

The Semantic Field of Slavery in Old English: *Wealh*,
Esne, *þræl*

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

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Abstract

This thesis considers three synonyms in the Old English semantic field of slavery: *wealh*, *esne*, *þræl*. It situates *esne*, often neglected, as a major word denoting SLAVE and a rival to *þeow* in all dialects except Late West Saxon. This reveals the bias of the authors of the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* who defined this word incorrectly, seeking to downplay the role of slavery in Anglo-Saxon England and to establish (non-existent) minimal differences between lexemes in this semantic field. This study demonstrates the ways in which these biases, rooted in an idealised view of the ‘free’ Anglo-Saxon past, have continued to inform the work of modern scholars. The quantitative case study of words denoting SLAVE in four Old English versions of the Gospels shows that Mercian and Northumbrian authors usually chose words other than *þeow* for SLAVE. The chapters on *wealh* and *þræl* explore synonymy in this semantic field further, demonstrating that the three terms on which this study concentrates could all be used in both positive and negative contexts. Lexemes in the semantic field of slavery were differentiated from one another geographically and chronologically, but not semantically. Thus, I argue that the semantic field of slavery was continually reshaped under the influence of linguistic and extra-linguistic forces. The dialectal aspects of this shaping are critical to our understanding both of the use of words for SLAVE in Old English, and of the way in which this semantic field developed in the transition to Middle English. Finally, this study demonstrates that the *servus Dei* trope was a major metaphor used to structure Anglo-Saxon ideas of society and spirituality: the slave was as much an ideal of obedience and a warning against the perils of disobedience as he was an unfree worker encountered in everyday life.

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1. Introduction

1.1 *Wealh, Esne, þræl*

‘Theow and Esne art thou no longer’ proclaims Cedric of Rotherwood when he frees the serf Gurth in Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*.¹ Despite Scott’s well-known flights of romantic fantasy and the obvious rhetorical flourish, this act of manumission touches upon a major under-appreciated feature of the Old English semantic field of slavery: the extent and importance of synonymy generally, and, in particular, the role of *esne* as an equivalent to the widely recognised *þeow*. Concentrating on three terms used to denote chattel slaves, *wealh*, *esne*, and *þræl*, in this study I demonstrate the significance and structure of such synonymy and its repercussions for our understanding both of the institution of Anglo-Saxon slavery, and of the language.² It is well recognised that ‘there are certain areas in the vocabulary [of Old English] that abound in near-synonyms’, amongst which it is not possible to establish ‘minimal meaning differences’. These areas tend to be culturally significant, and modern scholarship has concentrated on such synonymy in typically heroic and poetic fields.³ However, this present study demonstrates that this synonymy also occurred in non-heroic fields, and points to the cultural significance enjoyed by such areas, including chattel slavery.

Here, I challenge assumptions about the nature and meaning of the various lexemes in the semantic field of slavery as well as about the field as a whole. Although Late West Saxon texts

¹ Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*, ed. by David Blair (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1995), p. 272. For a discussion of the linguistic nationalism in *Ivanhoe* which lies behind such linguistic choices, see Mary Catherine Davidson, ‘Remembering our Saxon Forefathers: Linguistic Nationalism in *Ivanhoe*’, in *Memory and Medievalism*, ed. by Karl Fugelso, Studies in Medievalism, 15 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2006), pp. 41-54.

² Stefan Brink emphasises the importance of semantic and etymological analysis in the study of Scandinavian slavery, and this applies equally to the Anglo-Saxon material (Stefan Brink, ‘Slavery in the Viking Age’, in *The Viking World*, ed. by Stefan Brink and Neil Price [London: Routledge, 2008], pp. 49-56 [p. 49]).

³ Dieter Kastovsky, ‘Semantics and Vocabulary’, in *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume I: The Beginnings to 1066*, ed. by Richard M. Hogg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 290-408 (pp. 298-99).

dominate the extant corpus, we should not take this to mean that their lexical preferences were typical of other language variants. The evidence presented here suggests that the vocabulary of both Early West Saxon and the later Anglian variants diverged substantially from this supposed norm. I thus place *esne* in its rightful position as a major term denoting SLAVE, while reassessing the role of more minor lexemes such as *þræl* and *wealh*. I do not propose that we replace a *þeow-* or *þeow-þegn* based model of the semantic field with a *þeow-esne* based model, but rather suggest that this is a particularly rich and flexible semantic field, supporting a multitude of items. *þeow* dominated only in Late West Saxon, and synonymy was not merely an incidental feature of the semantic field, but a quality which authors such as Ælfric and Wulfstan actively sought.

This study uses a lexicological and semantic approach to consider the meaning, contexts, and distribution of these three Old English lexemes (*wealh*, *esne*, and *þræl*), establishing meaning through close reading and relevant *comparanda*. Each lexeme intersects with a variety of issues, revealing the centrality of the figure of the slave in Anglo-Saxon literature and culture. Because a vast amount of material in Old English uses the terminology of slavery, it is impossible to undertake an in-depth analysis of every term within this semantic field here. However, the use of case studies allows for great depth of analysis, and benefits both our understanding of the structure of the semantic field and of the function of individual terms within it. The distribution and use of these words convey information about approaches towards translation and the language; the qualities which were associated with slaves; attitudes towards slavery and service; and the nature of the *servus Dei* metaphor. Studies of medieval slavery often seek to define who the medieval slave was, what he did, how the law and the Church regarded him, and how the institution of slavery came to an end. Although these questions are important, the present study is more concerned to explore how speakers of Old English understood slaves; how they framed this understanding on a lexical level; and how this understanding informed their view of the world. The previous failure of modern scholars to tackle this linguistic material in depth not only reveals their methodological and ideological prejudices, but also highlights the problems which this created in the materials which they produced. Such problems include the inaccurate definition of various terms, and the

unjustified treatment of the *esnas* as a separate class. These materials still inform the understanding of established scholars and new students alike, and therefore perpetuate their misconceptions.⁴

1.2 Overview of Scholarship

Clarke noted in 1972 that ‘for social historians at least, the proper study of mankind begins with the lowest orders’,⁵ but the beginnings of the modern study of slavery were inauspicious: in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Gibbon devoted only a few paragraphs to slavery, while Martin Nilsson’s 1500-page study of Greek religion (1922) omitted slavery from the index.⁶ However, the study of Classical slavery exploded after the decision of the Mainz Academy in 1951 to begin a large-scale project researching this topic. The International Historical Conference held in Stockholm in 1960 injected new life into the debate.⁷ Moses Finley has produced the seminal work in this field, including *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, and anthologies such as *Slavery in Classical Antiquity: Views and Controversies*, and *Classical Slavery*.⁸ Walter Scheidel’s foreword to the 1999 reprint of *Classical Slavery* notes that the annual bibliography of slavery in the journal *Slavery and Abolition* contains several hundred entries for the Antique period. Distinct sub-topics have developed within the study of Classical slavery, including

⁴ The most obvious case of this is *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, ed. by Joseph Bosworth and Thomas Northcote Toller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882), the problems of which are discussed extensively in Chapter 4.

⁵ H. B. Clarke, ‘Domesday Slavery (Adjusted for Slaves)’, *Midland History*, 1 (1972), 37-46 (p. 46).

⁶ Moses I. Finley, ‘Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology (The Original 1980 Edition)’, in *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, ed. by Brent D. Shaw, expanded edn (Princeton, NJ: Markus Weiner, 1998), pp. 75-262 (p. 90); Moses I. Finley, ‘Slavery and the Historians’, in *Ancient Slavery*, ed. by Shaw, pp. 285-309 (first publ. in *Social History*, 12 [1979] (p. 291).

⁷ Brent D. Shaw, ‘“A Wolf by the Ears”: M. I. Finley’s *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* in Historical Context’, in *Ancient Slavery*, ed. by Shaw, pp. 3-74 (pp. 5-6) (first publ. in *Social History*, 12 [1979], 247-61).

⁸ Finley, ‘Slavery’, pp. 75-262.; *Slavery in Classical Antiquity: Views and Controversies*, ed. by M. I. Finley (Cambridge: Heffer, 1960) and *Classical Slavery*, ed. by M. I. Finley (London: Cass, 1987; repr. with foreword by Walter Scheidel, 1999).

archaeological enquiries, and monographs devoted to the study of slavery in relation to Christianity, and to slavery as a metaphor.⁹

Research into the post-Classical development of slavery in Europe is patchier. Although Joachim Potgiesser's 1703 account considers Germanic slaves and freedmen from the time of Caesar to the end of the Middle Ages, as late as 1957 E. A. Thompson denied that slaves had played any significant role in the primitive Germanic economy.¹⁰ The Romance-speaking areas of Europe have, generally speaking, generated the most interest, while continental Germanic-speakers have attracted more attention than either the Anglo-Saxons or the Scandinavians. Major works on slavery in medieval Europe date back at least as far as Marc Bloch's *Slavery and Serfdom in the Middle Ages* (published in English in 1975, but written as part of *Mélanges Historiques* before his death in 1944), Verlinden's *L'esclavage dans l'Europe Médiévale* (1955-77), Pierre Bonassie's *From Slavery to Feudalism in South-Western Europe* (translated in 1991 but written in 1985) and Pierre Dockès's, *Medieval Slavery and Liberation* (1982).¹¹ Recent research is fuller, although these studies tend to consider slaves alongside other forms of unfreedom, particularly serfdom, rather than

⁹ Walter Scheidel, 'Foreword', in *Classical Slavery*, ed. by Finley, pp. vii-xiii (pp. vii-viii); F. Hugh Thompson, *The Archaeology of Greek and Roman Slavery*, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, 66 (London: Duckworth, 2003); Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); I. A. H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church: From the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, 156 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998). This last item provides useful context for the Old English texts which translate Classical works, but no parallel study has traced the development of the metaphor after the fifth century.

¹⁰ Finley, 'Slavery and the Historians', p. 291; E. A. Thompson, 'Slavery in Early Germany', *Hermathena*, 89 (1957), 17-29 (pp. 17-18).

¹¹ Marc Léopold Benjamin Bloch, *Slavery and Serfdom in the Middle Ages: Selected Essays*, trans. by William R. Beer, Publications of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 8 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1975); Charles Verlinden, *L'esclavage dans l'Europe Médiévale*, Rijksuniversiteit de Gent, Werken Uitgegeven door de Faculteit van de Letteren en Wijsbegeerte, 119, 162, 2 vols (Bruges: De Tempel, 1955-77); Pierre Bonassie, *From Slavery to Feudalism in South-Western Europe*, trans. by Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Pierre Dockès, *Medieval Slavery and Liberation*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (London: Methuen, 1982).

concentrating uniquely on slaves.¹² The focus of much of this work has been on the decline of slavery and its eventual transformation into serfdom, as shown by the English title of Bonassie's work, rather than on the diachronic aspects of slavery.¹³ Some of the more recent studies are pan-European in their focus and therefore include work on the Germanic areas.¹⁴ Other developments include Michael McCormick's *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A. D. 300-900*.¹⁵ McCormick's broader focus places slavery within the context of the international slave trade and its economic implications, demonstrating an awareness that slavery can be studied from many different angles and intersects with many different issues.

Slavery in medieval Scandinavia has been discussed only more recently by Ruth Mazo Karras in *Slavery and Society in Medieval Scandinavia* (1988), and currently by Stefan Brink.¹⁶ Early Scandinavia was seen as an 'egalitarian peasant society, with free farmers, kings and chieftains'.¹⁷ The concept of the free Germanic peasant, and thus of the superiority of Germanic culture, was

¹² For instance, *Forms of Servitude in Northern and Central Europe: Decline, Resistance, and Expansion*, ed. by Paul Freedman and Monique Bourin, *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe*, 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), and *Serfdom and Slavery: Studies in Legal Bondage*, ed. by M. L. Bush (London: Longman, 1996). Michel Parisse's 'Histoire et Sémantique: De *Servus* à *Homo*', in *Forms of Servitude*, ed. by Freedman and Bourin, pp. 19-56 surveys the decline in the use of *servus* and its replacement by *homo* in the eleventh-century acts registered in the ARTEM database at Nancy.

¹³ David Wyatt, *Slaves and Warriors in Medieval Britain and Ireland, 800-1200*, *The Northern World*, 45 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 16.

¹⁴ *Forms of Servitude* includes essays on Germany, Denmark, and England, but all three concern serfdom rather than slavery.

¹⁵ Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁶ Ruth Mazo Karras, *Slavery and Society in Medieval Scandinavia*, Yale Historical Publications, 135 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988). Brink's contributions include 'Slavery in the Viking Age', in *The Viking World*, ed. by Stefan Brink and Neil Price (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 49-5; *Vikingarnas slavar: Den nordiska tråldomen under yngre järnålder och äldsta medeltid* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2012); and *Lord and Lady — Bryti and Deigja: Some Historical and Etymological Aspects of Family, Patronage and Slavery in Early Scandinavia and Anglo-Saxon England*, The Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture in Northern Studies Delivered at University College London, 17th March 2005 (London: The Viking Society for Northern Research, 2008). The latter is particularly interesting because of its linguistic focus.

¹⁷ Brink, 'Slavery', 49.

closely entwined with nationalistic and imperialistic ideology: 'Britons never will be slaves'.¹⁸ Even when such ideology was discredited, its assumptions about the Germanic past continued to inform scholarly work on these societies. The study of slavery in Anglo-Saxon England postdates even the study of Scandinavian slavery, and slaves in Anglo-Saxon England have not received a level of critical interest commensurate with their importance to society.¹⁹ Many studies, such as Abels's *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* examine the higher social classes, but few deal explicitly and specifically with the lower orders, and even fewer deal with slaves.²⁰ Kathleen Biddick associated the renewal of academic interest in the English medieval peasant with the process of decolonisation,²¹ but this did not immediately stimulate interest in slavery. Alex Woolf writes that 'slavery, like gender, creates invisible people', and some of this neglect must be the result of such invisibility. It is also a product of the attitudes of those who established the study of Iron Age and medieval societies as an academic discipline.²² Abhorrence for modern forms of slavery in the wake of abolition led to a disinclination to associate such an institution with the

¹⁸ David Mallet, *The Songs, Chorusses, &c. in The Masque of Alfred, as it is now Revived at the Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane. The Music by Dr. Arne, and Other Masters. Dressed in the Habits of the Times, with New Scenes, Machines, and Other Decorations* (London: Becket, 1773), p. 21; David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 173.

¹⁹ Christine Fell raises similar concerns about the treatment of women (Christine Fell, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England* [London: British Museum, 1984]).

²⁰ Richard Philip Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998). Gerd Althoff's *Family, Friends and Followers: Political and Social Bonds in Early Medieval Europe*, trans. by Christopher Carroll (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) similarly concentrates on high-status relationships in continental Europe, particularly Merovingian and Carolingian France and Ottonian Germany. Detailed surveys of prior scholarship are provided by David Anthony Edgell Pelteret, *Slavery in Early Mediaeval England*, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon England*, 7 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), pp. 4-24; Stefan Jurasinski, 'The Old English Penitentials and the Law of Slavery', in *English Law Before Magna Carta: Felix Liebermann and 'Die Gesteze der Angelsachsen'*, ed. by Stefan Jurasinski, Lisi Oliver, and Andrew Rabin, *Medieval Law and its Practice*, 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 97-118 (pp. 97-100); and Wyatt, *Slaves*, pp. 1-60. What follows here is therefore only a brief overview.

²¹ Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 66.

²² Alex Woolf, 'At Home in the Long Iron Age: A Dialogue between Households and Individuals in Cultural Reproduction', in *Invisible People and Processes: Writing Gender and Childhood into European Archaeology*, ed. by Jenny Moore and Eleanor Scott (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), pp. 68-74 (pp. 68-69).

Anglo-Saxons.²³ This has its roots in the nationalist and proto-nationalist fervour of scholars who ‘admired their image in the thing they studied’, and consequently idealised the imagined freedoms of the past.²⁴ Esmé Wingfield-Stratton’s formulation of the idealised Anglo-Saxon is overt in its patriotic and political intentions, calling the Anglo-Saxon ‘an untameably free man, jealous of his freedom’, a man determined ‘to maintain his personal dignity and freedom intact against authority’, in contrast to an imagined ‘oriental spirit of servile and unquestioning obedience’.²⁵

Even when historians have been forced to admit the existence of slaves, they have not investigated them in detail. Although John Mitchell Kemble recognised the existence of slaves in Anglo-Saxon England and devoted a considerable amount of attention to the ‘unfree’, he wrote that the fundamental unit of Anglo-Saxon society was the *ceorl* holding a hide of land, emphasising the role of free peasants. Moreover, he used the term ‘serf’ to translate *þeow* and to refer to slaves generally.²⁶ By eliding the two groups, Kemble lightened the apparent burden of oppression placed upon the Anglo-Saxon slave. Vinogradoff is inconsistent in his use of terminology, switching between *serf* and *slave* to describe the same groups, and translating ‘theows’ as ‘downright serfs’.²⁷ On the other hand, Palgrave argues that ‘bad as it was, the system of slavery had given a house and a home to the great mass of the lowest orders’, preventing the existence of paupers comparable to those in his own society.²⁸ Contemporary concerns about poverty clearly inform his thinking here; it is similarly not difficult to detect responses to the endemic problems of nineteenth- and twentieth-century society in many of these studies, particularly in response to the Slave Trade Act (1807), the Slavery Abolition Act (1833), and imperialist and nationalist

²³ Jurasinski, ‘Penitentials’, 97; Wyatt, *Slaves*, p. 1.

²⁴ Allen J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 26.

²⁵ Esmé Wingfield-Stratton, *The Foundations of British Patriotism* (London: Right Book Club, 1940), p. 37. The outbreak of the Second World War must have intensified this view, but it did not create it.

²⁶ John Mitchell Kemble, *The Saxons in England: A History of the English Commonwealth till the Period of the Norman Conquest*, 2 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1849), I, 128-29, 185-227

²⁷ Paul Vinogradoff, *English Society in the Eleventh Century: Essays in English Mediaeval History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908) pp. 463, 465.

²⁸ Francis Palgrave, *History of the Anglo-Saxons* (London: Tegg, 1867), p. 57.

ideology. Freeman saw Anglo-Saxon slavery as a humane punishment for prisoners and criminals, distinguishing it from New World slavery.²⁹ Similarly, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, Bromberg, Fisher and Loyn have attributed the existence or vitality of slavery in Insular cultures to the influence of external ethnic groups, a viewpoint which even Pelteret adopts on occasion.³⁰ This defers the moral responsibility for the existence of slaves from the Anglo-Saxons and other 'indigenous' British peoples to outsiders.

For many years, generic surveys such as Vinogradoff's *English Society in the Eleventh Century* and *Villainage in England* were the principal works in this field, alongside Liebermann's brief consideration of slaves in his edition of the laws.³¹ These early studies suffer from methodological problems, and their focus was not primarily on slavery. Vinogradoff's chapter entitled 'Peasants' deals with both the free and the unfree, thus minimising the differences between the two groups.³² Overall, little progress was made in the treatment of slaves. Indeed, Wyatt sees a regression in attitudes to Anglo-Saxon slavery in general in the mid-twentieth century due to the pressures of the Second World War.³³ Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England* mentions slaves four times in total, and all briefly.³⁴ Some shorter studies touch upon the issues of slavery, including Clarke's 'Domesday Slavery (Adjusted for Slaves)'³⁵ and Bromberg's 'Wales and the Medieval Slave Trade'.³⁶ However, the majority of studies which might be expected to deal extensively with slaves and peasants do not

²⁹ Edward A. Freeman, *The Growth of the English Constitution from the Earliest Times*, 3rd edn (London: Macmillan, 1876), p. 12; Jurasinski, 'Penitentials', 98.

³⁰ Wyatt, *Slaves*, pp. 2-5.

³¹ Paul Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England: Essays in English Mediaeval History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892); Jurasinski, 'Penitentials', 98; *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen: Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Savigny-Stiftung*, ed. by Felix Liebermann, 3 vols (Halle: Niemeyer, 1903-16). The entries on the various terms in Liebermann's glossary provide the most extensive treatment of slaves. However, as shown by the entry on *esne*, which translates this term as *Knecht*, this information is often also incorrect (Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, II [in two parts] [1906-12], 64).

³² Vinogradoff, *Society*, pp. 431-70.

³³ Wyatt, *Slaves*, p. 13.

³⁴ Frank Merry Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

³⁵ Clarke, 'Domesday Slavery', 37-46.

³⁶ Erik I. Bromberg, 'Wales and the Medieval Slave Trade', *Speculum*, 17 (1942), 263-69.

do so. Page's *Life in Anglo-Saxon England* relies heavily upon aristocratic social activities such as gift-giving for its material, and mentions slavery only briefly, giving the impression that it was not a major feature of this society. He also reiterates Vinogradoff's belief that the Church played a strong role in the abolition of slavery.³⁷ Thus, while some studies illuminated particular, often narrow, areas of interest, the study of slaves as a whole did not advance significantly.

It was only in the 1980s and 1990s that substantial progress was made. *The Work of Work: Servitude, Slavery and Labor in Medieval England* includes articles on slavery, of which Girsch's 'Metaphorical Usage, Sexual Exploitation, and Divergence in the Old English Terminology for Male and Female Slaves' is particularly relevant here.³⁸ Pelteret's *Slavery in Early Mediaeval England* is the first major study to concentrate on this area, and, indeed, Pelteret remains the dominant voice on this topic.³⁹ Other contributions include John S. Moore's 'Domesday Slavery', and Hugh Magennis's '*Godes Deow* and Related Expressions in Old English'.⁴⁰ Subsequently, the field has produced a small amount of further material, most obviously David Wyatt's 'The Significance of Slavery: Alternative Approaches to Anglo-Saxon Slavery' and *Slaves and Warriors in Medieval*

³⁷ Raymond Ian Page, *Life in Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Batsford, 1970), pp. 48, 65. Wyatt lists various other scholars who might be expected to cover the subject of slavery, but who do not (Wyatt, *Slaves*, pp. 2-5).

³⁸ *The Work of Work: Servitude, Slavery and Labor in Medieval England*, ed. by Allen J. Frantzen and Douglas Moffat (Glasgow: Cruithne, 1994); Elizabeth Stevens Girsch, 'Metaphorical Usage, Sexual Exploitation, and Divergence in the Old English Terminology for Male and Female Slaves', in *The Work of Work*, ed. by Frantzen and Moffat, pp. 30-54.

³⁹ In addition to this, Pelteret published or has since published a variety of articles on slavery, including 'The Image of the Slave in Some Anglo-Saxon and Norse Sources', *Slavery and Abolition*, 23 (2000), 75-88; 'Slave Raiding and Slave Trading in Early England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 9 (1980), 99-114; 'Slavery in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Anglo-Saxons: Synthesis and Achievement*, ed. by J. D. Woods and D. A. E. Pelteret, (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1985), pp. 117-33; and 'Slavery in the Danelaw', in *Social Approaches to Viking Studies*, ed. by Ross Samson (Glasgow: Cruithne, 1991), pp. 179-88.

⁴⁰ John S. Moore, 'Domesday Slavery', in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1988*, ed. by R. Allen Brown, Anglo-Norman Studies, 11 (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1989), pp. 191-220; Hugh Magennis, '*Godes Deow* and Related Expressions in Old English: Contexts and Uses of a Traditional Literary Figure', *Anglia*, 116 (1998), 139-70.

Britain and Ireland, 800-1200.⁴¹ Wyatt's work goes some way towards addressing Pelteret's overemphasis on texts such as the laws, wills, and the Domesday Book in *Slavery in Early Mediaeval England*, by introducing a greater range of sources.⁴² However, it is hampered both by the ambition of its scope and by Wyatt's rather peculiar thesis that the sexual abuse of slaves is the central purpose of slavery rather than an incidental feature of such unequal power relationships.⁴³ Jurasinski's 'The Old English Penitentials and the Law of Slavery', which looks specifically at the penitentials, and thus is also concerned with the socio-economic figure of the slave, is one of the few other significant studies on this topic in recent years.

Girsch and Magennis's work aside, the study of slaves has not been well integrated into other areas of Anglo-Saxon studies, even since the publication of Pelteret's monograph. For instance, John Blair's *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* mentions slaves only in passing.⁴⁴ Similarly, Rosamond Faith's *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* gives only a little space to the role of slaves.⁴⁵ The legal and socio-economic aspects of slavery dominate the literature. Even Wyatt's *Slaves and Warriors* uses the literary material as a source of legal and socio-economic information rather than as a subject of study in its own right.⁴⁶ These assumptions ignore both the importance of slavery as an idea and a metaphor in literature, and literature as a means of transmitting shared notions of social identity. The vocabulary used to denote slaves is a critical element of the construction and transmission of these concepts, but has suffered both from

⁴¹ David Wyatt, 'The Significance of Slavery: Alternative Approaches to Anglo-Saxon Slavery', in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2000*, ed. by John Gillingham, Anglo-Norman Studies, 23 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), pp. 327-47; Wyatt, *Slaves*.

⁴² Pelteret's 'Image of the Slave' and his chapter on the literary sources in *Slavery* (pp. 50-79) consider some of the less 'tangible' aspects of slavery, but neither constitutes an in-depth study.

⁴³ See, for example, Wyatt, *Slaves*, pp. 60-61, and the final chapters describing the decline of slavery; Lisa M. Bitel, 'David Wyatt, *Slaves and Warriors in Medieval Britain and Ireland, 800-1200*', *Speculum*, 86 (2011), 285-87 (p. 287).

⁴⁴ John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴⁵ Rosamond Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997).

⁴⁶ These assumptions may have retarded the development of this field, giving an undue sense that Pelteret and Wyatt have covered all that needs to be covered on the topic of Anglo-Saxon slavery.

a lack of interest, and from confusion about the definitions of many of the key terms. Words denoting slaves in both Classical and medieval languages have been persistently mistranslated for at least several centuries: the King James Bible routinely translates *servus* as ‘servant’, and this is also the first sense which Bosworth and Toller’s *Dictionary* gives in the definition of *þeow*.⁴⁷ Beavis notes that the translation of the Greek *doulos* as ‘servant’ ‘downplays the servile status of the parabolic actors’ and leads to a disjunction between the original intentions of the authors and modern understanding.⁴⁸ This disguises the appearance of slaves, reducing their apparent social significance, and thus deterring scholarly interest.

Recent semantic studies in Old English have covered a wide range of material which falls outside the more traditional work on heroic motifs.⁴⁹ Vic Strite notes that more work is needed on the semantics of terms for social interaction in Old English, which lack ‘adequate attention’.⁵⁰ While there are many studies of terms concerning nobility in Old English, there are few on slavery, and those which do exist are often not true semantic studies, lacking either sufficient scope

⁴⁷ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 1053. ‘Servant’ is used, for example, in Mark 10.44 in the King James version (*The Bible: Authorized King James Version*, ed. by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997], NT, p. 60). This issue recurs in other texts and other languages.

⁴⁸ Cited in Glancy, *Christianity*, p. 124.

⁴⁹ These include Helen Price’s work on *craft* in ‘Human and NonHuman in Anglo-Saxon and British Postwar Poetry: Reshaping Literary Ecology’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2014); Alaric Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity*, Anglo-Saxon Studies, 8 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007); Matthias Ammon, ‘Pledges and Agreements in Old English. A Semantic Field Study’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2011); Colin Peter Mackenzie, ‘A Lexical Study of the Semantic Field MEMORY in Old English and Old Icelandic’ (unpublished master’s thesis, University of Glasgow, 2010); Daria Izdebska, ‘Greed in *Beowulf*: A Semantic-Literary Investigation’, *International Medieval Congress*, Leeds, UK, 11-14th July 2011 [unpublished conference paper]; and Richard Dance, ‘Borrowing Money: Contact and Change in Early English Vocabulary’, *International Medieval Congress*, Leeds, UK, 7-10th July 2014 [unpublished conference paper]. The latter challenges the definition of *gersum* supplied by the dictionaries of both Old and Middle English, and therefore has similarities to this present study, both in its methodology and its repercussions.

⁵⁰ Vic Strite, *Old English Semantic-Field Studies*, American University Studies Series, 4, English Language and Literature, 100 (New York: Lang, 1989), pp. 1-2, 165.

or methodological rigour.⁵¹ H. R. Loyn studied *þegn* from the perspective of high-status rather than low-status terms. While *þegn* is not one of the primary terms considered in this study, this article is interesting both because it contributes to the study of slave words generally, and because it demonstrates the historiographical preference for high-status terms, and ignores the low-status contexts of this shift.⁵² Faull's 'The Semantic Development of Old English *Wealþ*' is a useful contribution to the field, but it is a brief overview of the history of this term rather than a true semantic study. In particular, it fails to examine the contexts in which *wealþ* denotes SLAVE in any significant depth. Neither Faull nor Loyn considers their chosen term in comparison to other words denoting slaves, and thus both are unable to place the development of these terms within wider patterns of change in this semantic field.⁵³ Pelteret alone considers the terminology for slaves and slavery in Old English as a set in *Slavery in Early Mediaeval England*. This glossary is a valuable survey of the terminology, but it depends on established definitions. This is particularly noticeable in his deeply flawed entry for *esne*, which marginalises the meaning SLAVE and includes the sense HIRED WORKER, which is not attested for the simplex.⁵⁴ Other studies, such as those by Girsch and Faull mentioned above and John W. Tonke's 'Wonfeax Wale: Ideology and Figuration in the Sexual Riddles of the Exeter Book',⁵⁵ show interest in individual lexemes and in the

⁵¹ Strite lists those works on high-status terms which had been published by that point in Strite, *Semantic-Field Studies*, pp. 122-32. Such studies include Caroline Brady, '“Warriors” in Beowulf: An Analysis of the Nominal Compounds and an Evaluation of the Poet's Use of Them', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11 (1983), 199-246 and Dennis Howard Green, *The Carolingian Lord: Semantic Studies of Four Old High German Words: Balder, Frô, Trubtin, Hërro* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965). Dennis Harold Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) has substantial chapters on 'Lordship', 'Kingship', 'People and Army' and 'Warfare', but no comparable section on vocabulary denoting the lower social orders.

⁵² H. R. Loyn, 'Gesiths and Thegns in Anglo-Saxon England from the Seventh to the Tenth Century', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 70, no. 277 (1955), 529-49.

⁵³ Margaret Lindsay Faull, 'The Semantic Development of Old English *Wealþ*', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s., 8 (1975), 20-44. Chapter 3 critiques Faull's article in greater detail.

⁵⁴ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 271-74. See below, Chapter 4, for extensive discussion of these issues.

⁵⁵ John W. Tonke, 'Wonfeax Wale: Ideology and Figuration in the Sexual Riddles of the Exeter Book', in *Class and Gender in Early English Literature*, ed. by Britton J. Harwood and Gillian R. Overing (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 21-42.

relationship between the terminology of slavey and literary motifs, but are not in themselves semantic studies. They are thus as vulnerable as Pelteret to the problems caused by flaws in previous scholarship, such as incorrect dictionary definitions and the tendency to assume that the West Saxon norm is the standard for the language overall.⁵⁶

Þræl is most commonly discussed in studies of Norse loanwords, including Erik Björkman's *Scandinavian Loan-Words in Middle English*, Richard Dance's *Words Derived from Old Norse in Early Middle English: Studies in the Vocabulary of the South-West Midland Texts*, Sara M. Pons-Sanz's *Norse-Derived Vocabulary in Late Old English Texts: Wulfstan's Works, A Case Study*, and Angelika Lutz's 'Norse Influence on English in the Light of General Contact Linguistics'.⁵⁷ These studies have placed *þræl* in its geographical and dialectal contexts, but not in the context of its semantic field. Matthew Townend notes that 'it is remarkable how little work has been done on the contextual study of Norse-derived loanwords in English'.⁵⁸ While some progress has been made since Townend made this remark, particularly in the studies by Dance and Pons-Sanz listed above, these works are not primarily concerned with meaning, nor do they concentrate on what can be learnt from a detailed analysis of *þræl*'s individual appearances. They consider *þræl* in relation to other Norse loans rather than in relation to other items within its semantic field. Angelika Lutz's

⁵⁶ Girsch shows this in her inclusion of 'hired workman, laborer' in her definition of *esne* (Girsch, 'Terminology', p. 31).

⁵⁷ Erik Björkman *Scandinavian Loan-Words in Middle English*, *Studien zur englischen Philologie*, 7, 11, 2 vols (Halle: Niemeyer, 1900-2); Richard Dance, *Words Derived from Old Norse in Early Middle English: Studies in the Vocabulary of the South-West Midland Texts*, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 246 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003); Sara M. Pons-Sanz, *Norse-Derived Vocabulary in Late Old English Texts: Wulfstan's Works, A Case Study*, *North-Western Language Evolution, Supplement 22* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2007); and Angelika Lutz, 'Norse Influence on English in the Light of General Contact Linguistics', in *English Historical Linguistics 2010: Selected Papers from the 16th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, Pécs, 22-27 August 2010*, ed. by Irén Hegedűs and Alexandra Fodor, *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, 325 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2012), pp. 15-41.

⁵⁸ Matthew Townend, 'Viking Age England as a Bilingual Society', in *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards, *Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 89-105 (p. 92)

definition of *þræl* as ‘serf’ and *þir* as ‘female servant’, when even a cursory examination of their sense reveals that they denote slaves, is indicative of this lack of interest in its semantics.⁵⁹

Esne has received very little critical attention, and is the subject of no individual study, allowing the nineteenth-century misreadings to stand unchallenged.⁶⁰ This is partially a function of the treatment of status terms referring to the lowest classes: *wealh* is studied because of its entanglement with questions of ethnicity, *þræl* as an early Old Norse loan, and *þegn* because of the shift it undergoes to RETAINER. In other words, they are all distinguished by qualities other than the denotation SLAVE. These qualities have made them appealing subjects of study, while terms such as *esne*, lacking such characteristics, were neglected. In the case of *esne*, as outlined in detail below, this situation was exacerbated by the frequent failure to recognise this term’s primary denotation. Thus, even in the work of scholars interested in slavery such as Pelteret and Girsch, it receives little recognition. This present study seeks to redress this balance by considering these three terms primarily as slave words.⁶¹ These terms are not disconnected from one another, but exist in a constant state of flux due both to linguistic and extralinguistic factors, fueled by the constant reimagining of the image of the slave as a literary motif and as a locus of social anxiety.

1.3 Defining the Slave

It is necessary at this point to attempt to define what we mean by the concept ‘slave’, although it is difficult to reach a definition which is universal rather than specific to a single culture. Ruth Mazo Karras gives a number of criteria for recognising and categorising slavery. She further suggests that key characteristics of the slave include a lack of the rights enjoyed by others; exclusion from the community and kin group; the direct control of the owner over the slave’s labour; and identification of slaves as a distinct status group, the lowest in society.⁶² She emphasises the importance of

⁵⁹ Lutz, ‘Norse Influence’, 23.

⁶⁰ See Chapter 4 for an in-depth discussion of these issues.

⁶¹ The phrase ‘slave word(s)’ will be used throughout this study as a convenient shorthand for ‘words denoting SLAVE’.

⁶² Mazo Karras, *Slavery*, pp. 6-12.

mental and social categories rather than economic factors in creating the concept and social reality of the slave.⁶³ D. B. Davis offered a briefer definition of the slave, delimited by three factors: 'his person is the property of another man, his will is subject to his owner's authority, and his labor or services are obtained through coercion'.⁶⁴ Rather than offering strict criteria, Moses Finley laid out seven features to be considered:

(1) power over a man's labour and movements; (2) power to punish; (3) claims to property, or power over things - a complex of elements requiring further differentiation both in its range (from *peculium* to full ownership) and its application to different categories of things (e.g. cattle or land or agricultural produce or money); (4) privileges and liabilities in legal action, such as immunity from arbitrary seizure or the capacity to sue or be sued; (5) privileges in the area of family: marriage, succession, and so on; (6) privileges of social mobility, such as manumission or enfranchisement (and their inverse); and (7) privileges and duties in the sacral, political, and military spheres.⁶⁵

Pelteret broadly accepts Finley's typology, but adds questions of esteem as an eighth feature of note.⁶⁶

Both Mazo Karras's various sets of criteria and Finley's generalised typology allude to variation between the conditions of the slave in one society and those in another.⁶⁷ The inability to hold property has often been taken as one of the defining features of the slave as a cross-cultural phenomenon.⁶⁸ However, the Anglo-Saxon slave could sometimes hold property, a feature which has been taken as evidence that slavery in Anglo-Saxon England was 'peculiarly humane'.⁶⁹ If the ability to hold property was as decisive as has previously been thought, then Anglo-Saxon slaves would not qualify as slaves. Nevertheless, both slaves who could hold property and those who could

⁶³ Mazo Karras, *Slavery*, p. 20.

⁶⁴ D. B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 31.

⁶⁵ Moses I. Finley, 'The Servile Statuses of Ancient Greece', *Revue Internationale des Droits d'Antiquité*, 3rd ser., 7 (1960), 165-89 (p. 188).

⁶⁶ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 2.

⁶⁷ See also Wyatt, *Slaves*, pp. 43-45.

⁶⁸ M. L. Bush, 'Introduction', in *Serfdom and Slavery*, ed. by Bush, pp. 1-17 (p. 2).

⁶⁹ Jurasinski, 'Penitentials', 109. See 4.3.3 for evidence from the Anglo-Saxon laws that slaves could hold property.

not are clearly recognised as belonging to the same class of persons. Similarly, the willingness of Anglo-Saxon authors to use the same terms which denote slaves in their own society to denote Classical and biblical slaves suggests that the differences between these groups did not preclude their identification as a single social class. Consequently, the kind of looser typology proposed by Mazo Karras and Finley is absolutely necessary to understand slaves as a cross-cultural phenomenon. Such understanding is particularly important in relation to the Old English material due to the relatively high frequency of translation texts in the corpus of works containing slave words.

Having recognised that it is not always useful to outline a single, definitive set of criteria by which we might purport to identify slaves, it is still necessary to agree upon the features which define a slave in this study. Certain commonalities, such as powerlessness ([1] and [2] in Finley's typology) and the low esteem in which this class is held are clearly a feature shared between slaves in Old English texts, and between these individuals and their Classical counterparts. Slaves, like those in Roman law, are liable to corporal punishment not shared by free men; they are also viewed as morally corrupt.⁷⁰ Such features are clearly shared between both cultures and possibly transmitted between them. In the light of these clear parallels and the willingness of Anglo-Saxon authors to equate contemporary slaves with those in other cultures, this study follows Pelteret's practical approach, which emphasises equivalence with the Latin *servus*:

the decision as to which group in a society can be called 'slaves' must be dependent on the terminology of status employed by that society... Fortunately, in that [Anglo-Saxon] society one group stands out unambiguously as being viewed as chattel and as having both the fewest rights and the heaviest obligations. The general term for a male member of this group was *þeow*, and, significantly, the Anglo-Saxon translators equated him with the Roman *servus*, the Latin word most widely used to denote a slave.⁷¹

⁷⁰ K. R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control*, Collection Latomus, 185 (Brussels: Latomus, 1984), p. 27; Glancy, *Christianity*, pp. 137, 142. According to Demosthenes, the distinction between free men and slaves was that the former paid recompense for their crimes with their possessions, while slaves answered with their bodies (Giuseppe Cambiano, 'Aristotle and the Anonymous Opponents of Slavery', trans. by Mario di Gregorio, in *Classical Slavery*, ed. by Finley, pp. 28-52 [p. 35]). See below (3.7, 4.3.6, 4.3.11, 4.7 etc) for concerns about the morality of slaves and 3.4 and 4.3.3 for their liability to corporal punishment.

⁷¹ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 3.

I differ from Pelteret in that I question the prominence of *þeow*, but his emphasis on the role of *servus* in defining the semantic field is still valid. All three terms under consideration here are used as synonyms for the Latin *servus*, and thus denote chattel slaves at least where this equivalence occurs. The widespread use of more than one Old English term to gloss *servus* and its feminine equivalent *ancilla* is, indeed, one of the most notable features of the synonymy which characterises this semantic field. For the purposes of this study, the Anglo-Saxon slave is defined first by Pelteret's extended version of Finley's typology; second, by the various conditions laid out in the laws which make it clear that the group or groups denoted by these terms were chattel slaves; thirdly, by various attitudes often shared with Classical texts; and fourthly, by an association with Latin terms denoting slaves. This last quality is often the most significant factor when deciding if an ambiguous term does indeed denote SLAVE.

1.4 Methodology

In this study, I use the *Dictionary of Old English* web corpus and its search functions to find the most comprehensive set of attestations for each *lemma*.⁷² This allows for the study of each term across the full range of texts and genres, and thus gives a complete and complex picture of their denotations. Tools such as this electronic corpus are critical to the feasibility of truly accurate semantic studies, and have here uncovered instances of these terms which have previously escaped attention.⁷³ Writing about the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus's predecessor, the *Microfiche Concordance of Old English*, first published in 1980,⁷⁴ Christine Fell wrote that 'for every English word that occurs in texts from the Anglo-Saxon period we have full documentation of all the contexts in which it is found, and can see at a glance its range and type and date of meaning'. Fell

⁷² *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, ed. by Antoinette diPaolo Healey, John Price Wilkin and Xin Xiang (Toronto: The Dictionary of Old English, 2011) <<http://www.doe.utoronto.ca/pages/pub/web-corpus.html>> [accessed 14 July 2014]. All subsequent references to this resource are given as 'DOE Corpus', along with details of the search parameters.

⁷³ For instance, see 5.3.2.

⁷⁴ *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English [microform]*, ed. by Richard L. Venezky and Antoinette diPaolo (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1980).

further emphasises the importance of this resource for detailed semantic analysis and its value in combating ‘centuries of mistranslations [...] quite simply governed by someone’s preconceptions about what something is likely to mean, rather than an analysis of the evidence for what it actually meant’.⁷⁵ Margaret Faull’s study of *wealh*, the closest analogue to the present work, predates the availability of the microfiche concordance. More significantly, no such resource was available for the compilers of the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, on whose assumptions the received meanings of slave words so often depend. The digitised corpus improves upon the accessibility of this raw data and features such as ‘begins with’ and ‘fragmentary’ searches are invaluable in understanding the grammatical productivity of these terms. This is of particular use in the case of *esne* where the compounds have so often been misunderstood.

In the main body of this study, I consider each term (*wealh*, *esne*, and *þræl*) in the light of the full range of material returned by searches of the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus. This material is subject to close reading in order to establish the meaning of each term in context, and to uncover wider patterns of usage. Latin parallels, where available, are critical. Where no such parallel is available, meaning must be determined from a detailed analysis of how the word works in context, including relationships to other terms, similarities to other uses of the same term, and the depiction and treatment of the individual in question. Both *wealh* and *esne* have denotations other than SLAVE, and thus the close analysis of these terms places particular emphasis on the need to distinguish between these denotations, and to understand the relationship between the denotations. Thus, this study tracks patterns of semantic change and divergence, considering both synchronic and diachronic aspects of this semantic field. Where useful, I supplement this qualitative analysis with quantitative analysis, particularly where a term is used multiple times with the same meaning in a single text. Here, qualitative analysis of each instance is redundant, but quantitative analysis helps to inform our understanding of broader patterns of distribution and the relative significance of these terms within their semantic field.

⁷⁵ Fell, *Women*, p. 15; Christine Fell, ‘Words and Women in Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Lastaworda Betst: Essays in Memory of Christine E. Fell with her Unpublished Writings*, ed. by Carole Hough and Kathryn A. Lowe (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2002), pp. 198-215 (p. 215). This lecture was given during the late 1980s.

More generally, this work reveals commonalities in the metaphors which these words form and the attitudes and ideas with which they are associated. The semantic study of these terms is intrinsically bound up with social and literary attitudes towards slaves and slavery. The dominance of metaphor in the use of slave words reveals the way in which these attitudes shaped ideas of service and hierarchy, both religious and secular. The involvement of all three terms in these conceptual commonplaces is a further aspect of their synonymy, and contributes to our understanding of the semantic field as a whole. Thus, this study considers both how each of these three terms behaves separately, and how this shapes the interaction between them and other items in this field, most obviously *þeow*.

1.5 Structure

The body of this study is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1, entitled ‘An Overview of the Old English Semantic Field SLAVE and Its Contexts’ aims to place the three case studies within the context of the semantic field as a whole, and that semantic field within the context of its Germanic and Latin counterparts. It surveys the glossaries of this semantic field in the *Thesaurus of Old English*, the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, and the glossary to Pelteret’s *Slavery in Early Mediaeval England*, giving particular attention to the methodological problems which each resource presents.⁷⁶ This study produces a shortlist of lexemes and lexical families which form the core of this semantic field; the three case-study terms are numerically prominent in this list. In Table 1 and the discussion thereof, I compare the three case-study terms both with one another and with *þeow*. This comparison demonstrates both the similarities and the differences in these terms, and thus hints at the underlying patterns within this semantic field which are explored in greater detail in the subsequent material. The comparative study of the semantic field as a whole demonstrates that synonymy in this area was a common feature of the Germanic

⁷⁶ *A Thesaurus of Old English in Two Volumes*, Costerus New Series, 131–32, ed. by Jane Roberts and Christian Kay, with Lynne Grundy, 2nd rev. impression, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), accessed from <<http://oldenglishthesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk>> [accessed 28th June 2014]; *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. by Christian Kay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), accessed from <<http://public.oed.com/historical-thesaurus-of-the-oed/>> [accessed 28th July 2014].

languages. There is a marked distinction between the importance of any single lexeme within the language family and its importance in any given daughter-language. Following this discussion, a case study of slave words in four Old English versions of the Gospels and their relationship to the Latin *lemmata* forms the body of this chapter. This includes an in-depth discussion of the problems pertinent to collecting and interpreting such a varied set of material. This case-study shows that typical assumptions about the semantic field of slavery only hold true in the case of the West Saxon dialect, and that the other linguistic varieties show distinctive patterns of usage. These indicate the importance of dialect in the shaping of this semantic field, a point which is crucial to the rest of this study. Each of the subsequent chapters returns to these gospel translations at some point. The close relationship of these translations to the Latin text is critical in determining the meaning of individual terms, and thus the structure of the semantic field as a whole.

Each of the subsequent chapters takes the form of a case study of one of the major items under consideration here. Chapter 3 covers *wealh*, the semantic development of which is deeply involved with the early period of Anglo-Saxon settlement in the British Isles. As with the case studies on *esne* and *þræl*, the substantive discussion of *wealh* begins with a section on this term's etymology and phonology. In the case of *wealh*, this discussion highlights the dialectal distribution of the term through the development of separate vowel reflexes in West Saxon and in Anglian. The chapter is sub-divided according to the various meanings of *wealh*. The first sub-division considers the meaning CELTIC-SPEAKER, FOREIGNER, which was inherited from Proto-Germanic. As this meaning is numerically vastly superior to SLAVE, this section provides an overview, rather than a detailed analysis of each instance. It draws upon the work of Faull and delineates the gradually narrowing meaning of *wealh* as an ethnonym. As such, it concentrates on material from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and allied texts, but also considers how these terms were used in narrative material including the *Martyrology*. The next sub-section focuses on the semantic change CELTIC-SPEAKER, FOREIGNER > SLAVE and places this within the context of the historiographical debate on the *adventus Saxonum*, and changing ideas about ethnic identity as a social construct. The laws of Ine is the key text which hints at this change. The next two sections discuss the various texts in which *wealh* denotes SLAVE, and those in which *wiln*, *wealh*'s major feminine cognate, appears. As the only

one of the case-study terms possessing a feminine cognate, this term is of particular interest. Both sections conclude that these terms were capable of much wider usage than has previously been allowed, and the study of *wiln* in particular engages with and critiques the ideas of Elizabeth Stevens Girsch. The final substantive section within this chapter considers the use of *wealb* and its cognates in the Exeter Book riddles, emphasising the potential for ambiguity which is a key feature of their use here, and the need to distinguish carefully between ethnic and status markers. This chapter overall argues that *wealb* and *wiln* were used as synonyms for *þeow* in Late West Saxon precisely because of the lack of other synonyms in this linguistic variety due to semantic change.

Chapter 4, on *esne*, spans the entire period, from some of the earliest Old English laws, through to the twelfth century. As a major alternative to *þeow*, *esne* forms the core both of this study, and of the semantic field. The sheer amount of material covered here is one of the most significant indications of *esne*'s importance. Thus, the changes which it undergoes are a particularly potent testimony to the continual shaping and reshaping of this field. The unacknowledged scale of its contribution and the need to redress this balance drive the focus on this term. Here, I challenge both the range of meanings conventionally ascribed to *esne* and the chronology of these meanings. After the etymological and phonological material, this chapter is sub-divided first by denotation (SLAVE versus MAN), then by genre, and then by text. I argue that *esne* is the dominant slave word both in the Anglian dialects and in Early West Saxon, and that even its earliest appearances indicate synonymy with *þeow*. Thus, this chapter suggests a different reading of society as portrayed by the early laws from that which has conventionally been presumed. Little has previously been written on *esne*, but this chapter reflects on the methodological flaws of this small body of material, particularly the tendency to conflate etymology with semantics, and simplex with compound forms. Thus, it implicitly calls into question many other definitions from Bosworth and Toller's *Dictionary*. Chapter 4 contains a separate section which discusses *esne* in the riddles, once more pointing to the inherent ambiguities of its use and suggesting that these are an intentional feature of the riddle form. The readjustment of the conventional chronology of *esne*'s semantic shifts is a critical feature of this chapter, and thus the chapter concludes by plotting the distribution of the major meanings of the simplex form against the chronological distribution of these texts. Finally,

the chapter closes by suggesting that a readjustment of the dictionary definition for *esne* is urgently needed.

The final substantive chapter of this study deals with *þræl* as it is the final term denoting SLAVE to enter the Old English lexicon. The appearance of *þræl* attests both to continuing processes of linguistic change and the significance of the idea of the slave in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as well as bearing witness to the earliest stages of loaning from Old Norse. It also offers the opportunity to explore the ‘afterlife’ of the Old English semantic field of slavery in Middle English. This chapter places *þræl* in the context of the semantic field of slavery, rather than seeing it solely as part of the group of early Norse loans. As with the chapter on *wealh*, I argue here that the restrictions which Girsch and Pelteret place upon the use of this term are based on false premises. The part of this chapter which deals with the Old English material is divided by text or textual grouping, and also contains a discussion of the manuscripts in which these texts occur. This is particularly important in the case of *þræl* as it offers both a mechanism for wider dissemination of this term, and evidence of its acceptance in the passive vocabulary of a wider range of authors. The Middle English material which forms the second part of this chapter is merely an overview of that period due to the vastly increased amount of material available. It demonstrates both continuation and culturally specific innovations. Both affirm that the restricted use of *þræl* in Old English was not a feature of this term *per se*, but rather of the late date at which it was loaned into the language and thus the geographically limited context in which it is recorded.

The structure of this study progress from an early loan, significant in its distribution throughout the Germanic languages and extraordinary in its usage, through a ‘native’ term, startling in the way it restructures our understanding of the Old English semantic field, to a late loan from Old Norse which eclipsed the rest of the Old English terminology to become the dominant Middle English term. Each lexical item (*wealh*, *esne*, *þræl*) raises a different set of questions and engages with a different set of material. Insofar as is possible, this study takes the same approach to each term, but subtle adjustments are necessary. As noted above, both *wealh* and *esne* have senses other than SLAVE, and thus require us to distinguish between these meanings and consider the relationships between them. Equally, some consideration of the Old Norse *þræll* is

necessary to understand *þræl* as an early loanword. This gives us a sense not only of the way in which *þræl* spread rapidly from its initial focus in the Danelaw, but also of the continued processes of growth and change which shaped the vocabulary of servitude and slavery over time. Slaves, slavery, and slave words do not exist in a vacuum, but interact with many facets of Anglo-Saxon society, a reality which modern academic study has been slow to recognise. A closer study of the semantic study of slavery reveals that this interplay is central to the idea of the slave, the society in which he existed, and the language which described him. Each of these terms is used as a synonym for both the Latin *servus* and the Old English *þeow*, and it is not possible to discern any difference in the connotations attached to each. The conclusion synthesises this material under the heading ‘Metaphor’, ‘Synonymy’, ‘Dialect’ and ‘Dictionaries and Bias’, and suggests some directions for further study in this field.

1.6 Normalisation and Conventions

This study does not use macrons to indicate vowel length, except in the phonological material where such distinctions are pertinent, or where they are used by the editors of primary texts.⁷⁷ Skeat’s editions of the gospels use the accent acute intermittently, presumably in relation to orthographic variants in the manuscript, but with no relationship to vowel length,⁷⁸ and these accents are omitted here. The Tironian *nota* <ȝ> which is used by some editions is rendered here with the ampersand. Some of the editions of the Middle English versions use alternative letter forms such as the ‘long s’, <ƿ> in order to render the orthography of the text more closely. This is normalised to <s>; other forms are similarly normalised. The Old English *wynn* <ƿ> is normalised to <w> in those few editions which continue to use it. Yogh <ȝ> is retained in Middle English

⁷⁷ Pelteret’s glossary similarly does not mark vowel length (Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 261-330).

⁷⁸ For instance, *þeow* in the Hatton and Corpus versions of Mark 10.44 and *þræl* in the Lindisfarne and Rushworth versions has no accent; if the accent indicated vowel length, we would expect to find it here (*The Gospel according to Saint Mark: in Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian Versions, Synoptically Arranged, with Collations Exhibiting All the Readings of All the MSS*, ed. by Walter William Skeat [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1871], pp. 84-85).

texts, but amended to <g> in Old English texts where there is no distinction between the two letter forms.

2. An Overview of the Old English Semantic Field SLAVE and Its Contexts

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contextualises the three case studies by positioning them in relation to other items in the semantic field SLAVE in Old English, and by comparing this semantic field with its counterparts in the other medieval Germanic languages and in Latin. The first part of this overview highlights the problems inherent in defining which lexemes belong to this semantic field, and seeks to outline the most basic set of items which clearly denote SLAVE in Old English. The Germanic material contextualises the development and idiosyncrasies of the Old English terminology. The Latin material provides a useful contrast to this, particularly given the role of translation texts in this study. The core of this chapter is a case study looking at the use and distribution of slave words in several Old English versions of the gospels. *Wealh*, *esne* and *þræl* all appear in at least one of these versions, and this case study sets the stage for the issues of dialect which form a major part of the following chapters. The terminology of slavery in these gospels has not received any detailed scrutiny because these are translation texts rather than innovative portrayals of the slave. However, this is an advantage for a lexical and semantic study such as this, because each instance of an Old English slave word has a corresponding Latin *lemma* by which to define its meaning. Thus, this chapter brings *wealh*, *esne* and *þræl* together in one place and establishes the synonymy between these items and *þeow* which is such a feature of their use elsewhere. It therefore undermines previous suppositions about the nature of these terms and lays the groundwork for further investigation in the subsequent chapters.

2.2 The Semantic Field SLAVE

No consensus has been reached agreeing which lexemes fall within the semantic field SLAVE in Old English. This is partially a result of the neglect of the linguistic and literary aspects of slavery

during this period, and partially due to the methodological issues attached to resources such as Bosworth and Toller's *Dictionary*. A 'modern word' search of the *Thesaurus of Old English* for *slave* returns a variety of results, some labelled 'slave', others described by a number of different labels which are insufficiently well differentiated from 'slave', such as 'a bought servant' or 'an enslaved person'. The list includes all the basic roots which we would expect to find: *þeow* (in both strong and weak forms), *wealh*, *þræl*, *mann*, *æht*, and *hæft*, as well as less common items such as *inbrydling*, *gop*, and *ceapcniht*. However, as it reproduces the errors of Bosworth and Toller's *Dictionary*, it omits some important items such as the largely poetic *scealc*, and, most critically, *esne*.⁷⁹ Similarly, the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* lists a number of terms under 'society > authority > fact of being subject to authority > slavery or bondage > [noun]> slave'. For the Old English period, however, it lists only 'theow' and 'thrall'. 'Esne' is listed, rather confusingly, under the date 1819 (the publication of *Ivanhoe*), although the dictionary entry describes it as 'the Old English designation of a class of domestic slaves'.⁸⁰ It therefore omits both *wealh* and *þegn*, alongside less common terms. Neither of these resources, therefore, provides an accurate picture of the semantic field of slavery in Old English.

Pelteret's first appendix, entitled 'The Old English Terminology of Servitude and Freedom' is the most complete study of this semantic field available at the present time. Described as 'a semantic analysis of the terminology of servitude and freedom employed in Old English', it covers about sixty pages and approximately 160 headword items.⁸¹ It is a comprehensive glossary of this vocabulary and a useful initial resource, as it includes features such as etymologies, phonological

⁷⁹ Roberts and Kay, *Thesaurus of Old English*, accessed from <<http://oldenglishthesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk>>, s.v. 'slave' [accessed 28th June 2014]. Other errors include the treatment of *wilb* as a separate lexeme from *wealh*, when it is in fact a variant of the latter found in some versions of the West Saxon gospels and the *Heptateuch* (Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 1224).

⁸⁰ Kay, *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed from <<http://public.oed.com/historical-thesaurus-of-the-oed/>>, s.v. 'slave' (16); *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), accessed from <<http://www.oed.com>>, s.v. 'esne' [accessed 28th July 2014]. All subsequent references to the *Oxford English Dictionary* are given in the form 'OED, s.v. "x"' and refer to the online version.

⁸¹ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 261-330.

histories, and an exploration of the multiple senses of complex words.⁸² However, its sheer breadth makes great depth of semantic analysis impossible, and Pelteret is consequently heavily reliant on the pre-existing dictionary entries for certain items. This is particularly noticeable in his entry on *esne*, where he declares that ‘the *esne* was in a better position than a slave’, and goes on to define ‘slave’ as one of its lesser senses.⁸³ This is clearly reliant on Bosworth and Toller’s definition of the *esne*, which makes unfounded claims placing the *esne* in precisely this position.⁸⁴ Semantic analysis is not the focus of Pelteret’s wider study, and, due to the range of material covered, his supposed analysis is often little more than a broad overview, without the attention needed to uncover the subtleties of usage between authors and dialects.

Out of the 160 or so items which Pelteret covers, a significant number are not concerned with slavery but with freedom. These include the nineteen members of the *lis-* family, such as the compounds *lisend* and *on-lisend* which are used of Christ as the Redeemer.⁸⁵ The *freo-* family is similarly substantial, and some items such as *freo-wine*, while etymologically related to the concept of freedom, have become bleached of this meaning. On the other hand, *sundor-freedom* and *sundor-freols* are concerned with the grant of lands rather than of persons.⁸⁶ Pelteret also includes single items which relate to the treatment of slaves, such as the verbs for buying, selling, and stealing slaves, including *ge-bicgan*, ‘to buy someone into a state of slavery’⁸⁷ and *for-stelan*, ‘to steal (a person)’.⁸⁸ Of Pelteret’s 160 items, twenty-two items or groups of items⁸⁹ are used to denote

⁸² See, for instance, the entries on *esne* and *wealþ* in Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 271-74, 319-22, 327-28 respectively.

⁸³ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 271-73.

⁸⁴ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 258. See Chapter 4 for the full text of this definition and extensive discussion of its flaws.

⁸⁵ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 263-64, 271, 296-98, 302, 318.

⁸⁶ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 262, 265, 269, 274-91, 303-04.

⁸⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 265.

⁸⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 275.

⁸⁹ The word-family *þeow*, including verbs, adjectives, feminine nouns, and various compound nouns, comprises one such group (Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 269-70, 302-03, 3305-16, 318-19, 323, 329-30).

chattel slaves themselves: *æht*, *ambiht-mæcg*, *birele*, *cniht*, *cyre-lif*, *esne*, *fostor-cild*, *fostorling*, *hæft-ancel*, *ham-byrde*, *inbyrdling*, *mægden-mann*, *mann(a)*, *mennen*, *scealc*, *þegn*, *þeow(a)*, *þir*, *þræl*, *þyften*, *wealh*, and *wencel*.⁹⁰ While Pelteret treats all these terms as equally relevant, some more obviously denote SLAVE, while others are occasionally used of slaves without SLAVE becoming part of their core meaning. The *birele* seems to be a slave in *Æthelberht*,⁹¹ but the word itself does not denote a slave; it is an occupational term: ‘cup-bearer’.⁹² The cognate verb, *byrelian*, means ‘to pour out, give to drink, serve’.⁹³ Pelteret himself admits that the masculine equivalent denotes ‘a cup-bearer or butler’,⁹⁴ and we can assume that the primary denotation of the feminine form here is occupational rather than legalistic. Along with such occupational terms, we can also exclude some other categories of terms, including items which refer to specific traits of some slaves (such as *fostorling* and *ham-byrde*), those which usually refer to human beings generally (*manna* and most of its cognates),⁹⁵ and those which similarly refer to non-socio-economic groups (*cniht*). Having excluded these, it becomes clear that the core set of items which denote SLAVE is much smaller:⁹⁶ *æht*, *ambiht-mæcg*, *esne*, *hæft-ancel*, *mennen*, *scealc*, *þegn*, *þeow(a)*, *þir*, *þræl*, *þyften*, *wealh*, and *wencel*, along

⁹⁰ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 261–62, 264, 266–74, 289–90, 293–94, 298–305, 308, 316–17, 319–23, 325, 327–28). While Pelteret gives ‘drunc-mennen’ as a separate headword (Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 269), it cannot reasonably be regarded as semantically separate from the theoretical phrase ‘drunc mennē’. Semantically, the first element functions in parallel to the adjectives ‘wonfeax’ and ‘dol’ (Riddle 12.8–9, *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book*, ed. by Craig Williamson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), p. 74. All references to the riddles are to this edition, parenthetically in the body of the text. Where it is necessary to refer to other editions of the riddles, I give the reference in footnotes. I treat *mennen* separately from *man* and other derivatives thereof because it is semantically distinct (Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 300–01).

⁹¹ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 266.

⁹² Thomas Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), p. 114. Similarly, Pelteret includes the word *dæge* (‘baker, dairymaid’) in his glossary, but as he does not cite ‘slave’ as a meaning of this term, it is not included here (Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 268–69). Other entries which Pelteret includes but which he does not cite as denoting SLAVE are also omitted.

⁹³ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 138.

⁹⁴ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 266.

⁹⁵ Pelteret, *Slavery* pp. 298–325.

⁹⁶ The other terms cannot be excluded entirely from the terminology of slavery, as they do, on occasion, refer to slaves, but this is incidental to their true denotation.

with their various cognates. Thus, we can condense a core vocabulary denoting chattel slaves which comprises thirteen lexemes or small groups of lexemes from Pelteret's glossary of 160 items.

Although the high levels of phonological and orthographical variation exhibited by some of these terms makes it difficult to give a definitive number of occurrences, some are much more frequently attested than others.⁹⁷ *Scealc*, which is extremely regular, occurs thirty-eight times in total, fewer than any of the lexemes which form the basis of the present study.⁹⁸ At one extreme, *þir* appears only twice, as does *ambiht-mæcg*.⁹⁹ *Hæft-incel* appears only once.¹⁰⁰ *Æht* is reasonably common: its headword form occurs sixty-two times, and searches for the declined forms find more attestations. However, as *æht* denotes property in general, the majority of these appearances do not refer to human chattels; thus it is much less significant as a slave word than these numbers suggest.¹⁰¹ At the other end of the scale, the form 'þeow' returns 248 instances in the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, and 'ðeow' returns eighty-six.¹⁰² Wider searches for the strictly regular forms of the masculine West Saxon strong paradigm of *þeow* reveal 1,188 forms in the extant corpus.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ See 2.5 for a discussion of the different forms of *þeow*, which shows a particularly marked degree of variation.

⁹⁸ *DOE Corpus*, using a 'fragmentary' search for 'scealc' [accessed 30th July 2014]. No other orthographic or phonological variants return any results.

⁹⁹ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 264.

¹⁰⁰ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 289. Many of the more 'marginal' terms such as *ham-byrde* are also only attested a handful of times (p. 290).

¹⁰¹ *DOE Corpus*, using a 'whole word' search for 'æht' [accessed 30th July 2014]; Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 261-62.

¹⁰² *DOE Corpus*, using a 'whole word' search for these forms [accessed 30th July 2014].

¹⁰³ *DOE Corpus*, using a 'whole word' search for 'þeow', 'þeowes', 'þeowe', 'þeowas', 'þeowa', 'þeowum', 'ðeow', 'ðeowes', 'ðeowe', 'ðeowas', 'ðeowa', and 'ðeowum' [accessed 30th July 2014]. This does not even begin to take into account non-standard spellings, the weak form of the noun, non-West Saxon forms, or the female forms. The need for further exploration of *þeow* is an important consequence of the present study, but we must also ask ourselves, given the wide range of spellings and its near-homophony with other terms, 'to what degree continued systematic searching is justified, or whether we have reached the point at which further research is likely to be inordinately time-consuming, and fruitful only through luck' (Elizabeth Knowles, *How to Read a Word* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 81). Careful planning would be needed to avoid such fruitlessness. By itself, *þeow* alone would form the basis for a companion-study to this present work.

The semantic field supports both major and minor terms, in addition to a number of lexemes which refer to slaves without necessarily denoting them. The three lexemes on which this study focuses are mid-level terms in a purely numerical sense, neither the most nor the least common items in this field. Qualitatively, they share features in common with one another and with *þeow*, the numerically dominant lexeme, but also show distinctive areas of divergence:¹⁰⁴

Table 1: A Comparison of Slave Words in Old English: *þeow*, *Wealh*, *þræl*, *Esne*

	þeow	Wealh	þræl	Esne
Appears in placenames	-	+	+	+
Feminine form	+	+	-	-
Appears in poetry	+	+	-	+
Appears in Northumbrian gospels	+	-	+	+
Used in <i>servus Dei</i> and related metaphors	+	+	+	+
Appears in Wulfstan	+	-	+	+
Appears in Ælfric	+	+	+	-
Denotes SLAVE in Proto-Germanic	+	-	-	-

¹⁰⁴ This chart is based on the material discussed elsewhere in this study. In the case of *þeow*, additional material is drawn from Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 269-70, 301-02, 305-15, 318-19, 323, 329 and a ‘begins with’ search of the *DOE* Corpus for ‘þeow’ and ‘ðeow’ [accessed 30th July 2014].

	þeow	Wealh	þræl	Esne
Other socio-economic denotation in Proto-Germanic	-	-	-	+
Attested with related sense in other Germanic languages	+	-	+	+
Appears in laws	+	+	+	+
Appears in riddles	+	+	-	+
Appears in West Saxon (excluding Wulfstanian texts)	+	+	-	+
Appears in Middle English Dictionary	+	+	+	-
Appears in PDE	-	+	+	-

On the one hand, *esne* shares its West Saxon and poetic role with *wealh*; on the other, its predominance in the Anglian dialects leads to similarities with *þræl*. The texts and circumstances in which all three case-study terms appear point to the flexibility of this semantic field and to the continuing integration of new terminology into the lexicon. Dialect plays a key role in the shaping and reshaping of this vocabulary, and the usage of these terms is very rarely discrete. Consideration of these three words thus covers the full range of diverse contexts in which Old English slave words occur and the full range of semantic changes which these words undergo, including the development of the semantic field after the end of the Old English period. *Esne* in particular undermines the perceived dominance of *þeow*, but both *wealh* and *þræl* contextualise this revelation, as they, too, are used in ways which indicate the complexity of the situation. The rapid spread of *þræl* is a vital indicator of the ways in which dialect and linguistic change affected the semantic field

of slavery. Meanwhile, *wealh* was an extremely early loanword, entering the language in the Proto-Germanic period as an ethnonym. Its unique semantic development in Old English demonstrates the powerful role which semantic convergence played in creating the synonymy which is a striking feature of the vocabulary of slavery, and illustrates the connections between slavery and other facets of society.

2.3 A Comparative Perspective

It is useful, at this point, to place the complexity of the Old English semantic field of slavery within the context of the other attested Germanic languages, many of which have equally sophisticated sets of vocabulary to denote the same concepts. The lists of terms given below include those listed under ‘servant’ in the relevant lexicographical resources for Gothic, Old Saxon, Old Frisian, and Old High German. As we have seen, lexicographers have not always been consistent in their application of the terms ‘slave’ and ‘servant’, and the present brief overview cannot begin to untangle these inconsistencies. It is therefore important to look at both sets of terms. The material for Old Norse is mainly drawn from Mazo Karras’s *Slavery and Society in Medieval Scandinavia*, with some additions from other resources. Some terms such as the Old Norse *ofræls* may have had more complex legal connotations than simple slavery.¹⁰⁵ Conversely, *huskarl* is omitted from the list for Old Norse as Mazo Karras states that ‘a huskarl or retainer is usually but not always a free

¹⁰⁵ Mazo Karras, *Slavery*, p. 44. While Mazo Karras gives this form, the expected Old Icelandic form here is *ófræls*.

man'.¹⁰⁶ Thus, these lists may not be entirely comprehensive, but give some indication of the shape of the core vocabulary.¹⁰⁷

Table 2: Words for Slave and Servant in the Germanic Languages

Gothic	Old Norse	Old Saxon	Old Frisian	Old High German
and-bahts	ambátt	ambahtman		ambaht, ambahtari, ambahti, ambahtman
asneis				asnāri, asni
magus				
skalks			skalk	skalk
þius, þiu- magus, þiwi	þý	thiu(wa), thiuwi		diu, dio,
	thiænisto swen, thiænista qwinna	thionostman	thiānost, thiānostmann, thiānostliōde	dionōstman
	þjón		thiāner	dionāri
		thiorna		

¹⁰⁶ Mazo Karras, *Slavery*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Wright, *Grammar of the Gothic Language: and the Gospel of St Mark, Selections from the Other Gospels and Second Epistle of Timothy, with Notes and Glossary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910; repr. Richmond: Tiger of the Stripe, 2008), pp. 307-49; Ferdinand Holthausen, *Altsächsisches Elementarbuch*, Germanische Bibliothek, 1 / Sammlung germanischer Elementar- und Handbücher, Reihe 4, Wörterbücher, 7 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1934), pp. 244-75; *The Saxon Genesis: An Edition of the West Saxon Genesis B and the Old Saxon Vatican Genesis*, ed. by A. N. Doane (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 416-17; *Altfriesisches Wörterbuch*, ed. by Gerhard Köbler, 4th edn (2014) <<http://www.koeblergerhard.de/afrieswbhinw.html>> [accessed 4th August 2014]; *Neuenglisch-Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, ed. by Gerhard Köbler (2006) <<http://www.koeblergerhard.de/germanistischeswoerterbuecher/althochdeutscheswoerterbuch/neuenglisch-ahd.pdf>> [accessed 4th August 2014]; Mazo Karras, *Slavery*, pp. 41-45; Brink, *Lord and Lady*, p. 15; Richard Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1874), p. 740.

Gothic	Old Norse	Old Saxon	Old Frisian	Old High German
		thegan		trūtdegan
			blata	
			hinde	
			husnât	
			knapa	
			kniucht	framknecht, heimknecht, knecht
	mannsmaðr, man		mann	man
			zerl (kerl)	
			heine	
			hiōna	
				geltara
				beinseggo
				bigengari
				butil
	þræll			dregil
				giswāso
				hagulstaldus
				lid
				mitigengo
				rink
				skullo

Gothic	Old Norse	Old Saxon	Old Frisian	Old High German
	ofræls			
	ánauðigr			
	sveinn			
	hýi			

Unsurprisingly, these languages share some common terms, both between themselves and with Old English:¹⁰⁸ cognates of *ambiht-* occur in four of five; cognates of *esne* in two; of *þeow* (including terms derived from verbs related to *þeowian*, Old Norse *þjóna*) in all five; cognates of *þegn* in two;¹⁰⁹ cognates of *cnibt* in two; cognates of *magu* in two; cognates of *mann* in two; cognates of *scealc* in three; and cognates of *þræl* in two. Grouping the West Germanic languages (the final three columns in the table above) together produces no remarkable correspondences between these languages which are not shared with Old Norse: both the West Germanic languages and Old Norse use *mann* in this sense. The terms which appear in the greatest number of languages are *þeow*, *ambiht-* and *scealc*, in their Old English forms. It is striking, therefore, that, of these, only *þeow* is a major term used to denote slaves in Old English. In the case of *ambiht*, only the compound *ambiht-mæcg* denotes SLAVE, while the simplex refers to various other forms of service, and *scealc* mainly survives as a poetical term.¹¹⁰ Consequently, numerical importance *across* the languages does not equate with importance *within* Old English. In other words, the historically significant terms which derive from the Proto-Germanic lexicon and which are shared between the Germanic languages do not necessarily retain their significance as the daughter languages develop.

¹⁰⁸ This table does not indicate whether a language has a cognate present in its overall lexicon, but only whether it has a cognate which denotes SLAVE or SERVANT. For instance, *Old Norse qnn* is cognate with *esne*, Gothic *asneis* but does not relate to servitude (Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 271).

¹⁰⁹ Old Norse preserves *þegn*, but, as in some Old English dialects, only for higher-status forms of service (Cleasby and Vigfusson, *Dictionary*, p. 732).

¹¹⁰ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 264, 302-03. The compounds of *ambiht-* appear regularly in the gospel translations, rendering a variety of Latin terms, but not *servus*. See Appendix 1.

This hints at structural flexibility within this semantic field and the role of semantic convergence in generating significant new slave words, both of which are prominent features of the Old English semantic field itself. While the specifics of the vocabulary of slavery are unique to Old English, the general pattern of supple changeability is a feature of this concept across the whole sub-family of languages. Thus, the importance of the notion and figure of the slave acts as a nexus or magnet for semantic development which encourages diversity in the daughter languages. Equally, while the cognates of *þeow* are important because they appear in many of the languages, this interlinguistic significance does not translate to intralinguistic significance. The reduced role of *þeow* in Old English demonstrated in this study therefore is part of wider patterns within the language family.

Various factors influence these areas of growth and decline, and accidents of textual survival may account for some of the anomalies. The surviving corpora of Old Saxon and Gothic are relatively small and the timeframes involved are vastly disparate: Gothic is mainly known from Wulfila's fourth-century translation of the Bible, while the 'oldest surviving connected Frisian texts date from the latter half of the thirteenth century'.¹¹¹ Some of the words which later come to denote slaves had not yet developed this meaning in Gothic, although they form part of the later shared Germanic lexicon. The late date of attested Old Frisian, after the decline of domestic slavery, makes the absence of otherwise shared terms for chattel slaves less surprising. This cannot, however, account for many of the changes, particularly the substantial number of items which are occur in no more than one of the later languages. Equally, the changed role of terms such as *ambiht-* in Old English shows semantic drift not only towards the critical nexus SLAVE, but also away from it. Of the three terms which form the basis of this study, *wealh* for SLAVE is an innovation which is unique to Old English. *Esne* has cognates in similar roles only in Gothic and Old High German.¹¹² *þræl* is shared only with Old High German and Old Norse; the latter is the immediate source of the Old English lexeme.

¹¹¹ Jay H. Jasanoff, 'Gothic', in *The Ancient Languages of Europe*, ed. by Roger D. Woodard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 189-214, (p. 189); Orrin W. Robinson, *Old English and Its Closest Relatives: A Survey of the Earliest Germanic Languages* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 181.

¹¹² However, see 4.2 for a critique of Wright's definition of *asneis*.

The Latin vocabulary for chattel slaves is comparatively limited. Excluding situational terms ('adversitor': 'one who goes to meet another; a slave who went to meet his master, in order to conduct him home') and occupational terms ('alipilus': 'a slave who plucked the hair from the armpits of the bathers'; or 'cosmetes': 'an adorer, slave of the wardrobe'), a search for 'slave' on the English to Latin feature of *Numen: The Latin Lexicon*, which includes both Lewis's *An Elementary Latin Dictionary* and Lewis and Short's *A Latin Dictionary* returns the following items: *ancillula, conserva, conservula, conservus, familia, famula, mediastinus, perenniservus, puerulus, serva, serviculus, servolus, servulus, servus, statuliber, verna, vernula*.¹¹³ While this list is comprised of a substantial number of items, there are only six roots used: *ancill-*, *serv-*, *famul-*, *mediastin-*, *puer-*, and *vern-*. The absences are even more notable. Terms such as *ancilla* and *famulus* can only be found by a search under 'servant'. This is a striking example of the problematic treatment of slave words by a modern lexicographer, and shows methodological issues in common with the *Thesaurus of Old English* and its antecedents. The search for 'servant' returns a wider selection of items, but it is difficult to distinguish between words which genuinely denote only servants, and those which apply more correctly to slaves. The items returned by this search are as follows: *ministra, ancilla, ancula, anculus, apparitor, cacula, cacus, calator, calo, confamulus, diaconus, famulus, galearii, hierodulus, latro, ministra, ministrix, obsecundator, paritor, pedisequus, praeminister, servitor, servola, servula, silentarius, atriensis*.¹¹⁴ While this list is more substantial than that returned by a search for 'slave', a significant proportion of the terms are still accounted for by a small number of roots. The comparative dynamism of the vocabulary of slavery in the Germanic languages suggests that, in its own way, slavery was no less important here than in Classical Antiquity, both as social reality and as a metaphor through which a variety of relationships might be understood.

2.4 Slave Words in Four Gospel Translations

¹¹³ *Numen: The Latin Lexicon*, ed. by Keith Alexander Woodell <<http://latinlexicon.org>> [accessed 21st September 2014]. This list excludes the personal names which the search for 'slave' also returns.

¹¹⁴ As with the list of terms for 'slave', this is an edited version of the results of the search, omitting obvious occupational and situational terms, as well as personal names (Woodell, *Numen* <<http://latinlexicon.org>> [accessed 23rd May 2014]).

The four versions of the gospels collected in Skeat's editions give us an unparalleled opportunity to study the semantic field of slavery in the various Old English dialects in a controlled sample.¹¹⁵ The versions drawn from Oxford, Bodley, Hatton 38 and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 140 are closely related West Saxon texts, belonging to a single textual family.¹¹⁶ Hatton 38 is a late manuscript, dating from twelfth or thirteenth century, while CCCC 140 is slightly earlier.¹¹⁷ The Rushworth gloss is composed of two parts: R₁, Farman's Mercian gloss; and R₂, Owun's Northumbrian gloss. Aldred's gloss on the Lindisfarne Gospels is in the Northumbrian dialect and is arranged by Skeat, as in the original, in an interlinear fashion in relation to the Vulgate Latin of the Lindisfarne Gospels.¹¹⁸ This is by far the most substantial sample of material which we have in multiple dialects, allowing the comparison of like for like. Joseph F. Tusso used these gospels to compare a variety of lexemes in Lindisfarne, R₁, and CCCC 140.¹¹⁹ However, his purely numerical

¹¹⁵ These editions are *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew in Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian, and Old Mercian Versions, Synoptically Arranged with Collations Exhibiting All the Readings of All the MSS*, ed. by Walter William Skeat, new edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1887); *The Gospel According to Saint Mark in Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian, and Old Mercian Versions, Synoptically Arranged with Collations Exhibiting All the Readings of All the MSS*, ed. by Walter William Skeat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1871); *The Gospel According to Saint Luke in Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian, and Old Mercian Versions, Synoptically Arranged with Collations Exhibiting All the Readings of All the MSS*, ed. by Walter William Skeat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1874); and *The Gospel According to Saint John in Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian, and Old Mercian Versions, Synoptically Arranged with Collations Exhibiting All the Readings of All the MSS*, ed. by Walter William Skeat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1878). All subsequent references are given by chapter and verse and page number, parenthetically in the body of the text. Where it is necessary for clarification, this is supplemented by a short version of the manuscript name: CCCC 140, Hatton 38, Lindisfarne, and Rushworth.

¹¹⁶ Joseph F. Tusso, 'An Analysis and Glossary of Dialectal Synonymy in the *Corpus, Lindisfarne, and Rushworth Gospels*', *Linguistics*, 43 (1968), 89-118 (p. 91).

¹¹⁷ Takako Kato, 'Oxford, Bodley, Hatton 38', in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Orietta Da Rold, Takako Kato, Mary Swan and Elaine Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.Ox.Hatt.38.htm>> [accessed 4th August 2014]; Elaine Treharne, 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 140', in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.CCCC.140.htm>> [accessed 28th May 2014].

¹¹⁸ Michelle P. Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe* (London: British Library, 2003), p. 4. For further discussion of the dating and authorship of the Mercian and Northumbrian versions, see below, 4.8.

¹¹⁹ Tusso, 'Dialectal Synonymy', 91.

analysis is methodologically flawed, and is not used here. Tusó omits Owun's gloss entirely, due to its similarity to Aldred's. While it is largely true that the two texts are very similar, both the similarities and the subtle differences are informative for a more focussed study such as this. Tusó's definition of a 'primary term' is one which renders a Latin *lemma* at least 65% of the time in one text, but which does not render this same *lemma* 65% of the time in at least one of the other two texts.¹²⁰ This is ultimately confusing and hides the appearance and significance of certain terms. As *þræl* never attains Tusó's 65% threshold, it never appears in his glossary, despite its significance.¹²¹ This creates an impression that the semantic field of slavery in the Lindisfarne glosses was more similar to the Mercian of R₁ than was the case. The full range of terms used by each glossator deserves study in order to give a clearer and more accurate idea of the state of the vocabulary and the relationships between the dialects.¹²²

The inclusion of substantial amounts of Anglian material in these glosses permits a glimpse of dialects which show distinctly different lexical preferences from those of West Saxon. Bibire claims that 'even in late tenth-century Northumbrian, almost as far removed as possible from the cultural centres of Wessex and in the heart of the Danelaw, the core vocabulary of English was entirely native and contained almost no Norse words'.¹²³ This study shows that this was not true of the culturally significant vocabulary of slavery, and, moreover, that in this area at least, the concept of a 'core vocabulary' is fundamentally flawed. The Latin text of the gospels, in the version used in the Lindisfarne Gospels, is crucial to our understanding of how these words

¹²⁰ Tusó, 'Dialectal Synonymy', 92.

¹²¹ Tusó, 'Dialectal Synonymy', 92, 99, 111.

¹²² Furthermore, the format of Tusó's entries is confusing and leads to a great deal of unnecessary repetition. For instance, the entry for *esne* reads '*esne*, Merc. (*servus*, 29.29 = 100%) W-S *þeow*, North. *esne* (33:79)/*ðegn* (24:79)' (Tusó, 'Dialectal Synonymy', 99), and a form of the same information is repeated for each 'primary term' glossing *servus* in each dialect.

¹²³ Paul Bibire, 'North Sea Language Contacts in the Early Middle Ages: English and Norse', in *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages: Studies in the Cultural History of North-Western Europe*, ed. by Thomas R. Liska and Lorna E. M. Walker (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), pp. 88-107 (p. 105). Bibire argues that the dialects of Aldred and Owun contain no definite loanwords from Old Norse, despite the presence of *þræl* and *þir* (Bibire, 'Language Contacts', p. 105). His conclusions are thus suspect.

work in context, particularly in the case of items with multiple meanings such as *þegn*.¹²⁴ To some extent, Skeat's editions have been superseded by Liuzza's *The Old English Version of the Gospels*, containing the West Saxon text, on the one hand, and Kenichi Tamoto's '*The Macregol Gospels*' or '*The Rushworth Gospels*' on the other.¹²⁵ However, no other edition has brought the various dialectal versions of the text together in one place. Skeat's editions are thus still the most powerful resource for effecting this kind of inter-dialectal comparison. In addition to their usefulness as substantial bodies of text, these gospel translations are particularly important because of the repeated appearance of slaves in the gospels in both metaphorical and literal contexts, and the way in which the gospels informed ideas of slavery throughout the Old English canon.

2.5 Slave Words in Four Gospel Translations: Collecting and Interpreting the Data

- i. Personal names are capitalised and given in an appropriate standardised form: Rushworth, John 19.39 'nichodemus' > *Nicodemus* (p. 173).
- ii. Participles are given in the nominative masculine singular form: Lindisfarne, John 21.12 'ræstendra' > *restende* (p. 183).
- iii. Pronouns and definite articles are given in the nominative masculine singular form: CCCC 140, Luke 7.10 'þone' > *se* (p. 74).
- iv. Phrases which must be given in their entirety to preserve their meaning are given in a normalised form: Hatton 38, John 21.12 'þare þe þær sæt' > 'þara þe þær sæt' (p. 182).
- v. Each lexeme is given as an appropriate headword form, derived from Bosworth and Toller's *Dictionary*. The headword form given does not necessarily reflect the most common spelling in these texts. *Ambihtmann* is usually spelt with <e> as in 'embehtmenn' (Lindisfarne, Luke 1.2, p. 15) and 'embiht-monnum' (Rushworth, John 2.5, p. 23). For the sake of consistency and clarity, the headword forms derived from the *Dictionary* are used both in the tables and in the

¹²⁴ For this reason, the Latin *lemmata* are included in the final columns of the table in Appendix 1.

¹²⁵ *The Old English Version of the Gospels*, ed. by R. M. Liuzza, EETS, o. s., 304, 314, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994-2000); '*The Macregol Gospels*' or '*The Rushworth Gospels*': *Edition of the Latin Text with the Old English Interlinear Gloss Transcribed from Oxford Bodleian Library, MS Auctarium D. 2 19*, ed. by Kenichi Tamoto (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2013).

accompanying analysis. This obscures dialectal variation in orthography and phonology, but, as the focus of this study is lexical, this is a secondary concern. The use of headwords facilitates the comparison of lexical items between the dialects. When extended quotations from the text of the gospels are used in the analysis, the original spellings are preserved.

- vi. No headword form occurs for the glosses on *herodianus* and the attested forms show a significant degree of variation: ‘herodianum’ (CCCC 140 and Hatton 38, Mark 12.13, p. 94), ‘herodianuscum’ (CCCC 140, Matthew 22.16, p. 178), ‘herodianissen’ (Hatton 38, Matthew 22.16, p. 178) and other related forms in *-sc*. There are subtle differences between these forms, but they are not semantically significant, nor are they significant for the purposes of this study. These forms are thus all given under the broad headword *herodianisc*. Aldred has ‘heroðes ðegnum’ in Matthew 22.16, and the Rushworth gloss is similar (p. 179). An appropriate genitive form is given in these cases.
- vii. Skeat’s editions of the West Saxon gospels use forms both with and without a hyphen for *leornungcniht*: ‘leorning-cnihtum’ (CCCC 140, Mark 13.14, p. 112) and ‘leorningcnihtum’ (CCCC 140, Matthew 28.7, p. 242). Given the length of this compound and the narrow columns in which the text is arranged, *leornungcniht* often falls over a line-end, and it is not possible to tell whether the hyphen is a function of the arrangement or the original orthography.¹²⁶ In the collation of the raw data, I treated such instances as unhyphenated compounds, as the hyphen has no lexical function and it is not possible to reconstruct the intended form. In the edited data here, both forms are given as *leornungcniht*.
- viii. The annotation ‘N/A’ refers to items of data which are not present in the text. This can be due to missing items, verses or leaves, or additional material inserted in one version which is not present in the others, such as the Lindisfarne *capitula lectionum*.
- ix. The annotation ‘OMITTED’ refers to items which are present in the text, but which occur in a corrupt form which makes it impossible to discern which lexeme they represent. Such omissions are rare and are discussed where relevant.

¹²⁶ For instance, this occurs in Matthew 10.13 (CCCC 140, p. 78).

- x. In the case of double glosses (where the glossator gives two alternative items), the individual items are given in separate rows in Appendix 1. For each instance, it is noted under the chapter and verse that this is a double gloss. For the other texts which do not use a double gloss, the annotation ‘N/A’ is entered for this item. ‘N/A’ is also given in the column for the Latin text of the Lindisfarne Gospels to avoid the appearance that there is an additional Latin *lemma* here.
- xi. *Ʒeow* and *Ʒeowa* are here treated as a single *lemma*. While Clark Hall and the *Thesaurus of Old English* treat these two forms as separate,¹²⁷ Pelteret and Bosworth and Toller treat them as variant forms of a single item.¹²⁸ The Lindisfarne and Rushworth glosses only use the strong form. The West Saxon gospels, however, use both weak and strong forms interchangeably, as in CCC 140, Matthew 18.26 (‘se Ʒeow’) and 18.28 (‘se Ʒeowa’), where both instances refer to the same individual (p. 150). Both these manuscripts show weakening and variation in the vowels of unstressed endings, such as <e> for <a> (Hatton 38, Matthew 26.19), and *-an*, *-on* or *-en* for *-um* (Hatton 38, Matthew 26.20), which obscure the differences between the two paradigms (p. 214). Matthew 26.51 in Hatton 38 has ‘Ʒeowa’ for ‘seruum’ (p. 220), which is irregular for either paradigm, but more likely to represent the loss of the final nasal from the weak form ‘Ʒeowan’. Although amenable to emendation, this instance demonstrates the fluidity of the inflectional endings in these texts. On these grounds and the grounds that there is no semantic difference between *Ʒeow* and *Ʒeowa*, the two forms are treated as a single lexical item.
- xii. Luke 19.22 in Rushworth has the form ‘leasne’. Comparison with Lindisfarne, which here reads ‘la esne’ (p. 185), shows that this is the product of the elision of *esne* with the previous word. It has thus been emended to *esne* here.

¹²⁷ *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, ed. by John Richard Clark Hall, 4th edn, rev. by Herbert D. Meritt, Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching, 14 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960; repr. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 359; Roberts, Kay and Grundy, *Thesaurus of Old English*, s. v. ‘slave’ [accessed 28th June 2014].

¹²⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 305; Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, pp. 1053-54.

xiii. Forms with <æ> for /e/ (usually spelt with <e>) in either the stem or the inflectional endings are common in Rushworth, especially Farman's gloss,¹²⁹ and occur occasionally in Lindisfarne. These are particularly noticeable in *esne* and *þegn* where they affect the appearance of the stem in forms such as 'ðægnum' (Rushworth, Matthew 14.2, p. 119) and 'æsnun' (Rushworth, Matthew 22.8, p. 177), as well as affecting the *efen-* element ('æfn-ðeuw': Rushworth, Matthew 18.33, p. 151). They also affect the endings, giving, for instance, 'þeowæ' (Rushworth, Matthew 26.69, p. 227). This has been attributed to hypercorrection towards a West Saxon model, including <æ> for West Germanic /e/, as in the *efen-* element and *þegn*, and for the i-mutation of West Germanic /a/, as in *esne*, along with similar treatment of the vowels in inflectional endings and other variants.¹³⁰ The occasional appearance of <æ> forms in Lindisfarne and R₂, as in 'esnæs' (Lindisfarne, John 18.18, p. 159) and 'æsnemonn' (Rushworth, John 10.13, p. 99), is a much rarer phenomenon, but suggests that this process of hypercorrection was also a feature of other Anglian dialects. It does not affect the semantics of these texts, but does, on occasion, make it more difficult to ascertain to which *lemma* a form belongs.

xiv. *þea* is the standard Northumbrian form of *þeow*. The West Saxon form has /e/ broken to /eo/ before /w/.¹³¹ This occurs phonologically in the nominative and accusative singular. Subsequently, the unbroken /ew/ develops to /eow/ by analogy throughout the rest of the paradigm.¹³² There is a strong tendency to unround the second element of diphthongs in the dialect of the Lindisfarne Gospels, and thus /eo/ appears as /ea/, except where /w/ follows.¹³³ In this case, this gives the nominative and accusative singular *þea*, as /w/ had disappeared in the final position in these cases. In West Saxon, /w/ was sometimes restored by analogy with the

¹²⁹ Jeremy J. Smith, 'A Philologist's View', in *Speaking in our Tongues: Medieval Dialectology and Related Disciplines*, ed. by Margaret Laing and Keith Williamson (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Brewer, 1994), pp. 99-105 (p. 103).

¹³⁰ Smith, 'Philologist's View', 104-05; Sherman M. Kuhn, 'E and Æ in Farman's Mercian Glosses', *PMLA*, 60 (1945), 631-69.

¹³¹ Alistair Campbell, *Old English Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), § 146.

¹³² Campbell, *Grammar*, § 584.

¹³³ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 278.b.

inflected forms (hence *þeow*), but this does not always occur, giving forms such as ‘þeo’.¹³⁴ Forms such as the dative singular ‘ðeua’ occur in Lindisfarne, which Campbell attributes to the approximation of /eo/ to /w/, giving /euw/, written <ew>, <eu>.¹³⁵ This shows the ‘original’ diphthong rather than one spread by analogy. In R₁, Farman shows a preference for forms with <euw> for this sequence, alongside a single use of the ‘standard’ <eow> (Matthew, 8.9, p. 69).¹³⁶ This shows a lack of Northumbrian unrounding in this dialect, whether phonologically or by analogy, but also the approximation of /eo/ to /eu/, along with orthographic preferences which are distinct from those of Aldred. Forms such as the genitive plural ‘ðeana’, containing the digraph <ea> are formed by analogy with ‘ðea’ in Northumbrian.¹³⁷

xv. There is considerable variation in the forms of the feminine *þeowe*. ‘Þiwa’/‘þiua’ is the most common form in Lindisfarne (Mark 14.69, p. 123; Matthew 26.71, p. 227), but forms with a digraph such as ‘ðiowum’ also occur (Mark 14.66, p. 121). In the nominative and accusative singular of the masculine forms, /w/ became final, causing the breaking of /e/ > /eo/.¹³⁸ In the feminine forms, /w/ does not become final. Thus, the feminine form initially retains its original vowel in the root, /e/, in the form *þewi. The /e/ is i-mutated > *þiwi and the final vowel is reduced to /e/ > *þiwe. The /i/ is broken to /io/ before /w/.¹³⁹ The second element here is approximated to the /w/, giving the sequence /iuw/, often written as <iw>, <iu>.¹⁴⁰ The use of <a> for <e> in the final syllable occurs as the unaccented back vowels fall together in these texts, a process also visible in masculine forms, such as the dative singular ‘ðeua’.¹⁴¹ Campbell argues that the <eo> in the standard *þeowe* must be explained in the following way: ‘þeowu, female

¹³⁴ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 584.

¹³⁵ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 279.

¹³⁶ This sequence appears in Farman’s version of Matthew 18.29, 18.31, 18.33, 24.49 (pp. 151, 201).

¹³⁷ Campbell *Grammar*, § 584.b; Lindisfarne, Matthew 25.19 (p. 205).

¹³⁸ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 120.3b.

¹³⁹ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 148.

¹⁴⁰ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 279.

¹⁴¹ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 379, n. 3.

servant, is a grammatical fiction to explain the *eo* of the existing weak fem. *þeowe*, *-an*, and *þeowen* besides *ðiuwen*; the short diphthong is metrically well established in *þeowe* (Gen. 2747, &c.), but *þeowen* may have *ēo* from *þēow*.¹⁴² To complicate this picture, *þeowe* in the Northumbrian texts is not declined weakly, as we might expect, but strongly, apart from the /e/ of the nominative singular. However, the vowel /i/ in the root, as described above, must derive from an ending in *-i/* causing i-mutation. The form ‘ðiu’ in Matthew 26.71 in Lindisfarne, given as a double gloss with the more conventional ‘ðiuu’ (p. 227), may be an attempt to reanalyse *þeowe* as analogous to feminine nouns such as *lar*.¹⁴³ CCCC 140 uses the alternative form *þeowen* (Matthew 26.69, p. 226). All of these potential unusual spellings compound the difficulty attached to using search terms to unearth this data.

xvi. Due to the number of terms involved, each with its own phonological and orthographic variants, and their appearance in four parallel but subtly different texts, it was not possible to use searches of the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus to collate this material. Instead, it was compiled directly from Skeat’s editions through a meticulous search of both the Latin text of Lindisfarne and the four Old English versions for any slave words. Thus, it was possible to find anomalous forms such as ‘leasne’ which an automated search would omit. This material is tabulated in Appendix 1.

xvii. Compounds of the type *efenesne*, rendering a Latin compound such as *conservus*, are treated alongside the simplex forms for the purpose of the numerical analysis. For instance, the presence of *efenesne* adds one token to the tally for *esne*.

2.6 Analysis of the Gospels

2.6.1 *Servus*

Lindisfarne

¹⁴² Campbell, *Grammar*, § 593, n. 2.

¹⁴³ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 585.

Aldred's gloss to the Lindisfarne Gospels contains 108 items glossing *servus* and its compounds, here shown by gospel and by headword:¹⁴⁴

Table 3: Old English Words Glossing *Servus* in Aldred's Gloss on the Lindisfarne Gospels

	Ʒeow(a)	Ʒræl	Esne	Ʒegn	Heafodling	Total (per section)
Praefatio	1	0	0	0	0	1
Matthew	11	3	5	27	1	47
Mark	1	4	3	0	0	8
Luke	0	8	26	3	0	37
John	1	5	8	1	0	15
Total (per lexical item)	14	20	42	31	1	108

An initial glance suggests that *esne* and *Ʒegn* are the dominant items in Aldred's glosses on *servus*, comprising 38.89% and 28.70% respectively.¹⁴⁵ However, this data is dramatically skewed by the predominance of *Ʒegn* in Matthew (57.45% of the items), a predominance which is not sustained elsewhere. Of the four uses of this word in the other gospels, two occur in the *capitula lectionum*. While these headings are treated alongside the gospels to which they refer for the sake of convenience, this divergence suggests that they have more in common, lexically speaking, with Matthew alone. Similarly, *Ʒeow*, comprising 23.40% of the glosses on *servus* in Matthew, is significantly overrepresented here in comparison to the other gospels, where it only occurs in the *capitula lectionum*.¹⁴⁶ If we average the remaining gospels, *Ʒeow* accounts for 3.33% of glosses on *servus* while *Ʒegn* accounts for 6.67%. We cannot, of course, discount Aldred's use of these two

¹⁴⁴ The *capitula lectionum* for each gospel are given under that gospel.

¹⁴⁵ These percentages are calculated from the raw data contained in the table above.

¹⁴⁶ It is used in the *capitula lectionum* Mark (43) and John (23). See Appendix 1.

terms in the overall structure of his terminology. They were clearly items which he recognised as belonging to this semantic field. Nevertheless, there was a distinct shift in his lexical preferences between Matthew and the other gospels, for reasons which are not clear. In Mark, Luke and John, the dominant items are *þræl* and *esne*, which constitute 28.33% and 61.67% of the attested items in the final three gospels respectively. Even taking all the gospels together, *esne*, at 38.89% of the corpus, is by far the most significant item. The single occurrence of *heafodling*, glossing *conservus* in Matthew 24.49, does not follow the conventional pattern, otherwise established across all four gospels, of using compounds of the various Old English slave words to render compounds of *servus*. In Matthew 11.16, the only other attested appearance of *heafodling*,¹⁴⁷ Aldred uses it to gloss *coaequalis* (p. 93). Therefore, while worth noting, the appearance of *heafodling* does not significantly impact our understanding of the semantic field of slavery. It is marked for the equality of status between the *conservi* rather than for their servility.

Overall, Aldred's lexical choices suggest that his set of lexemes denoting SLAVE was broad and his preferences shifting. Each gospel has two items which are predominant, along with one or more lesser items. Apart from Matthew, these patterns reflect dialectal preferences which are distinct from the general West Saxon bias of the attested corpus of Old English as a whole. The appearance of *þegn*, particularly its wide usage in Matthew, demonstrates that it had not yet fallen out of use in the sense SLAVE in this dialect. The difference between the first gospel and the other three may indicate that the significance of *þeow* in Matthew represents correction towards the West Saxon norm, a tendency which Aldred later discarded, while the use of *þegn* represents a more archaic form of Northumbrian than Aldred's own idiolect. Taken together, these distinctive preferences in Matthew suggest a less confident and more self-conscious set of lexical choices which tends towards the use of 'safe' items. This permitted a narrower range of lexical choices, tending to exclude the new loan *þræl* and diminish the role of *esne*, which had become ambiguous in West Saxon, thus making *þeow* a much more significant term. A wider investigation of the full range of Aldred's lexical choices in Matthew, an investigation beyond the scope of this present

¹⁴⁷ I found no further instances when using a 'begins with' search for 'heafodling' and 'heafudling' in the *DOE* Corpus [accessed 12th January 2014].

study, would be necessary to confirm whether this trend is borne out across his entire vocabulary. The preference for *esne* and *þræl* in the subsequent gospels marks a turn towards vocabulary which is emphatically non-West Saxon. *þræl* did not spread beyond the northern dialects before the advent of Middle English, and is thus a distinctively Northumbrian feature at this time.¹⁴⁸ *Esne* is well attested in West Saxon sources, and is particularly prominent in the early laws, where it is the most significant term used to denote chattel slaves. It remains a major term into the Alfredian period, but subsequently declines. Its dominance in the Lindisfarne Gospels marks this text as lexically distinct from the late West Saxon dialect. *þeow*, a striking feature of the latter dialect, is almost absent here, indicating that it either had not retained or had not attained the place which it occupied in Late West Saxon.¹⁴⁹ This in turn indicates that it is inaccurate to speak of a single dominant term throughout Old English. The Northumbrian of the Lindisfarne Gospels shows a complex and diverse set of vocabulary used to denote the figure of the chattel slave, rather than a single dominant term.

Rushworth

The Old English gloss to the Rushworth Gospels must be treated as two separate texts: the sections glossed by Farman in Mercian (R₁) and those glossed by Owun in Northumbrian (R₂). The only portions of Farman's gloss which contain *servus* and its compounds lie within the gospel of Saint Matthew.¹⁵⁰

Table 4: Old English Words Glossing *servus* in Farman's Gloss on the Rushworth Gospels

¹⁴⁸ See Chapter 5.

¹⁴⁹ I argue that *þeow* had not become as important in the development of Northumbrian as it had in the development of West Saxon. See Chapter 4 for a fuller discussion of *esne* in West Saxon.

¹⁵⁰ Farman glosses the entirety of Matthew, Mark as far as 'hleonadun' in Mark 2.15, and John 18.1-3 (Alan S. C. Ross, 'The Use of Other Latin Manuscripts by the Glossators of the Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels', *Notes and Queries*, 28 (1981), 6-11 [p. 6]). Farman's glosses outside Matthew are thus limited; *servus* does not appear in any of this material.

	ƿeow(a)	Esne	ƿegn	Total (per section)
Matthew	5	30	1	36

There is some debate on whether, and to what extent, Farman used Aldred's gloss as a model. Ross sometimes argues that there is strong evidence of Aldredian influence, but elsewhere suggests that this influence is not apparent before Mark.¹⁵¹ It is clear, however, that whatever influence Aldred may have exerted did not extend to the semantic field of slavery. The systems evidenced in the two glosses are remarkably different. Perhaps the most obvious feature is the reduced number of items present in Farman's vocabulary: of the five items which Aldred uses, only three are present in Farman's text. This change makes *esne* far more prominent in Farman's rendering of Matthew than in Aldred's version of the same text, and, to a lesser extent, more prominent than in the Lindisfarne glosses as a whole. *Esne* accounts for 83.33% of Farman's terms denoting SLAVE, as compared to 10.64% of Aldred's Matthew and 38.89% of Aldred's overall usage. Both *beafodling* and *ƿræl* are absent here; the latter absence is more significant. The most plausible explanation is that *ƿræl* had not yet become part of the Mercian dialect, at least in its literary form. It is used exclusively in Northumbrian and Northumbrian-influenced texts during this period, and it is likely to have spread southward from a place of borrowing somewhere in the northern part of the Danelaw.¹⁵² The absence of *ƿræl* here is consequently telling but not uncharacteristic. In the light of the absence of *ƿegn* for SLAVE in the West Saxon gospels, it is clear that *ƿegn* had become equally inappropriate as a term for chattel slaves in Mercian. The evidence from Lindisfarne further suggests that this was a linguistic change which spread northwards and had influenced Northumbrian more recently. The sole occurrence of *ƿegn* for *servus* in Farman's translation is in the complex gloss 'getrewē esne & snotter ƿene' [faithful *esne* and wise *ƿegn*] for the Lindisfarne

¹⁵¹ Ross, 'Manuscripts', 11; Alan S. C. Ross, 'Rare words in Northumbrian', *Notes and Queries*, 29 (1982), 196-98 (p. 196); Alan S. C. Ross and Ann Squires, 'The Multiple, Altered and Alternative Glosses on the Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels and the Durham Ritual', *Notes and Queries*, 27 (1980), 489-95 (p. 494).

¹⁵² See Chapter 5.

Vulgate's 'fidelis seruus et prudens' and Aldred's 'geleaf-full ðegn & hoga' [faithful and wise *þegn*] (Matthew 24.45, p. 201).¹⁵³ Both the Latin and other Old English texts use the pattern ADJECTIVE NOUN & ADJECTIVE, whereas Rushworth supplements this with a second noun (ADJECTIVE NOUN & ADJECTIVE NOUN). This suggests that the use of *þegn* here may owe something to a desire for poetic variation. Taken together, this evidence suggests that Farman's gloss is in some ways the most conservative of all these texts. It lacks the innovations of both West Saxon (the ubiquity of *þeow* and the introduction of *wealh*)¹⁵⁴ and Northumbrian (the introduction of *þræl*), and only shares the decline of *þegn* for SLAVE. Its geographical position between the two *loci* of change shapes the Mercian semantic field of slavery into distinctive patterns.

Moreover, even when Aldred and Farman use the same lexemes, they frequently do not occur in the same places. There are some coincidences between the use of *esne* in the two texts, but, given the prominence of *esne* in both, these instances are not especially marked. Of the five uses of *esne* in Matthew in Lindisfarne, one occurs in the *capitula lectionum*, which are not present in Farman's text (Matthew [68], p. 21). Of the remaining four, two occur in double glosses (*þeow(a)/esne*, Matthew 10.24 and *þegn/esne*, Matthew 18.32) (pp. 87, 151). Here, Farman's text also uses *esne*, but does not reproduce the other element of the double gloss. In Matthew 26.51, both texts use only *esne* (p. 221). Matthew 18.33's *efenesne* in Lindisfarne is *efenþeow(a)* in Farman (p. 151), suggesting that, while the simplex form was Farman's preferred term, he did not use it in compounds of this type, and, in fact, may have used only *efenþeow(a)*.¹⁵⁵ This is confirmed by Farman's use of *þeow(a)* elsewhere: of five uses of this item, four (Matthew 18.29, 18.31, 18.33, and 24.49) occur in the compound *efenþeow(a)* and correspond to *efenþegn*, *efenesne*, and *beafodling* in Lindisfarne (pp. 151, 201). The only instance in which *þeow(a)* in Farman's gloss corresponds to

¹⁵³ All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated, and are given parenthetically in the body of the text. I have chosen not to translate *wealh*, *esne*, and *þræl* in these translations in order to avoid imposing preconceived meaning onto these passages. Instead, the context provides the meaning of these words.

¹⁵⁴ See Chapter 4 for evidence that this was not the common term for SLAVE in the earlier forms of the Old English dialects.

¹⁵⁵ In Farman's version of Matthew 18.28, I omit 'æfn-þara' from this analysis as unintelligible, but it may also represent *efenþeow(a)* (p. 151).

þeow(a) in Aldred's occurs in Matthew 8.9, where Farman gives the double gloss *esne/þeow(a)* for Lindisfarne's *þeow(a)* (p. 69). Where *þeow(a)* occurs elsewhere in Aldred's text as a single gloss, Farman simply replaces it with the single gloss *esne*. The appearance of a double gloss here indicates that Farman *could* use the simplex *þeow(a)* in this sense, but that it was not his preferred term. This suggests that *esne* was Farman's preferred term in the simplex but did not participate in the formative processes. Thus, for compounds, Farman resorted to his 'back-up' term, *þeow*. Elsewhere, Farman uses *esne* for Lindisfarne's *þræl*, *þeow(a)* and *þegn* without discriminating between them. Thus, there is no relationship between Farman's word choice in this field and Aldred's. Aldred's more complex range of options are encompassed by Farman's preference for a single term, *esne*. While this does not exclude the possibility that Farman used Aldred's gloss, it indicates that any use was tentative and did not determine Farman's lexical choices in this field.

There is a consensus that Owun used Aldred's gloss as a guide to some extent in the composition of his own text, although Tamoto notes that the Owun was not 'blindly obedient' to Aldred's choices.¹⁵⁶ The data supplied by an analysis of the slave words confirms a much closer and more causal relationship than that between Farman and Aldred, while nevertheless indicating points of divergence:

Table 5: Old English Words Glossing *Servus* in Owun's Gloss on the Rushworth Gospels

	þræl	Esne	þegn	Total (per section)
Mark	3	4	0	7
Luke	3	18	1	22
John	4	6	1	11
Total (per lexical item)	10	28	2	40

¹⁵⁶ Richard Coates, 'The Scriptorium of the Mercian Rushworth Gloss: A Bilingual Perspective', *Notes and Queries*, 44 (1997), 453-58 (p. 457); Tamoto, *Gospels*, p. cii; Ross, 'Manuscripts', 7.

Rushworth lacks two instances of *þeow(a)* which occur in Lindisfarne, both in the *capitula lectionum*, material which is not reproduced at all in Rushworth. ‘Missing’ data in Owun’s gloss, such as missing leaves and single glosses for Lindisfarne double glosses also gives a much smaller data set than in Lindisfarne, and thus any differences between the two versions are magnified. It is therefore important both to look at this data in terms of proportions rather than absolute numbers and to recognise that even this approach is flawed. The diagram below omits the data from Matthew in Lindisfarne and gives the occurrences of each item as a percentage of the whole vocabulary of slave words in the remaining gospels, compared to that in Owun’s gloss.

Table 6: A Comparison of Old English Words Glossing *Servus* in Lindisfarne and R₂

	þeow(a)	þræl	Esne	þegn
Lindisfarne (excluding Matthew and Praefatio)	3.33%	28.33%	61.67%	6.67%
Rushworth (O)	0.00%	25.00%	70.00%	5.00%

Approaching this data in terms of percentages reveals a close degree of correlation between the two texts, particularly when the problems of the differing corpora are taken into account. However, not every difference between the two texts can be explained as a problem of differing data sets. When compared to Aldred, Owun shows a preference for *esne* which is not as marked as Farman’s but still significant. Moreover, the relationship between Owun and Aldred’s verbal choices is not entirely straightforward. On several occasions, Owun replaces Aldred’s *þræl* with *esne*, and he never uses *þræl* where Aldred does not. However, while *esne* is clearly his preferred term and *þegn* appears only rarely, Owun uses *þegn* once to replace Aldred’s use of *esne*. This cannot be explained in terms of idiolectal preferences. Here, Christ washes the feet of the disciples, and thus the relationship can be read as retainer-lord as well as slave-master: ‘ne is mara ðegn drihtne his ne ec apostol mara ðæm seðe sendes hine’ [the *þegn* is not greater than his lord, nor is the apostle also greater than he

who sends him] (Rushworth, John 13.16, p. 127). However, the Latin vocabulary indicates the latter: ‘seruus’ and ‘domino’ (p. 127). Owun’s choice of *þegn* here therefore indicates that he is not merely following or modifying Aldred’s lexical choices but instead making his own choices to reinterpret the force of the passage.

Where Aldred gives double glosses, Owun usually reproduces them. The sole exception to this is in Luke 19.15, where Aldred’s alternatives are grammatical rather than lexical: dative ‘esnum’ and accusative ‘esnas’ for the Latin ‘seruos’ (p. 183). These alternatives do not affect the sense of the text or the vocabulary used for translation, but instead evince an interest in the technical and grammatical aspects of translation which is not apparent in Owun’s gloss. Owun’s gloss is therefore a close rendering of Aldred’s but not an exact one, due to the differing interests of the two glossators. Owun’s preference for *esne* over *þræl* implies that the spread of the latter over time was complicated, and that even small geographical differences might exclude this term from consideration. Owun’s more cautious usage implies that his more southerly version of Northumbrian had not yet fully assimilated this term. As Northumbrian is scantily attested and lacked a standardised version on a par with the West Saxon *koiné*, it is easier to discern sub-dialectal variation here. Owun’s usage of *þræl* therefore exists as a point on the continuum between Aldred and Farman, and attests to the initially slow progress southwards which *þræl* made before achieving widespread acceptance in Middle English. Owun’s language is not merely a replication of Aldred’s, but a version of Northumbrian marked by its own dialectal, geographic, and intellectual preferences.

West Saxon

The two West Saxon versions of the gospels which Skeat edits, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 140 and Oxford, Bodley, Hatton 38, are here treated together, due to their common source and the very close degree of resemblance between the two of them.

Table 7: Old English Words Glossing *Servus* in the CCCC 140 Version of the West Saxon Gospels

	þeow(a)	Wealh	Pronouns etc	Total (per section)
Matthew	33	1	0	34
Mark	5	0	0	5
Luke	28	0	1	29
John	11	0	0	11
Total (per lexical item)	77	1	1	79

Table 8: Old English Words Glossing *servus* in the Hatton 38 Version of the West Saxon Gospels

	þeow(a)	Wealh	Pronouns etc	Total (per section)
Matthew	32	1	0	33
Mark	5	0	0	5
Luke	28	0	1	29
John	11	0	0	11
Total (per lexical item)	76	1	1	78

The sole difference between these two manuscripts in terms of slave words occurs in Matthew 18.31, and is due to an error in the Hatton manuscript manuscript: CCCC 140 reads ‘efen-þeowas’, while Hatton 38 reads only ‘efen’ (p. 150). This might be amended to ‘efen-þeowas’, but such emendation is inappropriate for the purposes of this study as it presupposes knowledge of the glossator’s lexical preferences. Therefore, this item is omitted here for Hatton 38. *Wealh* is used once in Matthew 24.50 in both versions (p. 200), and both use a pronoun in place of a noun in Luke 7.10 (p. 74). These are the only instances in which *þeow* is not used for *servus* in the West

Saxon versions of the Gospels. Considering the late date of the Hatton 38 manuscript, this shows a considerable degree of fidelity to its source material, and thus the stability of the vocabulary of slavery in this linguistic variant. While the use of the pronoun is essentially stylistic, the use of *wealh* here is of particular interest as it is the single point of divergence in an otherwise homogenous text. *Wealh* is clearly not a major term here, but it is of interest as the only other term used to denote SLAVE by the original translator, and for its use entirely without ethnic connotations. The servile meaning of *þegn* has clearly been lost in this variant by this point, while *þræl* has not yet been adopted. The latter is in accordance with the substantial evidence that this term had not yet reached the more southerly dialects, and, in fact, only did so during the Middle English period. The use of *þeow* throughout the rest of the West Saxon gospels is extraordinarily consistent, suggesting a standardised vocabulary which, at least for these scribes, has subsumed the multiple options available in other variants of the language. Unlike in the other dialects represented by the gospel translations, here *þeow* is the unmarked, conventional term for a chattel slave. This distinguishes West Saxon from the other dialects of Old English. The notion that *þeow* is the norm, therefore, is a function of the predominance of West Saxon, rather than a feature of the language as a whole.

2.6.2 *Ancilla*

Ancilla occurs only a few times in the gospels, and therefore the glosses on this word form a very limited set of data. There are thirteen possible tokens in total: nine instances of *ancilla*, four of which have double glosses in one version of the text. No gloss has a piece of intelligible data for each of these tokens, due to either single glosses for double, or the presence of unintelligible items. Thus the number of items is always fewer than thirteen per translator. This renders the kind of numerical analysis which is used on the *servus* glosses above essentially meaningless. The data set is so small that a single instance, when calculated as a percentage, can dramatically skew the results. A small difference in the overall data set, such as that between ten items in Lindisfarne but eleven in Rushworth, creates striking differences in the relative significance of the various items. For instance, *þir* accounts for 10% of glosses on *ancilla* in Lindisfarne, but only 7.69% of those in

Rushworth, or, alternatively, 12.5% of these glosses in Owun's text alone. In absolute terms, *þir* occurs once in each text. These problems also exist with the data on *servus* but are exacerbated here by the small corpus of glosses on *ancilla*. Nevertheless, it is useful to include numerical data which can be analysed in more general terms.

Lindisfarne

Table 9: Old English Words Glossing *Ancilla* in Aldred's Gloss on the Lindisfarne Gospels

	þeowe	þinen	þir	Total (per section)
Matthew	3	0	0	3
Mark	2	0	0	2
Luke	2	1	0	3
John	0	1	1	2
Total (per lexical item)	7	2	1	10

Here, *þeowe* is clearly the dominant item, occurring seven times, while *þinen*, the next most common item, occurs only twice. Neither *þræl* nor *esne* has a feminine form in Old English, which explains their absence from this data.¹⁵⁷ Given that *þeow* is far less common than *þegn* in the masculine data from the Lindisfarne gloss, we might expect to find *þeowe* less common than *þinen*, but the reverse is, in fact, the case. Thus, the connection between lexical preferences for masculine and feminine slaves is very weak here. The factors which shaped the masculine vocabulary did not likewise shape the feminine. One potential explanation is that *esne* appears to have replaced *þeow* in early and non-West Saxon dialects of Old English. *Esne* could not likewise replace *þeowe*, due to the masculine connotations of the former, and thus *þeowe* remained the most common term here.

¹⁵⁷ See Chapter 4 for further discussion of *esne*'s masculine connotations.

þinen was thus less common by default due to the structure of the inherited Proto-Germanic semantic field in which *þeow* and its cognates were the dominant terms.

The presence of *þir*, an Old Norse loan, indicates Scandinavian influence on the feminine vocabulary, and may have acted as a feminine equivalent to *þræl*.¹⁵⁸ It occurs as a double gloss with *þinen* in the phrase ‘ðir † sio ðignen durehaldend † dureueard’, glossing Latin ‘ancilla ostiaria’ [female slave doorkeeper] (John 18.17, p. 159). Its appearance in a double gloss may indicate a more tentative status, its meaning reinforced by the more common *þinen*. Certainly, it never achieved the currency which *þræl* did: it only occurs here and in the corresponding Rushworth gloss, and did not become an established part of the Middle English lexicon, possibly due to homophony with *thir(e)*.¹⁵⁹

Two items have been omitted from this data: ‘ðiuæs’ for ‘ancillae’ (genitive singular) in Luke 1.48 (p. 23), and ‘ðiuwas’ for ‘ancillas’ (accusative plural) in Luke 12.45 (p. 135). The vowel in the former and diphthong in the latter are expected spellings for *þeowe* in Aldred’s gloss and not found in the masculine *þeow*, but the endings here are clearly those of a strong masculine noun, *-es* and *-as*. It is likely that the intended noun here is, in its West Saxon headword form, *þeowe*. Owun clearly understands that these items require feminine glosses, as his text uses ‘ðiowa’ and ‘ðiowe’ respectively here (pp. 23, 135). Aldred’s use of clearly feminine forms for *ancilla* elsewhere shows that he, too, understood this. We therefore cannot prove whether these forms are either feminine nouns which have acquired masculine endings or masculine nouns which have acquired the <i(u)w> of the feminine form. They are therefore omitted from the data presented here. This does not change the qualitative impression that Aldred’s preferred gloss on *ancilla* was *þeowe*, with both *þinen* and *þir* lagging far behind.

Rushworth

¹⁵⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 46.

¹⁵⁹ *Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952-2001), <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>> [accessed 27th May 2014], s.v. ‘thir(e)’. All references to this dictionary are given as ‘MED, s.v. ‘x’.

Table 10: Old English Words Glossing *Ancilla* in Farman's Gloss on the Rushworth Gospels

	Ʒeowe	Ʒinen	Ʒir	Mennen	OƷer	Total (per section)
Matthew	1	0	0	1	1	3

Table 11: Old English Words Glossing *Ancilla* in Owun's Gloss on the Rushworth Gospels

	Ʒeowe	Ʒinen	Ʒir	Total (per section)
Mark	2	0	0	2
Luke	4	0	0	4
John	0	1	1	2
Total (per lexical item)	6	1	1	8

The small data set here obfuscates the differences between Farman and Owun, the most significant of which is the former's use of *mennen* as a double gloss with *Ʒeowe* in Matthew 26.69 (p. 227). This term is not used by the other glossators, nor is *mann* used for a male slave. Owun's use of *Ʒir* follows Aldred's use, and its absence in R₁ is not surprising, given the parallel absence of *Ʒrel*. These are the only hints we have that Farman's vocabulary here for female slaves differs from that of Aldred and Owun. The use of *oƷer* at Matthew 26.71 ('Ʒa he Ʒa uteode beforan dure sesæh hine oƷer' [and when he went out in front of the gates, another saw him] [p. 227]) is due to a difference between the versions of the Vulgate used by the Lindisfarne and Rushworth gospels: here, the latter uses 'alia' in place of a noun.¹⁶⁰ Owun's choice of words to denote female slave words is identical to Aldred's, except for the omission of *Ʒinen* in the double gloss to Luke 22.56 (p. 215). This term might have been increasingly inappropriate in this dialect, prompting its omission, a set of circumstances which would in turn imply that Aldred's gloss was more conservative here.

¹⁶⁰ Tamoto, *Macregol*, p. 92.

However, the data set is too small to draw any certain conclusion from it. Moreover, as Owun did not always preserve Aldred's double glosses, this omission is not particularly significant. Owun did not use the masculine *þeow* at all, so his preference for the feminine form is particularly striking. Therefore, the Northumbrian dialects shared a preference for *þeowe* as a gloss on *ancilla*, while also using a variety of other terms. The prominence of a single term, *þeowe*, is in contrast with the masculine terminology, in which several terms coexist in more equal proportions.

West Saxon Gospels

Table 12: Old English Words Glossing *Ancilla* in the CCCC 140 Version of the West Saxon Gospels

	þeowen	þinen	Wīln	Total (per section)
Matthew	1	0	1	2
Mark	0	2	0	2
Luke	0	4	0	4
John	0	1	0	1
Total (per lexical item)	1	7	1	9

The items glossing *ancilla* in Hatton 38 are identical to those in CCCC 140, apart from the use of 'þeowa' for the genitive plural in Matthew 26.69 in Hatton 38 (p. 226). This use of 'þeowa' can be interpreted in various ways. It could be precisely what it appears to be, the genitive plural of *þeow*, but this would require the glossator to have ignored or altered the gender indicated in the Latin text. It could be a contraction of either 'þeowenena' (*þeowen* declined weakly or strongly) or 'þeowena' (*þeowe* declined weakly, or *þeowen* declined strongly). Alternatively, if *þeowe* was declined as a strong noun, as in the Northumbrian texts, the existing form, without emendation, could be the strong genitive plural. CCCC 140 uses the nominative 'an þeowyn' rather than the partitive

genitive which appears in Hatton 38 (p. 226). Only London, British Library Royal 1 A. XIV shares the reading 'þeowa' with Hatton 38.¹⁶¹ Royal 1 A. XIV may be the exemplar for Hatton 38, or the two manuscripts may share a common source.¹⁶² Hatton 38 is a late manuscript and shows considerable evidence of the weakening of the inflectional endings of nouns, further complicating matters.¹⁶³ It is therefore not possible to conclude whether the attested form 'þeowa' belongs to *þeow*, *þeowe*, or *þeowen*, and thus this item has been omitted from the data.

As mentioned above, CCCC 140 and Hatton 38 are otherwise identical in their choice of words used to gloss *ancilla*, unsurprising because of their common origin. Each contains a single instance of *wiln* alongside seven instances of *þinen*. It is worth noting that the masculine *wealþ* and feminine *wiln* occur in relative proximity, the former at Matthew 24.50 and the latter at Matthew 26.71 (pp. 200, 226), and neither term here carries any connotations beyond the denotation of chattel slavery. There is no hint here, for example, of foreign origins. These terms represent a brief divergence from the scribe's otherwise homogenous vocabulary. The scribe's preference here is for *þinen*, which glosses *ancilla* seven of nine times in CCCC 140 and thus seven of eight in Hatton 38. *þinen* at John 18.17 occurs in the compound *durupinen*, glossing *ancilla ostaria* (p. 158),¹⁶⁴ indicating that this term was formative in this dialect.

Considering both the use of *þeowe* in non-West Saxon texts and the preference of the West Saxon manuscripts for *þeow* in the masculine, we might expect *þeowe(n)* to be the dominant term here. Its scarcity indicates that the lack of symmetry between the masculine and feminine was influenced by complex factors. The ungendered nature of the Present-Day English vocabulary of slavery may have led modern scholars to presume that masculine and feminine terms are naturally mirrors of one another, when, in fact, this is not always the case in Old English texts. An overall

¹⁶¹ Liuzza, *Gospels*, p. 57.

¹⁶² Orietta Da Rold, 'London, British Library, Royal 1 A. xiv', in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Orietta Da Rold, Takako Kato, Mary Swan and Elaine Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.BL.Roya.1.A.xiv.htm>> [accessed 28th May 2014].

¹⁶³ See 2.5 on the weakening of endings demonstrated by the various forms of *þeow(a)*.

¹⁶⁴ *Durupinen* also occurs in John 18.16, glossing *ostaria* alone (p. 158). While this clearly refers to the same individual, *ancilla* is not used in John 18.16; therefore this material is not included in the data examined here.

view of the semantic field suggests that *þeowe* was numerically the most common term for female chattel slaves, as *þeow* was the most common term for males, but this does not always transfer into individual texts. Girsch argues that the sexualisation of female slaves led to a disjunction between the female and male terms in which *þeowen* and *mennen* ‘bore the taint of sexual suggestion’, while *þinen* was less marked.¹⁶⁵ This could potentially explain the state of affairs in the West Saxon gospels, but not the Anglian material. Moreover, as argued in this study, the association of ‘real’ slaves with the *servi Dei* does not seem to have perturbed Anglo-Saxon audiences, but was, indeed, critical to the understanding of the metaphor. Girsch’s characterisation ignores the possibility of sexualisation and sexual exploitation of male slaves, which may have been as significant for contemporary audiences as issues concerning female slaves.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, *þeowe* is still clearly a common item used to denote female slaves; its scarcity in Ælfric’s works, to which Girsch attributes such significance, is a function of idiolectal and dialectal choices which are far from universal.¹⁶⁷ Wider study indicates that words for male and female slaves might be semantically separated from one another without such a radical explanation. Etymological relationships do not necessarily imply synchronic semantic relationships. While this is little more than a commonplace of etymological observation, the lack of attention paid to the Old English semantic field of slavery makes such confusion harder to avoid. As suggested above in relation to the Northumbrian material, the most obvious explanation here is that the feminine vocabulary was actually the most conservative, lacking the pressure from the various exclusively male items which shaped the masculine vocabulary. If, as argued here, *esne* not *þeow* was the dominant term denoting SLAVE in Early West Saxon, speakers of this variant would have been forced to find a different dominant term for FEMALE SLAVE: the role of *þeow* was diminished, and the gender connotations of *esne* made its use in this sense impossible. *þinen* would have been a natural alternative in this linguistic variant, and its popularity seems to have endured even after the resurgence of *þeow*. Feminine terms are scarce

¹⁶⁵ Girsch, ‘Terminology’, 47-49.

¹⁶⁶ While the sources are unsurprisingly silent about homosexual relations, concerns are expressed about the relationships between male slaves and their mistresses (see 4.3.6).

¹⁶⁷ Girsch devotes considerable time to Ælfric’s works (Girsch, ‘Terminology’, 30-54).

in relation to their masculine counterparts: ten intelligible items gloss *ancilla* in Lindisfarne, while 108 gloss *servus*. The greater scarcity of feminine forms may have lent itself to greater conservatism, and certainly makes the data considerably harder to interpret. The masculine and feminine terms are, therefore, not merely reflexes of a single lexeme, but separate items which must usually be explored separately.

2.6.3 Other Latin Terms Glossed by Old English Slave Words in the Gospels

Lindisfarne

Table 13: All Latin Terms Glossed by Old English Slave Words in Aldred's Gloss on the Lindisfarne Gospels

	þegn	þeow	þræl	Esne
Matthew	discipulus, servus, minister, miles, herodianus (Herodes þegn), angelus	servus	servus	servus, adulescens
Mark	discipulus, herodianus	servus	servus	servus, adulescens, iuuenis
Luke	discipulus, servus, minister, apostolus, ille	(þeowdom - captivitas)	servus	iuuenis, servus, adulescens

	Þegn	Þeow	Þræl	Esne
John	discipulus, Nicodemus, seruus, Nathanael, minister, cohors (þegna werod), Thomas, Philippus, miles	seruus	seruus	seruus (esnemon - mercenarius)

It is useful to consider not just which words gloss *servus*, but which other terms these gloss in turn. This illustrates the semantic complexity of some terms and their complex relationship with other social statuses, while highlighting the simplicity of others. The Old English words for female slaves do not gloss any other Latin terms in any of the texts, except for the case of *durubinen* for *ostiarina* discussed above, and therefore these terms are not discussed here. The above table makes it clear that the denotations of *þeow* and *þræl* were simple in Aldred's gloss. The use of *þeowdom* to gloss *captivitas* is interesting, given the role of warfare and raiding in providing new slaves,¹⁶⁸ but it does not alter the fact that *þeow*, like *þræl*, is almost exclusively associated with the Latin term *servus*. Here, these terms are only used to denote slaves, including metaphorical slaves. This implies that the Latin *servus* was key to Anglo-Saxon understanding of slavery. Whatever practical, economic, legal and social differences may have existed between Anglo-Saxon and Classical slavery, there was a perceived equivalence which was manifested in the choice of language. Most obviously, *þeow* and *þræl* do not gloss terms referring to other types of low-status, menial and semi-free labour, but only to chattel slaves. They are not used, for instance, to refer to the workers in the vineyard, who are 'ðæm wyrcentum † woerc-monnum' [the workers] (Matthew 20.1, p. 159). Overall, this is also the case for *esne*. The exception here is the use of *esne* to gloss *adulescens* or *iuuenis* six times in Aldred's translation, a denotation which occurs only in this text and in Owun's gloss. The relationship between the meanings SLAVE and YOUTH is considered in detail below,

¹⁶⁸ See 3.4.

with particular attention given to the semantic development involved.¹⁶⁹ We cannot dismiss the meaning YOUTH as unimportant, but it is subsidiary to SLAVE, which *esne* denotes forty-two times in the Lindisfarne gloss. Alongside *þeow* and *þræl*, *esne* is predominantly a slave word here, and there is a clear distinction between its two meanings.

In contrast, *þegn* glosses a number of different items, including several personal names and the adjective *herodianus*, in the phrase ‘Herodes þegn’ (Matthew 22.16, p. 179). *þegn* may be Aldred’s primary term for a chattel slave in Matthew, but SLAVE is not *þegn*’s primary meaning; the relationship between *lemma* and meaning is asymmetrical in this gospel. Where *þegn* glosses personal names, it refers to specific people, often the disciples, such as Thomas and Nathanael. In the phrase ‘Herodes þegn’, it is equivalent to the adjective *herodianus*, and thus, by providing a noun, it creates a specific social framework for the actions of these individuals. Both here and in those instances where *þegn* glosses *discipulus*, *minister*, and *miles*, it clearly does not refer to chattel slaves, but instead draws upon the various social relationships which are often described as retainer-lord, a wider denotation of *þegn* which developed during the Old English period.¹⁷⁰ It can be adapted to a variety of relationships, including the soldier (*miles*) to his commander, the angel (*angelus*) to God, and the disciple (*discipulus*) to Christ.

John 18.3 in Lindisfarne reads ‘iudas forðon miððy onfenge þ monn-mægen † ðegna uorud † & from aldormonnum & aelaruum heremenn † cuom ðidir mið spearum † mið lehtfatum & brondum † ðæcillum & woepnum’ [Judas, therefore, when he had received a *monn-mægen † ðegna uorud* and *heremenn* from the rulers and the Pharisees, went from there with lanterns and torches and weapons] (p. 157). ‘Monn-mægen’ and ‘ðegna uorud’ here render the Latin *cobors*. By using the latter phrase, Aldred equates the members of this crowd with the ‘heremenn’ (Latin ‘ministros’) who are grammatically parallel to the *cobors*. This is typical of Aldred’s more sophisticated glossatorial style, which responds to the sense of the text as much as to the individual lexemes. Thus, while the use of *þegn* to gloss *cobors* initially appears odd, it is more accurate to view this as part of its use for lord-retainer relationships. These relationships are subservient, but not

¹⁶⁹ See 4.3.9.

¹⁷⁰ See Loyn, ‘Gesiths and Thegns’, 529-49 for an exploration of this change.

servile, and thus, while *þegn* is used for SLAVE in Aldred's gloss on Matthew, his wider usage of this term for non-servile roles is consistent with its more general semantic shift from SLAVE to high-status RETAINER during the Anglo-Saxon period.¹⁷¹ Potential confusion is inherent in the use of *þegn* to denote both high- and low-status subservient relationships, particularly where the two occur in close proximity: in Matthew 22.10, *þegn* glosses *servus*, but in Matthew 22.13, it glosses *minister* (p. 179). This semantic ambiguity is likely to have been the deciding factor driving Aldred's avoidance of *þegn* for SLAVE after Matthew. In the final three gospels, he retains it for high-status, retainer-lord relationships, but tends to avoid it for chattel slaves. This creates a more clear-cut system of correspondences between the Latin and Old English terms, into which the other terms, *esne*, *þræl*, and, more rarely, *þeow*, the semantics of which are less ambiguous, fit neatly.

Rushworth

The situation in Rushworth is extremely similar to that in Lindisfarne:

Table 14: All Latin Terms Glossed by Old English Slave Words in the Glosses on the Rushworth Gospels

	<i>þegn</i>	<i>þeow</i>	<i>þræl</i>	<i>Esne</i>
Matthew (Farman)	discipulus, minister, herodianus, seruus (Herodes þegn), (tintreþegn - tortor)	seruus	N/A	seruus

¹⁷¹ *þegn* glosses *discipulus* over eighty times in Aldred's gloss, and *servus* only thirty-one times (see Appendix 1).

	þegn	þeow	þræl	Esne
Mark	discipulus, herodianus (Herodes þegn), minister	N/A	seruus	seruus, adulescens, iuuenis
Luke	discipulus, seruus, minister, apostolus	N/A	seruus	seruus
John	discipulus, Nicodemus, seruus, Nathanael, minister, Thomas, Philippus, miles, discumbens	N/A	seruus	seruus (esnemon - mercenarius)

The major points of difference can be summed up with relative brevity. The divergence between Farman and Owun is much less clearly marked here.¹⁷² Farman does not use *esne* for *adulescens*, preferring *geong* (Matthew 19.20 and 19.22, p. 157). Owun's use of the meaning YOUTH is entirely dependent upon Aldred's. It thus appears to have been a specifically Northumbrian, rather than generally Anglian usage, and perhaps of limited currency. The limited Mercian texts which survive and which use *esne* do so solely with the sense SLAVE where it is possible to discern the meaning.¹⁷³

The Latin *lemmata* which *þegn* glosses in the Rushworth glosses are, by and large, shared with Lindisfarne. In Matthew, Farman omits *þegn* for *miles* and *angelus* and adds the compound *tintreþegn* for *tortor* (Matthew 8.9, 18.34, 25.41, pp. 69, 153, 211). The latter is part of the use of *þegn* to denote subordinates in general, and transmutes the Latin occupational term into one with specific social connotations. Both omissions occur where Aldred has double glosses. For *miles*,

¹⁷² In addition to Farman's gloss on Matthew, he also glosses John 18.1-2, where he uses *þegn* for *discipulus* three times (p. 155). As both Farman and Owun use *þegn* for *discipulus* elsewhere, this does not disrupt the overall pattern.

¹⁷³ See Chapter 4. *Esne* in personal names and place-names has lost its semantic content, and therefore much of this material is difficult to interpret.

Aldred has ‘ðeignas † innheardmenn’, and Farman has ‘cempa’ (Matthew 8.9, p. 69); for *angelus*, Aldred has ‘englum † ðegnum’ and Farman only ‘englas’ (Matthew 25.41, p. 211). In the former, therefore, Farman shares neither of Aldred’s choices, while in the latter, he chooses only the most literal translation, once again indicative of his less creative approach to the translation process. Neither instance suggests any true distinction between the use of *þegn* in Northumbrian and in Mercian.

In Mark 14.54, Owun uses *þegn* to gloss *minister*, where Lindisfarne has *ambihrtmann* (p. 119). However, this does not disrupt the overall pattern of correspondences: both Aldred and Owun use *ambihrtmann* elsewhere with this sense.¹⁷⁴ Aldred also sometimes uses *þegn* for *minister*,¹⁷⁵ although he tends to prefer *ambihrtmann*. Thus, even where the lexical choices possible in Owun and Aldred’s dialects coincided, Owun did not always choose to follow his fellow glossator. Consequently, not all divergences can be ascribed to disagreement between their dialects, but rather to the influence of personal and immediate factors, including poetic variation and idiosyncratic whims.

Owun’s version of John 21.12 uses the phrase ‘nænigmon ne darste of ðegnum gifregna hine ðu hwæt arð wistun gere þte drihten were’ [none of the *þegnas* dared to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ because they knew that he was the Lord]. For the first part of this phrase, Aldred’s gloss reads ‘negi darste ænigmonn ðara hlingindi † ðara ræstendra’ [no one of those who reclined or rested] (p. 183). The West Saxon versions render this with ‘nan þæra þe þar sæt’ [none of those who rested there] (‘nan þare þe þær sæt’ in Hatton 38; p. 182). The Latin text of the Lindisfarne and Rushworth gospels differs here, and it is this which explains the disparity between the various versions. The Latin text of the Lindisfarne Gospels reads ‘nemo audebat discumbentium interrogare eum tu quis es scientes quia dominus est’ [none of those who reclined dared to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ because they knew that he was the Lord] (p. 183). In the Rushworth Gospels,

¹⁷⁴ For instance, in Mark 14.65 (p. 121).

¹⁷⁵ For instance, in John 7.46 (p. 75).

the phrasing is subtly different: ‘nemo [...] ex discipulis’ [none of the disciples].¹⁷⁶ The initial appearance of strikingly different translation techniques here is thus only a product of the different versions of the Vulgate, and has no overall consequences for our understanding of the relationships between the Latin and English terminology. Similarly, accidents of preservation account for the lack of some material in Rushworth: *esne* for *adulescens* in Luke 7.18 is absent because these leaves are missing in the manuscript (pp. 49-91).

West Saxon

The semantics of the slave words in the West Saxon gospels are simple when compared to the non-West Saxon variants. This is in part a feature of the West Saxon preference for *þeow*, which glosses only *servus* in both Anglian and West Saxon texts. This points to an extremely strong relationship between *þeow* and *servus* in all the translations, and thus indicates that its sense had not weakened. Girsch is incorrect when she argues that *þeow* ‘lost its position as the principal unmarked term expressing the concept “slave” ’.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, *wealh* never occurs here with any meaning but SLAVE. *þegn*, which never glosses *servus* here, itself only glosses two terms: *minister*, and, more rarely, *miles*. The preferred term for *discipulus* is the calque *leornungcniht*, which accounts for the vast majority of the appearances of the Latin term. Taken together, these correspondences point towards an attempt at homogeneity and consistency which draws upon key items in the West Saxon lexicon, and avoids synonymy in their distribution. The marked relationship between *þeow* and *servus* is indicative of its wider status as the dominant West Saxon term for chattel slaves. However, we know from the wider attested corpus that the West Saxon semantic field of slavery was more complicated than this, and, in particular, that less studied terms such as *esne* played an important role.

¹⁷⁶ Tamoto, *Gospels*, p. 333. This phrase is clearly the subject of considerable variation: the standard Vulgate uses ‘discentium’ (John 21.12, *Biblia Sacra: Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. by Robert Weber, 2nd rev. edn, 2 vols [Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1975], accessed from <<http://www.latinvulgate.com>>; all references to the Vulgate are taken from this edition and are given in the body of the text as chapter and verse). The King James is clearly based on a version of the Latin which accords with that in Rushworth, reading ‘none of the disciples’ (John 21.12, Carroll and Prickett, *Bible*, NT, p. 146).

¹⁷⁷ Girsch, ‘Terminology’, p. 43.

2.7 Conclusion

Wealh, *esne* and *þræl* are part of an extensive and complex semantic field, and the comparison with other terms in this field shows that these three items, especially *esne*, are not as insignificant as has previously been thought. Even *wealh*, which appears only once, is clearly more significant than other terms which are not used as simple synonyms for *servus* here. Unlike *ham-byrde* or *birele*, for example, these three terms are suitable to denote SLAVE with no further qualifications. The Germanic context shows that the significance of a term in the proto-language or as an item shared between languages is not a reliable indicator either of its meaning or its importance within a language. This has been ignored for too long in relation to the terminology of slavery in Old English, especially the neglected *esne*.

Each translator of the gospel translations (Aldred, Farman, Owun, and the original composer of the West Saxon versions, along with the scribes who copied his work) had at least two terms for a male or gender-neutral chattel slave at his disposal. The feminine terms are largely separate from the masculine, indicating the different factors influencing the two sets of vocabulary, and the sometimes tenuous connection between cognates. Most significantly in terms of the masculine vocabulary, *þeow* is the predominant term for chattel slaves only in West Saxon, undermining the perception that it dominated all the Old English dialects. It has previously been presumed that the West Saxon preference for *þeow* is the default for all Old English dialects, and that other terms must be explained as departures from this norm. The evidence from the gospels, however, indicates that this was not the case, and that the Anglian dialects had robust sets of vocabulary available to them which were distinct from and not dependent upon the West Saxon terminology. These were generally more complex and variable than the West Saxon. It is, however, true that *þeow* is the only term shared by all four variants in these gospel translations, although not, as demonstrated below, in the wider corpus. While *þegn* is often seen as a major alternative to *þeow*,¹⁷⁸ this study reveals that it is not more significant than *esne* or *þræl* as a word for SLAVE in

¹⁷⁸ For instance, Pelteret's entry on *þegn* devotes more attention to the meaning 'slave' than does the entry on *esne* (Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 273, 304).

any of these texts. In the case of both *esne* and *þræl*, their significance mandates further consideration of these terms. The scant attention paid to *esne*, when contrasted to its widespread appearance here, indicates the need for a thorough reassessment of its usage and role. The use of *wealh* is the sole break in the homogeneity of the West Saxon gospels, and reminds us that, even here, synonymy was a deeply embedded feature of the Old English semantic field of slavery. While these terms are ‘minor’ in a purely numerical sense when compared to *þeow*, they are not insignificant, and their minor status is a function of the dominance of West Saxon over the other dialects in the attested material, rather than a feature of the language as a whole. When we compare like for like across the dialects, as is possible with the gospels, the apparent significance of *þeow* is greatly diminished, and we must adjust our perspective and our understanding accordingly. Words which have previously been dismissed as insignificant are thus revealed as essential items in a complex semantic field.

On a microcosmic scale, there are clearly instances in the Anglian texts where the word choice is influenced by ideas of style and poetic variation. In Aldred’s gloss on Mark 12.2–4, the first slave sent to the workers in the vineyard is an *esne* and the second a *þræl* (p. 93). Neither the Latin text nor the context gives any reason for such alternation, and thus its function is purely stylistic. The complexity of the semantic field of slavery and its variation over both time and space offered a range of different possibilities to each author, possibilities which they used in ways which are specific to these texts, but which are also indicative of wider dialectal and diachronic patterns. In the Anglian texts, this range of possibilities entangles the language of chattel slaves with that of disciples and high-status retainers. This creates a linguistic network of types of service and status which reveals the intimate ties of imagery and vocabulary which connect these individuals. The use of slave words to define and describe other types of service is premised in this shared vocabulary, both in these Anglian texts and in the wider West Saxon corpus. The slave as a feature of the social landscape, the slave as a religious metaphor, and the slave as a metaphor for other types of service are inextricably linked. Thus, the semantic field of slavery as a whole is characterised by heterogeneity, complexity, and synonymy.

3. *Wealh*

3.1 Introduction

The multiple meanings of *wealh* in Old English make it an interesting and powerful nexus between types of social otherness which mark individuals and groups as excluded from mainstream society. Unlike *þræl* and *esne*, it has attested feminine cognates: *wale* and *wiln*. These forms are interesting both because of this disparity and because of their relationships with the Latin terminology and with *wealh* itself. The feminine forms add a further layer of complexity to our understanding of the structure and changeability of the Old English semantic field of slavery. The various dictionaries give a variety of definitions for *wealh*: Holthausen gives ‘Fremder, Sklave; Britte, Walliser’¹⁷⁹ [foreigner, slave, Briton, Welshman]; Bosworth-Toller, ‘a foreigner, properly a Celt [...] the British, the Welsh, or Wales [...] a Roman [...] a slave, servant’;¹⁸⁰ Clark Hall gives ‘foreigner, stranger, slave: Briton, Welshman: shameless person’;¹⁸¹ and the *Oxford English Dictionary* ‘Celtic, Briton’.¹⁸² There are minor points of disagreement between the definitions, most obviously Clark Hall’s ‘shameless person’, which is an anomaly.¹⁸³ The central denotations are FOREIGNER on the

¹⁷⁹ Holthausen, *Wörterbuch*, p. 386.

¹⁸⁰ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 1173.

¹⁸¹ Clark Hall, *Dictionary*, p. 399.

¹⁸² *OED*, s.v. ‘welsh’ [accessed 1st May 2011].

¹⁸³ This sense appears only in the glossaries in the form ‘walana’ where this glosses ‘proteruorum’ (*Old English Glosses: Chiefly Unpublished*, ed. by Arthur S. Napier, Anecdota Oxoniensia, Mediaeval and Modern Series, 11 [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900], p. 135; *The Old English Glosses of MS. Brussels, Royal Library 1650 [Aldhelm’s ‘De laudibus virginitatis’]*, ed. by Louis Goossens, Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Letteren, 74 [Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1974], p. 481). It is not possible to tell whether this develops directly from the sense FOREIGNER or from the sense SLAVE. As this sense, SHAMELESS PERSON, never appears in continuous prose which might give a sense of its relationship to the other meanings, it is not considered further here.

one hand, and SLAVE on the other.¹⁸⁴ Perhaps because of its peculiar semantic development, unique within Old English, *wealh* has received a comparatively significant amount of scholarly interest. Pelteret spends a considerable amount of time on this item, particularly in comparison to the scant treatment he gives to the much more significant *esne*.¹⁸⁵ Margaret Faull's 'The Semantic Development of Old English *Wealh*' concentrates solely on this term. While Faull describes her work as a semantic study, she devotes little attention to the study of the meaning SLAVE in context, giving not much more than an overview of the texts in which it occurs. Faull's study of the meaning FOREIGNER, CELTIC-SPEAKER is more comprehensive, but still in need of revision. She concentrates on an attempt to identify which specific group *wealas* referred to and the relationship between this group and the Anglo-Saxons, rather than a truly linguistic approach.¹⁸⁶ Pelteret gives greater attention to the contexts in which *wealh* and its cognates appear, but his conclusions do not always accurately represent the evidence, especially in relation to the feminine forms.¹⁸⁷

This chapter uses close semantic analysis of the contexts in which *wealh* occurs to reassess its denotations and its wider role in the semantic field. In the case of the meaning SLAVE, it is possible to analyse every instance,¹⁸⁸ while the section on the meaning FOREIGNER, CELTIC-SPEAKER is by necessity an overview, due to the much greater number of instances in which this meaning appears. I take a similar approach to the female cognates because they are not as central to the thrust of the chapter. The adjectival forms are mentioned only in passing. As with *esne*, *wealh*

¹⁸⁴ It is problematic to define *wealh* as FOREIGNER without any further qualifications, as is discussed in detail below (3.2), but here it serves as shorthand for a variety of ethnic identities, all of which were Celtic- or Romance-speaking and lived within the borders of the Roman Empire. Bosworth and Toller's use of 'servant' is part of the widely established phenomenon by which lexicographers and translators sought to elide the condition of the slave with that of the servant. Thus, this aspect of their definition of *wealh* it is not a useful or valid distinction here.

¹⁸⁵ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 34, 43, 51-53, 70, 319-22, 325, 327.

¹⁸⁶ Faull, 'Wealh', 20-44.

¹⁸⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 319-22, 327-28.

¹⁸⁸ In the case of the biblical translations and other texts where *wealh* is used repeatedly with the same meaning in a single text, only some phrases are considered in detail while others are referred to in passing. This methodological approach avoids needless repetition and is reproduced in the chapters on *esne* and *þræl* (Chapters 4 and 5).

is one of the few Old English terms in which we can see semantic change underway during the literary period. Furthermore, we have direct evidence of this change in the laws of Ine. Therefore, one subsection of this chapter is specifically devoted to this change and its relationship to the *adventus Saxonum*, intermediate between those subsections which consider the meanings SLAVE and FOREIGNER. The ambiguity of meaning encountered in the Exeter Book riddles is an entirely separate phenomenon from this evidence of change and is consequently considered separately. This close semantic analysis reveals the complexity and variety of contexts in which *wealh* and its feminine cognates could be used, and their close relationship with the dominant Late West Saxon term, *þeow*. This undermines older readings which have argued that these terms were only used in very narrow contexts and for their curiosity value. While *wealh* is attested in a comparatively narrow range of texts, its usage reveals broader potential, unencumbered by these supposed restrictions.

3.2 Etymology and Phonology

Wealh entered the Germanic languages during the Proto-Germanic phase as the name of the *Volcae*, a continental Celtic tribe in the zone of contact between Celtic- and Germanic-speakers, possibly east of the *Boii* in Moravia.¹⁸⁹ The masculine singular form of the tribal name was *Volcus*, attested in such forms as the personal name *Catuvolcus*.¹⁹⁰ These Latinate forms derive from the

¹⁸⁹ Faull, 'Wealh', 20; Green, *Language and History*, pp. 162-63. This relies on the mention of the Volcae Tectosages in this area by Julius Caesar (Gaius Julius Caesar, *The Gallic War*, ed. and trans. by H. J. Edwards (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), pp. 348-49). However, the designation 'Volcae' seems to denote various peoples, including the Volcae Arecomici ('Οὐόλκαι [...] Ἀρηκομισκοῦς') who dwelt in Gaul, near the Rhône (Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, ed. and trans. by Horace Leonard Jones, 7 vols [London: Heinemann, 1917-1932], II [1923], 200-1, 270-71). We therefore cannot be sure from which group the ethnonym was borrowed.

¹⁹⁰ Piergiuseppe Scardigli, 'Contact with Non-Germanic Languages I: Relations to the West', in *The Nordic Languages: An International Handbook of the History of the North Germanic Languages*, ed. by Oskar Bandle et al., *Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft*, 22.1, 22.2 (22.1), 2 vols (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2002-5), I (2002), 572-82 (p. 578).

Celtic root **uolco-*, which may have come from the Indo-European **g^{wb}ol-ko-* from **g^{wb}el-*.¹⁹¹ From designating a single tribe, its meaning broadened to include all speakers of Celtic languages, and even speakers of Italic,¹⁹² and thence generically FOREIGNER (speaking Celtic or Italic, and later the Romance languages). Who was or was not a foreigner-as-*wealh* was determined not in relation to the land, but in relation to the kin group, as defined by language. In Old English, this term only denotes ethnic groups who lived *within* the boundaries of the Roman Empire, a restriction which is apparently shared between the Germanic languages.¹⁹³ Thus, the semantic trajectory inherent in the dictionary definitions is MEMBER OF THE VOLCAE > FOREIGNER, CELTIC-SPEAKER > SLAVE, with later development to WELSH PERSON. This should be refined: MEMBER OF THE VOLCAE > INHABITANT OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, SPEAKER OF (CERTAIN VARIETIES OF) CELTIC AND ROMANCE > SLAVE with later development to WELSH PERSON. The development of the meaning WELSH PERSON is discussed in detail below and is due to a narrowing of meaning specifically to Celtic-speakers in the Roman-occupied areas of the British Isles. The denotation FOREIGNER is used here

¹⁹¹ *Dictionary of Continental Celtic Place-Names: A Celtic Companion to the Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, ed. by Alexander Falileyev, in collaboration with Ashwin E. Gohil and Naomi Ward (Aberystwyth: CMCS, 2010), pp. 35, 242.

¹⁹² Dafydd Jenkins, 'Gwalch: Welsh', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 19 (1990), 55-67 (p. 55). This grouping may have its basis in linguistic similarities (for further debate, see Warren Cowgill, 'Italic and Celtic Superlatives and the Dialects of Indo-European', in *Indo-European and Indo-Europeans*, ed. by George Cardona, Henry M. Hoenigswald and Alfred Senn [Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1970], pp. 113-53; Antoine Meillet, *The Indo-European Dialects*, trans. by Samuel N. Rosenberg [Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1967]; Calvert Watkins, 'Italo-Celtic Revisited', in *Ancient Indo-European Dialects*, ed. by Henrik Birnbaum and Jaan Puhvel [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966], pp. 29-50; and Frederik Kortlandt, 'More Evidence for Italo-Celtic', *Ériu*, 32 [1981], 1-22). It is possible that the speakers of Proto-Germanic identified speakers of Italic and Celtic languages as belonging to a single grouping on linguistic grounds, whether the Italo-Celtic thesis is true or not. On the other hand, the grouping may have been based upon the shared governmental, cultural and legal features of the Roman Empire.

¹⁹³ Alex Woolf notes that it was never used of groups such as the Gaels, Finns, Picts and Slavs, who were never included within the Roman Empire, and indeed suggests that *wealas* originally referred to the more Romanised population of lowland Britain, in contrast to *Cumbere* for the 'more barbaric' Celtic-speaking North (Alex Woolf, 'Reporting Scotland in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', in *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. by Alice Jorgensen, *Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, 23 [Turnhout: Brepols, 2010], pp. 221-39, [pp. 231-32]).

as a convenient shorthand for this complex of ethnicity, language, and geography, but it is not used in the more general sense assumed by earlier scholars.

Cognates of the ethnonym *Volcae* are absent in Gothic,¹⁹⁴ both as a common noun and as an element in personal names, but they are found throughout the rest of the Germanic language family.¹⁹⁵ These include the Old High German *walah*, *walb*, Middle High German *welbisch*, Modern German *welsch* and Dutch *waals*.¹⁹⁶ These tend to retain the denotation ROMANCE SPEAKER, as in Modern German, where *welsch* usually denotes the Italians. In Swiss German, it can be used to refer to the French-speaking Swiss.¹⁹⁷ It is also used in *walloon* and *Wallonia* for French-speaking Belgians, and in *Vlach* for the Romance-speaking Romanians.¹⁹⁸ This preference for the meaning ROMANCE SPEAKER over CELTIC SPEAKER is likely explained by the relatively swift replacement of the Continental Celtic languages with Latin in areas of contact with Germanic speakers. By contrast, speakers of Old English remained in close contact with Celtic speakers, and particularly speakers of the Brittonic languages. As the primary meaning of **walχaz* involved identification with certain linguistic and ethnic groups specifically within the Roman Empire, in the Continental Germanic successor languages it became identical with ROMANCE SPEAKER, and in the British Isles with BRITTONIC SPEAKER.

The Old Norse *valr* is a special development of this ethnonym in the Germanic languages: it is defined as ‘a hawk’¹⁹⁹ and ‘Falke’ [hawk, falcon].²⁰⁰ This is usually taken to be an abbreviation

¹⁹⁴ This may indicate the cultural and linguistic separation of Gothic-speakers from the other branches of Proto-Germanic prior to extensive contact with the *Volcae*, or it may be a product of the early date and limited nature of the extant Gothic texts. Lehmann surveys the problematic nature of Gothic texts succinctly in Winfred Philip Lehmann, ‘Gothic and the Reconstruction of Proto-Germanic’, in *The Germanic Languages*, ed. by Ekkehard König and Johan van der Auwera (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 19-37 (p. 19).

¹⁹⁵ Green, *Language and History*, p. 162.

¹⁹⁶ *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, ed. by Ernest Klein, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1966), II, 1737.

¹⁹⁷ Jenkins, ‘Gwalch’, 56, n. 6.

¹⁹⁸ *OED*, s.v. ‘Walloon’, ‘Walach, Wallach’, ‘Vlach’ [accessed 10th May 2011].

¹⁹⁹ Cleasby and Vigfusson, *Dictionary*, p. 676.

²⁰⁰ *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, ed. by Jan de Vries, 3rd edn (Leiden: Brill, 1977), p. 642.

of *val-baukr*, ‘carrion-hawk’, from the element *val*, ‘slain’,²⁰¹ but this compound may be a calque on the Old English term *wealh hafoc*, which often glosses (*h*)*erodius*, a falcon, or *gerfalcon*.²⁰² The plural, *valir*, is usually given separately, with the meaning ‘the “Welsh”, esp. the Celtic people in France [...] the French [...] foreign’²⁰³ or ‘*einwohner Nordfrankreichs; Wälsche, Kelten; sklaven*’ [inhabitant of northern France, Welsh person, Celt, slave].²⁰⁴

On the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain, *wealh*’s sense CELTIC SPEAKER, FOREIGNER was used most frequently to refer to speakers of the Brittonic languages in those parts of Britain which fell within the old empire, as discussed above. Nevertheless, it continued to be used in more general senses, particularly as an element in compounds. It was still not used to refer to ‘generic’ foreigners, but only to the specific ethnolinguistic groups delineated above. This term came to denote SLAVE solely in the context of Germanic settlement in Britain, and this development of the term has no parallel in the other Germanic languages. Thus, it is clear that this semantic development only took place after the languages diverged. As with the changes in the ethnic denotation of this term, the meaning SLAVE was a product of changing identities and shifting political realities in Britain during the Anglo-Saxon period.

The Proto-Germanic form of *wealh* was **walχaz*, a strong masculine a-stem noun. This shows both the First Sound Shift, /k/ > /χ/, and the merging of /o/ and /a/ to /a/, and thus indicates that the word was borrowed into Proto-Germanic some time before the fourth century

²⁰¹ Cleasby and Vigfusson, *Dictionary*, pp. 676.

²⁰² *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, ed. by Thomas Wright, 2nd edn by Richard Paul Wülker, 2 vols (London: Trübner, 1884), I, col. 25; *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources*, ed. by Ronald Edward Latham (London: Oxford University Press, 1975-2013), p. 169; de Vries, *Wörterbuch*, p. 642. The *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. by Ronald Edward Latham and David R. Howlett, 3 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1975-2013), I (1975), p. 795 records that (*h*)*erodius* can also denote a swan, egret or heron. The Old English development of this term is similar to the *wealh-moru* type of compound discussed below.

²⁰³ Cleasby and Vigfusson, *Dictionary*, p. 675.

²⁰⁴ de Vries, *Wörterbuch*, p. 641.

B.C.²⁰⁵ The phonological development of the Old English cognate itself is somewhat complex. The nominative singular inflection and stem vowel **-az* were uniformly lost in the pre-literary period,²⁰⁶ giving the form, **walχ* as the basis on which the various dialectal forms developed.

In West Saxon, the root **walχ* was first affected by First Fronting, by which the Proto-Germanic phoneme /a/ was fronted to /æ/,²⁰⁷ giving the form **wæλχ*. This was subsequently affected by breaking, by which the front vowels /æ, e, i/ were diphthongised before /l, r, χ/ + a consonant, through the development of a vocalic glide.²⁰⁸ This is first expressed as /æū/ and develops as /æɑ/, spelt <ea>.²⁰⁹ Here, the phoneme /æ/ in **wæλχ* is broken before the consonant cluster /lχ/ to give the attested nominative and accusative singular form *wæalχ*, spelt *wealþ*. The phoneme /χ/ is lost after a consonant and before a vowel, commonly in inflected forms. Compensatory lengthening occurs in the preceding vowel or diphthong.²¹⁰ Thus, in all but the nominative and accusative singular forms, the nominal root changes from *wæalχ-* to *wēal-*. When we have taken all these sound changes into consideration, we can derive the attested West Saxon forms through regular sound change:

Table 15: Regular Forms of *Wealþ*

	Singular	Plural
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²⁰⁵ *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, ed. by Charles Talbot Onions, Robert W. Burchfield and George Washington Salisbury Friedrichsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 999; Scardigli, 'Relations to the West', p. 578. Green dates the loan before the *third* century B.C. on the same grounds (*Language and History*, p. 162). Recent work on glottochronology, such as April and Robert McMahon's *Language Classification by Numbers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 177-204 may challenge this chronology. Venceslas Kruta argues that 'Volcae' was formed as a new ethnic identity during a period of 'Celtic' ethnic expansion at the beginning of the third century B.C. (Venceslas Kruta, *Celts: History and Civilisation* [London: Hachette Illustrated, 2004], p. 204). This would mean that the ethnonym *Volcae* was borrowed into Germanic fairly soon after it was coined, and would set a *terminus post quem* at this point.

²⁰⁶ Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 341, 404, 571.

²⁰⁷ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 131.

²⁰⁸ Campbell, *Old English Grammar*, § 139.

²⁰⁹ Richard M. Hogg, *A Grammar of Old English*, 2 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992-2011), I (1992), § 520.

²¹⁰ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 241.

Nominative	wealh	wēalas
Accusative	wealh	wēalas
Genitive	wēales	wēala
Dative	wēale	wēalum

In summary, the development of this term was as follows: **walχaz* > **walχ* > **welχ* > *wēalχ* (*wealh*) with χ -loss and compensatory lengthening in the inflected forms.

There is no restoration of /a/ before back vowels in the plural endings of the West Saxon forms, as /æ/ was diphthongised to /æa/ before a-restoration occurred.²¹¹ Moreover, restoration of the long form /æ:/ was less regular than that of /æ/,²¹² and therefore would have been less likely to have occurred in these forms due to the effects of compensatory lengthening. When forms of *wealh* with <a> do occur, they are not the result of a-restoration, and are thus unlikely to be West Saxon variants, and must, consequently, be interpreted as dialectal forms. To explain the <a>-forms, we must return to the form **walχ*, with its Germanic short /a/, and consider the development of this vowel in the Anglian dialects of Old English.²¹³ Some scholars, such as Hogg, believe that First Fronting did not occur in Anglian, leading to the retention of the Germanic /a/ for West Saxon /æ/.²¹⁴ Others argue that First Fronting did occur in the Anglian dialect, but that it was

²¹¹ Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 157-63, 255. It is, furthermore, not common where a vowel is followed by a consonant cluster (Campbell, *Grammar*, § 158).

²¹² Campbell, *Grammar*, § 162.

²¹³ There are occasional anomalous forms, such as ‘weles’ in the CCCC 140 version of Matthew 24.50 (p. 200). This may be due to the application of Anglian smoothing, or monophthongisation, to a West Saxon diphthong (Campbell, *Grammar*, § 222), or to a scribal error. Forms with <ie> for <ea>, as in *wielb* are used in some texts, particularly the Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud 509 version of the *Heptateuch* edited by Marsden (*The Old English Heptateuch and Ælfric’s ‘Libellus de Veteri Testamento et Novo’*, ed. by Richard Marsden, EETS, o. s., 330, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008-], I [2008]). All references to the *Heptateuch* are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text). I have not been able to explore the phonological processes behind these <ie> forms because they have only come to my attention very recently. However, it is possible that they may have been influenced by the first element in *wiln* or by a variety of unrelated terms including *wieldan*, with include a similar sequence of phonemes. These forms do not significantly affect our understanding of the dialectal development and distribution of *wealh* in either of its semantic reflexes, although potentially ‘mixed’ forms such as ‘weles’ suggest that the term was recognised in both West Saxon and Anglian dialect areas.

²¹⁴ Hogg, *Grammar*, I, §§ 5.13, 5.15.

subsequently retracted due to the same consonant cluster which caused diphthongisation in West Saxon.²¹⁵ Either process produces /a/ and /a:/ in the Anglian dialects for West Saxon /æ/ and /æ:/. This being the case, breaking does not occur here in Anglian, as /a/ is not a front vowel.²¹⁶ Compensatory lengthening following loss of /χ/ occurs, giving /a/ > /a:/ in forms other than the nominative and accusative singular. Thus, the Anglian forms are characterised by /a/, <a> in all cases. The Anglian paradigm is the same as that for the West Saxon forms, but with /a/ for /æa/ throughout, in both short and long forms. In addition to this, some weak forms of *wealh* occur, formed by the addition of the weak endings to the stem of the noun.²¹⁷ These forms are comparatively rare for *wealh*, although we can observe the same process at play in the creation of weak forms of *þeow* and *þræl*. This phenomenon is a late development, as endings became less differentiated in the period of transition to Middle English. It is therefore not a feature which is particular to *wealh*, nor is it indicative of any specific dialectal or semantic features.

The noun *wiln*, ‘a maid-servant, a hand-maid’,²¹⁸ derives from the masculine noun *wealh* by the addition of the feminine suffix *-īnjō: *walχ-īnjō.²¹⁹ The ending -jō is lost in the prehistoric period,²²⁰ giving the form *walχīn. The sound changes which are discussed above in relation to

²¹⁵ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 143.

²¹⁶ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 139.

²¹⁷ Roger Lass, *Old English: A Historical Linguistic Companion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), § 6.11.

²¹⁸ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 1229. As with terms for male slaves, circumlocutions such as ‘maid-servant’ and ‘hand maid’ are frequently used to translate medieval terms denoting FEMALE SLAVE. For instance, Christopher Tolkien translates the Old Norse *þý* as ‘bondmaid’ in *Saga Heiðreks Konungs ins Vitra* (*The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise*, ed. and trans. by Christopher Tolkien [London: Nelson, 1960], p. 51). The analysis of *wiln* conducted below, and particularly its association with the Latin *ancilla*, makes it clear that FEMALE SLAVE is the true meaning of this term. Holthausen defines *wiln* as ‘fremdes Weib, Sklavin’ [foreign woman, female slave] (Holthausen, *Wörterbuch*, p. 393). There is, however, no instance in which *wiln* clearly denotes FOREIGN WOMAN or FOREIGN SLAVE.

²¹⁹ Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 591-92. See also Bogislav von Lindheim, ‘Die weiblichen Genussuffixe im Altenglischen’, *Anglia*, 76 (1958), 479-504 (pp. 480-83).

²²⁰ Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 590-92; Hogg, *Grammar*, § 4.10.

wealh lead to the form **wealχīn* in West Saxon. This is i-mutated to **wielχīn*.²²¹ The loss of /χ/ and compensatory lengthening produce **wīelīn*.²²² The vowel in the suffix is subsequently shorted and weakened to /e/,²²³ giving **wīelen*. This is the form given by Clark Hall as a dictionary head-word,²²⁴ but only monophthongised forms with /y/ and /i/, unrounded from /y/ through isolative change, occur in the extant material.²²⁵ Both syncopated (*wīln*) and unsyncopated (*wīlen*) forms also occur.²²⁶ *Wīln* is most commonly declined as a strong noun, and thus the basic paradigm can be given as follows:²²⁷

Table 16: Regular Forms of *Wīln*

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	wīln	wīlna, -e
Accusative	wīlne	wīlna, -e
Genitive	wīlne	wīlna, -ena
Dative	wīlne	wīlnum

Variations of this occur with *wýlen*, *wýln*, and *wīlen*, following the same basic pattern.

There are no corresponding forms of *wīln* which show Anglian phonological developments, such as forms with /æ:/ from the i-mutation of Anglian /a:/.²²⁸ This implies that *wīln* was in use only in West Saxon, in contrast to the wider distribution of the masculine forms.

²²¹ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 190. I-mutation is conventionally dated to around 700 AD, and therefore Pelteret assumes that the suffix must have been added before this date, although *wīln* is never found meaning a ‘Celtic woman’. He therefore argues that it must have originally had this sense (Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 43). However, this i-mutation may be analogical. If this is the case, we can read *wīln* as a late formation, postdating the development of SLAVE, and only associated with this meaning.

²²² Campbell, *Grammar*, § 241. Because /χ/ is medial in all cases in *wīln*, the long diphthong /iē/ occurs throughout the paradigm.

²²³ Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 355, 369.

²²⁴ Clark Hall, *Dictionary*, p. 407

²²⁵ Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 300, 317.

²²⁶ See Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 392-93 for syncopation after long syllables.

²²⁷ As with *wealh*, weakly declined forms also occur.

²²⁸ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 190.

There is some evidence to corroborate this suggestion, as *wiln* appears predominantly in the works of Ælfric of Eynsham. By contrast, the form *wale*, created by appending the feminine endings to the masculine root, is distinctively Anglian. Pelteret gives the basic form of this noun as *weale*, arguing that its use twice in the Old English riddles, the only text in which it occurs, is a ‘purely literary usage’.²²⁹ As this is a rare term, it is impossible to assess the accuracy of this statement: it may indeed be ‘purely literary’, or it may simply be poorly attested. What is clear, however, is that Pelteret’s normalisation gives this term an apparently West Saxon character which is not representative of its phonology or dialectal usage. It is only attested with <a>, representing the non-diphthongised, Anglian vowel in *walb*. As the Exeter Book contains non-West Saxon features, the presence of such a spelling here, alongside West Saxon spellings such as ‘wealas’, is not surprising.²³⁰ The presence of two feminine forms which differ both in their phonology and their morphology suggests parallel developments in both the West Saxon and Anglian dialects.

The multitude of forms which these terms can take, particularly the variant forms of the vowels in the roots of *wealb* and *wiln*, make it easy to confuse them with various near-homophones such as *wiell* (a well), *weall* (wall), *weald-* (an element associated with power, as in *wealdend*, ‘leader, controller, ruler, king’), *wel* (‘well’, ‘will’), some forms and derivatives of *willan*, *wyllen* (woollen) and *wela* (‘prosperity, happiness, riches’), amongst others.²³¹ Although many of these can be distinguished from *wealb* contextually, this does cause problems in the study of *wealb*, particularly in toponymy, as Pelteret notes.²³² With the addition of possible variant spellings for <w>, it is extremely difficult to be sure that we have found every single attested form, even with the help of tools such as the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus.

3.3 *Wealb* as CELTIC-SPEAKER, FOREIGNER, and Specific Ethnonyms

²²⁹ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 319.

²³⁰ Muir discusses linguistic features which may indicate some kind of Northern influence on the Exeter Book (*The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry: An Edition of Exeter Dean and Cathedral MS 3501*, ed. by Bernard J. Muir, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), I, 32-33.

²³¹ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, pp. 1174-1285.

²³² Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 320.

The ethnic dimension of *wealb* accounts for the vast majority of its appearances in Old English. There is a small but significant group of compounds in which *weal(h)-* is used to denote some quality of ‘foreignness’, but in which the precise nature of this quality is hard to discern, as the compounds cannot be directly tied to any particular ethnic context. This class of compounds is largely composed of items of flora, such as the walnut,²³³ carrot (*wealb-more*),²³⁴ and dwarf elder (*wealb-wyrt*),²³⁵ as well as numerous instances of *wealb hafoc* for various birds.²³⁶ It is generally assumed that the first element in *wealbbnutu* distinguishes the walnut from the native hazelnut.²³⁷ While the element *wealb-* appears at first glance to denote generic foreignness, it is likely that each item had some connection, real or imagined, with the Roman or Romance-speaking world, defined as separate from and opposed to the Anglo-Saxon world.

The element *wealb-* in various place-names such as Walcot and Walton is most likely derived from the ethnic denotation,²³⁸ although the use of both *præl* and *esne* as place-name elements suggests that SLAVE is not improbable in such contexts. In this ethnic sense, *wealb* is most commonly found in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (including the poems *The Battle of Brunanburh* and *The Death of Edward*); related fragments, including those in the *Textus Roffensis*; and a variety of sources including Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the *Dunsæte*, and the charter material. The feature which this group of texts shares is their immediate reference to geopolitical realities, such as the history and ongoing inter-ethnic relations between the peoples living in Britain. The sheer number of uses of *wealb* with an ethnic meaning in these texts is also partially due to the presence of the same passage in multiple recensions of the *Chronicle*. For instance, the

²³³ Wright, *Vocabularies*, I, col. 452; *OED*, s.v., ‘walnut’ [accessed 23rd September 2014].

²³⁴ *An Eighth-Century Latin-Anglo-Saxon Glossary Preserved in the Library of Leiden University (Ms. Voss. Q^o Lat. N^o. 69*, ed. by Jan Hendrik Hessels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890), p. 89. This may also refer to parsnips (*OED*, s.v. ‘parsnip’ [accessed 23rd September 2014]).

²³⁵ Hessels, *Glossary*, p. 45; Faull, ‘*Wealb*’, 25–26.

²³⁶ For instance, in Ælfric’s *Glossary* (Ælfric of Eynsham, *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar: Text und Varianten*, ed. by Julius Zupitza [Berlin: Weidmann, 1966], p. 307). All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

²³⁷ *OED*, s.v., ‘walnut’ [accessed 23rd September 2014].

²³⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 319–20.

passage ‘her Hengest & Æsc gefuhton wið Wealas neah Wippedes fleote & þær ofslogan XII wylisce ealdormen, & heora þær wearð an ofslegen þam wæs nama Wipped²³⁹ [here Hengest and Æsc fought against the *wealas* near Wipped’s creek, and there killed twelve British chieftains, and one of them was killed there whose name was Wipped] quoted here from the C version also occurs in some form in A, E, and F, and uses *wealh* in each instance.²⁴⁰ Thus, the multiple versions of the *Chronicle* vastly increase the numerical superiority of this meaning, without increasing its currency, particularly as many of these episodes occur in the common stock of the *Chronicle*.

In the earlier part of the *Chronicle* and related episodes, *wealh* refers generally to the Celtic-speaking tribes living within the Empire in Britain, even in the simplex: the entry for 47 A.D. records ‘her Claudius Romana kyning gewat mid here on Brytene & þæt eglanð geode, & ealle Pihtas & Walas underþeodde Romana rice²⁴¹ [here, Claudius, king of the Romans, went to Britain with an army and conquered the island, and made all the Picts and *wealas* subject to the Roman kingdom]. In most instances, as in the entry for 753 (‘her Cuðred feaht wið Wealas’ [here Cuðred fought against the *wealas*] [C, p. 46]) the *wealas* are encountered in a military context, often associated with the advance of Anglo-Saxon culture. As demonstrated below, those who identified as the incoming force, the Anglo-Saxons, were not necessarily genetically and historically distinct from those who identified as the native population, the British. Crucially, however, the former group viewed themselves as distinct and applied ethnic labels such as *wealh* to the ‘British’.

²³⁹ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 5: MS. C: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition with Introduction and Indices*, ed. by Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (Cambridge: Brewer, 2001), p. 29. This is the entry for 461 in C, but for 465 in the other versions. All references are to this edition, parenthetically in the body of the text.

²⁴⁰ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 3: MS. A: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition with Introduction and Indices*, ed. by Janet M. Bately (Cambridge: Brewer, 1986), p. 28; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 7: MS E: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition with Introduction and Indices*, ed. by Susan Irvine (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004), p. 17; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 8: MS. F: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition with Introduction and Indices*, ed. by Peter S. Baker (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), p. 21. All references are to these editions, parenthetically in the body of the text. Where necessary, this is given in the format ‘F, p. x’ to clarify to which manuscript I refer.

²⁴¹ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 6: MS. D: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition with Introduction and Indices*, ed. by G. P. Cubbin (Cambridge: Brewer, 2001), p. 3. All references are to this edition, parenthetically in the body of the text.

In addition to such simplex forms, *wealh* is used in a number of different compounds in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. While ‘Galwalas’ is used to denote the Gauls (F, p. 381), these compounds more normally refer to the Celtic-speaking peoples who lived within the boundaries of the Roman Empire in Britain itself, not least because the *Chronicle* was more likely to deal with such persons and groups. In the compound ‘Bretwealas’, which simply denotes ‘Britons’, as in the entry for 682, the first element adds little to the compound compared to the simplex form (A, p. 32).²⁴² More frequently, however, the compound narrows the meaning to a specific Celtic-speaking group within Britain, as in the compounds ‘Nordwealas’, ‘Stræcdedwealas’, ‘Westwealas’, and ‘Cornwealan’ (A, pp. 58, 69; D, p. 19; F, p. 75).²⁴³ It is worth noting that these tend to date from the later period, contemporaneous or near-contemporaneous with the composition of these passages. Not only does this change in nomenclature therefore represent changes in social and political organisation; it also draws upon the more complex and complete knowledge of the various ethnic groups. The most critical element, however, is the lack of a corresponding first element to denote the British living in what is now Wales. This demonstrates the semantic narrowing of the simplex form. While *wealh* could still denote other Celtic-speakers and, to a lesser extent, Romance-speakers, it was beginning to apply specifically to the ‘Welsh’, and the other Celtic-speaking groups often needed some prefix to clarify their identity. Crucially, the sense SLAVE never displaces the ethnic sense of *wealh*, even in the later part of the period, but instead exists alongside it.

The phrase ‘on Wealas’ becomes more common in the latter part of the period, as in the entry for 916: ‘& ðæs embe þreo niht sende Æþelflæd fyrde on Wealas & abræc Brecenanmere & þær genam ðæs cinges wif feower & ðritiga sume’ [and after three nights, Æþelflæd sent the army amongst the Welsh and destroyed Brecenanmere and there took the wife of the king as one of

²⁴² Swanton uses ‘Briton’ here in his translation (*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, ed. and trans. by Michael Swanton, rev. edn (London: Phoenix, 1996), p. 38).

²⁴³ The name ‘west Wealum’ is also used to denote the Cornish in the *Liber Vitae of New Minster and Hyde Abbey* entry on Saint Petrocus (*Liber Vitae: Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester*, ed. by Walter de Grey Birch, Publications [Hampshire Record Society], 5 [London: Simpkin, 1892], p. 93).

thirty-four] (C, p. 76). This hints at the development of the toponym *Wales* from this semantic narrowing. The movement from the early medieval concentration on peoples to the later concentration on territories made ‘amongst the Welsh’ and ‘into Wales’ synonymous at some point, and led to the transference of the ethnonym to the territory. This blurring of meaning is also visible in the adjectival form *wylisc*: ‘on þam ilcan geare comon upp on Wylisce Axa of Yrlande XXXVI scypa, & þærabutan hearmas dydon mid Gryfines fultume þæs wæliscan cynges’ [in the same year, thirty-six ships came up the *wylisc* Usk from Ireland, and did harm thereabouts with the help of Gryffydd, the *wylisc* king] (D, p. 69). Both *Gryffin* (Gruffydd ap Rhydderch) and the *Axa* (Usk)²⁴⁴ are recognisably Welsh in the modern sense, and the adjective could apply equally to their geographical location and to an identification with the local ethnic groups. The Usk may more likely correspond to the former interpretation, and Gruffydd ap Rhydderch to the latter, but there are no definite indications to clarify our understanding. What is clear, however, is that the semantic narrowing of *wealh* as an ethnonym to denote specifically the ‘Welsh’ had progressed sufficiently far that it could, like the simplex nominal form, be used to apply to this group without confusion.²⁴⁵

As noted before, *wealh* is also used in two of the poems preserved in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. As in the more standard entries, the use of *wealh* here refers directly to the political organisation of the British Isles. *The Death of Edward* lists the *wealas* as one of the groups ruled by Edward the Confessor:

[...] hæleða wealdend,
weold wel geþungen Walum and Scottum
and Bryttum eac byre Æðelredes,
Englum and Sexum’

[Æthelred’s son, the ruler of heroes, excellently ruled the *Wealas* and Scots, and Britons too, the Angles and Saxons].²⁴⁶ *The Battle of Brunanburh* similarly lists the ‘Wealas’ amongst the foes whom

²⁴⁴ Swanton, *Chronicles*, p. 170.

²⁴⁵ The adjectival form *wylisc* is not discussed in great detail here as it usually only refers to the ethnic meaning of *wealh*.

²⁴⁶ 8b-11a, ‘The Death of Edward’, in *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, ASPR, 6 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1942), pp. 25-26 (p. 25).

Æthelstan faces, in parallel to the ‘Brytene’.²⁴⁷ Both texts, while conventionalised praise poems, refer directly to the various (equally conventionalised) ethnic groups which inhabited Britain. The *wealb* is therefore part of a standardised litany of ethnic groups, which, taken together, symbolise Britain as a whole.

Texts such as the *Dunsæte* and the various charters deal with the Brittonic-speaking peoples in a more intimate context. The charters, with their narrowly local focus, often use *wealb* to refer to these linguistic groups or the territories associated with them in Devon and Cornwall. One of the more famous examples of this occurs in the Will of Alfred, where the king bequeaths various estates to his younger son, including land at Yeovil and Exminster and ‘æt Liwtune & þa land þe þærto hyran, þ̅ synd ealle þe ic on Wealcynne hæbbe butan Triconscire’ [at Lifton and the lands which belong to it, that is all that I have amongst the *Wealcynne* except Triggshire].²⁴⁸ ‘Wealcynne’ here is translated by Lapidge and Keynes as ‘Cornwall’, and the possession of these lands by a West Saxon king, along with the context, certainly makes this the most plausible translation.²⁴⁹ Similarly, in Sawyer 552, Eadred bestows land in Berkshire upon Wulfric in return for land ‘on wealum [...] æt Pendencyg’ [amongst the *wealas* (...) at Pendencyg], identified as Pendavey in Cornwall.²⁵⁰ *Wealb* here is associated with various groups whose identity can be further confirmed by the context of its use. Additionally, it shows hints of the conflation of peoples with the territories which they held, as is also demonstrated on a grander scale in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

²⁴⁷ 71b-72b, ‘The Battle of Brunanburh’, in *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by Dobbie, pp. 16-20 (p. 20).

²⁴⁸ ‘Will of King Alfred’, in *Charters of the New Minster, Winchester*, ed. by Sean Miller, Anglo-Saxon Charters, 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 3-12 (p. 5).

²⁴⁹ ‘The Will of King Alfred’, in *Alfred the Great: Asser’s ‘Life of Alfred’ and Other Contemporary Sources*, ed. and trans. by Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge (London: Penguin, 1983), pp 173-78 (p. 175).

²⁵⁰ ‘S552’, in *The Electronic Sawyer: Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters* (2010), <<http://www.esawyer.org.uk>> (rev. from P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks, 8 [London: Royal Historical Society, 1968]) [accessed 5th September 2014]; Della Hooke, *Pre-Conquest Charter-bounds of Devon and Cornwall* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1994), p. 18. All references to *The Electronic Sawyer* are given in the format ‘“Sx”, in *The Electronic Sawyer*’.

The *Dunsæte* proclaims that it was agreed and contracted between the ‘Angelcynnes witan & Wealhðeode rædboran’ [wise men of the English people and counsellors of the *Wealh* people].²⁵¹ Individual clauses include the provisions that ‘ne stent nan oðer lad æt tihltan bute ordal betweox Wealan & Ænglan, bute man ðafian wille’ [there is no other defence against a charge between the *Wealas* and the English, unless they wish to consent to it] (§ 2.1, p. 276) and ‘gyf Wealh Ænglisne man ofslea, ne ðearf he hine <hider> ofer buton be healfan were gyldan, ne Ænglisc Wylisne geon ofer ðe ma, sy he ðegenboren, sy he ceorlboren: healf wer ðær ætfeald’ [if a *wealh* kills an English person, he need only pay half a wergeld hither beyond the border, and if an English person kills a *Wylisc* person beyond the border, whether he is nobly born or low-born, one half of the wergeld falls away] (§ 5, p. 377). It is particularly interesting that, in the latter case, the noun ‘Wealh’ and the adjective ‘Wylisne’ are used interchangeably, indicating that the process by which the latter was substantivised was underway. The *Wealas* and the *Englan* are juxtaposed as two distinct and mutually exclusive groups, despite whatever complexities may have existed in reality. Here, as in the *Chronicle*, there is no hint of status attached to this term. Indeed, the latter clause explicitly refers to the possibility that the *wealh* might be either ‘ðegenboren’ or ‘ceorlboren’. While the two meanings of *wealh* might be confused in deliberately enigmatic texts such as the riddles, they were not normally blurred after the initial development of this meaning.

Wealh appears in its most general ethnic sense in several more ‘literary’ texts, including *Widsith*, where the phrase ‘wala rices’ is often translated as ‘Romans’.²⁵² In the saints’ lives, *wealh* is used most often in the form ‘Galwalas’ to refer to the Gauls or Gaul, as in the *Life of Saint Chad*: ‘Wilfrid eac swilce of breotan ealonde wes onsend & he on galwalum wes gehadod’ [Wilfrid was also sent forth from the island of Britain, and he was in holy orders amongst the *Galwalas*].²⁵³

²⁵¹ Prologue, ‘Im Dunsæte-land giltige Engl.-Wälsche Beziehung’, in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen: Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Savigny-Stiftung*, ed. and trans. by Felix Liebermann, 3 vols (Halle: Niemeyer, 1903-16), I (1903), 374-78 (p. 374). All references are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

²⁵² 78b, ‘Widsith’, in *The Exeter Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, ASPR, 3 (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1936), pp. 149-53 (p. 152); ‘Widsith’, in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, trans. by S. A. J. Bradley (London: Dent, 1982), pp. 336-40 (p. 339).

²⁵³ *The Life of St. Chad: An Old English Homily*, ed. by Rudolf Vleeskruyer (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1953), pp. 162-64.

Such forms occur in a substantial cluster in the *Old English Martyrology*. Here, compounds of *wealh* occur eight times, three of which are forms of ‘Brytwealh’ and the five of which are forms of ‘Galwealh’. In four of the five instances of ‘Galwealh’, it is used in the stock phrase ‘on Galwala mægðe’ [amongst the people of the *Galwealas*], while in the remaining instance, *Galwealas* is clearly used in the same sense, simply omitting ‘mægðe’.²⁵⁴ The phrase ‘þeosses biscofes reliquias syndon on Galwala mægðe on Mennia ðære ceastre’ [the relics of this bishop (Phocas) are amongst the people of the *Galwealas* in the city Mennia] is a representative use of this phrase (p. 148), showing its simple ethnic connotations as well as its use to locate significant people and objects in the ‘real’ world. However, here, it clearly does not refer to the land of the Gauls or Franks as Phocas was bishop ‘on ðære mægðe ðe Pontus is nemned’ [amongst that people which is called Pontus] (p. 147). The use of the first element ‘Gal-’ here may represent confusion between various ethnic groups. The entry for Saint Symphorian uses ‘Galwala mægðe’ more conventionally to refer to the ethnic group in whose territory Augustodunum (present-day Autun) lay (p. 184). The other uses of this phrase elsewhere in the *Martyrologium* only use it to refer to ‘Gauls’, never to other ethnic groups.

The uses of *Brytwealh* are more diverse in their functions but are similarly exclusively ethnic. We are told that ‘seo stow þær Albanus ðrowade is neah ðære ceastre þe Bryttwalas nemdon Uerolamium ond Ængla þeod nemnað nu Wætlingaceaster’ [the place where Albanus died is near the town which the *Brytwealas* called Uerolamium and which the people of the Angles now call Wætlingaceaster’ (p. 126). ‘Bryttwalas’ here is used without any reference to geographic territories, but solely in relation to peoples and the languages which they speak. This indicates the depth of identification between ethnicity and language. Similarly, the four peoples of Britain are defined as ‘þæt syndon Bryttwalas ond Peohtas ond Scottas ond Ongle’ [those are *Bryttwalas* and Picts and Scots and the English] in the entry on Saint Oswald (p. 171). This echoes the recitation of peoples in *The Battle of Brunanburh* and the list of the languages of Britain which prefaces the *Chronicle*: ‘Ænglisc, Brytwylsc, Scottisc, Pihtisc and Boclæden’ [English, *Brytwylsc*, Scottish, Pictish, and

²⁵⁴ *Das altenglische Martyrologium*, ed. by Günter Kotzor, 2 vols, (Munich: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), II, 127, 148, 167, 171, 184, 218, 241, 245. All references are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

Book-Latin] (D, p. 1). Unlike the references to the ‘Galwala mægðe’, this usage does not place the action in a specific geographic context, but lays out the political makeup of Britain as a whole. In the entry on Germanus, we are told that the saint came to Britain ‘on Brytwala dagum’ (p. 167). This ties considerations of ethnicity not to the geographical aspects of power but to its chronological aspects. While *Galwealh* is used for geographical context, through the identification of various ethnic groups with their territories, the more diverse uses of *Brytwealh* are indicative of greater complexity due to closer contact with Celtic-speaking peoples in Britain. Thus, while the ethnic meaning of *wealh* is multifaceted in this material, its ethnic denotation here is entirely separate from the meaning SLAVE, which never appears in the *Martyrology*. As the meaning SLAVE appears to be both late and West Saxon, its absence from an early Mercian text such as the *Martyrology*²⁵⁵ fits in with the established distribution of these two meanings. Meanwhile, the appearance of *wealh* in a Mercian text such as this, alongside various characteristically <a> spellings in other texts, reminds us that the meaning FOREIGNER was not likewise restricted by dialect.²⁵⁶

3.4 Ethnicity, the *Adventus Saxonum*, and Semantic Change

The early historians of the *adventus Saxonum* often assumed that those Britons who were neither slain nor driven out of ‘England’ were enslaved by the Anglo-Saxons *en masse*, and that this was the underlying reason for the identification of the *wealas* with chattel slaves.²⁵⁷ This reading requires both mass migration and mass destruction, as well as mass enslavement. Pelteret rightfully points out that mass enslavement is difficult in agrarian societies.²⁵⁸ This idea of a mass migration of Germanic speakers into the British Isles is present in Bede, and became a major theme of Anglo-

²⁵⁵ Michael Lapidge, ‘Martyrology, OE’, in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes and Donald Scragg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 303-04 (p. 303).

²⁵⁶ Moreover, we have a single potentially Northumbrian use of *wealh*, in the personal name ‘Walh’, which occurs in the manumission lists of the Congregation of Saint Cuthbert (H. H. E. Craster, ‘Some Anglo-Saxon Records of the See of Durham’, *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th ser., 1 [1925], 189-98 [p. 191]).

²⁵⁷ For instance, Freeman, *Constitution*, p. 12.

²⁵⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 33.

Saxon studies following the revival of interest in the period as a field of historical study.²⁵⁹ John Hare, in his *St Edward's Ghost; or Anti-Normanisme*, published in 1647, wrote that

our Progenitors that transplanted themselves from Germany hither, did not conmixe themselves with the ancient inhabitants of the Countrey the Britaines [...] but totally expelling them, they took the sole possession of the Land to themselves, thereby preserving their blood, lawes, and language incorrupted.²⁶⁰

As Allen J. Frantzen summarises the matter, such scholars 'used Anglo-Saxon studies to identify, and then to recover, their cultural beginnings', premised on the notion of a single, shared ethnic identity.²⁶¹ However, more recently scholars have begun to challenge the notion that the large-scale migration of one ethnically cohesive group, speaking a Germanic language, drove out another, Celtic-speaking, group. Consequently, there has been a general, although not unanimous, shift towards the view that the change from Late Roman Britain to 'Anglo-Saxon England' was as much a cultural as a demographic shift.²⁶²

Oppenheimer believes that the population of the British Isles has been relatively static and stable since prehistoric times,²⁶³ while Higham argues that a small immigrant elite ruled and 'Anglo-Saxonised' a population that was substantially 'British' in terms of their origins. In other words, the majority of the 'Anglo-Saxon' population did not migrate from the 'Germanic' lands in the fifth and sixth centuries; they were genetically descended from the British but culturally

²⁵⁹ Nicholas Higham, 'Britons in Anglo-Saxon England: An Introduction', in *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Nick Higham, Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, 7 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), pp. 1-15 (pp. 2-3).

²⁶⁰ John Hare, *St. Edward's Ghost: or, Anti-Normanisme. Being a Patheticall Complaint and Motion in the Behalfe of our English Nation against her Grand (yet Neglected) Grievance, Normanisme* (London: Wodenothe, 1647), pp. 10-11.

²⁶¹ Frantzen, *Origins*, p. 22.

²⁶² Higham summarises this debate in Nicholas Higham, 'Introduction', p. 1-15. For more in-depth material, see Nicholas Higham, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons* (London: Seaby, 1992).

²⁶³ Stephen Oppenheimer, *The Origins of the British* (London: Robinson, 2007). Richards et al discuss the genetic (especially Y chromosome lineage) evidence for a complex picture of migration, with greater genetic heterogeneity at an early date and relatively slight influence on the genetic composition of the population by migration from a 'Saxon homeland' (Martin Richards, Christian Capelli and James F. Wilson, 'Genetics and the Origins of the British Population', in *Encyclopedia of Life Sciences* [electronic resource]; <<http://www.els.net/WileyCDA/>>; DOI: 10.1002/9780470015902.a0020804 [accessed 25th May 2011]).

identified with the Germanic incomers.²⁶⁴ On the grounds that a demonstrably small number of Germanic settlers were all that was needed to transform the culture and language of such marginal areas as Cumbria, Devon, and Shropshire, Ward-Perkins argues that even areas as thoroughly ‘Anglo-Saxonised’ as the South-East may have been settled by a relatively small number of incomers, whose influence nevertheless transformed the culture of these areas.²⁶⁵ Therefore, Ward-Perkins estimates that an immigrant population of at most 200,000 Germanic invaders in Britain as a whole may have mingled with a remaining Celtic-speaking population of at least 800,000.²⁶⁶ Despite arguing for a relatively small population of Germanic settlers, he believes that, even in very early written sources, there was a clear distinction between the Anglo-Saxons and the Britons, reflected in Gildas’s *De Excidio*, the *Gododdin*, the genealogies, and the works of Bede,²⁶⁷ which suggests the rapid and dramatic adoption of Anglo-Saxon identity. The increasing power of the Anglo-Saxons changed the political environment of sub-Roman Britain and ‘had the potential to stimulate fundamental changes in how erstwhile “British” communities would construct their own group identity’, thus encouraging the adoption of both a new identity and language.²⁶⁸ There is a rich and contentious secondary literature on the construction of identity in the early medieval world, a debate well articulated in *On Barbarian Identity*.²⁶⁹ This has often centred on the articulation and rejection of the *Traditionskern* theory, which argued that group identity was replicated through the attachment of members to a mythic narrative of a common past, focused on

²⁶⁴ Higham, *Rome*, pp. 154-236.

²⁶⁵ Bryan Ward-Perkins, ‘Why Did the Anglo-Saxons Not Become More British?’, *The English Historical Review*, vol. 115, no. 462 (2000), 513-33 (pp. 521-22.)

²⁶⁶ Ward-Perkins, ‘Anglo-Saxons?’, 521-22.

²⁶⁷ Ward-Perkins, ‘Anglo-Saxons?’, 516.

²⁶⁸ Nicholas Higham, ‘The Anglo-Saxon/British Interface: History and Ideology’, in *The Celtic Roots of English*, ed. by Markku Filppula, Juhani Klemola and Heli Pitkänen, *Studies in Languages*, 37 (Joensuu: University of Joensuu, Faculty of Humanities, 2002), pp. 29-46 (p. 34). See also Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity* (London: Sage, 1997).

²⁶⁹ *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Andrew Gillett, *Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002).

the divine descent of its rulers.²⁷⁰ Those who oppose this theory argue that it is likely that ancient traditions and oral myths played no significant role in shaping early medieval group identity.²⁷¹ While the supporters and detractors of *Traditionskern* theory argue about the specifics, there is a general assumption that ethnic identification is both a process and a social construct, rather than an objective fact.²⁷² Whatever factors created a sense of shared identity for Brittonic-speakers on the one hand and speakers of Old English on the other, there was a shift towards the latter identity during the early years of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Thus, a relatively small shift in the population resulted in a much greater apparent shift in ethnic identity, accounting for the disappearance of ‘Celtic’ populations in Lowland Britain without assuming large-scale death and destruction.

If we therefore assume that the migration associated with the *adventus Saxonum* was relatively small-scale, but accompanied by a shift in identification, it becomes implausible to suggest that every Brittonic-speaker was enslaved, and that this was the cause of the semantic shift of *wealh* from FOREIGNER, CELTIC-SPEAKER to SLAVE. Accepting the minimal figures given by Ward-Perkins, such a scenario would result in a ratio of four slaves to every free Germanic-speaker.²⁷³ Such an extensive population of slaves is not reflected in the documentary evidence, and would be difficult to sustain in practice. Even the assumption that only those Brittonic-speakers who did not adopt an Anglo-Saxon identity were all enslaved imputes a racialised motive to the Anglo-Saxons which is anachronistic. Moreover, in the laws of Ine, discussed immediately below, the *wealh* may belong to many social classes, as defined by *wergeld*, from those paying 600 shillings

²⁷⁰ Andrew Gillett, ‘Introduction: Ethnicity, History and Methodology’, in *On Barbarian Identity*, ed. by Gillett, pp. 1-18 (p. 3).

²⁷¹ Walter Pohl, ‘Ethnicity, Theory, and Tradition: A Response’, in *On Barbarian Identity*, ed. by Gillett, pp. 221-39 (p. 222).

²⁷² Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity: Racism, Class and Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 10, 21.

²⁷³ Significantly higher figures have been suggested for Late Roman Britain, giving a population up to four million, or even greater. This makes the imbalance between the incomers and the hypothetical British slave population even more improbable (Higham, ‘Introduction’, p. 6).

to those paying 60 shillings.²⁷⁴ Clearly, these are not all slaves. This semantic change does not require that all Brittonic-speakers should be slaves, or all slaves Brittonic-speakers, but rather that, for the majority of speakers of Old English, or perhaps more closely West Saxon-speakers, during the period of this change, the majority of the Brittonic-speakers whom they encountered may have been slaves or at least potential slaves. All the evidence presented thus far indicates that this cannot have been the case during the period of the initial Anglo-Saxon settlement. It is most plausible, therefore, that this semantic change occurred after the consolidation of West Saxon identity within Wessex itself. The majority of the Brittonic-speaking population in what became Wessex must have chosen to adopt the new ethnic identity, if it was available to them and if it was expedient to do so. Areas of geographical isolation in which intermarriage was relatively unlikely and settlement was sparse might have reduced the ‘natural’ intermingling of Brittonic-speakers and speakers of Old English, and thus the ability to choose between the identities, leading to enclaves of ‘Celtic’ identity. For the majority of the population in this area, however, ethnic identity was gradually homogenised, and the incoming Anglo-Saxons were soon indistinguishable from the ‘native’ population. In the context of this relative homogeneity, the potential to encounter the ethnic *wealas* as equals was much reduced. While noting that ‘conquest did not inevitably involve enslavement’, Pelteret argues that the servile development of the term *wealh* may have been related to the conquest of ‘Celtic’ peoples in the South-West.²⁷⁵ This seems particularly plausible as Ine’s laws, which shows the first hints of this semantic development, date from the period of the Anglo-Saxon conquest and settlement of Devon.²⁷⁶ This process created a source of *wealas* as slaves who were not one’s immediate neighbours, a source separate from both the time and the process of the original conversion of ethnic identities. Both war and intentional slave-raiding were significant

²⁷⁴ §§ 23.3, 24.2, 32, ‘Ine’, in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachen*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 89-123 (pp. 100, 102). All references are to this edition unless otherwise specified, and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

²⁷⁵ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 34, 70.

²⁷⁶ B. A. E. Yorke, ‘Ine’, in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Lapidge, Blair, Keynes and Scragg, pp. 251-52 (p. 251).

sources of slaves during this period.²⁷⁷ Neither requires that the purpose of the exercise should be the utter enslavement of an ethnic group, but the procurement of slaves was a major consequence of such activities. In this case, while the *wealas* were no longer the immediate neighbours of most Old English speakers, and therefore not encountered on an everyday basis, they were encountered as slaves, the product of both raiding and warfare. Other Anglo-Saxons were undoubtedly also enslaved in similar circumstances, but, as they were also encountered in other contexts, they were not as closely identified with the state of slavery.

The laws of Ine provide the first evidence of the semantic change FOREIGNER, CELTIC-SPEAKER > SLAVE in Old English. While Faull notes that this is also the first ethnic use of this term within the language, neither Pelteret nor Faull pays significant attention to how this text fits into the process of semantic change.²⁷⁸ Of the references to the *wealas* in these laws, some clearly apply solely to the ethnic group. The 600-shilling *wealh* (§ 24.2, p. 100) cannot be a slave, and therefore *wealh* here must be solely an ethnic term. Similarly, the 200-shilling value accorded to the *horswealh* suggests that this was not a servile position (§ 33, p. 102).²⁷⁹ Faull ascribes the differences between the *wergeld* for the Anglo-Saxon and for the *wealh* to the *wealh*'s lesser status under the law; this may instead be due to the attempt to define such penalties between two independent groups.²⁸⁰ The reference to 'witeðeowne monnan Wyliscne mon' [a *Wylisc* person enslaved in punishment] (§ 54.2, p. 114) implies the existence of free *wealas*. Moreover, such *wealas* could clearly become slaves through multiple routes, not only through war or raiding, but also as penal slaves. This suggests complex relationships between the two ethnic groups, as well as an attempt to bring both these groups into a single system of law.

However, there are also references in this legal code to *wealas* who are clearly slaves: 'gif ðeowwealh Engliscne monnan ofslihð, þonne sceal se ðe hine ah weorpan hine to honda hlaforde

²⁷⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 43. Wyatt discusses slave-raiding extensively (Wyatt, *Slaves*, pp. 2-5, 22, 24-25, 27-28, 53, 58-59, 76-78, 100, 121-30, etc).

²⁷⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 33-34, 43, 51-52, 70, 319-22; Faull, 'Wealh', 22, 26-27.

²⁷⁹ Faull, 'Wealh', 28.

²⁸⁰ Faull, 'Wealh', 21-22; see 3.3 on the *Dunsæte*, which has a similar disparity of penalties, without implying subjugation.

& mægum oððe LX scillinga gesellan wið his feore' [if a *þeowwealh* kills an English person, then his owner must had him over to the lord and kin or pay for his life with sixty shillings] (§ 74, p. 120).²⁸¹ The elements 'wealh' and 'Engliscne' are parallel, as are 'ðeow' and 'monnan'. The compound *þeowwealh* here provides the medium between the meanings FOREIGNER, CELTIC-SPEAKER and SLAVE. In other circumstances, as with *esne*, we might read the first element here as affirmation of the *wealh*'s status. However, given the ethnic use of *wealh* elsewhere in this code, it is more likely that *þeow* is used here as status term to qualify *wealh*. A compound of this type easily lends itself to the loss of the first element and the conflation of the second with its servile meaning. Compounds or collocations of this type may have been an important element in the semantic shift which *wealh* underwent. In a similar manner, the term *nigger* has been used to denote persons of any ethnic group involved in menial labour.²⁸² The development of *slave* in the modern Western European languages follows much the same path.²⁸³ Thus, the association of certain ethnic groups with slavery and therefore the transference of the ethnonyms referring to them to mean SLAVE is a common phenomenon, here replicated in the specific context of the westward spread of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. After a certain amount of association between the two concepts, the first element *þeow-* becomes unnecessary, and the denotation SLAVE can be conveyed by the formerly ethnic element alone, here *wealh*. There is a suggestion of this process at work elsewhere in Ine: 'Wealh gafolgelda CXX scillinga his sunu C, ðeowne LX, somhwelcne fiftægum; Weales hyd twelfum' [the wergeld of a *wealh* tribute-payer is 120 shillings; that of his son is 100 shillings. A slave is worth sixty shillings, sometimes fifty. A *wealh*'s skin is worth twelve shillings] (§ 23.3, p. 100). Here, Faull suggests that both 'wealh gafolgelda' and the 'weales' refer to the British. The latter is a British slave, and the intervening 'ðeowne' refers to a more generic,

²⁸¹ F. L. Attenborough also includes a heading which duplicates this material: 'be þam þe ðeowwalh frigne man ofslea' [if a *þeowwealh* kills a free man] (§ 74, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, ed. and trans. by F. L. Attenborough [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922], p. 60).

²⁸² *OED*, s.v. 'nigger' [accessed 23rd September 2014].

²⁸³ See *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, ed. by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, 16 vols (Leipzig: Herzog, 1854-1954), X.1 (1905), pp. 1310-15, s.v. 'Sklave' for an in-depth discussion of this development.

presumably Anglo-Saxon slave.²⁸⁴ This entire passage gives a descending scale of payments from the ‘wealh gafolgelda’ to the hide of the *wealh*. While the *wealh* and the ‘ðeowne’ man are not entirely parallel, their status is clearly closer to one another than to the *gafolgelda* and his son. As in the passage discussed above, *wealh* on its own can clearly refer to both free and unfree persons. Moreover, the liability of the *wealh* to pay with a beating is the mark of a slave,²⁸⁵ separating him from the *wealh gafolgelda*. Here, it is clearly not necessary to repeat the element ‘ðeowne’. It is implicit in the subsequent use of *wealh*, and its omission is once again evidence of the subtlety of this semantic change.

3.5 *Wealh* as SLAVE

Wealh denotes SLAVE in a relatively small number of texts in Old English, stretching from the late tenth century to the end of the period: the simplex is used in the West Saxon gospels, the *Heptateuch*, Ælfric’s *Grammar* and a single Ælfrician homily, the law code *II Æthelred*, the *History of the Kentish Royal Saints*, and the late fragment ‘The Soul to the Body’. In addition to these simplex uses, it appears as an element in compounds with this meaning in the *Rule of Chrodegang* and glossary entries, as when ‘hundwæalh’ glosses the Latin ‘canum servitor’.²⁸⁶ These glossary entries are not discussed further here, but they indicate *wealh*’s participation in formative processes, and thus hint at its wider currency in the language. Similarly, *wilisc*, while usually an ethnic term, appears once, in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A. III, describing the descendants of Ham, condemned to slavery.²⁸⁷ Pelteret’s analysis of the meaning SLAVE concentrates upon its use

²⁸⁴ Faull, ‘*Wealh*’, 26.

²⁸⁵ See 4.3.3.

²⁸⁶ *The Old English Version of the Enlarged Rule of Chrodegang together with Latin Original; An Old English Version of the Capitula Theodulf together with the Latin Original; An Interlinear Old English Rendering of the Epitome of Benedict of Aniane*, ed. by A. S. Napier, EETS, o. s., 150 (London: Paul, Trench and Trübner, 1916), p. 68; Wright, *Vocabularies*, I, col. 111, (see also col. 128 where ‘weala win’ is used for *crudum vinum*); Faull, ‘*Wealh*’, 27; Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 321. Faull lists some additional forms which may have developed from this sense, but which may equally be an extension of the sense FOREIGNER or related to some other term (Faull, ‘*Wealh*’, 34).

²⁸⁷ A. S. Napier, ‘Altenglische Kleinigkeiten’, *Anglia*, 11 (1889), 1-10 (p. 3); Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 326.

in the works of Ælfric, and thus implies that it was not in common usage.²⁸⁸ However, as the analysis below shows, the cluster of uses in one passage in Ælfric's *Grammar* gives his works this appearance of prominence, while, by contrast, we find it in a variety of other southern texts which do not necessarily have a connection with this author.²⁸⁹ Moreover, it is used in the full range of contexts in which we might expect to find a slave word, while its relationships with other lexemes, both Latin and Old English, indicate that it was a full participant in the complex system of synonymy between the various Old English terms.

The first appearance of *wealh* unambiguously denoting SLAVE occurs in the West Saxon version of Matthew 24.50, dated from the late tenth or early eleventh century²⁹⁰ and contained in a variety of manuscripts including Hatton 38 and CCC 140: 'cymbð ðæs weles hlaford on þam dæge ðe he na ne wenþ & on ðære tide þe he nat' [the lord of that *wealh* will come on the day when he does not expect him, and in the time which he does not know] (CCC 140, p. 200). As the use of *wealh* here is shared by all of the manuscripts to which Skeat refers, it is clear that it must have been used in the original exemplar, and that, while occurring only once in this text, it was sufficiently widely accepted in the passive vocabulary that it was not replaced by any of the subsequent copyists. Faull compares the use of *wealh* here with the alternation between *þegn* for the 'good' slave and *þræl* for the 'bad' slave in Aldred's version, arguing that both *wealh* and *þræl* may have been chosen here due to negative connotations attached to them.²⁹¹ However, this is an inaccurate observation both of Aldred's semantic field of slavery which is characterised by complexity and multiplicity, and of the overall semantics of *þræl*, which can, in fact, be used in both positive and negative situations.²⁹² Similarly, *þeow* is used elsewhere in this text with a variety of moral statuses attached, as it is the only other term used to denote male chattel slaves in the

²⁸⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 320-22.

²⁸⁹ Pelteret appears to be correct that the development of this sense is an exclusively southern phenomenon (Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 320).

²⁹⁰ Ursula Lenker, 'The *West Saxon Gospels* and the Gospel-Lectionary in Anglo-Saxon England: Manuscript Evidence and Liturgical Practice', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 28 (1999), 141-78 (p. 1).

²⁹¹ Faull, 'Wealh', 27.

²⁹² See Chapters 2 and 5.

West Saxon gospels. In the same parable, the Latin ‘malus seruus’, which refers more directly to the moral status of this individual, is rendered as ‘se yfela þeowa’ in the Corpus version and ‘se yfela þeow’ in the Hatton version [the bad *þeow(a)*] (Matthew 24.48, pp. 200-01). If *wealþ* had any clear moral connotations here, we might expect it to be used in this more forceful instance. As *wealþ* is used elsewhere in positive and neutral contexts, we cannot presume that it was chosen here for any specific connotations. Instead, it represents natural variation and diversity within the language. As discussed above, the West Saxon translator appears to have aimed for clarity in his vocabulary of social status, choosing to associate each Latin *lemma* closely with a single Old English term, although this was not the case in Old English overall. The appearance of *wealþ* suggests that even in the late West Saxon of this translator, there was a greater variety of terms available, variety which he chose to sublimate for the sake of clarity. In terms of the meanings SLAVE and FOREIGNER, it is clear that the semantic development underway in the early West Saxon laws had been completed by this time. Here, *wealþ* simply translates the Latin ‘serui’ with no hint of ethnic status attached.

The greatest concentration of uses of *wealþ* for SLAVE similarly occurs in a biblical translation, the *Heptateuch*. Richard Marsden’s edition is based on Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 509; the text occurs in a number of manuscripts.²⁹³ Only two of the eleven instances of this term occur in the parts which Ælfric translated, while the remaining nine occur in the anonymous portions.²⁹⁴ Pelteret notes both of the Ælfrician instances, but only one of the nine anonymous instances, giving a disproportionate impression both of scarcity and of Ælfrician dominance.²⁹⁵ Faull devotes less than a sentence to the *Heptateuch*, and does not make any distinction between the Ælfrician and anonymous sections.²⁹⁶ The denotations of *wealþ* here are largely uniform. In every

²⁹³ Marsden, *Heptateuch*, I, xxiv-lxix.

²⁹⁴ Jost shows that, linguistically speaking, Ælfric only translated Genesis 1-24.61 and some of Numbers (Karl Jost, ‘Unechte Ælfricexte [Forsetzung]’, *Anglia*, 51 [1927], 177-219 [218-19]); Raith suggests that only the text from Genesis may be genuinely Ælfrician (Josef Raith, ‘Ælfric’s Share in the Old English Pentateuch’, *Review of English Studies*, n. s., 3 [1952], 305-14 [pp. 309-10, 314]).

²⁹⁵ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 321.

²⁹⁶ Faull, ‘*Wealþ*’, 27.

instance except one, it translates the Latin *servus*. Where *wealh* glosses the first element in the *servus et ancilla* collocation, the latter is always glossed by *wiln*, reinforcing the connection between the two terms, and their usefulness as an alliterative pairing (Genesis 20.14, Exodus 20.17, 21.20, 21.26, 21.32, Leviticus 25.44; pp. 44, 116-18, 136).²⁹⁷ The translation of Leviticus 25.39-40 is the exception, as *wealh* does not gloss *servus* here, reading ‘þeah þin nehxta for his yrmðe gange on þeowet, nafa þu hine for weal ac for medgildan’ [if your neighbour/next of kin falls into slavery on account of his poverty, you may not have him as a *wealh* or as a servant] (p. 135), for the Latin Vulgate ‘si paupertate compulsus vendiderit se tibi frater tuus non eum opprimes servitute famulorum’ [if your brother, driven by poverty, has sold himself, you may not oppress him with the servitude of slaves] (Vulgate, Leviticus 25.39). The Old English is clearly not a literal translation of the Latin: the phrase ‘servitute famulorum’ corresponds to both of the Old English nouns, ‘weal’ and ‘medgildan’, and is not a precise counterpart of either. Nevertheless, while *wealh* does not gloss *famulus* elsewhere, *famulus* also denotes chattel slaves and is often glossed by the same Old English terms which gloss *servus*. Therefore, this does not disrupt our understanding of *wealh*’s semantics. Moreover, the appearance of *servitus* here reinforces the connection between its cognate *servus* and *wealh*.

In the *Heptateuch*, *wealh* occurs in both the narrative and legal sections, although it is more common in the latter. It is used of both insignificant slaves who serve as extensions of their master’s will, such as the slaves of Abimalech, and of important figures, crucially Joseph during the time of his slavery in Egypt (Genesis 20.14, 21.25, 39.17; pp. 44-46, 69). Thus, there are no moral distinctions attached to it. In the version of the commandments contained in Exodus 20.17, the ‘wyeles’ and ‘wilne’ are part of the list of the neighbour’s goods which should not be coveted (p. 116), and thus we see slaves in their role as pure chattels. On the other hand, *wealh* occurs multiple times in Exodus 21 and twice in Leviticus 25, both of which concern the appropriate treatment of slaves and means of acquiring them (Exodus 21.5, 21.20, 21.16, 21.32, Leviticus 25.39, 25.44; pp. 116-118, 135-36). Exodus 21.20 lays out the commandment ‘se þe his wiel slicþ mid girde, oððe his wilne, and hig deade beoð þurh his handa’ [he who strikes his slave or his female slave with a

²⁹⁷ See Pelteret, *Slavery* p. 327.

rod, and they die by his hand] and sets out punishments for this behaviour (p. 117). This verse is included in the introduction to Alfred's laws, where *servus* is rendered by *esne*.²⁹⁸ Its translation here by *wealh* indicates the depth of synonymy which existed in this Old English semantic field. Equally, *wealh* is not the only term for SLAVE used in these parts of the *Heptateuch*: for instance, *servus* in Exodus 21.6 is glossed by *þeow*, although it immediately follows 21.5, in which *wealh* is used of the same individual (p. 116). This indicates that the terms were used interchangeably here. These verses concern the practicalities of owning human beings and seek to delineate the social norms and mores concerning them. Thus, as elsewhere, the use of *wealh* is not restricted to one aspect of the slave.

Ælfric uses *wealh* repeatedly to translate the neuter paradigm, *mancipium*, in his *Grammar*, alongside *þeow* for the masculine *servus* and *wiln* for the feminine *ancilla* (pp. 101-02).²⁹⁹

Table 17: *Wealh* and *Mancipium* in Ælfric's *Grammar*

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	weal (mancipium)	wealas (mancipia)
Vocative	weal (mancipium)	þeowan (mancipia)
Accusative	weal (mancipium)	þeowan men (mancipia)
Genitive	weales (<mancipii>)	þeowra (mancipiorum)
Dative	weale (mancipio)	ðeowum (<mancipiis>)
Ablative	weale (mancipio)	þeowum mannum (mancipiis)

Ælfric's choice to use *wealh* here likely represents the desire to use different terms to render each Latin paradigm, even though *wealh* and *þeow* are both strong masculine nouns in Old English. The use of both *wealh* and *wiln* in a didactic text of this sort suggests that, while Ælfric might possibly

²⁹⁸ See 4.3.4.

²⁹⁹ It is most probable that Ælfric himself added the Old English glosses to these texts. If he did not, it is certain that a closely affiliated member of his school did so, and that they had shared lexical preferences.

have been indulging a penchant for uncommon words, it is more likely that these terms were sufficiently widely recognised to be useful glosses for the intended audience. Moreover, it is worth noting that Ælfric does not use other supposedly less common terms to denote chattel slaves, such as *esne* and *þræl*. His vocabulary in this area is otherwise a close match to the West Saxon norm, although this is in part because his works go some way towards defining what constitutes this norm. His use of *wealh* and *wiln*, therefore, is significant as his sole divergence from this pattern.

It is unusual to find any of the Old English slave words discussed here glossing *mancipium*, but this is a function of the latter's comparative scarcity: for instance, *mancipium* does not occur at all in the version of the Vulgate used in the Lindisfarne Gospels. Its pairing with *servus* and *ancilla* indicates that it is used here primarily as a convenient Latin slave word which happens to belong to the neuter declension. Thus, as *mancipium* parallels *servus*, so, too, *wealh* parallels *þeow*. This equivalence is particularly obvious as *wealh* is replaced by *þeow* in all the plural forms except the nominative. Whatever the reasons for this switch, it clearly has no effect on the meaning. At a purely semantic level, the two terms are interchangeable. The sample sentences for *wealh* are less informative than those for *wiln* discussed below. Nevertheless, the phrase '*mei <mancipii> filius mines weales sunu*' [my *wealh's* son] echoes the *filius ancillae* stock phrase used repeatedly with *wiln* in Ælfric's works. More strikingly, '*mea mancipia arant mine wealas eriað*' [my *wealas* plough] recalls the unfree ploughman of the *Colloquy*.³⁰⁰ Thus, as far as we can tell from a limited amount of material here, the *wealh* is associated with the same stock phrases and servile activities as elsewhere in the extant corpus.

Wealh appears in Ælfric's homily 'Feria II Letania Maiore': 'we ðe næron wurðe. beon his wealas gecigde. and we habbað swilce geðincðe. þurh ða gehyrsumnysse' [we were not worthy to be called his *wealas*, and we have appeared as such, through that submission].³⁰¹ This is a ritualistic display of submission to the divine and an implicit evocation of the *servus Dei* trope. The

³⁰⁰ Ælfric of Eynsham, *Ælfric's Colloquy*, ed. by G. N. Garmonsway, 2nd edn (London: Methuen, 1947), p. 21. All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

³⁰¹ Ælfric of Eynsham, 'Feria II Letania Maiore', in Ælfric of Eynsham, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series; Text*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, EETS, s. s., 5 (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 180-89 (p. 181).

unworthiness and utter obedience of the speakers is framed by their self-description as unworthy even of the debased status of the slave. In conjunction with the use of *wealh* in the *Grammar* to denote ‘real’ slaves, its use here in a metaphorical construct of this type demonstrates that, for Ælfric at least, *wealh* could be used in all the contexts which required a slave word. As Ælfric also used *þeow* in such metaphorical contexts, this passage further demonstrates the extent of synonymy between the two terms in his works.

Wealh occurs once in the late laws in *II Æthelred*, the treaty between Æthelred and Ólaf Tryggvason, dated from around 994.³⁰² ‘& þæt naðor ne hy ne we ne underfon oðres wealh ne oðres ðeof ne oðres gefan’ [and that neither they nor we receive the *wealh* of the other, nor the thief of the other, nor anyone involved in feud with them].³⁰³ The appearance of *wealh* for SLAVE in such a significant piece of legislature indicates a wider recognition of its meaning. It is easy to assume from the limited range of texts in which *wealh* is attested that, as SLAVE, it was a strange and unusual term, more of a curiosity than a functional part of the lexicon.³⁰⁴ Its usage here suggests that its limited range of attestations is misleading and that, although it is rarely used in the extant material, it was more widely understood. There is clearly no hint of a potentially confusing ethnic dimension here, and it is thus clear that context was sufficient to determine which sense of *wealh* was intended. Moreover, its appearance in a practical text of this kind shows that it was as applicable to social and political situations as it was to literary formulae.

In the *History of the Kentish Royal Saints*, the ‘stefen cearciendes wænes’ [voice of the creaking wagon] is contrasted with that of the ‘ceoriendes wales’ [complaining *wealh*].³⁰⁵ There has been some considerable debate here on the question of whether ‘wales’ comes from *hweol* or *wealh*. While the contrast with the wagon might suggest that a wheel might be a more obvious reading

³⁰² Richard P. Abels, ‘Paying the Danegeld: Anglo-Saxon Peace-making with Vikings’, in *War and Peace in Ancient and Medieval History*, ed. by Philip DeSouza and John France (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 173-92 (pp. 189-90).

³⁰³ § 6.2, ‘II Æthelred: Vertrag mit Olaf’, in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 220-24 (p. 224). All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

³⁰⁴ See for instance Faull, ‘*Wealh*’, 35-36.

³⁰⁵ Max Förster, ‘Die altenglischen Beigaben des Lambeth-Psalters,’ *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 132 (1914), 328-35 (p. 335).

here, Faull accepts the latter on grounds of the orthography.³⁰⁶ Accepting this as the most probable reading, we once again have evidence that *wealb* was in wider usage. This version of the text appears in the late eleventh-century manuscript London, Lambeth Palace Library, 427, and is written in a hand of the Exeter type, although the text was most likely composed in the South-East.³⁰⁷ The chiding slave here is a familiar figure, yet another manifestation of the anti-social and unpleasant behaviour associated with chattel slaves. The alliteration between the two phrases which gives this passage its striking force may well have impelled the choice of *wealb* in place of a more common but less alliterative term. Its use here is yet another case in which *wealb* is used a single time in a non-Ælfrician text.

Wealb is used in a fragment of ‘The Soul to the Body’ in the thirteenth-century manuscript Worcester, Cathedral Library, F. 174: ‘ond ic þin wale iwearþ, hu so þu <woldest>’ [and I became your *wealb*, however you wished].³⁰⁸ This manuscript contains Ælfric’s *Grammar* and *Glossary*, but the fragment is now labelled as anonymous. The linguistic forms are Early Middle English.³⁰⁹ It is difficult to assess the dialectal and idiolectal relationships of this text, and thus of the use of *wealb*. At one extreme, we could assume that this is an Ælfrician text or one produced by

³⁰⁶ Faull, ‘*Wealb*’, 27.

³⁰⁷ Elaine Treharne, ‘London, Lambeth Palace Library, 427’, in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Orietta Da Rold, Takako Kato, Mary Swan and Elaine Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.Lamb.427.htm>> [accessed 21st June 2014]; Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 321.

³⁰⁸ *Die Fragmente der Reden der Seele an den Leichnam in Zwei Handschriften zu Worcester und Oxford*, ed. by Richard Buchholz, Erlanger Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie, 6 (Erlangen: Deichert’sche, 1890), p. 9. The form ‘wale’ for *wealb* in the nominative singular implies both a weak declension and the merger of final vowels in Middle English. While the usage of this term may represent mechanical copying, the appearance of Middle English phonological forms here may represent the continuing use of *wealb* in this sense into the thirteenth century, which in turn suggests wider currency. Neither Faull nor Pelteret discusses this instance, and, indeed, the text has received little or no scholarly attention since the editions of the nineteenth century. Here, therefore, the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus has proved invaluable in finding neglected material containing this term.

³⁰⁹ Elaine Treharne, ‘Worcester, Cathedral Library, F. 174’, in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.WorcCL.F.174.htm>> [accessed 20th June 2014]. The *Middle English Dictionary* also cites this text (*MED*, s.v. ‘wale’ [accessed 20th June 2014]).

his school and therefore that this lexical choice depends entirely upon his usage; at the other we could assume that this is an entirely independent text with a concomitantly independent lexical choice. As the distribution of *wealþ* is wider than Pelteret's concentration on the Ælfrician material implies, it is unwise to assume the former. Faull notes that the use of *wealþ* for SLAVE continued into the Middle English period, appearing for the final time in the London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A. IX version of Lazamon's *Brut*, where it is used in parallel with *þræl*.³¹⁰ This indicates the continuation of synonymy until a very late date, independent of Ælfrician influence. As in the homily discussed above, the use of *wealþ* in 'The Soul to the Body' is an expression of humility. As elsewhere, the image of the slave is a potent but conventional image of humility, and one which is not impeded by the use of an unusual word. Therefore, *wealþ* is suitable for both literal and metaphorical contexts. As with *þræl*, the scant amount of material in which this term is attested has made such metaphorical constructions rarer than is the case with *þeow* and *þegn*, but this is an accident of preservation rather than an indication of usage.

3.6 *Wiln*

Unlike the other terms considered in this study, *wealþ* has a feminine form, *wiln*. The presence of a female form is not a peculiarity of *wealþ*; rather the absence of a female form for *esne* and *þræl* is a peculiarity of those terms, as *þeow*, *þegn*, and *mann* all have prominent female cognates. *Wiln* is not purely equivalent to *wealþ*, because it never appears with the sense FOREIGNER, only with the sense SLAVE.³¹¹ *Wiln* itself receives little attention, entirely omitted from Faull's study, although covered by both Pelteret and Girsch.³¹² This is a function of the neglect of both women and slaves in the development of the field of Anglo-Saxon studies, which doubly impacts this term. Nevertheless,

³¹⁰ Faull, 'Wealþ', 28; 7411-12, *Lazamon's Brut: Edited from British Museum MS. Cotton Caligula A.IX and British Museum MS. Cotton Otho C.XIII*, ed. by G. L. Brook and R. F. Leslie, 2 vols, EETS, o. s., 250, 277 (250) (1963-78), I (1963), 384. All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

³¹¹ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 327; Girsch, 'Terminology', p. 45. Pelteret suggests that the formula *wealas and wilna* for male and female slaves was derived from an earlier sense in which this meant 'male and female Celts' (Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 327). However, this is not borne out by any of the extant texts.

³¹² Faull, 'Wealþ'; Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 327-28; Girsch, 'Terminology'.

wiln occurs a substantial number of times, appearing in a greater number of texts than *wealb* as SLAVE. It occurs fewer than sixty times in the extant corpus, and is mainly attested in the works of Ælfric and in the *Heptateuch*, both the Ælfrician and anonymous portions. The third grouping of attestations occurs in the works of Wulfstan, and a variety of other texts account for the remaining examples. The survey given here is not a comprehensive analysis of every instance, but rather an overview which demonstrates the close semantic relationship of *wiln* to its male cognate on the one hand, and on the other, the way in which its limited usage nevertheless hints at wider possibilities.

As with the masculine *wealb*, there is a significant cluster of usages of *wiln* in Ælfric's *Grammar*, where the latter is used to gloss *ancilla* (pp. 100-01):

Table 18: *Wiln* and *Ancilla* in Ælfric's *Grammar*

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	wiln (ancilla)	wilna (ancillae)
Vocative	wiln (ancilla)	wilna (ancillae)
Accusative	wilne (<ancillam>)	wilna (ancillas)
Genitive	wilne (ancillae)	wilna (ancillarum)
Dative	wilne (ancillae)	wilnum (ancillis)
Ablative	wilne (ancilla)	wilnum (ancillis)

Girsch argues that Ælfric chooses *wiln* to gloss *ancilla* in his *Grammar* and elsewhere because it avoids the sexual connotations which she believes were attached to *mennen* and *þeowen*. Instead, she believes, the term *wiln* had a 'mantle of literal slavery incapable of literal amelioration through the means available to the masculine terms' and that Ælfric 'virtually coined the term, or at least resurrected it from obscurity'.³¹³ The assertion that a term which solely denoted literal slaves, most open to sexual abuse, was simultaneously lacking in connotations derived from such abuse, is somewhat strained.³¹⁴ As Ælfric also shows an unusual fondness for *wealb* and the two terms are

³¹³ Girsch, 'Terminology', p. 48-49.

³¹⁴ See Wyatt, *Slaves* for a thorough discussion of the sexual abuse of slaves.

closely associated elsewhere, particularly in the anonymous portions of the *Heptateuch*, it seems likely that his choice of *wiln* was not independent of his choice of *wealh* and cannot be treated as such. Furthermore, Girsch's argument is underpinned by the assumption that the default term for a chattel slave *must* be *þeow*, when, in reality, a wider range of lexical choices were available to those writing about slaves in Old English.

The notion that this was an Ælfrician coinage conflates survival with usage, presuming that because we do not often find this term elsewhere, it cannot have been used by other authors, rather than noting that Ælfric wrote a substantial proportion of the material which touches upon female slaves, and that his works are well preserved. Ælfric's use of *wiln* to gloss *ancilla*, itself a very common term used to denote female slaves,³¹⁵ suggests that it cannot have been as rare as Girsch presumes. In a pedagogic text of this type, the choice of a rare word to gloss a common Latin word would undermine the purpose and effectiveness of the passage. Although *wiln* is rare in the sources, it is unlikely that it was very rare in contemporary discourse because its main appearance in Ælfric is in his translation of the paradigm for *ancilla*, itself a reasonably common noun. More generally, Girsch concentrates on other terms denoting a female slave, such as *þeowen* and *mennen* in the course of her article, and, apart from the instances cited above, *wiln* is largely ignored.³¹⁶ However, *wiln* might simply have been an obvious choice to render the intersection of the semantic fields FEMALE, HUMAN and UNFREE. If we look at his word choice from this perspective, Ælfric's use of *wiln* reveals that it could be regarded as a simple and easy translation for *ancilla*, rather than an obscure and difficult term. Moreover, the strong feminine terms *þeowen* and *þignen* would be equally useful to illustrate the declension of the Latin noun without the potential for confusion.

³¹⁵ *Ancilla* appears 125 times in the Latin Vulgate (*Biblia Sacra: Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. by Robert Weber, 2nd rev. edn, 2 vols [Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1975], accessed from the ARTFL Project: Multilingual Bibles <<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/public/bibles/>> [accessed 4th September 2014]. The ARTFL Project has a search engine which can be used for a corpus search). *Ancilla* also occurs in the *Penitential of Theodore*, the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the works of Æthelweard and Boniface (Latham and Howlett, *Dictionary*, I, 83) and a variety of other texts. Lufu, the benefactor of the charter Sawyer 1196, is described as an *ancilla Dei*. Thus, this word appears in many genres and contexts (Peter Hayes Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* [London: Royal Historical Society, 1968], p. 351).

³¹⁶ Girsch, 'Terminology', pp. 30-54.

Ælfric's choice of *þeow(a)* for *servus* indicates that he had no particular aversion to common terms here. This suggests that *wiln* was not Ælfric's own creation, but was chosen because it denoted FEMALE SLAVE, as did the Latin term which it glosses.

While the *Ars Minor* of Donatus, on which Ælfric's *Grammar* is based in part, gives its examples in the simplest form ('nominativo hic magister' [in the nominative, *hic magister*]),³¹⁷ Ælfric's examples for the female paradigm receive a more complex treatment, partially necessary due to the case syncretism in Old English which had reduced the number of endings. Ælfric's familiarity with the works of Tatwine and Boniface, intended to teach Latin to non-native speakers, may have influenced this strategy of differentiation.³¹⁸ On the other hand, Priscian, another source for the *Grammar*, gives no such illustrative examples.³¹⁹ As noted above, not every paradigm is treated identically by Ælfric, with fewer complex examples given for *servus* than for *ancilla*. This uneven treatment may be the product of such exposure to a variety of strategies for teaching this grammatical material, or to perceived differences in the difficulty attached to learning it.

While some of these sentences, such as '*mea ancilla hoc fecit min wiln dyde ðis*' [my *wiln* did this] (p. 100) give us little more information than the grammatical relationship between the words, others are rather more informative. The sentence '*meae ancillae ars minre wilne cræft*' [the skill of my *wiln*] (p. 100) hints at the potential for slaves to be involved in skilled labour. Hugh Magennis claims that, while a Roman *servus* could be involved in skilled, intellectual work and could wield power and influence, an Anglo-Saxon slave was restricted to the humblest pursuits and did not tend to occupy valued personal positions.³²⁰ At first glance, the correlation between low-status, unskilled work and legal slavery seems obvious, in part due to the major influence of slavery in the American South upon the modern conception of the institution, but also due to the

³¹⁷ Aelius Donatus, *The Ars Minor of Donatus: For One Thousand Years the Leading Textbook of Grammar*, ed. and trans. by Wayland Johnson Chase, University of Wisconsin Studies in the Social Sciences and History, 11 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1926), pp. 30-31.

³¹⁸ Thomas N. Hall, 'Ælfric as Pedagogue', in *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. by Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 18 (Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 193-216 (p. 195).

³¹⁹ Priscianus Caesariensis, *Excerptiones de Prisciano: The Source for Ælfric's Latin-Old English Grammar*, ed. by David W. Porter, Anglo-Saxon Texts, 4 (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2002).

³²⁰ Magennis, '*Godes Þeow*', 155. Magennis does not make it clear what such 'personal positions' might be.

economic degradation which was often both cause and consequence of slavery. Rosamond Faith writes that Anglo-Saxon ‘slavery was essentially the bottom of a long slippery slope which was a hazard for the economically insecure, and the pressures of poverty meant that the stock of slaves was continually being replaced from within Anglo-Saxon society’.³²¹ However, there is clear evidence that slaves in Anglo-Saxon England could undertake skilled labour, including the work of skilled stockmen, such as dairying, beekeeping and swineherding, all mentioned in the *Rectitudines*.³²² Rosamund Faith goes so far as to argue that it was *likely* that slaves would be such skilled workers.³²³ Ploughing, a skilled activity, was consistently associated with slaves in this period, and the Domesday Book records a close correlation between the number of slaves and the number of plough teams.³²⁴ Thus, Ælfric’s phrase here echoes and confirms our understanding of the association of slaves with particular types of skilled work.

The majority of Ælfric’s *wiln*-sentences can be divided into two broad, and not necessarily mutually exclusive, categories: those which concern the work of slaves, and those which concern their social subordination. In addition to the two examples discussed in the previous paragraph, sentences which concern the work of slaves include the vocative singular (*‘mea ancilla, esto utilis eala ðu min wiln, beo nytwyrðe’* [be useful, my *wiln*]), ablative singular (*‘a mea ancilla, uestitus sum fram minre wilne ic eom gescryd’* [I am dressed by my *wiln*]), the nominative plural (*‘meae ancillae bene operantur mine wilna wyrceað wel’* [my *wilne* work well]), and the vocative plural (*‘o meae ancillae, operamini melius eala ge mine wilna, wyrceað bet’* [work harder, my *wilne*]) (p. 101). This association with work is unsurprising, but reiterates the primary role of the slave as a tool for her masters. The only sentence which may apply more specifically to female rather than male slaves is the ablative singular, *‘fram minre wilne ic eom gescryd’* [I am dressed by my *wiln*] (p. 101).

³²¹ Rosamund Faith, *Peasantry*, p. 61.

³²² Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 172-9; ‘Rectitudines Singularum Personarum’, in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 444-453. All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

³²³ Faith, *Peasantry*, pp. 64-65.

³²⁴ Pelteret’s chapter on the Domesday evidence pays particular attention to the statistical relationship between ploughs and *servi* (*Slavery*, pp. 185-235).

Pelteret suggests that *wiln* may have been used particularly of female slaves who had a personal relationship with their owners.³²⁵ However, this kind of personal relationship may have been as much a feature of female slavery generally, or at least of the slavery of those female slaves whose role was most recognised by their masters. Just as these sentences do not require any particular *kind* of female slave on a lexical level, so, too, the slave is undifferentiated at the level of sentence meaning, implying no special conditions attached to the *wiln* in comparison to the *þeowen*.

The second category of *wiln*-sentences is rather more varied: dative singular (*'meae ancillae do alimenta minre wilne ic sylle fodan'* [I give food to my *wiln*]), accusative singular (*'meam <ancillam> arguo mine wilne ic ðreage'* [I rebuke my *wiln*]), dative plural (*'meis ancillis uictum tribuo minum wilnum ic forgife bigleofan'* [I grant sustenance to my *wilne*]), and accusative plural (*'meas ancillas moneo mine wilna ic myngie'* [I warn my *wilne*]) (p. 101). Here, the *wiln* is both given succour and chastised,³²⁶ emphasising her subordination and her complete dependence upon her masters. The master, in the person of the speaker, has power, both physical and moral, over the slaves, and this power is treated as commonplace. Although these sentences are, in origin, not intended to give any particular picture of the relationships between slave and master, they demonstrate the same prevailing attitudes towards slaves which we find in other texts and in relation to other slave words.³²⁷ This power relationship could apply to any relationship involving chattel slaves, and even the elements of gender are minimal. Ælfric's use of *wiln* here is thus free of complex connotations, save those of powerlessness which were attached to all slaves.

Wiln appears multiple times in the rest of the Ælfrician corpus, although its appearances are far more dispersed here than in the *Grammar*. It appears in two of the *Catholic Homilies*

³²⁵ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 327-28.

³²⁶ The notion that slaves were inherently sinful and must be continually rebuked to counter this tendency was common in Classical thought (Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, p. 27) and continued in Christian thought, including that of Isidore of Seville (Dockès, *Slavery and Liberation*, p. 146).

³²⁷ For more detailed work on the power structures implicit in works such as dictionaries and grammars, see Rachel Gilmour, *Grammars of Colonialism: Representing Languages in Colonial South Africa* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006) and Kristen Mackintosh, 'Biased Books by Harmless Drudges: How Dictionaries are Influenced by Social Values', in *Lexicography, Terminology, and Translation: Text-Based Studies in Honour of Ingrid Meyer*, ed. by Lynne Bowker (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2006), pp. 45-63.

(Epiphany and Palm Sunday), *On Auguries*, Ælfric's version of the *Interrogationes Sigeuulfi in Genesin*, and several saints' lives (Eugenia, Agatha, Swithhun).³²⁸ In the *Interrogationes* and the homily on Palm Sunday, *wiln* refers to slaves in a biblical context, and in Saint Eugenia to slaves in Classical Antiquity (pp. 36-38). In the *Life of Saint Swithun*, the *wiln* who is sentenced to a beating for 'lytlan gylte' is saved on account of her prayers to the saint (p. 452). This story clearly draws upon the conditions of contemporary and near-contemporary slavery. The appearance of the fettered slave, a trope in itself, allows the narrator to demonstrate the saint's charity and beneficence in relation to the lowest orders of society.³²⁹ This is as much a power relationship as that evidenced in the *Grammar*, and illustrates the vulnerability of slaves to unjust punishment. In the homily for Epiphany, we are told that 'seo cwen' and 'seo wiln' often give birth at the same time, but 'þære wilne sunu wunað eall his lif on þeowte' [the *wiln*'s son remains in slavery all his life] (p. 236). Pelteret uses this instance to illustrate his argument that *wiln* cannot be used with a spiritual meaning.³³⁰ Certainly, the status contrast between the *cwen* and the *wiln* is the key feature of the latter's semantics here. It juxtaposes the very highest possible female role with the very lowest, in service of the rhetorical purposes of the passage. In both texts, the *wiln* is both an acknowledged feature of society and a cipher for absolute subjugation.

Similarly, in the *Life of Saint Agatha*, the saint's choice to act as a *wiln* is contrasted with

³²⁸ Ælfric of Eynsham, 'Epiphania Domini', in Ælfric of Eynsham, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series; Text*, ed. by Peter Clemoes, EETS, s. s., 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 232-240 (p. 236); Ælfric of Eynsham, 'On Auguries', in Ælfric of Eynsham, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints: Being a Set of Sermons on Saints' Days Formerly Observed by the English Church*, ed. and trans. by Walter William Skeat, EETS, o. s., 76, 82, 94, 114 (76, 82), 2 vols (London: Trübner, 1881-1900), I (1881-85), 364-383 (p. 364); Ælfric of Eynsham, 'St. Eugenia, Virgin', in Ælfric of Eynsham, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. by Skeat, I, 24-51 (pp. 36-38); Ælfric of Eynsham, 'St. Swithun, Bishop', in Ælfric of Eynsham, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. by Skeat, I, 440-471 (p. 452); Ælfric of Eynsham, 'St. Agatha, Virgin', in Ælfric of Eynsham, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. by Skeat, I, 194-209 (p. 198); Ælfric of Eynsham, 'Dominica Palmarum. De Passione Domini', in Ælfric of Eynsham, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*, ed. by Godden, pp. 138-49 (p. 141); George Edwin Mac Lean, 'Ælfric's Version of Alcuini Interrogationes Sigeuulfi in Genesin', *Anglia*, 7 (1884), 1-59 (p. 46). I have used the titles which Skeat uses for these texts in his table of contents, rather than those which immediately precede the texts themselves. References are to these editions and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

³²⁹ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 58-59.

³³⁰ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 327.

her ‘true’ status as ‘æðelborenre mægðe’ [noble-born maiden] (p. 198). Once again, the *wiln*, here in reference to Classical rather than contemporary slavery, is contrasted with the highest ranks of society. On the other hand, Pelteret’s assumption that *wiln* cannot be used in a spiritual sense runs aground here. Girsch argues that Quintianus’ use of *wiln* here implies literal slavery, while Agatha ripostes with ‘ic eom godes þinen’ [I am God’s *þinen*] in a metaphorical sense (p. 198).³³¹ However, the two are simply used as synonyms; the text marks no difference between the two terms. Agatha clarifies Quintianus’ use of *wiln* with ‘godes’, playing on different aspects of the same central concept, the literal and spiritual aspects of the slave. Her use of ‘þinen’ is stylistic rather than semantically differentiated. Moreover, the reference in *On Auguries* to the flesh as the slave of the soul, which Pelteret himself cites, is clearly a metaphorical use of this term which draws upon its references to contemporary society, but which is also spiritual in nature:³³²

ac seo sawl is ðæs flæsces hlæfdige, and hire gedafnað þæt heo simle gewylde ða wilne, þæt is þæt flæsc, to hyre hæsum. Þwyrlice færð æt ðam huse þær seo wiln bið þære hlæfdian wissigend, and seo hlæfdige bið þære wilne underðeodd

[but the soul is the mistress of the flesh, and it befits her that she should always rule the *wiln*, that is the flesh, according to her commands. It goes badly with the house where the *wiln* instructs the mistress, and the mistress is subject to the *wiln*] (p. 364). This metaphor occurs elsewhere in the Old English corpus, but it is more usually constructed in terms of the relationships of men or of persons of unspecified gender.³³³ The use of explicitly feminine terms here allows the metaphor to be shaped in terms of the household, not changing its essential nature, but giving it a subtly different slant, suggested by the grammatical gender of *sawel*. While this is not the *ancilla Dei* construct, it is a metaphorical, spiritual usage of this term, and one which is closely related to the *ancilla Dei*. Ælfric’s use of *wiln* in these texts is thus more diverse than has previous been allowed, and encompasses the full range of contexts in which we might expect to find such a slave word. It is his most commonly used term for FEMALE SLAVE,³³⁴ but his unusual frequency of usage is not

³³¹ Girsch, ‘Terminology’, p. 47.

³³² Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 327.

³³³ See, for instance, the fragment ‘The Soul to the Body’ discussed elsewhere in this chapter (3.5).

³³⁴ Girsch, ‘Terminology’, p. 48.

matched by unusual semantics or patterns of attestation. As with the masculine terms, once integrated into the lexicon, *wiln* was used as any other slave word.

Wiln is used in Ælfric's *Glossary* to translate *ancilla*, alongside the parallel Latin glosses *serva* and *abra* (p. 301). This is most likely the source of some of the glosses in which *wiln* appears, including those edited by Kindschi,³³⁵ and the Antwerp-London glossaries. In the latter, the vocabulary of Hand 2 is built upon the core of Ælfric's *Glossary*, and *wiln* is equated with *ancilla*, *þinen*, and, tellingly, *abra*.³³⁶ Dependent as they are upon Ælfric's lexical choices, these glosses do not give us any additional information on the semantics or contexts of *wiln*. The Prudentius glosses are not dependent upon Ælfric, and equate *wiln* with 'uernae, ignobiles'.³³⁷ The first of these *lemmata* refers specifically to 'a slave born in his master's house, a homeborn slave', while the second, in this sense, simply means 'of low birth, baseborn, ignoble'.³³⁸ The Latin *verna* can refer to slaves of both genders, but the apparently feminine form may have suggested *wiln* to the Old English glossator. This gloss is therefore clearly distinct from the Ælfrician glosses. The first *lemma* retains the association with slavery established elsewhere in the Old English corpus, while the latter implies some broadening or blurring of meaning which is not attested elsewhere.

The *Heptateuch* uses *wiln* extensively. In addition to the *wealas ond wilne* stock phrase discussed above, *wiln* appears on its own eight times (Genesis 16.5, 16.6, 21.10, 21.13, 21.14, Exodus 11.5, 12.29, 23.12; pp. 36, 45-46, 105, 107, 119). Unlike its paired uses, when *wiln* is used alone it is usually in the Ælfrician parts of the *Heptateuch*; the exceptions to this rule are the two uses in Exodus. This suggests more tentative usage, although it is worth noting that even in the Ælfrician parts of this text, *ancilla* is not always glossed by *wiln*. The most substantial

³³⁵ 'The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin-Moretus MS. 32 and British Museum MS. Additional 32246', ed. by Lowell Kindschi (unpublished doctoral thesis, Stanford University, 1955), pp. 50, 206. See also Wright, *Vocabularies*, I, col. 108.

³³⁶ David W. Porter, 'On the Antwerp-London Glosses', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 98 (1999), 170-92 (pp. 178, 181-83).

³³⁷ *The Old English Prudentius Glosses at Boulogne-sur-Mer*, ed. by Herbert Dean Merritt, Stanford Studies in Language and Literature, 16 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 39.

³³⁸ *A Latin Dictionary: Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary*, ed. by Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), pp. 881, 1974.

concentration of uses of *wiln* is in the story of Hagar, which falls within the portion translated by Ælfric. Here, *wiln* glosses *ancilla* three times (Genesis 16.5, 21.10, and 21.13; pp. 36, 45), and the pronoun ‘eam’ once in Genesis 21.14 (pp. 45-46), where this refers back to *ancilla* in the previous verse. However, *ancilla* occurs many more times in this episode and elsewhere throughout the text of these books, glossed by different slave words, as in Genesis 16.1-2, and 16.8, which also refer to Hagar (p. 36). This cluster of uses disproves Girsch’s argument that Ælfric avoided *þeowen* and *mennen* due to their sexualised connotations, and chose *wiln* instead. Hagar’s role as concubine would surely suggest a sexualised term and preclude the use of *wiln* if Ælfric used it specifically because ‘it carried very little baggage’, particularly the sexual connotations of *mennen* and *þeowen*.³³⁹ Ælfric’s use of *wiln* here suggests that any connotations were both weaker and more evenly distributed than Girsch believes, and that the *wiln* was not immune to the sexual environments associated with other feminine slave words.

Ancilla is more common in Genesis than elsewhere. As a substantial proportion of this book was glossed by Ælfric, so the anonymous translator may appear disproportionately more cautious in his use of this term. Nevertheless, it is clear that the anonymous translator uses *wiln* most frequently as part of the stock phrase *wealas ond wilne*, and the choice of the feminine term may have been triggered by the choice of the masculine and by the demands of alliteration. The three instances in which the anonymous translator uses *wiln* independently of *wealh* occur in Exodus: 11.5, 12.29, and 23.12 (pp. 105, 107, 119). The first two instances refer to the killing of the firstborn of Egypt and are versions of the same passage: ‘to middre nihte ic gange ut on Egipta land and ofslea ælc frumcenned cild on Egipta land, fram Pharaones frumcennedan sunu þe sit on his cynesetle oð þære wilne frumcennedan sunu þe sitt æt þære cweornan, and ealle þara nytena frumcennedan’ [at midnight, I will go out into the land of Egypt, and slay every firstborn child in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn son of the Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn son of the female slave who sits at the mill, and all the firstborn of the beasts] (Exodus 11.5, p. 105). This usage is narrative, and uses the contrast of high and low status as a rhetorical device such as we have seen elsewhere. The second usage, in Exodus 12.29, concerns the execution of this

³³⁹ Girsch, ‘Terminology’, pp. 48-49.

massacre, and uses much the same formula: ‘oð þære gehæftan wilne frumcennedan cild, þe sæt on þam cwerterne’ [to the firstborn child of the bound female slave who sat in the prison] (p. 107). The prison is substituted for the mill, both presumably associated with low status. This change of setting is the reason for the use of *captiva* in the Vulgate (Exodus 12.29). Thus here, unusually, *wiln* does not gloss *ancilla*. The previous use of *wiln* and *ancilla* together in the earlier formula nevertheless drove the translator to reuse the term *wiln*. While the participle ‘gehæftan’ adds clarification, the close association between slaves and captives probably eased this choice. Pelteret’s claim that *wiln* is only ever used to translate *ancilla* in the *Heptateuch*³⁴⁰ is therefore incorrect. *Wiln* has enough flexibility to be used with other closely related Latin *lemmata* where a link with *ancilla* is already strongly suggested.

The anonymous narrator’s other use of *wiln* alone occurs in the commandment to keep the Sabbath: ‘wirc six dagas and geswic on þam sefoðan, þæt þin oxa & þin assa hig gereston and þæt þinre wilne sunu si gehyrt, and se utacymena’ [work for six days and rest on the seventh, so that your oxen and your asses may rest, and the son of your *wiln* and the foreigner may refresh themselves] (Exodus 23.12, p. 119). In contrast to the earlier usage, here, the text is legalistic rather than narrative, the use of *wiln* part of a stock phrase, and the overall list of beasts and persons is a neat microcosm of the household. There is no particular feature which links the use of *wiln* in these two passages. Overall, indeed, there is no distinction of meaning, context, or referent between those instances in which *ancilla* is glossed by *wiln* and those in which it is glossed by other terms in either translator’s text. The lexical selection is purely stylistic, and *wiln* is used synonymously with the other Old English terms.

Girsch’s belief that Wulfstan avoided feminine slave words entirely, due to his ‘well-known propriety’ and the potential sexual connotations of such words,³⁴¹ is incorrect: Wulfstan uses *wiln* twice. Pelteret notes that this may be a borrowing from Ælfric.³⁴² The connection between the two

³⁴⁰ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 327.

³⁴¹ Girsch, ‘Terminology’, p. 49. Feminine slave words are much more scarcely attested than their masculine counterparts, not least because the masculine terms can apply to both genders. This may account in part for the absence of such terms in Wulfstan.

³⁴² Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 328.

men, including the correspondence between them, is both well recognised and well studied.³⁴³ On the other hand, Dance notes that Wulfstan's choice of vocabulary did not necessarily follow Ælfric's slavishly, and that, while his usage is 'late West Saxon' he frequently departs from the preferred vocabulary of the 'Winchester group'.³⁴⁴ It is therefore likely that we can read Ælfrician influence behind the use of this term, but Wulfstan's choice to adopt it is his own. The 'missing piece' here is Wulfstan's adoption and use of other slave words which were not common in Late West Saxon. It is this tendency which explains his choice to use a rare West Saxon term with which he was familiar due to his acquaintance with Ælfric, just as his tenure as Bishop of Worcester and Archbishop of York introduced him to terms such as *esne* and *þræl* which he incorporated into his vocabulary.³⁴⁵

In common with his uses of *þræl*, Wulfstan uses *wealh* both in his homiletic works and in the law codes which he helped to compose. The homily *Dominica IIIIa vel quando volueris*³⁴⁶ states 'he is ealra fæder, & þæt we geswuteljað þonne we singað ure pater noster. Ealswa bealdlice se þeowa clypað & namað on his pater noster his Drihten him to fæder swa se hlaford, & seo wylen eallswa wel swa seo hlæfdige' [he is the father of all, and we make that clear when we sing our *pater noster*. Even as the slave boldly honours and calls upon his Lord as a father for himself in his *pater*

³⁴³ Joyce Hill, 'Ælfric: His Life and Works', in *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. by Magennis and Swan, pp. 35-65 (p. 43); Christopher A. Jones, 'Ælfric and the Limits of "Benedictine Reform"', in *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. by Magennis and Swan, pp. 67-108 (pp. 67, 108); Joyce Hill, 'Archbishop Wulfstan: Reformer?', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. by Matthew Townend, *Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, 10 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 309-24 (pp. 313-6).

³⁴⁴ Richard Dance, 'Sound, Fury and Signifiers; or Wulfstan's Language', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 29-61 (pp. 47-50).

³⁴⁵ This may also be the case with other semantic fields, but these lie outside the scope of this study. Pons-Sanz's *Vocabulary* covers some aspects of this, but does not cover borrowing between the dialects of Old English.

³⁴⁶ This homily is on the subject of baptism, and is believed to be a shorter version of VIIIc, in which *wiln* does not occur (Wulfstan II, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Dorothy Bethurum, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 31). While other homilies by Wulfstan exist in multiple manuscripts, this homily, *Dominica IIIIa vel quando volueris*, exists only in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 302. As Bethurum notes, this is based upon several Carolingian sources, including Alcuin's outline of the baptismal rite, and Wulfstan's interest in this material may spring from a similar desire to clarify and promote the Roman, rather than the Gallican, practice (Wulfstan, *Homilies*, pp. 302-3).

noster, so does the lord, and so the female slave does just as well as the lady].³⁴⁷ Here, the very structure of the passage ('se þeowa [...] se hlaforð, & seo wylen [...] seo hlæfdige') draws our attention to the pairs of parallels. On the one hand, the *wiln* and the *hlæfdige* represent the extremes of the social spectrum, demonstrating that individuals from every level of society can both worship God and call upon him as father.³⁴⁸ On the other hand, the pairing of *wiln* and *þeow* uses gender as a contrastive division of society. Both *þeow* and *wiln* have cognates which correspond to the opposite gender which could have been used here. Wulfstan's choice of *wiln* and *þeow* indicates that not only was *wiln* synonymous with the other terms used to denote female slaves, but that it also existed in partial synonymy with the masculine terms, in which gender was the only contrasting element of meaning. The pairing of *wiln* and *þeow* here is unforced and the natural consequence of their overall semantics.

The use of *wiln* in *II Cnut* is the sole appearance of *wealþ* or a cognate in a late legal code: 'gif wiffæst wer hine forligce be his agenre wilne, þolige þære & bete for hine sylfne wið God & wið men' [if a married man commits adultery with his own female slave, he should forfeit her and atone for himself before God and men].³⁴⁹ This code was composed by Wulfstan,³⁵⁰ and the presence of *wiln* is most likely due to his linguistic influence. It is most probable that, even when the composers of other late law codes recognised the servile meaning of *wealþ*, its potential ambiguity in texts relevant to relations with Celtic-speaking communities discouraged its use.³⁵¹ *Wiln* is not similarly ambiguous, but specific references to female slaves are rare in the laws. As a minor term, even if in wider currency than attested in the extant corpus, *wiln* would represent a small proportion of a small group of references to slaves, and therefore we should not expect it to

³⁴⁷ Wulfstan II, 'Dominica IIIa vel quando volueri', in Wulfstan, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, pp. 172-74 (p. 173).

³⁴⁸ *Hlæfdige* translates *domina* in Ælfric's *Glossary* (p. 301).

³⁴⁹ § 54, 'II Cnut', in *Die Gesetzte der Angelsachsen*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 308-370 (p. 348). All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

³⁵⁰ 'Cnut's Oxford Code, 1018 (Cn 1018)', in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/>> [accessed 26th June 2014].

³⁵¹ *II Æthelred*, discussed above, does not deal with relations between the English and Celtic-speaking peoples, and therefore the contexts in which *wealþ* is used resolve its ambiguity here.

be used frequently in the law codes. Thus, while Wulfstan's usage is dependent upon his association with Ælfric, the rarity of this term is not surprising. It is not so much that we should be surprised that Wulfstan used this term while others did not, as that anyone used it at all in this context. In terms of the specifics of this clause, the concern for the sexual role of slaves is widespread.³⁵² In addition to concerns about this in literary texts, other Anglo-Saxon law codes tackle such issues in the practical domain.³⁵³ Both such long-standing concerns and increasing interest in imposing monogamy make clauses such as this a pressing concern.³⁵⁴ Once again, we find *wiln* used in a highly sexual context. It is clear, therefore, that this term could be used in many of the situations in which the other feminine slave words were common, and that they were not differentiated by sexualisation.

Wiln is also found in Psalm 115 of the Arundel Psalter, 'eala drihten forðon ic eom þeow þin & bearn wilne þinre þu toslite bændas mine' [O Lord, for I am your slave and the son of your *wiln*. You broke my bonds] for the Vulgate (Psalm 115.16) 'obsecro Domine quia ego servus tuus ego servus tuus filius ancillae tuae dissolvisti vincula mea' [I entreat you O Lord, for I am your slave: I am your slave, and the son of your female slave. You broke my bonds].³⁵⁵ Similarly, *wiln* also occurs in Psalm 122 of the Salisbury Psalter: 'efne swa egan þeowene on handa hlaforda heora egan wilne on handa hlæfdian swa egan ure to drihtene gode ure oþ he gemildsige us' for the Latin 'ecce sicut oculi seruorum in manibus dominorum suorum, [Sicut] oculi ancillę in manibus domine suę ita oculi nostri ad dominum deum nostrum donec misereatur nostri' [even as the eyes of the slaves are on the hands of their lords, the eyes of the female slaves on the hands of their

³⁵² See Girsch, 'Terminology', and Wyatt, *Slaves*.

³⁵³ See Chapter 4 for both aspects (4.3.1, 4.7 etc).

³⁵⁴ The imposition of monogamy and its relationship to slavery is one of the central themes of Wyatt's *Slaves*, and is discussed repeatedly in that volume.

³⁵⁵ Psalm 115.16, *Der altenglische Arundel-Psalter: Eine Interlinearversion in der Handschrift Arundel 60 des Britischen Museums*, ed. by Guido Oess, Anglistische Forschungen, 30 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1910), p. 190. The Vitellius Psalter gloss on *ancillae* here is corrupt (Psalm 115.16, *The Vitellius Psalter: Edited from British Museum MS Cotton Vitellius E. xviii*, ed. by James L. Rosier, Cornell Studies in English, 42 [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962], p. 290).

mistresses, so our eyes are upon our Lord God until he has mercy upon us].³⁵⁶ In both these psalms, *wiln* is used with its conventional sense, translating the Latin *ancilla*. The distribution of contrasts in the latter is similar to that found in Wulfstan's homily: a gender contrast with *þeow* on the one hand, and a status contrast with *blæfdige* on the other. While Pelteret and Girsch make much of *wiln*'s failure to appear in *ancilla Dei* metaphors, it appears here in a simile to the same purpose. This indicates that the absence or rarity of *wiln* in such metaphors may be rather less significant than has been supposed, and that the various translators were more interested in its equivalence with *ancilla* than in any other feature.

The final use of *wiln* occurs in the version of Matthew 26.71 in the West Saxon Gospels: 'ða he ut-eode of þære dura ða geseah hyne oþer wiln. & sæde þam ðe þær wæron; & þes wæs mid þam nazareniscan hælende' [when he went out of the doors, another female slave saw him, and said to those who were there 'this man was with the Nazarene Saviour'], translating once more the Latin *ancilla*, rendered by Aldred as *þeowe* (pp. 327-28).³⁵⁷ This is the sole use of *wiln* in this text, which otherwise prefers *þinen*.³⁵⁸ The *wiln* here is the female slave who accuses Peter when the latter denies any knowledge of Christ. There is no obvious factor here driving the translator's divergence from his established norm; the previous *ancilla* in this episode is translated by *þeowen* (Matthew 26.69, pp. 226-27), and the two slaves are clearly intended to belong to the same class and type of people. The only instance of *wealh* in the West Saxon version of the gospels occurs in relative proximity, at Matthew 24.50, which may explain the choice of *wiln* in 26.71.³⁵⁹ The intervening use of *þeowen*, however, indicates that while this usage may have suggested *wiln* to the translator, it did not create an exclusive connection between the two. We have here a hint of the

³⁵⁶ Psalm 22.2, *The Salisbury Psalter: Edited from Salisbury Cathedral MS 150*, ed. by Celia Sisam and Kenneth Sisam, EETS, o. s., 242 [London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1959], p. 259). This translation refers to both the Old English and the Latin text.

³⁵⁷ This text is taken from CCC 140, but Hatton 38 also uses *wiln*. Owun's Rushworth gloss uses *oþer*, due to textual differences in the Rushworth version of the Latin text (pp. 327-28).

³⁵⁸ See 2.8.2.

³⁵⁹ See 3.5.

synonymy which is common in the Old English semantic field of slavery, but which is otherwise so rare in the West Saxon gospels.

3.7 Ambiguity in the Exeter Book Riddles

Wealþ is used in the Exeter Book Riddles 12 and 72, alongside the apparently Anglian feminine form *wale* in Riddles 12 and 52.³⁶⁰ The manuscript of the Exeter Book (Exeter, Cathedral Library 3501) in which these riddles occur can be dated to between 965 and 975, while attempts to date the riddles more closely have been inconclusive.³⁶¹ Williamson solves both 12 and 72 as ‘ox’, while 52 is commonly solved as a variety of household implements.³⁶² As noted above, this is the only use of the form *wale*. While otherwise omitting the feminine forms, Faull considers both the masculine and feminine forms of *wealþ* used in the riddles side-by-side. She summarises the debate on the identity of the *wealas*: Baum translates both with ‘Welsh’ and Tupper takes the references to dark complexion to indicate a high proportion of ‘Celtic’ ancestry amongst the slave population, implicitly believing that these terms encompass both meanings at once. John Morris argues that the *wealas* here are the descendants of the British inhabitants of the local area. On the other hand, Faull herself prefers a reading which sees this ‘darkness’ as a marker purely of status, and thus the individuals simply as slaves.³⁶³ Certainly, dark hair is a common feature of the *wealas* in Riddles 12 and 52: in the former, we encounter ‘*swearte Wealas*’ [dark Wealas] and the ‘*wonfeax Wale*’ [dark-haired Wale], and in the latter the ‘*wonfah Wale*’ [dark-hued Wale] (Riddle 12.4a, 12.8a, p. 74;

³⁶⁰ This study uses the Krapp-Dobbie numbering for the riddles, which treats the first ‘three’ riddles as separate texts, because of the widespread use of this system. However, the text itself here is drawn from Williamson’s edition which treats these lines as a single unitary riddle. Therefore, there is a discrepancy of two between the two systems: Riddle 12 here is Riddle 10 in Williamson’s numbering. Williamson gives the Krapp-Dobbie numbering for each riddle in brackets.

³⁶¹ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, I, 1; Williamson, *Riddles*, pp. 3-10. However, the Leiden Riddle, one of the riddles included in this collection, has linguistic features which are typical of the earlier forms of the Northumbrian dialect and Parkes dates the physical text in Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Vossius Lat. 40 106, 25 V to the tenth century (M. B. Parkes, ‘The Manuscript of the Leiden Riddle’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 1 [1972], 207-17 [pp. 211, 216-17]).

³⁶² Williamson, *Riddles*, pp. 166-67, 295, 342.

³⁶³ Faull, ‘*Wealþ*’, 30-31.

Riddle 52.6a, p. 99).³⁶⁴ While *swearte* ('dark, black') is reasonably common, having over 300 attestations,³⁶⁵ both *wonfeax* and *wonfab* are *hapax legomena*, formed with the common element *won-*, meaning 'dark, dusty, sable, lurid, livid', and, when referring to living creatures, specifically, 'swarthy, dusty, dark-hued'.³⁶⁶ However, such 'darkness' need not represent either genuine phenotypic difference between two populations or an 'ethnic' construction of identity based upon dark hair or skin as a marker of identity.³⁶⁷ There is a substantial body of evidence which suggests that dark colouration is associated with low social status and thus with the 'othering' of such classes in a number of societies. From a very early period, Chinese culture associated darker skin with lower social status: 'according to the *Shuowen* (first century AD), the common people were called black-headed because of their pigmentation', and this colour-consciousness was only increased by contact with darker-complected neighbouring peoples. This led to 'an elision of physical type and cultural status'.³⁶⁸ More immediately, *þrælar* in Old Norse literature are often associated both with a complex of unflattering moral characteristics and with dark colouration, as in the poem *Rígsþula*, where the prototypical slave *Þræll* is described as 'hǫrvi svartan' [dark as

³⁶⁴ Williamson's use of these capitalisations implies a decisively ethnic reading of this text. As I argue here, the use of these terms is in reality ambiguous, and such capitalisations should thus be avoided.

³⁶⁵ Including variant spellings, a search of the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus returns approximately 316 results (*DOE* Corpus [accessed 16th May 2011]).

³⁶⁶ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 1167. This appears to be related to the Old Frisian element *wan-* in *wanfelle*, *wanfellig*, 'with bruised skin, black and blue', which refers to a dark colour. Breeze postulates a loan from Brittonic, meaning 'faint (of light), dim, obscure', with blueish and pale connotations (Andrew Breeze, 'Old English *Wann* "Dark; Pallid": Welsh *Gwann* "Weak; Sad, Gloomy" ', *ANQ*, 10 (1997), 10-13), but in the riddles it is clearly used to refer to dark colouration, as in Riddle 49, which pairs 'wonna' with 'sweart' (Riddle 49.4b-5a, p. 98).

³⁶⁷ Such features, however, were and are used as a 'bearer of meaning', and hair in particular was an especially potent marker in this period (Robert Bartlett, 'Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle Ages', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 4 [1994], 43-60, [p. 43].)

³⁶⁸ Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (London: Hurst, 1992), pp. 10-11; Fenton, *Ethnicity*, p. 85.

flax].³⁶⁹ The highly stylised nature of *Rígsþula* emphasises the connection between such stereotypical features and the idealised class structure which it delineates,³⁷⁰ but such features seem to have been used as a quick poetical and visual code to cue the audience to issues of class in other medieval texts. Therefore, the darkness of the *wealas* in the riddles, both male and female, is simply a group marker, probably relating to their low status, and not necessarily an indicator of ethnic identity, contrary to Pelteret's suggestion.³⁷¹

Riddle 12 relies extensively on contrasts between positive and negative characteristics and behaviour, the latter being the province of *wealas*, whether male or female. Most obviously, the 'swearte Wealas' are explicitly compared to undefined 'sellan men' [better men] (Riddle 12.4b, p. 74). The actions of the 'wale', also described as the 'dol druncmenn' [foolish drunk female slave] (Riddle 12.9a, p. 74) are potentially obscene:

wæteð in wætre, wyrmeð hwilum
 fægre to fyre; me on fæðme sticaþ
 hygegalan hond, hwyrfeð geneahhe,
 swifeð me geond sweartne.

[she wets me in liquid on dark nights, sometimes warms me pleasantly at the fire; thrusts a wanton hand into my lap, turns me often, sweeps me through the dark] (Riddle 12.10-13a, p. 74). It is not uncommon to associate foreign peoples, especially enemies and rivals, with scurrilous behaviour.³⁷² On the other hand, slaves were also associated with such behaviour, which was regarded as particularly perilous to society if unrestrained. While these characteristics could therefore be

³⁶⁹ 7, 'Rígsþula', in *Edda: Die Lieder de Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, ed. by Hans Kuhn and Gustav Neckel, 2 vols (Heidelberg: Winter, 1983), I, 280-87 (p. 281). The composition of the poem may be connected to the British Isles, but this trope is widespread in Old Norse literature. Dronke argues that 'the thesis of the poem [...] may have been perfected in the context of early eleventh-century England', but that the material is much older, relating the use of colour to Indo-European colour-class symbolism. She suggests that the creator of the poem in its current form was a Norse poet familiar with Anglo-Danish England and writing around the year 1020 ('Rígsþula', in *The Poetic Edda. Volume II: Mythological Poems*, ed. and trans. by Ursula Dronke [Oxford: Clarendon, 1997], 159-238 [pp. 185-90, 203-07]).

³⁷⁰ Frederic Amory, 'The Historical Worth of *Rígsþula*', *Alvíssmál*, 10 (2001), 3-20 (pp. 3-5); Thomas D. Hill, 'Rígsþula: Some Medieval Christian Analogues', *Speculum*, 61 (1986), 79-89.

³⁷¹ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 52.

³⁷² *OED*, s.v. 'Dutch' and 'French'.

associated with both foreigners and slaves, the concern evinced elsewhere in Old English literature suggests that the latter is more likely to be relevant here.

Thus far, many of the features associated with *wealas* in the riddles have not added greatly to the differentiation between the ethnic and status denotations of this term, plausible as they are for both senses. However, there are some contextual clues. The riddle creature of Riddle 12 tells us ‘binde fæste’ [(I) bind fast] (Riddle 12.3b, p. 74) the ‘swearthe Wealas’, suggesting the binding of slaves, but also of war captives taken from the various Celtic-speaking peoples. To make matters more confusing, many such captives would likely have ended up as slaves.³⁷³ Pelteret notes the close connection between the two categories, slaves and ‘Celts’, which lies behind the semantic development of *wealh*.³⁷⁴ Similarly, the description of the *wale* as ‘feorran broht’ [brought from afar] (Riddle 12.7b, p. 74) initially triggers the association with captives taken from another ethnic group, but may refer more generally to war and raiding as common sources of slaves.³⁷⁵ The two meanings, FOREIGNER and SLAVE, are not necessarily mutually exclusive here. On the other hand, the equation of the *wale* with the *mennen*, a common term used to denote female slaves, and the contrast with the ‘bryd’ [maiden] with her ‘felawlonc fotum’ [very stately feet] (Riddle 12.6b-7a, p. 74), points more obviously towards a status reading of this term. Thus, both the *wale* and the *wealas* in Riddle 12 may be read as either slaves or ‘foreigners’, although with some suggestions that we should prefer the former reading. Equally, the domestic tasks of the *wale* in Riddle 52, who drives the domestic implements, and lacks any further indications of ethnic status, make the most likely reading of this term here SLAVE (Riddle 52.1-7, p. 99). By contrast, if we retain the manuscript reference to ‘mearcraþas walas’ in Riddle 72, we must read the use of ‘walas’ here as an

³⁷³ See above 3.4 on slave-raiding.

³⁷⁴ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 52.

³⁷⁵ There is a small possibility that this may refer not to the *wale* but to the subject of the riddle. However, if we agree with Niles that we should be able to solve the riddles in their original language, including the agreement of grammatical gender, this is unlikely (John D. Niles, ‘Answering the Riddles in their Own Tongue’, in *Old English Enigmatic Poems and the Play of the Texts*, ed. by John D. Niles, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 13 [Turnhout: Brepols, 2006], pp. 101-40 [p. 105]). *Oxa* is a masculine noun (Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 711), whereas this phrase would have to be neuter accusative: the solution would not match the question posed.

ethnic use of this term.³⁷⁶ Pelteret emends this to the genitive plural ‘wala’.³⁷⁷ There is no hint of servitude here, nor can *wealh*, as Faull suggests, denote a vague sense of foreignness, ‘conveying the impression of moors distant from home’.³⁷⁸ In context, *wealh* need not have referred to a specific territory, but this element demands a relationship to certain areas and zones of contact with the Brittonic-speaking peoples.

Wealh and its female cognate *wale* are used in the riddles both in contexts where the distinction between ethnic and status meanings are irretrievably ambiguous, and those in which, while still not perfectly clear, *wale* on the one hand denotes SLAVE, while on the other *wealh* is used in its ethnic sense. This mixture of meanings is unique in the extant Old English corpus. It is not that we should read *wealh* and *wale* here as *both* ethnic and servile; there is no instance in which we should infer a meaning such as ‘the Welsh slave’. Instead, the ambiguities of the riddles allow these terms to be read as *either* ethnic *or* servile, and require the reader to distinguish between the two contextually similar states. Ultimately, these ambiguities do not affect the solutions of these riddles, but features such as the dark complexion of the *wealas*, male and female, may have triggered as much uncertainty in the minds of the intended audience as in the mind of the modern reader. As noted below, while ambiguous terms such as *wealh* and *esne* commonly denote slaves in these riddles, the unambiguous *þeow* is rare here, suggesting that this ambiguity was intentional. The uncertainty triggered by such semantically complex words as *wealh* adds to the complexity of meaning encoded in the riddles and requires additional thought to discern whether this affects the solution. The association of the meaning FEMALE SLAVE with the phonologically Anglian *wale* suggests that, while the meaning SLAVE for *wealh* and its cognates is otherwise found only in West Saxon text, and has thus been presumed to be a West Saxon development, it may have been in wider use. *Wale* is therefore not simply a literary formation,³⁷⁹ but instead a significant although rare instance of parallel Anglian usage.

³⁷⁶ Williamson, *Riddles*, pp. 108, 344. See Riddle 72.12a for the emended form of this line (p. 108).

³⁷⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 319.

³⁷⁸ Faull, ‘*Wealh*’, 30.

³⁷⁹ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 319.

3.8 Conclusion

Wealb in the sense SLAVE is, as Pelteret notes, a southern term, while *wiln* is subject to similar dialectal limitations.³⁸⁰ Their phonology further confirms a West Saxon origin; while <a>-forms occur for *wealb*'s ethnic denotations, suggesting Anglian influence, only <ea>-forms occur for *wealb* as SLAVE. This sense may have developed in the context of the westward expansion of Wessex rather than during the initial period of the *adventus Saxonum*, even if the latter is defined as a period of changes in affiliation rather than mass migration and annihilation. This later and consequently more geographically limited development of *wealb* explains the dialectal limitations of the sense SLAVE; if it developed during the *adventus* period, we might expect to find it more evenly distributed throughout the Old English dialects. The complex system of synonymy present in Aldred and Owun's Northumbrian gospel translations, which shows great flexibility, might well have absorbed such an additional term if it had evolved during the early period. Certainly, the Northumbrian kingdoms had as much contact with Brittonic-speakers, including those who are called the 'Stræcledwealas' and 'Nordwealas', as did Wessex. The absence of any such meaning in these texts points to a later and more southern locality for the development of this meaning. Nevertheless, there are hints, most obviously in the existence of the feminine form *wale*, that this term had begun to penetrate the Mercian dialectal area. The dialectal element of the distribution and use of slave words has been consistently underestimated and ignored in the secondary literature, leading particularly to the neglect of *esne*; in the case of *wealb*, this dialectal element is undeniable, and can, unusually, be tied to specific events and processes.

This dialectal restriction of the meaning SLAVE to West Saxon and possibly some forms of Mercian may significantly change our understanding of its role within the West Saxon semantic field and of its decline and disappearance in the Middle English period. It has been assumed, as widely discussed above, that this sense for *wealb* and its female cognate *wiln* was a linguistic form shared only by a small number of authors, perhaps only as an eccentric, literary choice. While it is true that both *wealb* and *wiln* appear in the works of a limited number of authors, the contexts in

³⁸⁰ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 320.

which these terms are used suggest wider comprehension and sub-literary usage which is not attested in the extant corpus. *ƿræl* appears in an equally narrow range of texts, but the Middle English evidence demands that scholars must presume just such a degree of sub-literary usage of this term in Anglo-Saxon England. Despite the paucity of Middle English evidence, this may also have been the case for *wealþ*. If, as argued above, the meaning SLAVE was a relatively recent addition to the language, it may not yet have been fully integrated into the literary language, and therefore may have been more common in forms which have left no record. This must remain a matter of speculation, but this reading does not presuppose the use of abstruse words in texts such as Ælfric's *Grammar* where clarity would be useful.

Furthermore, literary Late West Saxon had lost *esne* in the sense SLAVE, and the sense of *þegn* was greatly ameliorated; equally, this dialect had not absorbed the Norse loan *þræl* evident in Northumbrian. As indicated in the gospel translations, this had left West Saxon with a single major term for chattel slaves, *þeow*. The dominance of this dialect in the extant texts has led scholars to assume that this was the natural state of affairs, while both the Anglian dialects and earlier forms of West Saxon show a more complex semantic field. If writers working in Late West Saxon deliberately sought such synonymy rather than eschewing it, their choices were limited. Ælfric, for instance, never uses *esne*. His use of *wealþ* and *wiln* was previously taken as an extraordinary development in need of extraordinary explanations. However, it may have simply evolved from a desire to find synonyms for *þeow*, a desire which led Ælfric to draw such terms from the sub-literary lexicon of Old English. This places the development of *wealþ* within the context of wider changes in the semantic field of slavery, while equally recognising that a lesser-used term is not necessarily an arcane one.

In terms of the later development of the terminology of slavery, particularly during the transition to Middle English, the rapid extinction of *wealþ* should not lead us to conclude that it was not a significant term in Late West Saxon. As discussed above, despite its concentration in a limited number of texts, there are hints of wider usage, continuing into the Middle English period. *þeow* equally declined rapidly in importance in Middle English.³⁸¹ The process by which *þeow* was

³⁸¹ Girsch, 'Terminology', p. 32; *OED*, s.v. 'theow' [accessed 24th September 2014].

replaced by *þræl* is the consequence both of the dialectal distribution of these terms and of the rapid eclipse of West Saxon in the Middle English period. Just as *þeow* declined not because of any particular qualities of its own but because of the increasing prominence of dialects in which it was not a major term for chattel slaves, so, too *wealh*, which had only developed the sense SLAVE at a relatively late date, developed no further because of its dialectal limitations.

Turning to the synchronic aspects of *wealh* as SLAVE, it is clear that both the masculine form and its feminine cognate could be used in the vast majority of contexts in which we might find slave words, from legal texts to metaphorical constructs. The latter aspect of these terms has been downplayed, but, while much more scarcely attested, it is clearly an important aspect of their meaning. The search for unusual denotations and connotations for these terms, alongside the concomitant presumption that they must lack common denotations and connotations, has distorted previous understanding of their meaning. This is predicated on the assumption that all terms except *þeow* and possibly *þegn* require special pleading and an extraordinary explanation for their use and existence. As becomes clear in the case of all the terms considered in this study, this is simply not the case. Both a major ‘alternate’ term such as *esne* and more minor terms such as *wealh* and *þræl* share the majority of their meanings and contexts with *þeow*, indicating that such attempts to differentiate them are driven by modern preconceptions rather than the state of the Old English corpus.

As mentioned above, *wealh*, like *esne*, is unusual in that we can see semantic change underway during the attested Old English period. The continuing use of the sense FOREIGNER, CELTIC-SPEAKER for *wealh* indicates the complexities of such semantic change, leading here not to a simple, linear development, but to a bifurcation of the two meanings. These are almost never used in the same texts, but remain discrete, both in meaning and in usage. This is undoubtedly due in part to the distribution of the two major meanings between authors and genres, but possibly also to the need to avoid ambiguity. In the laws of Ine, such ambiguity is a function of the process of semantic change itself, while, in the case of the riddles, the only other text in which such ambiguity is present, it is an essential component of the riddling itself. More generally, the development of the ethnic meaning of *wealh* leads to a narrowing of its denotation FOREIGNER as a

simplex term during the Old English period, while the use of a variety of prefixes also allowed it to be applied to other groups. The continued use of *wealh* in its simplex form for Celtic-speaking groups in Devon and Cornwall shown in texts such as Alfred's will provides a direct link with the context of the development of the meaning SLAVE. *Esne* and *þræl* are, etymologically speaking, occupational terms; the introduction of an ethnonym such as *wealh* into the semantic field of slavery indicates both the multiple routes by which individuals could be reduced to this state and the flexibility of the language in this area.

4. *Esne*

4.1 Introduction

Esne has received little attention in modern scholarship, remaining little known and even less frequently studied, although it is a major dialectal term for SLAVE, as shown in the overview of slave words. It is far more significant in Northumbrian than *þræl*, although the latter has received considerably more attention due to its status as a loanword. What little attention *esne* has received is restricted to passing mentions, such as Lapidge and Keynes's note on *esnewyrhta* in the laws,³⁸² Baker and Lapidge's comment on *esne* as MAN as a commonality between the *Heptateuch* and Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*,³⁸³ and R. S. Cox's mention of Jordan's erroneous conclusion that *esne* is archaic in the South.³⁸⁴ The closest scholarship has come to a comprehensive study of the word is, on the one hand, Lisi Oliver's notes on the laws,³⁸⁵ and, on the other, Pelteret's entry in his glossary.³⁸⁶ Both suffer from an unconditional acceptance of earlier assumptions about the nature of the *esne*. Oliver's notes impose a preconceived idea that the *esne* was socially distinct from the *þeow* onto texts where no such distinction is obvious. While wider in scope, Pelteret's glossary suffers from more substantial methodological problems. His glossary discusses some of the earlier laws, but the focus of Pelteret's study begins with the reign of Alfred, omitting or glossing over much of the early material which contextualises the later development of *esne*. Indeed, *esne* has no entry in Pelteret's index, unlike the much less common compound *esnewyrhta*.³⁸⁷ As with Oliver,

³⁸² Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred*, p. 310.

³⁸³ Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *Byrhtferth's 'Enchiridion'*, ed. by Peter S. Baker and Michael Lapidge, EETS, s. s., 15 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. cxi. All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

³⁸⁴ R. S. Cox, 'The Old English Dicts of Cato', *Anglia*, 90 (1972), 1-42 (p. 21). All of these instances are discussed below.

³⁸⁵ *The Beginnings of English Law*, ed. and trans. by Lisi Oliver (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), pp. 36, 43, 51, 79-116.

³⁸⁶ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 271-74.

³⁸⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 368.

Pelteret assumes that the status of the *esne* was intermediate between the free and unfree. This assumption depends not on a close reading of the texts but the imposition of prior meaning onto them. The most obvious source for this prior meaning is Bosworth and Toller's *Dictionary* definition:

*A man of the servile class, a servant, retainer, man, youth; mercēnārius, servus, vir, jūvēnis. The esne was probably a poor freeman from whom a certain portion of labour could be demanded in consideration of his holdings, or a certain rent [gafol, q. v.] reserved out of the produce of the hives, flocks or herds committed to his care. He was a poor mercenary, serving for hire or for his land, but was not of so low a rank as the þéow or wealh.*³⁸⁸

The former part of this statement presumes rough equality between these meanings, when, in fact, SLAVE is dominant, a numerical and diachronic preeminence which this chapter explores across the full range of texts in which *esne* appears. The latter part bears no relationship to any of the legal conditions described in the extant texts, and is entirely unsubstantiated. This failure in lexicographical accuracy may be due to some combination of nineteenth-century squeamishness on the subject of slavery, and the desire to differentiate Old English slave words from one another. In 1849, John Mitchell Kemble described the *let* and *esne* as 'poor mercenaries, serving for hire or for their land, but not yet reduced so low in the scale as the þéow or wealh'.³⁸⁹ Pelteret and Oliver make assumptions about the nature of the *esne* which draw upon this definition, and read the texts in the light of these assumptions, trapping scholarship in a vicious circle. Consequently, Bosworth and Toller's inaccurate definition is never tested against the evidence, but instead perpetuated by successive generations of scholarship. Thus, *esne* is little studied in relation to the other slave words in Old English, as it is presumed that SLAVE is not its major denotation; Pelteret gives it as the third meaning in his typology, but 'hired labourer' as his first.³⁹⁰ This chapter seeks to redress this balance through a close examination of the relevant texts in order to discern the true social position of the *esne* and create a new definition of his status *ab initio*. To this end, a re-examination

³⁸⁸ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 258. The supplement gives the meanings 'a man of the servile class', 'a servant', 'a young man', and 'a man' (Toller, *Supplement*, p. 194). It is more accurate than the original definition, but still needs refinement, especially in the confusion of SERVANT and SLAVE.

³⁸⁹ Kemble, *Saxons*, I, 215.

³⁹⁰ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 271-73.

of the laws is key to understanding the specific legal conditions attached to these individuals, but other, often literary, sources are equally important.

Therefore, this chapter uses the full range of sources in which *esne* occurs, avoiding the methodological problems associated with Pelteret's concentration on legal codes, charters, manumissions and wills: these sources may not be representative of the material as a whole. *Esne* occurs in excess of 240 times in the extant material, and, in some cases, such as the metrical psalms and the Rushworth and Lindisfarne Gospels, it appears a substantial number of times in a single text. In these cases, it is not useful to consider every single instance separately, as they are often semantically consistent, but instead to consider the statistical appearance of *esne*, and analyse a representative sample of occurrences.³⁹¹ Latin versions of these texts are particularly useful for establishing the distinction between SLAVE and MAN. Where these versions are not available, either because the Old English is a distant paraphrase or because it is a new composition, context alone must provide the justification for assigning meaning.

The chapter is divided into broad groupings according to meaning and genre, following the initial linguistic discussion: SLAVE in prose (including the laws and gospels); MAN in prose; miscellaneous prose (containing such material as texts in which *esne* is only used in compounds, where two different meanings appear equally, or where it is not possible to define the meaning of *esne*); poetry; and the riddles. The latter category is considered separately as the riddles use *esne* with what appears to be deliberate ambiguity, playing upon multiple meanings. The appearance of compounds such as *esnlice* and *esnewyrhta* does not usually influence the order in which the texts are considered, as their meanings do not correspond closely to those of the simplex forms. The sole exception is in the case of texts in which only compounds occur, which are included in the section on miscellaneous texts. Indeed, the issue of the relationship between the simplex and compound forms of *esne* is thorny and usually glossed over by commentators. The separation of the simplex and compound forms is one of the major themes and results of this chapter.

The close analysis of the texts which is central to this chapter reveals the importance of both synchronic and diachronic interplay between the various recorded meanings of *esne*. Early

³⁹¹ In the case of the Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels, this statistical analysis is contained in Chapter 2.

scholars of the Anglo-Saxon laws attempted to reconstruct a ‘timeless “system” of law’, which was static rather than subject to chronological developments.³⁹² This has obscured the unusual degree of chronological development in the semantics of *esne*, conflating early with late meanings, as well as simplex and compound forms. Even when Pelteret seeks to outline chronological aspects,³⁹³ this conflation has hampered accurate analysis of the data. In addition to this, the general disregard for non-legal and particularly translation texts, while perhaps permissible in studies which seek primarily to establish legal realities, has led to an imbalance in the understanding of this term. By looking at the full range of texts and establishing an independent chronology at the end of the chapter, this study permits a more complete and more fully contextualised analysis of *esne* than that contained in previous studies. This more complete approach illuminates the influence of dialect, complicated by chronological factors, on the distribution of *esne*, and thus, more generally, the neglected significance of dialect in the development of the semantic field of slavery. In the conclusion of this chapter, these findings, brought to bear both on the Bosworth-Toller entry and on Pelteret’s typology, demand a rewriting of the definition of *esne* which emphasises the meaning SLAVE and thus this term’s critical role in the semantic field of slavery.

4.2 Etymology and Phonology

The Indo-European roots of *esne*, **es-en*, **os-en*, **-er-* pertain to the summer and harvest time, a sense retained in the Old Icelandic *ǰnn*.³⁹⁴ These roots also denote the autumn, presumably due originally to differing divisions of the seasons. The cognate Proto-Germanic verb, **aznōn*, denotes ‘to do harvest work, serve’, giving the Old English *earnian*.³⁹⁵ It subsequently comes to include all

³⁹² Jurasinski, ‘Penitentials’, p. 100.

³⁹³ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 271-74.

³⁹⁴ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 271.

³⁹⁵ *The American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots*, rev. and ed. by Calvert Watkins, 2nd edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), p. 24.

types of work in the fields.³⁹⁶ Cognates include the Old Saxon *asna* ‘wages, taxes, dues’,³⁹⁷ Old Frisian *esna*, ‘wages’, and Middle Low German *asne*, ‘wages, income’.³⁹⁸ The nominal form **asnijaz* originally applied to hired labour and its associated economic forms.³⁹⁹ It presumably became associated with low-status, menial work, and came to be applied to servile, chattel labour. Joseph Wright glosses the Gothic *asneis* as ‘servant, hireling, hired servant’.⁴⁰⁰ Although Wright also glosses *þius* as ‘servant’,⁴⁰¹ *asneis* refers only to hired labour in the extant Gothic Bible. It glosses the Vulgate’s *mercenarius*, and, more immediately the Greek *μισθωτός*, in John 10.12, 10.13, Luke 15.17 and 15.19, and Mark 1.20.⁴⁰² In each of these cases, the subordinate role of the *asneis* is clear, but it never refers to chattel labour; the key element of its meaning is the hired status of these individuals.⁴⁰³ The shift to SLAVE clearly did not occur in the form of Gothic preserved in these texts. Nevertheless, it is clear that, even by this early stage, *asneis* was no longer associated exclusively with certain types of seasonal agricultural work but with menial labour in general. The later shift to SLAVE is therefore not surprising and does not need to rely solely upon interpretation of labour patterns in Anglo-Saxon England alone.

**Asnijaz* is a masculine *ja*-stem noun, and follows the pattern of **andijaz*, having /ij/ following a long syllable.⁴⁰⁴ With the loss of the stem vowel /a/ and the inflectional ending /z/, /ij/

³⁹⁶ Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 2 vols (Bern: Francke, 1959-69), I (1959), p. 343.

³⁹⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 271.

³⁹⁸ Holthausen, *Wörterbuch*, p. 94.

³⁹⁹ *Esne* declines like *ende*, the Proto-Germanic form of which was **andijaz* (Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 575-78).

⁴⁰⁰ Wright, *Gothic*, p. 308.

⁴⁰¹ Wright, *Gothic*, p. 349.

⁴⁰² John 10.12, 10.13, *Die Gotische Bibel*, ed. by Wilhelm August Streitberg, Germanische Bibliothek, 2, Band 3, 2 vols (Heidelberg: Winter, 1910-1919), accessed from <<http://www.wulfila.be/gothic/>> [accessed 6th February 2013]; Wright, *Gothic*, pp. 120-274.

⁴⁰³ These instances were returned by a search of the text of Streitberg, *Gotische Bibel* using the version accessed from <<http://www.wulfila.be/gothic/>> [11th July 2014] and the paradigm for long closed-stem syllable *ja*-stem nouns, as given by Wright (Wright, *Gothic*, pp. 87-88, §184).

⁴⁰⁴ Wright, *Gothic*, pp. pp. 87-88, §§ 183-85; Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 398.4, 578.

was simplified to the lengthened /i:/: **asnijaz* > **asnija* > **asnij* > **asnī*. This final /i:/ was later shortened to /i/, giving **asni*.⁴⁰⁵ In Early Old English, Proto-Germanic /a/ was fronted to /æ/,⁴⁰⁶ hence giving **asni* > **æsni*. I-umlaut later fronted /æ/ here to /e/, giving the form **esni*.⁴⁰⁷ Due to the reduction of vowel quality in unaccented syllables, the final /i/ became /e/, producing the attested form *esne*.⁴⁰⁸ Its full declension was as follows:⁴⁰⁹

Table 19: Regular Forms of *Esne*

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	esne	esnas
Accusative	esne	esnas
Genitive	esnes	esna
Dative	esne	esnum

As the endings in Old English were the same in *ja*-stem as in *a*-stem nouns,⁴¹⁰ *esne* here is indistinguishable from such nouns, except for the *-e* in the nominative and accusative singular. While Northumbrian and Mercian texts occasionally use <æ> for <e> in both the root and inflectional endings, the attested forms are otherwise highly regular.⁴¹¹

4.3 Prose: SLAVE

⁴⁰⁵ Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 331.4, 355.3, 341, 398.4, 404, 571, 575-76. The /-ija-/ here can also be represented as /-ia-/ (§ 335.3).

⁴⁰⁶ Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 131-33.

⁴⁰⁷ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 191.

⁴⁰⁸ Campbell, *Grammar*, §§ 369-70.

⁴⁰⁹ This is a modified form of the paradigm for *ende* (Campbell, *Grammar*, § 575).

⁴¹⁰ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 575. See also the paradigms for *dags* and *hairdeis* in Gothic (Wright, *Gothic*, §§179, 184, pp.85, 87).

⁴¹¹ See 2.5.

4.3.1 *Æthelberht*

Esne appears in four Anglo-Saxon law codes: *Æthelberht*, *Hlophere and Eadric*, *Wihtræd*, and *Alfred-Ine*. It has usually been assumed that, in these codes, *esne* refers not to slaves but to a separate class of unfree labourers: Lisi Oliver applies Bosworth and Toller's definition of *esne*, cited above, to the first three codes.⁴¹² However, neither Bosworth and Toller nor Oliver gives any evidence to support this claim, either in terms of the legal status of the *esne*, or in terms of either the kind of services or rents rendered. The claim that the *esne* was a mercenary stands on particularly shaky grounds. The Gothic cognate *asneis* refers to hired workers (*mercenarius*), but the Old English simplex *esne* does not do so. Even if *esne* referred to such hired workers, the equation of Latin *mercenarius* and Present-Day English *mercenary* is also false. The degree to which this equation has been accepted indicates the depth of misapprehension surrounding *esne*. As it is, neither the Latin *mercenarius* nor the Present-Day English *mercenary* correspond to the Old English *esne*. Thus the conventional picture of a separate class of free labourers in the laws is not substantiated.

The first three extant law codes, *Æthelberht*, *Hlophere and Eadric*, and *Wihtræd*, are Kentish codes which only exist in a late copy, the Textus Roffensis, Rochester Cathedral Library A.3.5, dated to the first half of the twelfth century.⁴¹³ The texts as preserved are believed to be faithful copies of the original codes. The first of these laws, that of *Æthelberht*, mentions *esne* in four consecutive clauses: 'gif man mid esnes cwynan geligeþ be cwicum ceorle, II gebete' [if a person lies with the wife of an *esne* while the husband is alive, let him pay twofold]; 'gif esne oþerne ofslea unsynnigne, ealne weorðe forgelde' [if an *esne* kills another who is guiltless, let him pay the full worth]; 'gif esnes eage & foot of weorðeþ aslagen, ealne weorðe hine forgelde' [if the eye or foot of an *esne* is struck off, let him pay him the entire worth]; 'gif man mannes esne gebindeþ, VI scill

⁴¹² Oliver, *Law*, p. 79, note c.

⁴¹³ Oliver, *Law*, p. 20; Elaine Treharne, 'Rochester, Cathedral Library, A. 3. 5.', in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.RCL.htm>> [accessed 21st August 2013].

gebete' [if a person binds a person's *esne*, let him pay six shillings].⁴¹⁴ These clauses fall immediately between those which deal with freemen of all kinds and those which deal with *þeowas*. Some clauses in the earlier part of the text deal with particular ranks of slaves, but those refer specifically to certain types of female slaves (for instance, § 11, p. 3).⁴¹⁵ Oliver argues that § 85 (§ 79 in her numbering), by using *esne* and *ceorl* of the same individual, equates the *esne* and freeman semantically, implying that the *esne* was free. However, she allows that 'elsewhere' *ceorl* can simply mean a man or husband, rather than pertaining to a specific legal status.⁴¹⁶ There is no reason that we cannot read 'ceorle' here simply as the husband of the 'cwynan', and 'esnes' as a clarification of his social status. The importance of this phrase lies in the idea that the husband, the *ceorl*, is still living. It is his continued existence and his claim over his wife as a husband which makes the sexual act between the 'man' and the 'cwynan' particularly problematic. If *ceorl* refers to this individual's sexual relationship, then it is not pertinent to the legal status of the *esne*, and the semantic equation for which Oliver argues does not exist.

Having dispensed with this objection, there is little in this law code to distinguish the legal position of the *esne* from that of the *þeow*. Pelteret argues that 'the *esne* here was clearly regarded as being to some degree under the sway of another' but that he 'was in a better position than a slave', and thus was 'a landless *ceorl* who hired himself out as a labourer'.⁴¹⁷ To this end, Pelteret claims that the entitlement of the *esne* to compensation for his wife's adultery and the ability to pay compensation in his turn are evidence that the *esne* was not a slave.⁴¹⁸ While this is superficially convincing, it relies on the assumption that the slave can neither own property nor have a wife. These are not necessarily the defining features of the slave, nor are they sufficient grounds to presume that the *esne* was not a chattel slave, when all other evidence points to this

⁴¹⁴ §§ 85-88, 'Æthelberht', in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 3-8 (p. 8). All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁴¹⁵ Oliver, *Law*, p. 90.

⁴¹⁶ Oliver, *Law*, pp. 114-15.

⁴¹⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 271.

⁴¹⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 271.

conclusion.⁴¹⁹ While Oliver, reaffirming her use of Bosworth-Toller, claims that ‘an *esne* was probably a labourer: either a hired hand, or one who owed part of his produce to a master [...] This rank had intermediate status between a freeman and a slave’,⁴²⁰ the distinction made in the laws themselves is more obviously two-way. Only two clauses use the word *þeow*, and they do not deal with the same matters with which clauses §§ 85-88 are concerned. For instance, the laws of Æthelberht do not prescribe penalties for maiming or binding a *þeow* separate to those for the same treatment of an *esne* cited above. On the other hand, a substantial proportion of the code is dedicated to penalties for maiming freemen, including the loss of an eye and a foot (§§ 43, 69, pp. 5, 7). Other clauses deal with binding a freeman and lying with his wife (§§ 24, 31, pp. 4-5). Thus, the structure of the code draws a distinction between the freeman, with one set of clauses, and the slave (*esne* or *þeow*) with another set. The *þeow* lacks a separate, parallel set of clauses dealing with the same offences. There is a two-way system of distinction between the free and unfree here, not a three-way system. Oliver attempts to explain this material while maintaining a three-way system by suggesting that ‘perhaps Æbt §§ 78-81 [§§ 85-88], which specifically mention *esnas*, also pertain to the rank of *þeow*, the final two clauses then adding stipulations specific to slaves’.⁴²¹ This is an unnecessarily complicated explanation. If this were the case, we might expect the *þeowas*, presumably a larger and certainly a better attested class of people, to take the primary place, with the *esnas* in the secondary role. Thus, we would expect this text to name first the laws which applied to *þeowas*, with the assumption that they also applied to *esnas*, the latter being a subordinate grouping, and then the laws which only applied to *esnas*. The structure as it stands, in Oliver’s conception, places a surprising amount of emphasis on the *esnas*, these hypothetical free labourers, in contrast to the much more significant group of true slaves. On the lexical level, *esne* is used four times in the law code and *þeow* only twice (pp. 3-8), an inversion of the pattern which we might expect.

⁴¹⁹ See 1.3 for discussion of the difficulties of defining the slave, particularly whether or not such individuals could own property.

⁴²⁰ Oliver, *Law*, p. 114.

⁴²¹ Oliver, *Law*, p. 115.

An obvious solution to this problem, although one which has been entirely neglected, is to suggest that the *esne* and the *þeow* here in fact refer to the same group of people, and that any distinction between the two was etymological and historical rather than social. There need not be, as we would expect in modern laws, a one-on-one relationship between the lexeme and the social rank, with a shift in terminology signalling a shift in subject matter. No such concept of a one-to-one relationship exists in these texts, and there are other cases where two or more lexemes were taken as synonymous. *Friman* and *ceorl* are both used to denote freemen, as in § 9: ‘gif frigman freum stelþ, III gebete, & cyning age þæt wite & calle þa æhtan’ [if a freeman steals from a freeman, he should pay threefold, and the king should have the fine and all the possessions], and § 16: ‘gif wið ceorles birelan man geligeþ, VI scillingum gebete’ [if a person lies with a freeman’s cupbearer, he should pay with six shillings] (pp. 3-4). Overall, the laws of Æthelberht use *fri(man)* six times, including one instance of ‘friwif’ and one of ‘freum’ used substantively. *Ceorl* occurs four times, placing the two terms on a reasonably equal footing (pp. 3-8). Unlike in the case of *esne* and *þeow*, modern commentators do not claim that *fri-man* and *ceorl* refer to different ranks, and Oliver translates both these terms as ‘freeman’.⁴²² Words for slaves and for freemen have thus provoked very different and unequal responses in modern audiences. Prior perception that *esne* denoted a rare group has affected its interpretation, obscuring its synonymy with *þeow*, and led to assumptions about the role of the *esnas* as a class which are not based on the text of the laws.

There is, indeed, considerable evidence that the *esne* in the laws of Æthelberht was a chattel slave, not a free labourer. The phrase ‘mannes esne’ (§ 88, p. 8) implies that the *esne* belongs to another. Moreover, the *esne* is described as having ‘weorðe’ rather than ‘wergeld’, as we might expect for a freeman, even one of low degree (§ 87, p. 8). Pelteret resorts to the rather strained argument that ‘their poor economic status would have reduced their rights and this explains why the law had to insist that in the event of the death of an *esne* his full value had to be paid’, without explaining why this is framed as ‘weorðe’.⁴²³ Oliver acknowledges the use of ‘weorðe’, additionally noting that the fine for binding an *esne* is six shillings, particularly low when

⁴²² Oliver, *Law*, pp. 65-67.

⁴²³ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 271-72.

compared to the twenty exacted for a freeman.⁴²⁴ However, she fails to draw the most obvious conclusion from this evidence: that the *esnas* were not freemen, but rather, their status was, as far as we are able to tell from this code, that of slaves, and that no distinction is drawn here between the *esnas* and the *þeowas*.

4.3.2 *Hloþhere and Eadric*

This situation is borne out by the next extant Kentish code, the law of Hloþhere and Eadric, dated to the end of the seventh century.⁴²⁵ Here, the phrase *mannes esne* is used twice: ‘gif mannes esne eorlcundne mannan ofslæhð, þane ðe sio þreom hundum scill gylde, se agend þone banan agefe & do þær þrio manwyrð to’ [if a person’s *esne* kills a person of noble birth, who should be paid for with three hundred shillings, the owner should give up the killer and add three man-worths], and ‘gif mannes esne frigne mannan ofslæhð, þane þe sie hund scillinga gelde, se agend þone banan agefe & oþer manwyrð þær to’ [if a person’s *esne* kills a freeman, who should be paid for with a hundred shillings, the owner should give up the killer and add a second man-worth thereto].⁴²⁶

The possessive relationship which is implied by the use of the genitive ‘mannes’ in the laws of Æthelberht is here made explicit by the use of *agend*: the *esne* is someone who has not merely a master, potentially ambiguous, but an ‘owner’.⁴²⁷ Moreover, as Oliver notes, this owner, not the *esne* himself, is responsible for the payment of these fines, indicating a lack of separate identity under the law.⁴²⁸ These two occurrences are the only appearances of *esne* in this law code, a code which does not otherwise deal with murder, either by slaves or by freemen. It is not possible, therefore, to confirm whether the penalties for murder by an *esne* are more like those for murder

⁴²⁴ Oliver, *Law*, p. 115.

⁴²⁵ ‘Hlothere and Eadric’s Code (Hl)’, in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 15th April 2014]. Although Pelteret believes that the *esne* was a freeman in these laws, he, too, argues that the situation in the laws of Hloþhere and Eadric was similar to that in the laws of Æthelberht (Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 272).

⁴²⁶ §§ 1, 3, ‘Hlothære und Eadric’, in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 9-11 (p. 9). All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁴²⁷ Oliver, *Law*, p. 115.

⁴²⁸ Oliver, *Law*, p. 115.

by slaves or freemen. We can only say that *esnas* appear in this code simply as slaves, as shown by the use of *agend* in both these clauses. Moreover, § 3 distinguishes between the *esne* and his putative victim, the ‘frigne mannan’. The adjective ‘frigne’ marks the critical difference between the two individuals, a legal distinction which has bearing on the crime in question. In the laws of Hloþhere and Eadric, therefore, the *esne* is a chattel slave, the property of an *agend*, and not responsible for himself before the law.

4.3.3 *Wihtræd*

Esne also appears in the final early Kentish law, that of *Wihtræd*, dated to 695.⁴²⁹ The initial clauses which mention *esnas* use this term in a manner very similar to that found in the previous legal codes. The first mention reads ‘gif esne ofer dryhtnes hæse þeowweorc wyrce on sunnan æfen efter hire setlgange oþ monan æfenes setlgang, LXXX scil se dryhten gebete [...] Gif esne deþ his rade þæs dæges, VI se wið dryhten gebete oþþe sine hyd’ [if an *esne* does slave-work on his lord’s command after sunset on the eve of Sunday until sunset on the eve of Monday, his lord shall pay eighty shillings (...) If the *esne* works according to his own counsel on that day, he should pay six towards his lord, or his hide].⁴³⁰ These clauses establish that the *esne* could own property and thus pay a fine. Such an ability is usually seen as beyond the purview of slaves, but this was not the case in Anglo-Saxon England.⁴³¹ Thus, the ability to pay a fine, while unusual, does not preclude servile status. Pelteret’s belief that the ability to pay both with a fine and a flogging indicates ambiguity and the use of *esne* for more than one social group depends solely on this inaccurate measure of servility.⁴³² More importantly, the *esne* has a master, ‘dryhten’, who can compel him into work for

⁴²⁹ ‘*Wihtræd*’s Code (Wi)’, in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 15th April 2014].

⁴³⁰ §§ 9–10, ‘*Wihtræd*’, in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 12–14 (p. 13). All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁴³¹ Bush uses the ownership of property to distinguish slaves from serfs (Bush, ‘Introduction’, p. 2); Oliver notes, however, that Anglo-Saxon slaves could own property (Oliver, *Law*, p. 172).

⁴³² Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 272.

which the *esne* is not held morally or legally culpable.⁴³³ This work is specifically called ‘*þeowweorc*’, a compound which makes it clear that such labour was servile. The lack of a comparable compound ***esneweorc* tallies neatly with *esne*’s lack of productivity in Old English, and the conservative nature of the compounds which do occur.⁴³⁴ While the personnel are called *esnas*, their work contains the element *þeow-*, confirming the interchangeability of *esne* and *þeow* here.

The *esne* in the laws of Wihtræd is not contrasted here with the *þeow* but with the freeman. There is no separate clause for the penalties which the *þeow* must pay for these deeds, but § 11 reads, ‘*gif friman þonne an ðane forbodenan timan, sio he healsfange scyldig, & se man se þæt arasie, he age healf þæt wite & ðæt weorc*’ [however, if a freeman works in that forbidden time, he should pay the *healsfang*, and the person who discovers that shall have half the fine and the work] (p. 13). The freeman is not offered the option of paying with a flogging, but instead must pay the ‘*healsfang*’, a ‘fine in lieu of imprisonment’.⁴³⁵ Punishment by flogging for slaves is commonplace, to the extent that the Roman author Quintilian argued that free children should not be beaten because ‘flogging [...] is a disgraceful form of punishment and fit only for slaves’.⁴³⁶ § 22 of the laws of Wihtræd states that ‘*gif man bisceopes esne tihte oþþe cyninges, cænne hine on gerefan hand oþþe hine grefa clensie, oþþe selle to swinganne*’ [if a person charges the *esne* of the bishop or the king with an offence, he may clear himself in the presence of the reeve: either let the reeve clear him, or give him to be flogged] (p. 14), confirming that the *esne* is one who can be subject to corporal punishment while the *friman* is not. Those clauses of this code which *do* use *þeow*, as § 13 does, do not have a corresponding clause for *esne*, but instead for the *ceorl* or *friman*, as in § 12 (p. 13). This division of society is complete, structurally and in terms of content, and there is no evidence for a third category.

⁴³³ Similarly, §§ 14-15 prescribe different penalties for a *þeow* eating meat during a fast, dependent on whether the *þeow* does so according to his own wishes or not (p. 13).

⁴³⁴ See the analysis of compounds of *esne* elsewhere in this chapter. Aldred’s compounds are semantically, and probably etymologically, distinct.

⁴³⁵ Oliver, *Law*, p. 156.

⁴³⁶ Cited in Glancy, *Christianity*, p. 122.

Interpretation of § 23 is rather more difficult. This clause reads ‘gif mon gedes þeowne esne in heora gemange tihte, his dryhten hine his ane aþe geclænsie, gif he huslgenga sie, gif he huslgenga nis, hæbbe him in aþe oðirne æwdan godne, oþþe gelde, oþþe selle to swinganne’ [if a person charges the *þeow esne* of a fellowship with a crime in their midst, his lord may clear him by his oath alone, if he is a communicant. If he is not a communicant, he should have for him in the oath another good witness, or he should pay, or he should give him to be flogged] (p. 14). At first glance, the phrase ‘þeowne esne’ suggests that the *esne* could be free.⁴³⁷ However, as we have already seen, nomenclature is not always as stable or consistent in these codes as we might expect in modern legal texts. If we take this phrase at face value, we are still confronted with the problem of finding these ‘unþeowe esnas’, evidence for whom is otherwise lacking. On the other hand, we can read this as a fossilised, stock phrase, recalling an earlier stage during which *esnas* genuinely could be either free or unfree. Equally, the adjective ‘þeowne’ could be included here as a literary formulation to emphasise, rather than clarify, the position of this individual.⁴³⁸ Indeed, the contextual material here suggests an individual who was a chattel slave. Once again, the *esne* is liable to suffer punishment by flogging, suggesting servile status. While it is not entirely clear what ‘gedes’ and ‘huslgenga’ denote,⁴³⁹ and therefore what the precise position of the *esne* is, this individual is cleared not on his own recognizance but on the oath of his master, or the oath of the master’s ‘æwdan godne’. This suggests an individual who himself has no standing under the law and must rely on others to mediate its effects for him. The provisions of § 24 are very similar: ‘gif folcesmannes esne tihte ciricanmannes esne, oþþe ciricanmannes esne tihte folcesmannes esne, his dryhten hine ane his aþe geclensige’ [if a layman’s *esne* lays a charge against a clergyman’s *esne*, or a clergyman’s *esne* against a layman’s *esne*, his lord may clear him by his oath alone] (p. 14). This again makes the *esne* reliant upon the *dryhten* in matters of law. Thus, as in the earlier Kentish codes, the laws of Wihtræd use *esne* to denote a slave who was fully reliant upon his master in legal

⁴³⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 272.

⁴³⁸ This may have something in common with literary doublets which are stylistic rather than meaningful. See below, 4.5.3.

⁴³⁹ Oliver, *Law*, p. 161, note a, b. She suggests ‘fellowship’ for ‘gedes’ here.

matters and subject to corporal punishment, clear markers of slave status. Once again, if the *esne* and *þeow* were distinct, the lack of the latter in this code would be surprising, given the prominent evidence for slaves elsewhere. If, however, the *esne* is a slave, then this term is used here to denote the same person who is elsewhere described as a *þeow*. Taken together with the evidence from the other early Kentish law codes, this indicates that, far from being the universally dominant term in early Old English, *þeow* gradually displaced other terms with which it competed, especially in non-West Saxon texts.

4.3.4 *Alfred-Ine*

Although many law codes survive from the last centuries of the Anglo-Saxon period, the final surviving law code (in terms of composition rather than manuscript survival) to use *esne* is Alfred's, which includes the laws of Ine. Given the evidence from the Kentish codes, this absence may well be the product of the increasing domination of West Saxon and of *þeow* as its preferred word. *Esne* occurs once in the introduction to Alfred-Ine, once in the laws of Alfred, and once in the laws of Ine. The use of *esne* in Alfred's introduction,

se ðe slea his agenne þeowne esne oððe his mennem, & he ne sie idæges dead, ðeah he libbe twa niht oððe ðreo, ne bið he ealles swa scyldig, forþon þe hit wæs his agen fioh. Gif he ðonne sie idæges dead, ðonne sitte sio scyld on him,⁴⁴⁰

[he who strikes his own *þeow esne* or his female slave, if they are not dead on the same day, even if they live two nights or three, he is thus not at all guilty, because they are his own property. If they die on the same day, then he is guilty], is a translation of the Vulgate: 'servum suum vel ancillam' (Exodus 21.20).⁴⁴¹ As frequently elsewhere, *esne* glosses *servus* here. It is worth noting that *mennen* is used for *ancilla*, as *esne's* masculine connotations clearly prevented the formation of a feminine cognate. For the most part, the conclusions about the status of the phrase 'þeowne esne'

⁴⁴⁰ El. 17, 'Ælfred, Einleitung', in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 28-46 (p. 32).

⁴⁴¹ This is one of a series of quotations taken from Exodus, examples of Old Testament law as received by Moses, intended to contextualise Alfred's own law-giving ('Extracts from the Laws of King Alfred', in *Alfred*, ed. by Keynes and Lapidge, pp. 163-72 [p. 163]). The reworking of several of these quotations addresses the difference in status, rights and obligations between biblical and Anglo-Saxon slavery (Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 83).

in the laws of Wihtræd hold true here.⁴⁴² However, the ambiguities of *esne* in other ‘Alfredian’ material suggest that it may have had a more emphatic role here, clarifying the status of the *esne*, just as the use of ‘agenne’ clarifies the master’s possession.⁴⁴³ If this is the case, then this may be a rare glimpse at a transitional state during which *esne* denoted neither MAN nor SLAVE but hung between the two, a state during which clarification of its semantics in a particular context was useful.

The purely Alfredian part of this code contains the only instance in the laws in which *esne* is explicitly contrasted with *þeow*. However, this passage, which enumerates the holidays which are given to free men, uses a compound rather than the simplex: ‘eallum frioum monnum ðas dagas sien forgifene, butan þeowum monnum & esnewyrhtan’ [these days are given to all free men, except slaves and *esnewyrhtan*]. The author of the Latin translation contained in the *Quadripartitus* drew a clear distinction between the two: ‘seruis et pauperibus operariis’ [slaves and poor workers].⁴⁴⁴ As the *Quadripartitus* was most likely written in the early years of the twelfth century,⁴⁴⁵ the translation ‘pauperibus operariis’ does not necessarily represent the understanding of the Old English author, but there is still a distinction between the two ranks. As both ‘þeowum monnum’ and ‘esnewyrhtan’ are also contrasted with ‘frioum monnum’, it is clear that the *esnewyrhta* is unfree. This sets up a three-way distinction in social and legal status, unlike in the earlier codes, although the specifics of this distinction are unclear.

Marsden, in the notes to his edition of this text for translation practice, glosses *esnewyrhta* as ‘unfree labourers’ and comments

⁴⁴² There may be some parallels between this phrase and the use of tautological word pairs in the Old English translation of Bede (Janet M. Batley, ‘Old English Prose Before and During the Reign of Alfred’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 17 [1998], 93-138 [p. 123]). Equally, the phrase ‘þeowum monnum’ discussed immediately below could as easily have been replaced with the noun ‘þeowum’. The phrase as it stands does not obviously change the meaning of the status term, but is simply a literary formulation.

⁴⁴³ See the sections on the prose translation texts.

⁴⁴⁴ § 43, ‘Ælfred’, in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 46-89 (pp. 78-79).

⁴⁴⁵ Richard Sharpe, ‘The Dating of *Quadripartitus* Again’, in *English Law Before Magna Carta*, ed. by Jurasinski, Oliver and Rabin, 81-93 (pp. 81-90).

the distinction between these and the slave just mentioned is not clear (and the word *esne* is itself used often to mean ‘slave’), but it cannot have been great. Both categories of worker are presumably included in the ‘slaves’ who are allocated four days off per year in the next law [Æthelred VIII].⁴⁴⁶

This is an unusually clear-sighted summation of the evidence and recognition of the semantics of *esne*. Indeed, it is not possible to ascertain the precise legal status of the *esnewyrhta*, but, looking at both the original text of *Alfred* and the *Quadripartitus*, its key features are the work of a labourer and a legally unfree status. Pelteret’s assertion that the *esnewyrhtan* ‘were definitely not slaves’ here contradicts his later statement that their ‘legal position somewhat blurred the formerly clear legal distinctions between slaves and *ceorlas*’, and his conflation of the *esnewyrhta* with the *esne* does not clarify matters.⁴⁴⁷ If we cast the three-way system here in terms of absolutes, the *esnewyrhta* is neither free nor a slave, a conceptual space which is not defined in modern terminology. Thus, he may have shared more in common with the *þeowas* than with free men, and be closer to the modern definition of slavery than to its antithesis. There is simply not enough evidence to make a decisive judgement. Keynes and Lapidge explore the compound *esnewyrhta* more fully:

Esne is used on its own to signify ‘slave’ or to translate *servus*, ‘slave’, but it also occurs with the meaning ‘man’ or ‘young man’; *wyrhta* means ‘labourer’; *esnewyrhta* occurs elsewhere as a translation of *mercenarius*, ‘hireling’. The *esnewyrhta* of Alfred’s code was perhaps a poor man who eked out a living by working for a master, and who was neither free nor able to move elsewhere.⁴⁴⁸

While the latter portion of this comment is highly speculative, its conclusions are broadly those which Marsden draws. Moreover, it points out that the compound *esnewyrhta* has quite different denotations from the simplex *esne*, a distinction which has eluded other scholars. As suggested previously, this is most likely due to the preservation of an older meaning of *esne* in the compound, referring to a worker who does low-status hired labour. The semantics of *esne* and *esnewyrhta* were not dependent upon one another in the historical period, and the two terms did not refer to the same class of people. The unwillingness of modern critics to recognise this distinction has

⁴⁴⁶ ‘Laws of Alfred of Wessex (c. 890)’, in Richard Marsden, *The Cambridge Old English Reader* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 52-57 (p. 56).

⁴⁴⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 84-85, 272.

⁴⁴⁸ Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred*, p. 310, n. 31.

obfuscated our understanding of *esne's* meaning. While in other texts, *esnewyrhta* glosses *mercenarius*, and may thus refer to various kinds of hired labour, its specific association with unfree labour here narrows the gap between the simplex form and the compound. This narrowing may have thus added impetus to the change of the simplex from SLAVE > MAN by weakening the distinctive nature of the *esne* as slave. If this is the case, however, it is certainly not a quick or linear process, as many texts which use *esne* for SLAVE postdate Alfred-Ine by some considerable amount of time.

The appearance of *esne* in the part of this legal code attributed to Ine completes this complicated picture of its usage in *Alfred-Ine*: ‘gif mon sweordes onlæne oðres esne, & he losie, gielde he hine ðriddan dæle; gif mon spere selle, healfne; gif he horses onlæne, ealne he gyldde’ [if a person lends a sword to the *esne* of another, and he escapes, he must pay him (the lord) one third; if a person gives a spear, a half; if he loans a horse, he must pay the whole] (§ 29, p. 102). As in Alfred’s preface, here *esne* denotes SLAVE. Significantly, the use of the genitive ‘oðres’ establishes that the *esne* belongs to another.⁴⁴⁹ The passage concerns the possibility of slaves escaping from their legal masters with the aid of others, a legal and social preoccupation that we can see elsewhere, as in Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi*.⁴⁵⁰ As in the other early laws, the *esne* has a value which can be paid, but this is not described as *wergeld*. It may have been the purchase price of this individual. The sword, spear and horse are not merely practical aids to the escape of the slave, but items which are often symbolically associated with free warriors, and thus unsuitable for a slave. Both Attenborough’s translation of *esne* here as ‘the servant of another man’⁴⁵¹ and Liebermann’s ‘dem Lohnknecht eines anderen’ (§ 29, p. 103), while accurately reflecting the grammar of this phrase, do not reflect the semantics of *esne*, nor the importance of the context given here. Liebermann’s gloss thus makes the unsupported presumption that *esne* denoted hirelings and mercenaries in historical Old English, based on its etymological associations.

⁴⁴⁹ Liebermann amends the B-version of the text’s ‘oðru’ to ‘oðrum’ (§29, p. 102) which removes this genitive. It is unclear how we should read the resultant ‘oðrum esne’ without changing the meaning of the text.

⁴⁵⁰ See Chapter 5 and 4.3.11.

⁴⁵¹ § 29, Attenborough, *Laws*, p. 45.

The B version of the text, from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 383, additionally contains the heading to § 29 ‘be ðam þe his sword alæne oðres ðeowan’ [when a person loans a sword to another’s slave] (p. 102). This indicates an equation between *esne* and *þeow(a)*. Pelteret argues that whoever added this title ‘thought of the *esne* as a slave (*ðeowa*) but there is no reason to believe that he was’, and implicitly equates the *esne* with the *esnewyrhta*.⁴⁵² This entirely disregards the evidence of the passage; it is clear that preconceived notions take precedence over context and analysis in Pelteret’s discussion here. Taken together with the evidence from the other early codes, the laws of Ine imply that *þeow* was less dominant in all the early dialects, and that its spread was not thus merely due to the increased importance of West Saxon, but also to changes within West Saxon.

The Latin text of the *Quadripartitus* is not always a good guide to the intended meaning of the Old English. For this passage from the laws of Ine, it reads ‘qui gladium prestiterit ad occidendum aliquem (homicidium), si occidatur homo, reddat terciam partem compositionis eius; qui lanceam prestiterit, dimidiam weram; qui equum prestiterit totum reddat’ [he who gives a sword to another who is killing (murder), if a man is killed, must give back the third part of his portion; if he gives a spear, half the *wer*; if he gives horse, he must repay everything] (§29, p. 103). This contains no word denoting SLAVE, and it is not merely a translation but a substantial reworking of the Old English text. While *homo* corresponds to *esne* syntactically, it does not do so semantically. In the Old English text, the crime in question is fleeing (‘losie’), but the crime in the Latin version is murder (‘occidendum [...] homicidium [...] occidatur’). The omission of the idea of flight is not surprising as this is specifically a crime associated with runaway slaves. The flight of a freeman with the aid of another would not necessitate the punishment of this second individual. The meaning MAN for *esne* became more common towards the end of the Old English period, as demonstrated in this study. Given the late date of the *Quadripartitus*, this may have been the only meaning which the author recognised, leading not only to the substitution of *homo* for a Latin slave word, but the need to rework the sense of the passage. As the flight of a freeman was not a crime, another crime which made sense of the concerns about outside aid had to be substituted.

⁴⁵² Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 272.

Thus, while the Old English text clearly uses *esne* to denote SLAVE, the later Latin reworking shows a shift to MAN. This demonstrates the direction of semantic change, the meaning SLAVE weakening to MAN, rather than vice versa. This process was complicated by dialectal factors, but the author of the *Quadripartitus* seems to recognise only a single meaning, indicating that, in his dialect at least, the process was complete.

4.3.5 *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum*

The *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum* is not, strictly speaking, a law code, but a text on estate management dated to the twelfth century.⁴⁵³ However, the *Rectitudines* shares certain affinities with legal codes and lays out certain expected patterns of behaviour, not dissimilar to the purpose of a law code. It is edited by Liebermann alongside the Anglo-Saxon laws (pp. 444-53), and by the *Early English Laws* project alongside the *Gerefa*.⁴⁵⁴ *Esne* appears here in the context of the proper provisioning of the dependents: ‘be manna metsunge. Anan esne gebyreð to metsunge XII pund godes cornes & II scipæteras & I god metecu, wuduræden be landside’ [for the provisioning of a man: each *esne* is provided with twelve pounds of good corn for provisions, and two sheep carcasses, and one good food cow, the right to cut timber according to local custom]. This is contrasted with § 10: ‘be wifmonna metsunge. Deowan wifmen: VIII pund cornes to mete, I sceap oððe III p.’ to wintersufle, I syster beana to længtensufle, hwæig on sumera oððe I p.’ [for the provisioning of a woman: *þeowan wifmenn* are due eight pounds of corn for food, one sheep, or three pennies for midwinter provisions, one sester of beans for spring provisions, whey in the summer, or one penny].⁴⁵⁵ Gobbitt argues that ‘the rubrics present the two clauses as contrasted information between males and females’, but that ‘the provisioning of bound women’ in § 9 should more accurately be contrasted with the ‘provisioning of bound men’ in § 19. Thus, he suggests, the

⁴⁵³ ‘Rectitudines Singularum Personarum (Rect)’, in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 16th April 2014].

⁴⁵⁴ ‘Gerefa (RSP + Ger)’, ed by Thom Gobbitt, in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 15th September 2013].

⁴⁵⁵ §§ 8-9, ‘Rectitudines Singularum Personarum’, (pp. 449-50)

difference between §8 and §9 ‘as written is primarily one of social status rather than of gender’.⁴⁵⁶ It is not clear what he means by this reference to § 19 (§ 20 in his numbering), as this clause refers to the right of the forest warden to fallen trees (§ 19, p. 452). There are strong parallels between §§ 8-9, and their proximity in the text emphasises the connection; they form a natural pairing. Both discuss the provisioning of these individuals in terms of specific items of food. The disparity between the levels provided, such as twelve pounds of corn for the *esne* and eight for the ‘ðeowan wifman’, can be explained in terms of gender rather than social rank. Both clauses have a heading which refers to the gender of the individuals involved but does not specify their rank (although both terms could be used for chattel slaves), while the main text of the clause refers both to their rank and their gender. The Latin text of the *Quadripartitus* merely glosses *esne* as ‘inopi’, ‘without resources, helpless, weak [...] helpless through poverty, destitute, needy, indigent’,⁴⁵⁷ while ‘ðeowan wifmen’ is given as ‘ancille’ (§§ 8-9, pp. 449-50). As with *Alfred-Ine*, it is apparent that the author of the Latin text was not familiar with the use of *esne* in the Old English original and sought to find a term which explained the need to provision these individuals without contradicting *esne*’s semantics in his own dialect. We cannot entirely dismiss the possibility that *esne* here referred to a less clearly defined status than elsewhere, but it is reasonable to assume a level of equivalence between ‘ðeowan wifmen’ and ‘esne’, and thus that the latter was also a slave.⁴⁵⁸ This confirms the pattern established elsewhere linking *esne* semantically and contextually with the more common term *þeow* and its cognates.

4.3.6 Pastoral Care

The Old English translation of Gregory’s *Pastoral Care* belongs to a group of translation texts often referred to as ‘Alfredian’, due to their supposed association with the court of Alfred the

⁴⁵⁶ Gobbitt, ‘Gerefa’ [accessed 15th September 2013]. In the numbering of the *Early English Laws*, these clauses are §§9, 10, and 20 respectively.

⁴⁵⁷ Lewis and Short, *Dictionary*, p. 960.

⁴⁵⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 273. Despite this correct summation of the evidence, Pelteret presumes here that *esne* had ‘gained’ this meaning in the *Rectitudines*, whereas its appearance here actually represents the continuation of an older meaning.

Great: the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, the *Pastoral Care*, Boethius' *De Consolatio philosophiae*, and St Augustine's *Soliloquies*, and the Old English *Historia Ecclesiastica*.⁴⁵⁹ Each of these texts has been associated with the 'translation programme' of the Alfredian court.⁴⁶⁰ Traditionally, all but the *Dialogues* were assigned to Alfred himself, while Bede, along with Orosius, is now conventionally excluded from this group. The prose psalms may also belong to this grouping.⁴⁶¹ Frantzen considers the *Pastoral Care*, the *Consolatio Philosophiae*, the *Soliloquies*, and the prose psalms as 'Alfredian'.⁴⁶² Lapidge and Keynes assign the *Pastoral Care*, *Consolatio Philosophiae*, *Soliloquies*, and prose psalms to Alfred himself.⁴⁶³ On the other hand, Godden questions whether the king had the time or skills necessary for the task, and argues that Alfred wrote nothing himself, and that the attribution of these texts to him personally is simply a ventiloquising trope.⁴⁶⁴ The debate concerning Alfred's personal involvement is ultimately redundant and mired in insoluble questions of personality. However, it is significant that even Godden has seen no reason to suggest that these texts do not belong to this approximate period and place. While Waerferth's translation of the *Dialogues* is the only one of these texts to be viewed as explicitly Mercian, due to its association with Waerferth himself, a Mercian and Bishop of Worcester,⁴⁶⁵ the *Soliloquies* also contain non-West Saxon forms, as does the *Historia Ecclesiastica*.⁴⁶⁶ They are the creations of a

⁴⁵⁹ Other texts are attributed to this programme, but do not use *esne*.

⁴⁶⁰ Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred*, pp. 28-40.

⁴⁶¹ Janet M. Bately, 'Lexical Evidence for the Authorship of the Prose Psalms in the Paris Psalter', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 10 (1981), 69-85 (pp. 69-70). The *Dialogues* are generally accepted as Mercian (Dorothy Whitelock, 'The Prose of Alfred's Reign', in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. by Eric Gerald Stanley [London: Nelson, 1966], pp. 67-103 [p. 77]). Asser ascribes them to Wærferth (Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred*, p. 35), and thus they are still associated with Alfred's court.

⁴⁶² Allen J. Frantzen, *King Alfred*, Twayne's English Authors Series, 425 (Boston: Twayne, 1986), pp. 22-105.

⁴⁶³ Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred*, pp. 29-32.

⁴⁶⁴ Malcolm Godden, 'Did King Alfred Write Anything?', *Medium Aevum*, 76 (2007), 1-23 (pp. 1-18).

⁴⁶⁵ Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred*, pp. 32-34.

⁴⁶⁶ *King Alfred's Version of St. Augustine's 'Soliloquies'*, ed. by Thomas A. Carnicelli (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 3. All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text. See 4.5.3 for further discussion of this aspect of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

single (albeit broad) cultural milieu.⁴⁶⁷ As some of the earliest narrative prose texts in Old English, the importance of *esne* here is striking and implies that it was a more significant term in the earlier forms of Old English than has been allowed. However, while these texts are in other ways a cohesive group, they do not all use the simplex *esne* in the same way. This implies heterogenous authorship and a synchronic range of possible meanings for *esne*.

In the ‘Alfredian’ translation of the *Pastoral Care*, the duties of a ‘good’ slave take centre stage: ‘sua sua Dauid forbær ðæt he Saul ne dorste ofslean for Godes ege & for ðæm ealdum treowum, sua doð ða æltæwan mod ðara godra esna’ [just as David forbore from slaying Saul on account of the dread of God and because of old promises, the honest minds of good *esnas* (must) act thus].⁴⁶⁸ The actions from which good *esnas* must refrain are ‘ðæt hie mid ðæm sueorde hiera tungna tælinge ne sleað hira hlafurdes ðeawas, ðeah hie wieten ðæt hie elles æltæwe ne sin’ [that they should not rebuke the customs of their lord with the sword of their tongues, even though they know that those customs are not otherwise excellent] (p. 199). This passage functions on multiple literal and metaphorical levels, all of which are dependent upon the role of the *esne*. The multiple different levels on which this trope operates allow it to enjoin multiple different but related behaviours, linked by a single figure. On the one level, this passage retells the actions of David, the model of the ‘good slave’ (p. 197), even when confronted by a master who is rather less than perfect. The Latin text does not use *servus* but *subditus*,⁴⁶⁹ the past participle of *subdare*, ‘to put, place, set, or lay under’, ‘to bring under, subject, subdue’.⁴⁷⁰ Old English had no shortage of words to indicate unequal but non-servile relationships, the most obvious of which is *þegn*. The

⁴⁶⁷ Where the term ‘Alfredian’ is used throughout this study, it therefore does not denote personal authorship by Alfred, but that the text was part of this milieu.

⁴⁶⁸ *King Alfred’s West Saxon Version of Gregory’s ‘Pastoral Care’*, ed. by Henry Sweet, EETS, o. s., 45, 50 (London: Trübner, 1871-72), p. 199. All the references here are from the manuscript Bodleian, Hatton 20 (Sweet, *Pastoral Care*, p. xiii), but the version of the text in Cotton Tiberius B. XI contains identical uses of *esne* (pp. 198, 142, 362). All references are to this edition, parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁴⁶⁹ Gregory the Great, *Règle Pastorale*, ed. by Bruno Judic and Floribert Rommel, trans. by Charles Morel, Sources Chrétiennes, 381-82, 2 vols (Paris: Cerf, 1992), II, 280. All references are to this edition, parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁴⁷⁰ Lewis and Short, *Dictionary*, p. 1773.

translator's choice here takes the sense of the Latin one step further, rendering this relationship as the epitome of subjection, the slave himself. Slavery is the ultimate model of service here, a quotidian and accessible image which encapsulates and embodies the key attributes of the relationship between king and vassal. On the next level, this metaphor of slavery, expressed by the use of *esne*, applies to the clerics, *servi Dei*, for whom Gregory the Great's text was written. The lessons of the *Pastoral Care* were also applicable to secular officials, for whom the service of clerics was a model.⁴⁷¹ David, a priestly king, was the ultimate model of the *servus Dei* in both forms, as shown by the use of this trope in the psalms.⁴⁷² He was a model of both the ideal lord and the ideal subordinate, a single individual who formed a nexus at which various levels and types of service met. These metaphors are therefore highly flexible, and the terminology used in them must likewise show a great degree of flexibility, denoting individuals enmeshed in an array of different and complex relationships.

The other appearance of the simplex *esne* in the *Pastoral Care* also occurs in a passage concerning both literal slaves and the *servi Dei*:

se bið eallinga Godes gewinna se se ðe wilnað ðæt he hæbbe ða weorðunga for his godan weorcum ðe God habban sceolde æt ðæm folce. Hwæt we genoh georne witon ðæt se esne ðe ærendað his woroldhlaforde wifes, ðæt he bið diernes gelires scyldig wið God, & wið his hlaford eallenga forworht, gif he wilnað ðæt hio hine lufige, & he hire licige bet ðonne se ðe hine & ðæt feoh ðider sende

[he who wishes to have the honours for his good works which God should have amongst the people is altogether the enemy of God. Behold, we know well enough that the *esne* who obtains a wife for his worldly lord is guilty of fornication against God and altogether guilty against his lord, if he wants her to love him, and to please her better than he who sent him and the money thither] (pp. 141-43). The Latin text uses *puer* of this individual (I, p. 232), in its common secondary sense, 'a boy for attendance, a servant, slave'.⁴⁷³ The context makes it clear that it is not used with the meaning YOUTH, and thus *esne* is not used with this meaning but as the much more

⁴⁷¹ 'From the Translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*', in *Alfred*, ed. by Keynes and Lapidge, pp. 124-130 (p. 124).

⁴⁷² See 4.6.1.

⁴⁷³ Lewis and Short, *Dictionary*, pp. 1486-87.

widespread SLAVE. On the literal level, this passage addresses some common concerns about the behaviour of slaves, particularly the importance of their obedience, and their potential for sexual licentiousness. On the latter concern, Wyatt argues that ‘the often intimate nature of slave owners’ relationships with their female slaves [...] may have stimulated concerns regarding the sexuality of their male slaves’ and relates this to the ‘cultural suppression of the male slave’s virility and masculinity’.⁴⁷⁴ The *esne* here threatens social order because he wishes to supplant his master in the affections of the *wif*. Consequently, he undermines both the master’s virility and his authority, and participates in the presentation of slaves as socially disruptive, a concern which was present in both the Anglo-Saxon period, as demonstrated by Wyatt, and in the Classical period: ‘Greco-Roman writers were almost obsessively concerned with the theme of domestic slaves as threats to the stability and harmony of their households’.⁴⁷⁵ The extent of this concern suggests that it is a fundamental characteristic of slavery itself. The Old English translator rendered the Latin ‘sponsus’, which emphasises the master’s role in relationship to the ‘sponsa’, his betrothed (I, p. 232), with ‘woroldhlaforde’, which instead emphasises the relationship between the master and the slave. This places the onus on the latter’s unfulfilled duty of obedience. The element ‘worold-’ makes the everyday roots of this metaphor clear; it is intended to function on more than one level, as much an admonishment to behave correctly towards one’s earthly master as to correct spiritual behaviour.

The structure of the passage makes the metaphorical interpretation of this idea very clear, comparing this faithless *esne* to ‘Godes gewinna’, who seeks the glory for himself rightly due to God. This behaviour directly contradicts the admonishment of the chapter title: ‘ðætte se reccere his goda[n] weorc for gielpe anum ne do, ac ma for Godes lufan’ [that the ruler does not do his good work for pride alone, but rather for God’s praise] (p. 141). The *esne* here is entirely negative, but the converse of this portrayal is the possibility of the stereotypically good *esne*, loyal, humble, and obedient. It is this ideal for which the audience is encouraged to aim. The association of *esne*

⁴⁷⁴ Wyatt, *Slaves*, p. 157. See the section on *esne* in the riddles (4.7) in particular for a discussion of this theme.

⁴⁷⁵ Glancy, *Christianity*, p. 142.

with stereotypically negative servile behaviour does not preclude its additional association with churchmen and other *servi Dei*. Good slaves and bad slaves exist at the extreme poles of the cultural idealisation of this figure, but they are not mutually exclusive and do not require exclusive vocabulary. This applies even to the most high-status of slaves, those who serve God. Concerns about ‘real’ slaves are integral parts of the metaphor, influencing not just imagery but also the understanding of cultural and social structures. Although these texts are translations, the way in which they recast and retell these metaphors tell us that such concerns and constructs were as current in Anglo-Saxon society as in the Classical cultures which originally produced them.⁴⁷⁶

The *Pastoral Care* only uses *esne* to denote SLAVE; the use of the compound *esnlice* is entirely distinct. The *Pastoral Care* cites St. Paul’s attempt to disrupt the unanimity between the Sadducees and Pharisees: ‘hwæt do ge, broður, doð esnlice’ [what you do, brothers, do *esnlice*] (p. 363). ‘Doð esnlice’ here, somewhat perplexingly, renders the Latin greeting ‘viri fratres’ [brother men] (II, p. 416). It is not clear what the Old English author intended by this injunction, as the sense does not relate directly to the Latin text, nor is its meaning otherwise immediately obvious. However, it is clear that *esnlice* loosely corresponds to ‘viri’. The two passages do not share a common meaning, but both draw upon a shared sense of masculinity as a positive force. This use of *esnlice* contrasts strongly with the use of *esne* elsewhere in the *Pastoral Care*, indicating the disjunction between the two. While Aldred uses *esne* formatively as SLAVE, here the simplex and compound forms are semantically divorced.⁴⁷⁷ The compound *esnewyrhta* appears to harken back to an earlier stage of the language, in which *esne* applied to various kinds of hired labour, but this conservative explanation is inadequate here. The meaning MAN is only attested in the later texts, and, if this is a true reflection of the language as a whole, *esnlice* cannot therefore be a fossilised form comparable to *esnewyrhta*. It may, on the other hand, represent the growth of the meaning MAN alongside or deriving from SLAVE, in which the compound *esnlice* was transmitted separately from the simplex and thus separately admitted into the West Saxon literary *koine*. Given the other

⁴⁷⁶ This is in contrast to the King James Bible, for example, which routinely translates *servus* as *servant*, suggesting that this metaphor needed to be restructured in order to remain relevant by this point.

⁴⁷⁷ See 4.3.9.

evidence, it is still likely that *SLAVE* predates *MAN* and that the latter was originally a southern form, as it is lacking in Northumbrian. Thus, we can tentatively suggest that *MAN* diverged from *SLAVE* somewhere in the South before the late ninth century. The unambiguous denotations of the simplex form delayed the adoption of the meaning *MAN* into the literary language. However, the compound *esnlice*, having no comparable slave-word form, was more easily adopted, its semantics consequently separated from that of the simplex.⁴⁷⁸

4.3.7 *Soliloquies of Saint Augustine*

Esne occurs only once in the Alfredian translation of the *Soliloquies* of St. Augustine, and denotes a slave: ‘hwæt, ic wat þæt ðu hefst ðone hlaford nu todæg ðe þu treowast æt elcum þinum bet þonne þe siluum, and swa hefð eac manig esne ðara þe unricran hlaford hefð þonne ðu hefst’ [lo, I know that you have a lord now today who you trust in all your affairs better than yourselves, and so also many an *esne* has of those who have poorer lords than you have] (p. 87). There is no direct parallel for this section of the text in the Latin version.⁴⁷⁹ In a purely literal reading, the slave here, as elsewhere, is closely defined by his relationship with his lord. The juxtaposition of *esne* with the *hlaford* makes it clear that the major defining feature of the *esne* is his servility, and thus that such individuals are seen predominantly in terms of this relationship, whether literal or metaphorical. As *þeow*, *wealh*, and *þræl* do not occur in either the *Soliloquies* or the *Pastoral Care*,⁴⁸⁰ it is fair to claim that all uses of slave words in these texts are used to construct hierarchical relationships, frequently with metaphorical repercussions. From this metaphorical point of view, the *esne* in the *Soliloquies* is used as part of a *servus Dei* construction. This section expands upon the conventional imagery which sees God in terms of an earthly ruler: ‘he weal(ð) þara kynninga ðe mæstne anweald habbað þisse(s) myddangeardes’ [he who has the most power in this middle-earth governs kings] (p. 86). It goes on to consider trust and belief in one’s lord: ‘hu þincð þe nu gyf se þin hlaford ðe

⁴⁷⁸ If this is the case, then the non-servile denotation of *esnewyrhta* must surely have facilitated its adoption.

⁴⁷⁹ Carnicelli, *Soliloquies*, p. 25.

⁴⁸⁰ Searches for these words in the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus, restricted to these texts by Cameron number, return no results (*DOE* Corpus [accessed 26th September 2013]).

hwilc spel segð þara ðe þu nefre ær ne geherdest, oððe he þe segð þæt he hwethwugu gesawe þæs þe ðu nefre ne gesawe? Ðinc(ð) þe hweðer þe awuht æt his segene tweoge, forðam þu hyt self ne gesawe?’ [how does it seem to you now if your lord tells you a story of those which you never heard before, or he says that he saw somewhat of that which you never saw? Does it seem to you whether anything of his speech is doubtful because you never saw it yourself?] (p. 88). Here, the audience is asked to visualise God in terms of an earthly lord, and the metaphor is not confined to general assumptions but is linked to specific aspects of service. The *esne* must give trust and service to an ‘unricran hlaforð’ who is implicitly and unfavourable compared to God. The obvious implication is that such service is even more due to God himself, and this relationship is superior to the earthly relationship. This gives us a multi-tiered conception of service which emphasises the hierarchy of such relationships, of which the human-divine aspect is the pinnacle.

4.3.8 Vercelli Book Homily V

Vercelli Book Homily V, a Christmas homily, reads ‘ond on þæs caseres dagum wæron genydde to rihtum þeowdome & to rihtre hyrnesse ealle þa esnas þe fram hira hlaforð[e] ær gewiton & him hyran noldon; & swa hwylce swa ne woldon hlafordas habban, ða wæron þurh r[od]e deaðe gewitnode’ [and in the days of that Caesar, all *esnas* who had departed from their lord and did not wish to obey him were compelled to proper slavery and to lawful obedience; and those who did not wish to have a lord were punished by crucifixion].⁴⁸¹ This passage is a commentary on Luke 2.1: ‘factum est autem in diebus illis exiit edictum a Caesare Augusto ut discreberetur universus orbis’ [it came to pass in those days that an edict went our from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled] (Vulgate, Luke 2.1), and draws parallels between Augustus and Christ.⁴⁸² More immediately, it is a loose translation of the *Catechesis Celtica*: ‘in eius quoque tempore serui dominos fugientes ad legitimum seruitium redire coacti sunt, et qui dominos non recipiebant in cruces coegit’ [also, in that time, slaves fleeing from their masters were forced to return to

⁴⁸¹ ‘Homily V’, in *The Vercelli Book Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. by Donald G. Scragg, EETS, o. s., 300 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 108-25 (p. 115). All references are to this edition, parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁴⁸² Scragg, ‘Homily V’, p. 108.

legitimate slavery, and those who did not accept masters were crucified].⁴⁸³ It a fairly conventional passage, equating slavery with proper service to God. The avoidance of both is equally abhorrent. These dire warnings against those who seek to escape *þeowdom* reinforce social hierarchies and the *status quo* as the work and will of God. The use of the term *esne* to gloss *servus* in the *Catechesis Celtica* makes it clear that it denoted a slave, and was thus associated with much of the conventional imagery and moral concerns appended to this figure.

The manuscript itself (Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare, CXVII) is dated from the second half of the tenth century and is written in ‘conservative late West Saxon’. Scragg suggests that it was compiled at St Augustine’s, Canterbury.⁴⁸⁴ The scribe of the Vercelli Book was a fairly literal copyist, reproducing material from a number of different exemplars without attempting to ‘impose linguistic uniformity’,⁴⁸⁵ and it is consequently impossible to tell whether *esne* was his own choice or reproduced from an exemplar. Vercelli Homily V also occurs in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340 & 342.⁴⁸⁶ CCCC 198 is of unknown geographical provenance, and dated to the early eleventh century, while Bodley 340 & 342 is dated to the middle of the eleventh century and was probably at Rochester during the eleventh century.⁴⁸⁷ Thus, both these additional versions are probably dated after the composition of the Vercelli Book itself. CCCC 198 shares the reading ‘esnas’ with the Vercelli Book, but Bodleian 340 & 342 has the variant reading ‘men’ here (p. 115). The scribe of Bodleian 340 & 342, or a predecessor not shared by the Vercelli Book and the Corpus Christi manuscript, clearly recognising the word *esne*, but not the meaning SLAVE intended by the original author. The Vercelli Book and

⁴⁸³ Scragg, ‘Homily V’, p.115.

⁴⁸⁴ Scragg, *Vercelli*, p. xxiii, xliii, lxxxix.

⁴⁸⁵ Scragg, *Vercelli*, pp. xx, xliii.

⁴⁸⁶ Scragg, *Vercelli*, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

⁴⁸⁷ Elaine Treharne, ‘Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 198’, in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.CCCC.198.htm>> [accessed 3rd August 2013]; Takako Kato, ‘Oxford, Bodleian library, Bodley 340 + Bodley 342 (2404-05)’, in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.Ox.Bodl.340.htm>> [accessed 3rd August 2013].

Bodleian 340 & 342 were both written in Kent, within perhaps half a century of one another; the substitution of ‘men’ here indicates a significant and rapid shift. The overlap between the composition of CCCC 198 and the Bodleian manuscript further indicates the speed of this transition, as well as pointing to the hidden complicating effects of dialect and personal preference.⁴⁸⁸ The use of *þeowdom* has clearly not triggered any recognition of *esne* within its immediate context for the Bodleian scribe. Not only has the scribe failed to recognise the original sense of *esne* and its significance within the passage, he also prefers to substitute it with another term.

4.3.9 Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels

The Rushworth and Lindisfarne Gospels between them account for the largest single block of attestations of *esne* (approximately 109 out of 240 uses of this term). This obviously points to its synchronic status as a major non-West Saxon synonym for *þeow*.⁴⁸⁹ As the broad patterns of its usage have already been discussed in the overview of the gospels, the specifics of its usage will be considered only briefly here. In the gospels, *esne* never glosses *vir* or *homo* or other terms referring generically to human beings, but only *servus*, *adulescens*, and *iuvenis*. There is no hint of *esne*’s etymological roots in seasonal agricultural labour, as it does not gloss any words associated with this kind of labour, such as the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20.1-16, pp. 158-61). This narrow range of meaning contrasts with the semantically more complex *þegn*, the simplex form of which glosses six separate (and often highly distinct) Latin nouns in Lindisfarne.⁴⁹⁰ *Servus* is by far the dominant terms glossed by *esne*, numerically speaking. It is not just, therefore, to regard the denotations YOUTH and SLAVE as of equal significance.

The use of *esne* to gloss *iuvenis* and *adulescens* is, numerically at least, of far less significance than its use for *servus*. Out of forty-eight occurrences of *esne* in the Lindisfarne gloss, *adulescens*

⁴⁸⁸ Given the paucity of evidence, we cannot tell what effects the interference of Kentish as a dialectal substrate which previously used *esne* for SLAVE may have had.

⁴⁸⁹ Pelteret notes the use of *esne* for SLAVE in these texts, but implies that it was less important in Lindisfarne than was in fact the case (Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 273).

⁴⁹⁰ See 2.8.3.

accounts for only four instances, and *iuvenis* for two. Out of Rushworth's sixty occurrences, *adulescens* and *iuvenis* each account for one. In both instances where *esne* denotes YOUTH in Matthew, Farman uses *geong* (Matthew 19.20 and 19.22, p. 157).⁴⁹¹ Owun's use of *esne* for YOUTH is entirely dependent on Aldred, giving further evidence for his lexical dependence on the latter and thus the extent of copying involved in the composition of his gloss. As this sense is consequently only used innovatively by a single author, albeit possibly representative of wider dialectal features, it is not equal with the senses SLAVE and MAN. Farman's consistent gloss of *adulescens* as *geong* strongly indicates that this sense was not current in Farman's own Mercian variety. Moreover, in Mark 14.51 and Mark 16.5, both Aldred and Owun feel the need to qualify *esne* (for *adulescens* and *iuvenis*, respectively) with *geong* (p. 119, 131). This complicates the semantics of *esne* considerably. The former refers to the young man who approaches Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. The latter refers to a youth, found in the empty sepulchre, whose white robe may be a sign that he is a messenger from God.⁴⁹² Neither are slaves, and thus we cannot interpret the phrase 'ging *esne*' word for word as 'young slave'. In light of the use of *esne* alone for *adulescens* and *iuvenis*, the adjective may have an intensifying or clarifying function. The alternative, that *esne* denoted MAN as in the southern texts, is unlikely, although not impossible, given the lack of *esne* for *homo* and *vir*. As Aldred's gloss on Matthew approximates the West Saxon norm more closely than his work on the other gospels,⁴⁹³ it is plausible that the use of *geong* was part of this approximation, intended to clarify *esne* within this context. Certainly, YOUTH is not the dominant denotation of *esne* here.

Nevertheless, *esne* is the only term which Aldred and Owun used to render *adulescens*: four times in the former, and once in the latter. *Iuvenis* occurs once in both the Lindisfarne and Rushworth versions of Mark 16.5 (p. 131), and once in the *capitulum lectionis* 40 to Luke (p. 6), all of which are also glossed by *esne*. It is thus the sole term which these glossators use to denote YOUTH. In addition to the instances discussed above concerning the Garden of Gethsemane and

⁴⁹¹ Both the uses of *esne* in Luke in Lindisfarne occur in material which is not present in Rushworth (pp. 6, 75), thus accounting for the disparity between Lindisfarne and Rushworth.

⁴⁹² John J. Kilgallen, *A Brief Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* (New York: Paulist, 1989), p. 300.

⁴⁹³ See 2.6.1.

the resurrection, *esne* denotes the young man asking questions of Christ in Matthew 19.20 and 19.22 (p. 157). It is used in *capitulum lectionis* 40, referring to Luke 9.57-62, to apply to Christ himself (p. 6). As Luke 9.58 has ‘se hælend’ for Christ in the corresponding passage (p. 105), this is not an example of Christ as *famulus*. Finally, *esne* refers to the widow’s son who is raised from the dead in Luke 7.14 (p. 75). There is no single unifying factor linking these individuals except for the Latin terminology: they play different roles and have widely differing statuses. These individuals are not marked as slaves elsewhere in the text. There is no hint that *esne* had any specific connotations related to low-status when it used to mean YOUTH. Thus, its meaning is entirely distinct and separate from SLAVE, although the two occur together.

As there is no semantic overlap evident between SLAVE and YOUTH or MAN and YOUTH, any suggestions concerning the place of YOUTH in the chronological development of *esne* must remain hypothetical. Semantic shift between SLAVE and YOUTH, in both directions, is not unusual. *Lad* is etymologically uncertain but has both meanings.⁴⁹⁴ *Boy* originally meant ‘male servant’ and ‘churl’, and later came to denote ‘male child or youth’.⁴⁹⁵ The Latin *puer* comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **pau-*, ‘few, little’,⁴⁹⁶ and its main denotation in Latin is CHILD, but it also comes to denote SLAVE.⁴⁹⁷ The meanings of the Welsh *gwas* include ‘boy, lad, stripling, youngster, young man’ and ‘servant, attendant, employee, officer; vassal; slave’.⁴⁹⁸ The legal similarities between childhood and slavery, along with the susceptibility of youth to the latter state, undoubtedly fuel this linguistic association. There are two plausible routes for semantic change. The first assumes that YOUTH and MAN are equal outcomes: HARVEST WORKER > HIRED WORKER > SLAVE > YOUTH or MAN. Here, YOUTH and MAN are simultaneously derived from SLAVE, and the

⁴⁹⁴ *OED*, s.v. ‘lad’ [accessed 28th September 2014].

⁴⁹⁵ *OED*, s.v. ‘boy’ [accessed 28th September 2014].

⁴⁹⁶ Watkins, *Roots*, p. 62.

⁴⁹⁷ *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Latine*, ed. by Alfred Ernout and Alfred Meillet (Paris: Klincksieck, 1932), p. 543.

⁴⁹⁸ *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru: A Dictionary of the Welsh Language*, ed. by Richard James Thomas (Cardiff: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1950-2002), accessed from <<http://welsh-dictionary.ac.uk/gpc/gpc.html>>, s.v. ‘gwas’ [25th September 2014].

difference is dialectal. In the second possible situation, the development is purely linear: HARVEST WORKER > HIRED WORKER > SLAVE > YOUTH > MAN. If the latter is correct, youth is an intermediary stage which is preserved in Aldred's gloss because of the conservative nature of the Northumbrian dialect, but entirely lost in West Saxon. This possible trajectory sees a gradual but consistent weakening of the term's meaning. There is no absolute evidence to recommend one version above the other. What is clear is that both are late developments, while SLAVE is the 'original' meaning in Old English, etymologically speaking, and that these later developments occur in a dialectal distribution.

The use of *esne* in these gospels is broadly similar to that of *þræl*, encompassing both literal and metaphorical aspects.⁴⁹⁹ In Matthew 26.51, both Aldred and Farman's glosses use *esne* for the slave of the high priest whose ear is cut off by one of the disciples: '& heono an of ðæm ða ðe weron mið ðone hælend aþenede hond & gebrægd suord his & slænde † slog esne aldorsacerdas aslog earoliprice his' [and behold one of those who were with the Saviour extended his hand and drew his sword and struck the *esne* of the high priest and cut off his ear] (Lindisfarne, p. 221). This is a straightforward use of *esne* to denote a chattel slave. Luke 22.50 contains a version of the same event and both Aldred and Owun used *esne* here (p. 215). The pattern is repeated in John 18.10, which additionally names the slave as Malchus (p. 157). The version in Mark 14.47 is particularly interesting: here, the Latin text of the Rushworth Gospels diverges from that of the Lindisfarne Gospels, reading 'unum summi sacerdotis', [one of the people of the high priest] (p. 140) where Lindisfarne has 'seruum summi sacerdotis' [the slave of the high priest] (p. 119). Although Owun's practice elsewhere is to follow the Latin text of the Rushworth Gospels which he glosses where such divergences occur, here Owun uses the double gloss 'esne † ðræl', which corresponds more closely to the Lindisfarne Latin text and reproduces Aldred's choice. In this, we can see the fluidity of Owun's translation practice. More importantly, his reliance on the Lindisfarne version here is strong evidence that he was using this text extensively and may have had it before him for reference.

⁴⁹⁹ See Chapter 2 for discussion of numerical distribution etc and 5.3.1 for the use of *þræl*.

Esne appears in both the Lindisfarne and Rushworth versions of the parable of the slaves awaiting the return of their master in Luke 12.36–48. In Luke 12.37, the Lindisfarne text reads, ‘eadgo biðon esnas ða ðaðe miððy cymes se drihten gemoetað wæccendo’ [blessed are those *esnas* who when their lord comes, he finds them watchful]. The Rushworth text also uses *esne* here (p. 133). As in other parables, the image is rooted in practical, social constructs and conceptions of slavery. The susceptibility of slaves to bad behaviour without close supervision is widely touted by Classical authors, and also serves here as a metaphor for humanity awaiting the messiah. *Esne* refers simultaneously to chattel slaves and to humanity as the slaves of God. Pelteret’s distinction between ‘slave’ and ‘slave [...] (used in a spiritual sense)’⁵⁰⁰ is thus as artificial as the distinction which the *Middle English Dictionary* draws in the definition of *thral*.⁵⁰¹

In the subsequent passage, beginning with Luke 12.45, *esne* is also applied to ‘bad’ slaves in both Lindisfarne and Rushworth: ‘ðætte gif cweðes esne ðe in heorte his cweðes læte doeð drihten min to cumanne & onginneð miððy slaa ða cnæhtas & ða ðiowe eota & drinca & druncniga’ [but if the *esne* says in his heart: my lord is late in coming, and begins then to strike the boys and the female slaves, and to eat and to drink and to be drunk] (Rushworth, p. 135). If the *esne* acts in this way, Luke 12.46–47 tells us that he will be punished when his lord returns. Taking Luke 12.37 and 12.45 together, it is clear that *esne* is an uncharged term for slaves. It has no connotations of positive or negative behaviour by itself beyond those associated with slaves generally, and can thus be used in a variety of situations where moral aspects can be supplied contextually if needed. Moreover, both Aldred and Owun alternate freely between *esne* and *þræl* in this parable (although *esne*, as elsewhere, is far more common), using the double gloss in Luke 12.43 with no shift in

⁵⁰⁰ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 273.

⁵⁰¹ *MED*, s.v. ‘thral’ [accessed 13th August 2014]. Other parables in which *esne* is used include the Master and Servant or Unprofitable Servant (Luke 17.7, p. 169), in which, once again, human-divine relations are seen in the light of real social norms. It is also found in John 8.34–35 for the slave of sin metaphor, once again alternating with *þræl* (p. 83). This slave of sin can be read as pure metaphor, but, as with the parables, it is deeply rooted in the social realities of slavery. Here, the precarious position of the slave within the household, contrasted with the ‘Son’, informs the audience’s understanding of spiritual questions precisely because these realities are widely understood and accepted. The precise details of Classical and Anglo-Saxon slavery may have diverged, but the lexical equivalence is both the result of and a mechanism for the inter-cultural transferal of such conceptions of slavery.

subject matter (p. 135). This indicates that there were no semantic factors involved in the distribution of these two terms. Combined with the lack of strong connotations for both these terms we can see that, when used in the gospel glosses to denote SLAVE, *esne* and *þræl* were essentially interchangeable.⁵⁰² The general appearance of double glosses reinforces this picture. *Esne* is used in double glosses six times in Lindisfarne and five times in Rushworth. In Lindisfarne these are as follows: with *þeow* (Matthew *capitulum lectionis* [68], Matthew 10.24, pp. 21, 87), *þegn* (Matthew 18.32, p. 151), and *þræl* (Mark 10.44, 14.47, pp. 85, 119; Luke 12.43, p.135). Those in Rushworth are: *þeow* (Matthew 8.9, p. 69), *þegn* (Matthew 24.45, p. 201), and *þræl* (Mark 10.44, 14.47, pp. 85, 119; Luke 12.43, p. 135). As Farman follows Aldred much less closely in his choice of slave words, the absence of these doublets in Matthew is not surprising.⁵⁰³ The appearance of the double glosses involving *þræl* in both Lindisfarne and R₂ is equally unsurprising, as Owun is entirely dependent on Aldred in his use of this term. Taken as a body, the double glosses point to a complex system of synonymy.

Esne appears in two compounds in the Lindisfarne and Rushworth gospels. The form ‘esneteam’, which occurs in the marginalia to John 9.22, and glosses *conspiratio* (p. 93), is probably a scribal error for *efenteam*.⁵⁰⁴ It is difficult to relate *esne-* in ‘esneteam’ to the meaning of the compound, while *efen-* is frequently found in calques for the morpheme *con-*. Consequently, this emendation seems plausible, and ‘esneteam’ must be excluded from the tally of compounds on *esne*. Otherwise, *esne* occurs once in the compound ‘efne-esne’ for ‘conserui’ in Lindisfarne in Matthew 18.33 (p. 151). Compounds in *efen-* and a slave word for *conservus* occur eighteen times in total in the two gospel glosses.⁵⁰⁵ As the simplex *esne* is common, it is striking that this compound is uncommon. The semantics of *esne*’s other compounds, which do not denote slaves, may have influenced the glossators to avoid using it in compounds which required the meaning SLAVE. Aldred’s use of *esne-* here appears to be a calque of his own, inspired by other *efen-* + SLAVE

⁵⁰² See Chapter 5.

⁵⁰³ See 2.8.1 and 2.8.2.

⁵⁰⁴ Toller, *Supplement*, p. 181.

⁵⁰⁵ See Appendix 1.

compounds. By comparison, ‘*æsne-mon*’, found in John 10.13 in both Lindisfarne and Rushworth texts glossing ‘*mercennarius*’ (p. 99), is distinct from this usage, and follows the pattern for *esne*-compounds established elsewhere throughout the extant corpus of Old English. It is clear, particularly in the light of the Gothic *asneis*, that the compounds preserve an older meaning of *esne* no longer seen in the simplex. *Esne* had otherwise become largely unproductive in historical Old English. Aldred and Owun’s use of ‘*æsne-mon*’, alongside the West Saxon compounds such as *esnewyrhta*, demonstrates that this phenomenon was not restricted to any one dialect in Old English.

4.3.10 Durham Ritual

The pattern of the usage of *esne* in the gloss to the Durham Ritual is broadly similar to that in the gloss to the Lindisfarne Gospels, as both were composed by Aldred.⁵⁰⁶ The Durham Ritual, Durham Cathedral A. IV. 19, is a collectar containing various liturgical material, produced in the South of England but present in Northumbria by the late tenth century.⁵⁰⁷ *Esne* is by far the most common term used to gloss *servus* in the Durham Ritual. Out of twenty-two uses of *servus*, twenty are glossed by *esne*, one by *þræl*, and one by *þeow*.⁵⁰⁸ This shows some differences from the patterns established in Aldred’s Lindisfarne gloss, most notably the absence of *þegn* and the scarcity of *þræl*. However, it also demonstrates that Aldred’s dominant use of *esne* is neither an isolated curiosity nor a feature of a particular genre, but rather this item is a key slave word within his dialect, closely associated with the Latin *servus*. As in the Lindisfarne Gospels, this relationship is borne out by the use of *esne* in the calque ‘*efne-esne*’ for *conservus* (p. 70). The most prominent difference is the use of *esne* to gloss *famulus*, which occurs five times in the Durham Ritual, four times in a single cluster (pp. 95-97, 123). *Esne* is not the most common term which Aldred uses to gloss *famulus*.

⁵⁰⁶ Pelteret deals with the two texts together, albeit with extreme brevity (Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 273).

⁵⁰⁷ ‘Manuscript Du’, in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 13th August 2014].

⁵⁰⁸ *Rituale Ecclesiae Dunelmensis: The Durham Collectar*, ed. by U. Lindelöf, Publications of the Surtees Society, 140, rev. edn (Durham: Andrews, 1927), pp. 1-178. All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

Out of the twenty-four uses of *famulus* in total, ten are glossed by *þeow*, eight by *þegn*, five by *esne*, and one by *hiwan* (pp. 7-170).⁵⁰⁹ This suggests that while *esne* was seen as a direct and obvious translation for *servus*, its relationship to *famulus* was more tentative. It had not entirely displaced the older alternatives, *þeow* and *þegn*. *Famulus* does not occur in the Latin text of the gospels, so we cannot know whether genre plays a part in this distinction. As no Latin term denoting YOUTH appears in the Durham Ritual, it is similarly not possible to trace the development of this meaning. Apart from the omission of *þræl*, the pattern here strongly resembles the distribution of slave words in Aldred's gloss to Matthew. This suggests that Aldred moved from a cautious approach which sought to approximate West Saxon terminology to one which is more confident in a selection of specifically Anglian terminology.

The feminine form *famula* occurs thirteen times in the Durham Ritual, all within a relative short space. *Famula* is glossed by forms of *þeowe* such as 'ðio' and 'ðiven' (pp. 103-09). It is never glossed by *esne*. Taken together with the material from the Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels, in which *esne* never glosses *ancilla*, it is clear that, in the Northumbrian dialect, *esne* was not used for female slaves, and lacked a feminine form analogous to *þeowe*. While some of the groups of slaves referred to in the plural may have included female slaves as well as male, it is not used of wholly female groups. Thus, these terms were supplied by other roots. The development of the sense MAN in Late West Saxon texts indicates that there was a sense of masculinity attached to *esne*, possibly due to its etymological and historical associations with certain kinds of labour, which may have obstructed the development of a feminine form of the word.

⁵⁰⁹ The plural noun *hiwan*, sometimes spelt with <g>, usually denotes 'members of a household, of a religious house, a family' (Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 538) and also 'the domestics of a household' (Toller, *Supplement*, p. 546). The Proto-Germanic noun was **hīwa*, 'member of the family, spouse' and the majority of the Germanic cognates refer to family members and close social units (*A Gothic Etymological Dictionary*, ed. by Winfred Philip Lehmann [Leiden: Brill, 1986], pp. 181-82). The form 'higo' also occurs in the Durham Ritual, glossing *familia* (p. 34). While this unusual use of *hiwan* for 'famulis' (p. 30) may draw upon the etymological relationship between *famulus* and *familia*, it is also likely that this unusual usage of *hiwan* was influenced by the Old Norse *hjún*, which sometimes denoted 'domestics, household people' and *hji*, 'a domestic, servant' (Cleasby and Vigfusson, *Dictionary*, pp. 268, 304). The use of *famulus* in a *servus Dei* construction here may have made 'higum' a particularly apt choice for the Old English gloss, combining the 'native' association of *hiwan* with religious communities with the servile sense borrowed from Old Norse.

By far the most common use of *esne* in the Durham Ritual is in the *servus Dei* trope, particularly in the prayers and blessings which form a substantial part of the text.⁵¹⁰ In this, there is no difference between those instances in which it is used to gloss *servus* and those in which it is used to gloss *famulus*. For instance, *esne* is used to gloss *servus* in the prayer ‘Pro fratribus nostris absentibus’: ‘halo do esnas ðino god min hyhtende on ðec’ [keep safe your *esnas* who trust in you, my God] (p. 174), and two similar versions of the same phrase in other prayers (pp. 176, 178). Here, the *servus Dei* trope translated by *esne* applies specifically to monks as slaves of God. This association is found elsewhere in the Durham Ritual, such as in those prayers associated with the taking of holy orders, including the prayer on the shaving of the beard, ‘Ora’ ad barbas tondendas’: ‘giher beodo vs’ of’ ðiosne esne ðin gigoð’ ældo’ wlite wynsvmiende ond æristvm/frūmū frehtū to scearanne’ [hear our prayers over this your *esne* of young age, rejoicing with the ornament and first privileges of shaving] (p. 97). Both here and in ‘Postquam tonsorati est...’ (p. 96) *esne* glosses *famulus* where the latter refers to monks as *servi Dei*. Thus, while, numerically speaking, Aldred uses *esne* differently to gloss *servus* and *famulus*, there is no semantic or contextual distinction. Conversely, in the prayer ‘Ora’ ad capilaturam’, which falls between ‘Postquam tonsorati est’ and ‘Ora’ ad barbas tondendas’, the phrase ‘hunc famulum tuum’ [this your slave] is translated not with *esne* but with *þeow* (p. 97). These three prayers form a cohesive set, and, as such, *esne* and *þeow* refer to the same individual or concept. Thus, the choice between *esne* and *þeow* is not one of semantics but of taste. In addition to the use of the *servus Dei* trope for monks, this trope is also used in the paraphrase of Isaiah 49.5: ‘ðas cvoeð driht’. bisinde/sceop mec of hrife esne him ic salde ðec on leht cynna þte sie hælo mino oð to við vtmoste earðes’ [the lord, who formed me from the womb to be his *esne*, says this: ‘I have given you as a light to the peoples, so that you may be my salvation to the ends of the earth’] (p. 55). The subject is often identified as Christ, and is described as the slave of God, whose work is to restore Israel.⁵¹¹ Therefore it is clear that the use of *esne* in this formula is generic and not restricted only to certain individuals.

⁵¹⁰ This category covers blessings over ale (p. 116) and over water (p. 117), and prayers for protection against certain evils (p. 118), as well as a prayer to be spared from secrets (pp. 168, 172).

⁵¹¹ The heading to Isaiah 49 in the King James Bible reads ‘Christ sent to the Gentiles with gracious promises’ (Carroll and Prickett, *Bible*, OT, p. 811); Vulgate, Isaiah 49.5-6.

While the nature of the Durham Ritual means that the *servus Dei* trope is the most common form in which *esne* appears, it also refers to the slaves who summon the guests to the wedding banquet in Matthew 22, appearing five times in this context (p. 108). As in Aldred's gloss on the Lindisfarne Gospels, these slaves have both a literal and a metaphorical function. As a metaphor, they are those who summon the 'guests' to heaven, while, literally, they undertake tasks which are the preserve of chattel slaves in real life. The strength of the metaphor of slavery and of the parable form lies in the ability of the image to function on multiple levels simultaneously. The use of *esne* in this context is congruent with Aldred's terminology in the Lindisfarne gloss, indicating the stability of his use of this term. On the other hand, in the same passage in Lindisfarne, Aldred uses *þegn* for *servus* (Matthew 22.3-10, pp. 177-79), showing that he did not copy this passage directly from one text to the other, nor were his lexical choices here dependent on his earlier choices.

4.3.11 Wulfstan's *Institutes of Polity*

The *Institutes of Polity* is a Wulfstanian text to which Pons-Sanz attributes no precise date, although she suggests that Wulfstan concentrated on this text, alongside Cnut's law codes, after 1016.⁵¹² Wulfstan uses *esne* here once: 'ne ealdan esne ne bið buton tale, þæt he hine sylfne wyrce to wencle on dollican dædan oþþon on gebæran' [nor is it without reproach for an old *esne* if he makes himself like a child through foolish action or behaviour].⁵¹³ The 'ealdan esne' is a *servus Dei*, and the passage overall is concerned with the proper behaviour of churchmen, indicating that this phrase is used here specifically of the clergy. The use of *esne* to translate this metaphor emphasises this figure's wide currency and the flexibility and importance of the terms used to render it. Any association with youth elsewhere is here emphatically negated by the use of the adjective *eald*. *Esne* is a well established part of the West Saxon lexicon, but the meaning MAN seems to have begun to displace SLAVE by this time in this dialect. Therefore, Wulfstan's use of this term here may be a

⁵¹² Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, pp. 11, 22, 25.

⁵¹³ Wulfstan II, *Die 'Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical': Ein Werk Erzbischof Wulfstans von York*, ed. by Karl Jost, *Swiss Studies in English*, 47 (Bern: Francke, 1959), p. 267.

less visible aspect of Wulfstan's fondness for borrowing dialectal terms in this semantic field. While his use of *þræl* is a particularly notable instance of this phenomenon, Wulfstan's use of *esne* may be an instance of semantic borrowing between the dialects.⁵¹⁴ Wulfstan's usage is ultimately not anomalous, but this potential borrowing casts light on the more subtle aspects of dialectal interaction within Old English. More generally, the appearance of *esne* in the works of Wulfstan, alongside *þeow*, *þræl*, and *wealh* (in its feminine form, *wiln*) confirms its central place in the semantic field.

4.4 Prose: MAN

4.4.1 *Consolatio Philosophiae*

The *De Consolatio Philosophiae* is the only one of the 'Alfredian' texts in which the simplex *esne* is used to mean MAN. It is used of Orpheus as he bargains with Hades: 'ða he [Orpheus] ða longe & longe hearpode, ða cleopode se hellwara cyning & cwæð: Wutun agifan ðæm esne his wif, forðæm he hi hæfð geearnad mid his hearpunga' [then when he (Orpheus) had played the harp for a long time, then the king of those who dwell in hell spoke and said: 'Go and grant the man his wife, because he has won her with his harping'].⁵¹⁵ There is no suggestion of slavery, although we cannot entirely rule out a derogatory note to Hades' command. If it were not for the Latin text, we might read this as the command of a king to a slave. However, the Latin contrasts 'uiro' [man] with 'coniungem' [wife].⁵¹⁶ The former is explicitly masculine while carrying no connotations of slavery. In this light, it becomes clear that the key characteristic of the *esne* here is his gender,

⁵¹⁴ On the other hand, Pons-Sanz suggests that Wulfstan's idiolect has more in common, lexically speaking, with the Alfredian texts than with the 'Winchester group', which would suggest that his use of *esne* could be native to his own dialect (Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, p. 193).

⁵¹⁵ *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius 'De Consolatio Philosophiae'*, ed. by Walter John Sedgefield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), p. 102. All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁵¹⁶ 42-43, Book 3, Metrum 12, Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii Philosophiae Consolatio*, ed. by Ludovicus Bieler, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, 94, Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii Opera, 1 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1984), p. 64. All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

contrasted with the feminine *wif*. Pelteret mentions the use of the sense MAN in the *De Consolatio*, but he fails to recognise the significance of gender.⁵¹⁷

Gender is less explicitly marked in the second instance in which *esne* denotes MAN in the *De Consolatio*. Nevertheless it refers to masculine, rather than gender-neutral, human beings, and thus its usage is congruent with the first episode. Wisdom declares that the wise man should feel grief about the dictates of fate no more than ‘se hwata esne scyle ymb þ gnornian, hu oft he fiohtan scyle’ [the bold *esne* should feel grief about how often he ought to fight] (p. 138). The *esne* here is a man in his most obviously masculine role as a warrior, a role emphasised by the use of ‘hwata’ to indicate the masculine virtue of boldness or bravery. While Sedgefield translates ‘se hwata esne’ as ‘a stout man-at-arms’,⁵¹⁸ the Old English text does not state the martial role of the *esne* in such blunt terms, but rather relies on the identification of the masculine man with the warrior. Once again, the *esne*’s role here indicates a translation of MAN in the gendered rather than ungendered sense, specifically masculine rather than generically human; the Latin here reads ‘virum fortem’ [strong man] (Book 4, Prose 7, p. 87). The equation of the wise man suffering from the effects of vacillating fortune in the first part of this statement with the *esne*’s fighting is intended to indicate the high moral and social status and martial, masculine qualities of this wise man. Not only does *esne* here lack the negative connotations we might expect from its servile uses elsewhere, but it retains all the positive connotations of active masculinity.

4.4.2 The *Dicts of Cato*

The *Dicts of Cato* is a late Old English collection of apothegms and gnomic wisdom predominantly based on the *Disticha Catonis*,⁵¹⁹ a Latin instructional text, ‘one of the medieval curriculum’s greatest stars’.⁵²⁰ Elaine Treharne emphasises the twelfth-century contexts of the composition of

⁵¹⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 273. Here, Pelteret also fails to note the second use of *esne* in this text.

⁵¹⁸ *King Alfred’s Version of the Consolations of Boethius. Done into Modern English, with an Introduction*, ed. and trans. by Walter John Sedgefield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), p. 128.

⁵¹⁹ ‘The Dicts of Cato’, edited in R. S. Cox, ‘The Old English Dicts of Cato’, *Anglia*, 90 (1972), 1-42 (p. 1).

⁵²⁰ Elaine Treharne, ‘The Form and Function of the Twelfth-Century Old English *Dicts of Cato*’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 102 (2003), 465-85 (p. 465).

the present version of the *Dicts*, calling them them ‘late witnesses to Old English,’⁵²¹ but in R. S. Cox’s notes to his edition, he places the beginning of their composition somewhere between the mid tenth and the mid eleventh century.⁵²² The manuscript on which Cox’s edition is mainly based is Cambridge, Trinity College, R.9.17, which is dated to the eleventh or twelfth century, with booklet B, in which the *Dicts* are found, ascribed to the late eleventh century on palaeographical grounds.⁵²³

The Old English *Dicts* are not word-for-word renderings of the Latin text, but instead expand upon and reinterpret the text. For the Latin

Quem scieris non esse parem tibi, tempore cede:
victorem a victo superari saepe videmus

[yield for a while, as you might not know who is equal to you: we often see the conqueror overcome by the conquered] (II.10), the Old English has a considerably expanded version: ‘ðonne þu geseo gingran mann ðonne ðu sie, & unwisran & unspedigran, þonne geþenc ðu hu oft se ofercymð oþerne, ðe hine ær ofercom: swa mann on ealdum bigspellum cwið, þæt hwilum beo esnes tid, hwilum oðres’ [when you see a younger person than you are, and less wise, and more unlucky, then you perceive how often he who was previously overcome (now) overcomes the other. Thus, it is said in old fables that sometimes it is one *esne*’s time, sometimes the other’s].⁵²⁴ The context here does not suggest any hint of servitude. *Esne* simply functions as a term for human beings alongside *man*, perhaps more explicitly gendered, but still ultimately used in parallel.⁵²⁵ The martial connotations of *ofercuman* may have suggested the use of such a specifically masculine word, but this is tenuous. The gendering of *esne* here is less marked than in other texts where it used to denote MAN, and this may suggest further weakening of its sense, so that it becomes a kind

⁵²¹ Treharne, ‘Dicts’, 484-85.

⁵²² Cox, ‘Dicts’, 34.

⁵²³ Elaine Treharne, ‘Cambridge, Trinity College, R. 9. 17 (819)’, in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.CTC.R.9.17.htm>> [accessed 2nd October 2013].

⁵²⁴ Cox, ‘Dicts’, p. 9.

⁵²⁵ Pelteret does not mention the use of *esne* here (Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 273-74).

of placeholder, without strong connotations of its own to interfere with the meaning of the passage. This agrees broadly with *esne*'s use in Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*, another late text, although the evidence is too scanty for absolute certainty. Jordan argues that both *tid* (in the sense of a 'favourable moment') and *esne* were more common in the North, but archaic in the South, giving the second part of this passage the character of an old proverb.⁵²⁶ As we have seen, *esne* is undoubtedly more common in Northern, especially Northumbrian texts, and was, in fact, the dominant word to denote chattel slaves in the Anglian gospel glosses. However, its usage in southern texts is far too widespread in terms of genre and too common to support the notion that it was purely archaic. Moreover, the meaning MAN is a relatively new development rather than an archaism, and suggests the continuing currency of this term in both West Saxon and Anglian dialects. The meaning SLAVE for this term in West Saxon might have given the passage an archaic 'flavour'; the sense MAN cannot do so. Thus, while this passage is clearly presented as a proverb, 'ealdum bigspellum', the choice of terminology, specifically *esne*, is not necessarily indicative of this.

4.4.3 Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*

Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion* is an early eleventh-century commentary on Byrhtferth's own *computus*, written at Ramsey Abbey.⁵²⁷ Here, *esne* is used solely with the meaning MAN. Slave words are extremely rare in this text: neither *wealh* nor *þræl* occurs, while *þeow* occurs only a single time, in the compound *þeowdom* (p. 116).⁵²⁸ The explicit contrast with 'freodome' here indicates that *þeowdom* has its normal meaning.⁵²⁹ *þegn* occurs five times, with a mixture of meanings, including in the phrase 'Godes þegnas' (p. 114).⁵³⁰ Thus, it is not possible to tell whether Byrhtferth *could*

⁵²⁶ Richard Jordan, *Eigentümlichkeiten des englischen Wortschatzes: Eine wortgeographische Untersuchung mit etymologischen Anmerkungen* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1906), pp. 91-92.

⁵²⁷ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, pp. xxvi-xxviii, xxxiii-xxxiv.

⁵²⁸ A fragmentary search of the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus for both 'þeow' and 'ðeow', restricted to this text returns only this instance (*DOE* Corpus [accessed 12th April 2014]). I conducted similar searches for the other Old English slave words and returned no results.

⁵²⁹ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 1055.

⁵³⁰ *DOE* Corpus [accessed 12th April 2014], using a 'fragmentary' search for 'þegn' and 'ðegn', restricted to this text.

use *esne* to denote chattel slaves but did not use it here because his references to slaves were scarce, or whether *esne* in his idiolect only applied to masculine human beings with no reference to legal status. On the other hand, Clemoes notes that this use of *esne* solely for MAN was part of a pattern of vocabulary preferences shared with the anonymous portions of the Old English Heptateuch.⁵³¹ If Clemoes' assumption about the relationship of these two texts is correct, then it is likely that MAN is the sole possible meaning of *esne* in the *Enchiridion*.

Overall, *esne* occurs five times in the *Enchiridion*.⁵³² In the majority of these instances, it is very clear that *esne* neither denotes a slave nor carries servile denotations, but refers unambiguously to masculine human beings of no given legal status. In Book II, Byrhtferth writes that 'hig habbað ascrutnod Serium and Priscianum and þurhsmogun Catus cwydas þæs calwan esnes and Bedan gesetnyse þæs arwurðan boceres' [they have examined Sergius and Priscian and investigated the sayings of Cato the bald *esne* and the compositions of the venerable scholar Bede](p. 120). In a similar vein, in the discussion of the *dyle peristigmene*, we find Zenodotus described thus: 'þys hiw ealde uðwittan gesettan agen þam þingum þe Zenodotus se Eficisa esne unwræstlice gesette' [old scholars placed this figure next to the things which the Ephesian *esne* Zenodotus set down inaccurately] (p. 178). These two passages clearly share an underlying formula: NAME (the) ADJECTIVE MAN. This formula could be rewritten with any Old English term used to denote a generic masculine human being, but here Byrhtferth chooses to use *esne*. The formula requires *esne* to act as a 'placeholder' term without strong connotations of its own. Instead, it is the adjectives, 'calwan' and 'Eficisa' which are most significant here in terms of the meaning of the formula. A noun with strong connotations would skew this relationship. As a placeholder, the strong connotation of masculinity present elsewhere, including the anonymous portions of the Heptateuch, is somewhat diminished, although not absent. If this semantic bleaching was part of an ongoing process, by which it became little more than a synonym for the vastly more common

⁵³¹ *The Old English Illustrated Hexateuch: British Museum Cotton Claudius B. IV*, ed. by C. R. Dodwell and Peter Clemoes, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile*, 18 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1974), pp. 42-53; Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, p. cxi.

⁵³² Pelteret only cites two instances and gives no analysis of them (*Slavery*, p. 273).

man, this development offers a possible explanation for the disappearance of *esne* in Middle English.

Similarly, Byrhtferth uses the phrase ‘rimcræftige esnas’ [*esnas* skilled in computation] to denote computists when listing the symbols which these computists use to denote various weights (pp. 178-79). *Rimcræftig* means ‘skilled in computation’, and *rimcræft* is ‘the science of numbers, arithmetic’.⁵³³ Here, this adjective refers to their skill in using this system of notation. For Byrhtferth’s purposes, this adjective is the most significant feature of this phrase, while *esnas* adds little in terms of meaning. As in the two cases discussed above, *esne* refers to scholars of renown who are clearly not slaves or in a servile position, nor is there any reason to presume a metaphorical construct drawing upon the image of the slave. Thus, *esne* is evidently an integrated element of Byrhtferth’s language, rather than an unusual element chosen for a specific purpose.

The semantics of the final two instances of *esne* in Byrhtferth’s *Enchiridion* are not as immediately obvious, but still point to a meaning MAN. In the first case, Byrhtferth constructs an elaborate comparison between the labour of a bee and that of human beings and concludes ‘swa gedafenað esnum þam orpedan, þonne he god weorc ongynd, þæt he þæt geornlice beswynce, þeah hine deofol mid his lymum wylle gedreccan and his barspere beotige to ofsticianne’ [so it befits the bold *esne*, when he begins a good work, that he should exert himself earnestly at that, although the devil with his henchmen will vex him and threatens to pierce him with his boar-spear] (p. 128). There is no evidence to suggest a servile dimension to this work, which is itself a metaphor, both the bee and the labouring man, for the scholarly study of Easter (III.1.113-36, p. 128). Once again, there is no suggestion of a *servus Dei* construction which might justify the application of slave words to such high-status pursuits. As in the constructions discussed above, the emphasis of the passage lies not on the *esne* but on his actions and attributes.

While Baker and Lapidge otherwise gloss *esne* as ‘man’, they refine this to ‘young man’ in III.3.1-3: ‘ðæt byð snotrum were med swyðe arwurðlic beforan Godes gesihðe, gif he wisdomes lare geleaffullum esne cyð to soðe’ [there is a great honour before the sight of God for the wise

⁵³³ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 799.

man, if he gives the knowledge of wisdom to the faithful *esne*] (pp. 162).⁵³⁴ There is an implied hierarchy of knowledge between the ‘snotrum were’ and the ‘geleaffullum esne’, which may in society have often been accompanied by an age differential, but the passage does not refer to this. The assumption that *esne* means ‘young man’ here is a product of the assumption that it denotes YOUTH in a wide variety of texts, when this meaning is, in reality, a limited development, closely associated with the meaning SLAVE. Both *wer* and *esne* refer to masculine human beings,⁵³⁵ and here they are used as equivalents, providing literary variation without semantic impact. Once again, the qualifying adjectives are the critical meaningful elements in this passage. Baker and Lapidge are essentially correct in their gloss on *esne*, but this final usage should not be treated as an exception.

4.4.4 The *Heptateuch*

The anonymous portions of the Old English *Heptateuch*, as Clemons notes, share lexical preferences with Byrhtferth’s *Enchiridion*, including the use of *esne* for MAN.⁵³⁶ *Esne* is used nine times in the *Heptateuch*: five times in Genesis, three times in Exodus, and once in Deuteronomy, all in the material composed by an anonymous author.⁵³⁷ *Esne* first occurs in this text in Genesis 24.61, which is the ‘definite break’ between the earlier, Ælfrician material, and the anonymous portions.⁵³⁸ *Esne* does not occur in Ælfric’s other work, so its absence in the Ælfrician material here is not surprising. The comparatively small amount of material composed after the year 1000 which uses *esne* makes its collective impact harder to judge when compared to the earlier material. Nevertheless, the meaning MAN is substantially attested in the later material, indicating a diachronic semantic change, at least in West Saxon, rather than some dialectal substrate acting upon these texts particularly.

⁵³⁴ Baker and Lapidge, *Enchiridion*, pp. 441–42.

⁵³⁵ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 1205.

⁵³⁶ See 4.4.3.

⁵³⁷ See 3.5 for the provenance of the text and the details of the division between anonymous and Ælfrician material.

⁵³⁸ Raith, ‘Ælfric’s Share’, 311.

In the *Heptateuch*, *esne* glosses *vir* six times, by far its most common use: Genesis 24.61, 42.11, 42.13 and Exodus 2.1, 2.19, 11.2 (pp. 52, 73, 90, 91, 105). It is used in Exodus 2.19 when Moses helps the daughters of the priest of Midian, and is described as ‘an Egiptisce *esne*’ [an Egyptian *esne*] (p. 91).⁵³⁹ The Latin text of the Vulgate here reads ‘*vir aegyptius*’ [Egyptian man] (Vulgate, Exodus 2.19). There is no reference to the Israelites’ slavery here in either version to suggest a blurring of meanings between SLAVE and MAN. This is further confirmed by the use of *esne* in Exodus 11.2: ‘witodlice þu scealt beodan Israhela folce þæt *esne* bidde æt hys frynd, and wif æt hire nehgeburan, gyldan fatu and sylfrene’ [truly, you shall tell the people of Israel that the *esne* should ask his friend, and the woman her neighbour, for vessels of gold and silver] (p. 105). The Latin text here uses ‘*vir*’ and ‘*mulier*’ (Vulgate, Exodus 11.2). The critical contrast here is between male and female human beings, and the lexical choices closely parallel those in the Old English *De Consolatio Philosophiae* discussed above. This contrast is key to the semantics of *esne* in this text: *esne* is HUMAN BEING + MASCULINE where *wif* is HUMAN BEING - MASCULINE, and thus it is not surprising to find these two terms as a complementary pair.⁵⁴⁰ Even when it is used to mean SLAVE, *esne* is never used solely for women. Thus, the factor which links the two main denotations of *esne* is gender.

In two closely related instances, *esne* for *vir* is used to denote the patriarch Jacob: ‘ealle we synd anes *esnes* suna’ [we are all the sons of one *esne*] (Genesis 42.11, p. 73) and ‘ða twelf þine þeowas sind gebroðru, synd anes *esnes* suna on Chanaan lande’ [those twelve slaves of yours are brothers, and are the sons of one *esne* in the land of Canaan] (Genesis 42.13, p. 73). Although the use of ‘þeowas’ might indicate a servile reading of *esne* here, *esne* actually corresponds with the Latin *vir* (Vulgate, Genesis 42.11, 42.13). Although the twelve brothers address Joseph as slaves, their father, Jacob, is not a slave. Jacob’s fatherhood makes a term which emphasises his masculine, generative role particularly apt. *Esne* is used a single time to gloss *pater* itself: ‘we twelf gebroður wæron anes *esnes* suna’ [we twelve brothers were the sons of one *esne*] (Genesis 43.32, p. 74) for

⁵³⁹ Although Pelteret lists the other uses of *esne* for *vir* in the *Heptateuch*, he omits this instance (*Slavery*, p. 274).

⁵⁴⁰ Alternatively, *wif* is HUMAN BEING + FEMININE and *esne* is HUMAN BEING - FEMININE.

‘duodecim fratres uno patre geniti sumus’ [we twelve brothers are born of one father] (Vulgate, Genesis 42.32). This does not indicate that FATHER was a denotation of *esne*, but rather that the formula from Genesis 42.11-13 was applied here without alteration. *Pater* does not contradict *esne*’s essential denotation here, and thus does not disrupt the use of the formula, creating connections within the text.

The gloss on Deuteronomy 31.6 contains the adverbial form *esnlice*: ‘onginnaþ esnlice and beoþ staþulfæste’ [set to work *esnlice* and be steadfast] (p. 171) for the Latin text, ‘viriliter agite et confortamini’ [act manfully and be strengthened greatly] (Vulgate, Deuteronomy 31.6). While in the earlier, ‘Alfredian’ texts, the senses of the simplex noun and the adverb were distinct, here their meanings concur. The adverb suggests not merely unmarked masculinity but masculine strength and virtue, a state which is not attained solely by biological fact but achieved and enhanced by active endeavour. It is therefore significant that the simplex *esne* never glosses the more neutral *homo*. The existence of this adverb hints that *esne* as MAN was formative, although no further compounds occur. This process may have been impeded by the existence of compounds preserving the older meaning HIRED WORKER.

Esne does not specifically and primarily denote SLAVE in the *Heptateuch*, but there are instances in which the *vires* to which *esne* is applied are also slaves. In Exodus 2.1, the Old English ‘æfter þison, for an esne of Leuis hiwrædene and nam wif an his agenum cynne’ [after this, an *esne* from the family of Levi went and took a wife from his own people] (p. 90) translates the Latin ‘egressus est post haec vir de domo Levi accepta uxore stirpis suae’ [after this, a man from the house of Levi went out and took a wife from his own lineage] (Vulgate, Exodus 2.1). The *esne* in question here is Amram, Moses’ father, and this passage occurs during the time of Israelite slavery in Egypt. Despite this, there is no mention of slavery, nor are slave words used in this passage. *Esne* glosses *vir*, as elsewhere in the *Heptateuch*. The use of both *vir* and *uxor* closely parallels the passage from Exodus 11.2 discussed above, indicating that this contrast, rather than any contextual consideration of Amram’s legal status, was the deciding factor in the use of *esne* here.

The first use of *esne* for the individual who leads Rebecca to Abraham’s home in Genesis 24.61 (‘on þære tide þe se esne hig hamweard lædde to his hlaforde’ [in time when the *esne* led her

homewards to his lord]) (p. 52) occurs in similar circumstances: he is an *esne* in the Old English and *vir* in the Latin (Vulgate, Genesis 24.61), but is elsewhere described as a slave.⁵⁴¹ *Esne* must have been chosen here because of its relationship to the Latin *vir*. However, when this man is explicitly called a *servus* in Genesis 24.66 (Vulgate), the anonymous author also uses *esne*: ‘se esne rehte þa Isaace eall hys færeld’ (p. 52).⁵⁴² We cannot rule out the possibility that the more usual denotation, SLAVE, was, as Pelteret believes, intended here,⁵⁴³ but this reading is strikingly out of character for the anonymous parts of the *Heptateuch*. The *Historia Ecclesiastica* is the only prose text which clearly uses *esne* for both MAN and SLAVE, and, as discussed below in 4.5.3, this is likely due to dialectal admixture. The most plausible solution here is that, as with *esne* for *pater*, the earlier description of this same slave with *esne* for *vir* prompted a repetition of this lexical choice. The absence of *esne* as SLAVE to gloss *servus* elsewhere in the *Heptateuch* certainly indicates that, although the anonymous author had no problems using this term, the meaning SLAVE was not a normal part of its denotation in his idiolect.

4.5 Prose: Miscellaneous

4.5.1 The *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great

Esnewyrhta occurs once in the ‘Alfredian’ translation of the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, both in the version of the text from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 322, and in the version from Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 76. The texts are substantively the same. The CCC 322 version reads ‘eala, hu manige esnewyrhtan wæron in mine fæder huse & þam hlaf

⁵⁴¹ This chapter immediately follows an abbreviated passage in the *Heptateuch* which does not directly translate the Latin text (Marsden, *Heptateuch*, pp. 51-52). Raith discusses this abbreviated passage (Raith, ‘Ælfric’s Share’, 311). However, the same individual is described as ‘servumque Abraham’ in the Latin text of the Vulgate (Genesis 24.59).

⁵⁴² In the intervening verse this individual is described as ‘puerum’ in the Latin Vulgate (Genesis 24.65) and ‘cnihte’ in the Old English (p. 52).

⁵⁴³ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 274.

genihtsumað' [alas, how many *esnewyrhtan* are in my father's house and have sufficient bread].⁵⁴⁴ This is the lament of the Prodigal Son, suffering from hunger. Both the Latin version of the *Dialogues* and the Vulgate use *mercenarius* here (p. 144; Vulgate, Luke 15.17). In the various Old English gospel translations, *mercenarius* is glossed by 'yrðlinga' (CCCC 140), 'erdlinga' (Oxford, Bodley, Hatton 38), and 'celmertmenn' (Lindisfarne), while this passage is missing in the Rushworth gospels (pp. 156-57). *Irþling* denotes 'husbandman, farmer, ploughman'.⁵⁴⁵ While ploughmen could be associated with servile labour, as in Ælfric's *Colloquy*, this term is occupational rather concerned with rank, and thus does not necessarily indicate servile status. Meanwhile, *celmertmonn* simply denotes a 'hired servant, hireling'.⁵⁴⁶ The Latin *mercenarius* used nominally means 'a hireling, hired servant'.⁵⁴⁷ The use of *esnewyrhta* in this context in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great suggests that the meaning of the compound is closer to its etymological roots than the simplex form was. Pelteret's decision to treat this compound as if it sheds light on the simplex *esne* and proves that the latter denoted 'a hired labourer' is thus flawed both in its method and its conclusions.⁵⁴⁸

4.5.2 The *Prose Psalter*

Esne appears in the final verse of two psalms in the *Prose Psalter*, the 'Alfredian' prose paraphrase of the first fifty psalms. It appears to be part of a stock phrase exhorting the listener to increased vigour and determination: 'hopa nū mīn mōd, tō Drihtne and gebīd his willan and dō esnlīce, and

⁵⁴⁴ *Bischofs Werferth von Worcester Übersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen: Über das Leben und die Wunderthaten Italienscher Väter, und über die Unsterblichkeit der Seelen*, ed. by Julius Zupitza, Henry Johnson and Hans Hecht, Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Prosa, 5, 2 vols (Leipzig: Wigand, 1900-07), I (1900), ix, vii, 106-07. The Hatton 76 version uses *fela* and the partitive genitive, and is substantively identical (p. 106).

⁵⁴⁵ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 601.

⁵⁴⁶ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 150. Holthausen links this with the Latin *collibertus* (Holthausen, *Wörterbuch*, p. 46), which suggests a more complex legal status, and may in turn cast light on Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards the marginal status of low-status labour, conflating the semi-free with both menial tasks and hired labour.

⁵⁴⁷ Lewis and Short, *Dictionary*, p.1135. See 4.2.

⁵⁴⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 271-2, 274.

gestaþela and gestranga þīne heortan, and geþola Drihtnes willan’, [hope now for God, my mind, and await his will and act *esnlice* and strengthen your heart and endure the will of the Lord] and ‘ac dōð esnlīce, and gestrangiað ēowere heortan and ēower mōd, ælc þāra þe to Gode hopige’ [but act *esnlice*, and strengthen your heart and your mind, each of those who have hope in God].⁵⁴⁹

Tabulating these phrases besides their Latin counterparts from the Vulgate makes the resemblance even more striking (Vulgate, Psalm 26.14, 30.25):

Table 20: Stock Phrases in Two Psalms

Psalm 26	Psalm 30
Hopa nū mīn mōd, tō Drihtne and gebīd his willan and dō esnlīce, and gestaþela and gestranga þīne heortan, and geþola Drihtnes willan.	Ac dōð esnlīce, and gestrangiað ēowere heortan and ēower mōd, ælc þāra þe to Gode hopige.
expecta Dominum, confortare et roboretur cor tuum et sustine Dominum	confortamini et roboretur cor vestrum omnes qui expectatis Dominum

The Old English of the *Liber Psalmorum* is a paraphrase rather than a direct translation of the Latin text. ‘Roborari tuum/vestrum cor’ is faithfully rendered by ‘gestrangian þīne/ēowere heortan’, but ‘dōn esnlīce’, ‘act manfully’ does not correspond literally to *confortare*, ‘to strengthen much’, here used in the passive imperative: ‘be strengthened greatly’. The Old English shifts the meaning from passive to active, not only in purely grammatical terms, but also in terms of the force of the passage. In the Latin text, strength is an attribute which can be imposed upon the subject, but in the Old English interpretation it is an attribute which the individual displays. Moreover, the choice of *esnlice*, which elsewhere only glosses *viriliter*, suggests that this strength is a purely masculine attribute. The use of the verb *don* rather than *beon* reinforces the active aspects of this quality, constructing it as a deed to be performed rather than a state to be achieved. Masculinity here is constructed as both virtuous and active.

⁵⁴⁹ 26.16, 30.28, *Liber Psalmorum: The West-Saxon Psalms, Being the Prose Portion, or the “First Fifty” of the So-Called Paris Psalter*, ed. by James Wilson Bright and Robert Lee Ramsay (Heath: Boston, 1907), pp. 56, 66.

4.5.3 Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*

Esne is used twice in the Old English translation of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. It is first used to describe Penda: 'þa wonn wið hine Ceadwealla Bretta cyning; & him Penda onfultome wæs, se fromesta esne of Mercna cyningcynne' [then Ceadwealla, King of the Britons, fought against him, and he was supported by Penda, the most bold *esne* of the Mercian royal race].⁵⁵⁰ *Esne* here clearly does not denote SLAVE; this meaning would be highly inappropriate for a king. Regardless of Bede's disfavour towards Penda, both 'fromesta' and 'of Mercna cyningcynne' reinforce Penda's high status. Thus, *esne* here must be, at the very least, read as a neutral term, and most probably a positive one. On a syntactic level, *esne* is very rarely qualified by an adjective in prose when it means SLAVE, but there are parallels for the use of an adjective with *esne* as an uncharged term for a man in Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*.⁵⁵¹ Moreover, *esne* here renders the Latin text's *vir*: 'illi Penda uiro strenuissimo de regio genere Merciorum' [that Penda, the most vigorous man of the royal kin of the Mercians].⁵⁵² Where *esne* denotes MAN rather than SLAVE, its most common Latin counterpart is *vir*, as in the anonymous portion of the Old English *Heptateuch*. This suggests that, in some varieties of Old English, most obviously West Saxon, there was a clear equation between the two terms; this was a wider shared feature, and not the preserve of a single author.

By contrast, the second use of *esne* must denote SLAVE. When Wilfrid is given the estate at Selsey, 'mid land and mid monnum' [with land and with people] he baptizes the slaves of the estate: 'betwih ða twa & hundteontig & fiftig þara manna esna ond menena gefulwade; & ealle ða swa swa he þurh fulwihhte from deofles ðeowdome gehælde, & eac swilce mennisce ðeowdome onlesde & hie gefreode' [of these, he baptized 250 *manna esna* and *menena*; and just as he released

⁵⁵⁰ *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Miller, EETS, o. s., 95, 96, 110, 111 (95, 96), 2 vols (London: Trübner, 1890-98), I (1890), 146-48. All references are to this edition, parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁵⁵¹ See 4.4.3.

⁵⁵² Bede, *Histoire Ecclésiastique du Peuple Anglais*, ed. by André Crépin and Michael Lapidge, trans. by Pierre Monat and Philippe Robin, Sources Chrétiennes, 489-91 (489), 3 vols (Paris: Cerf, 2005), I, 394. All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

them from slavery to the devil through baptism, he likewise released them from human slavery and freed them] (pp. 304-06). The Latin text here uses ‘seruos et ancillas’, who are freed from ‘seruitute daemonica’ [slavery to the devil] by baptism and also from ‘humanae iugo seruitutis’ [the yoke of human slavery] (II, p. 266). There is a clear equivalence between *servus* and *esne*. The use of ‘manna’ to qualify *esne* here is of particular interest. As we have seen, *esne* is never used solely of female slaves. Translating *mann* here as ‘human’ is not useful, as there is no ‘nonhuman’ *esne* juxtaposed with the *mann* here. However, the translator of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* had a fondness for doublets where the Latin text only had a single term.⁵⁵³ *Mann* also denoted ‘a person belonging to another, a slave’.⁵⁵⁴ If *mann* is translated in this way, it is a doublet which reinforces the sense of *esne*. Equally, *mann* may be used in a gendered sense,⁵⁵⁵ to add emphasis to *esne* as a term which is already gendered and to distinguish it from *mennen*. Although Pelteret recognises the meaning SLAVE here,⁵⁵⁶ the servile status of these individuals, their distinguishing feature, has eluded some modern scholars. Miller translated this passage as follows: ‘he established all in the faith of Christ and washed them in the laver of baptism. Of these he baptized 250, men and maids; and as he by baptism saved them all from the devil’s service, so he also released and freed them from service to man’ (pp. 305-07). The mistranslation of ‘manna esna ond menena’ here makes nonsense of the connection which the passage draws between literal and spiritual manumission, and weakens the significance of their slavery to mere service. These individuals *must* be slaves, rather than ‘men and maids’ in order for their freedom from service to have the depth of meaning which is intended. In the Old English version, the Latin’s *servitus* is rendered by *þeowdom* both times, enhancing the connection between the social and spiritual states of service and further reminding us that *esne* and *þeow* are equivalent. As *esne* is, by and large, not formative in Old English, the compound *þeowdom*

⁵⁵³ Bately, ‘Prose’, 123.

⁵⁵⁴ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 299.

⁵⁵⁵ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 299.

⁵⁵⁶ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 273-74. His assertion here that it ‘usually translates *seruus*’ in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, however, is odd.

stands in the place of ***esnedom*, and there is no difficulty using this compound in conjunction with the simplex *esne*.

Thus, in the Old English translation of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, *esne* appears in two entirely distinct semantic fields, with no apparent overlap in meaning. Most of the other texts in which *esne* appears are either dominated by a single meaning (such as SLAVE in the Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels) or exhibit a substantial amount of ambiguity around the meaning of the word, as in the Exeter Book riddles. The Old English *Historia Ecclesiastica* is usually dated to the end of the ninth century or the beginning of the tenth.⁵⁵⁷ Whether associated with Alfred's translation programme or with a Mercian school of translation,⁵⁵⁸ it is generally agreed that, while the surviving text is Late West Saxon, the main translator originally wrote in an Anglian dialect or a dialect heavily influenced by Anglian, most likely the Mercian variety.⁵⁵⁹ As we have seen in the Mercian sections of the Rushworth Gospels, *esne* was particularly common in this dialect, and in Anglian dialects more widely. The significant cluster of appearances of *esne* as both a personal name and a place name in the Mercian charter material further attests to its popularity in this dialect, although, as noted, it is not possible to tell from these occurrences whether the original meaning was MAN or SLAVE. The admixture of dialects created by the reformulation of a Mercian text into West Saxon is the most likely cause of the juxtaposition of the two senses here. The question of which meaning came from which dialect is ultimately insoluble. However, as SLAVE is attested in Anglian dialects until the late tenth century,⁵⁶⁰ while MAN is an entirely West Saxon phenomenon, it is most probable that these dialects supplied these meanings respectively. Nevertheless, there is no reason to assume that both meanings of *esne* were not intelligible in the translator's dialect or that of his target audience. Where dialects overlapped, this led to the coexistence of more than one

⁵⁵⁷ Sharon Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Anglo-Saxon Studies, 16 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2011), p. 2. The *terminus post quem* is the beginning of the tenth century, the period of the oldest surviving manuscript fragments (Bately, 'Prose', 98).

⁵⁵⁸ Rowley, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 5.

⁵⁵⁹ Rowley, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 38; Dorothy Whitelock, 'Prose of Alfred's Reign', p. 77; Bately, 'Prose', 98.

⁵⁶⁰ The meaning may have continued to have currency beyond this time, but the last Anglian texts containing *esne* date from this point.

meaning, at least in the passive vocabulary. This concurs with the evidence from the riddles, which also have both Anglian and West Saxon elements, and which draw upon both meanings, MAN and SLAVE, in their play on social and linguistic ambiguity. The interplay between dialects not only obscures the development of *esne*, but also creates situations where its meanings are brought into direct conflict, sometimes incidentally and sometimes to great effect.

4.5.4 Charters and Wills

Overall, the *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum* records thirty individuals named ‘Esne’. Some of these, such as the ‘king’s thegn’ in the *Onomasticon* are the same individuals attested in the Sawyer charters.⁵⁶¹ The more recent *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* project records fifteen possible individuals.⁵⁶² This group includes four of the five individuals found in the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus material.⁵⁶³ The greater number of individuals in the *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* when compared to the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus is mainly due to the inclusion of Latin charters⁵⁶⁴ and texts such as the Latin record of a synod of 786.⁵⁶⁵ These differences account for the absence of most of these individuals in the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus material except for Esne 12. This man appears in six charters which are written in part or in whole in Old English (S304, 309, 310, 312, 313, and 317),⁵⁶⁶ but is not attested in the material from the Dictionary of

⁵⁶¹ *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum: A List of Anglo-Saxon Proper Names from the Time of Beda to that of King John*, ed. by William George Searle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), p. 236.

⁵⁶² Esne 11 may be the same person as Esne 1 or 2 (*Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Janet L. Nelson, Simon Keynes and Stephen Basxter [King’s College London, 2010] <<http://www.pase.ac.uk>> [accessed 11th April 2013]). These numerical designations are those used by PASE itself to distinguish between the various individuals. References to *PASE* are given in the format ‘*PASE*, Esne x’. When I refer to the entry for ‘Esne’ as a whole, this is simply given as ‘*PASE*, Esne’.

⁵⁶³ The references to these individuals were found using a ‘begins with’ search for ‘esn’ (*DOE* Corpus [accessed 21st April 2014]). It has not so far been possible to pinpoint the bishop Esne who occurs in Sawyer 1819 in *PASE*.

⁵⁶⁴ For instance, Esne 2 only appears in the witness lists of Latin charters (*PASE*, Esne 2 [accessed 12th April 2013]).

⁵⁶⁵ *PASE*, Esne 4 [accessed 12th April 2013].

⁵⁶⁶ *PASE*, Esne 12 [accessed 12th April 2013].

Old English Corpus. Whatever their numerical disagreements, the Dictionary of Old English Corpus, the *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum*, and *PASE* provide evidence for a substantial number of individuals at the highest levels of society, bearing witness to charters and benefitting from wills, who were named *Esne*. It is not possible to tell whether the name *Esne* was more closely associated with the denotation SLAVE or MAN or some other meaning, because, as personal names, they no longer contain semantic content, nor can we reconstruct such meaning from their contexts.⁵⁶⁷ Pelteret assumes that the personal name is derived from the sense MAN, drawing upon the evidence of the Old English personal name ‘Man’.⁵⁶⁸ This is not implausible, but the meaning MAN for *esne* is elsewhere only attested in late texts, which may make it improbable for some of the earlier attestations of the personal name. Furthermore, various terms denoting SLAVE are also attested in personal names,⁵⁶⁹ so we cannot rule out this meaning. *Esne* is not formative in the dithematic naming scheme, only occurring in the simplex in the *PASE* material discussed here.⁵⁷⁰

The regional associations of the *Esnes* listed in *PASE* are as follows: a Mercian *dux* (1), a Mercian *princeps* (2), two Kentish *comites* (3, 6),⁵⁷¹ a Bishop of Hereford (4), a Mercian *comes et praefectus* in a spurious charter (5),⁵⁷² a witness to a Mercian charter concerning land in Kent (7),

⁵⁶⁷ Nigel F. Barley, ‘Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Names’, *Semiotica*, 11 (1974), 1-31 (pp. 1-13) and Fran Colman, *Money Talks: Reconstructing Old English*, Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs, 56 (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), pp. 12-16.

⁵⁶⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 274.

⁵⁶⁹ *Þrel* is found in some Middle English surnames, such as Willelmus le Thral (*MED*, s.v. ‘thral’ [accessed 14th April 2013]). In the legendary material, *þeow* appears in names such as *Wealhþeow* and *Ongenþeow* (E. V. Gordon, ‘Wealhþeow and Related Names’, *Medium Aevum*, 4 [1935], 169-75).

⁵⁷⁰ See Cecily Clark, ‘Onomastics’, in *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume I*, ed. by Hogg, pp. 452-89 (pp. 456-71) for discussion of the various types of Anglo-Saxon personal names.

⁵⁷¹ While these individuals are cited as ‘Kentish’ by *PASE*, *Esne*’s 3’s *floruit* (762-778) falls within the time of Mercian influence in Kent, and, of *Esne* 6’s three charters, two concern land grants by Cenwulf of Mercia and one concerns the return to Canterbury Christ Church of land confiscated by Offa (*PASE*, *Esne* 1, 2, 3, 6 [accessed 15th April 2013]).

⁵⁷² ‘S122’, in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 15th April 2013]. While this charter is generally agreed to be spurious, it is interesting to note that the use of the name *Esne* (here *Esme*) seems to be associated with Mercian material.

the father of a witness to a charter concerning land in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire (8),⁵⁷³ a priest witnessing a charter concerning land in Gloucestershire (9), a king's *þegn* in Kent (10), the father of a Mercian *dux* who owned land in Worcestershire (11), a minister who witnessed a number of West Saxon charters (12), a bishop who issued leases for land in Somerset in the will of Alfred (13), the father of Ælfheah who is mentioned in the will of Bishop Ælfric (14),⁵⁷⁴ and the witness to a Mercian charter granting land in Worcestershire (15).⁵⁷⁵ Sawyer 1819, in which an *Esne* also occurs, concerns grants of land at Nynhead, Stoke St Mary, Ruishton and Hestercombe in Somerset.⁵⁷⁶ It is not, of course, possible to be sure whether the places with which these men are associated in the charter material can in any way be correlated with their places of origin. Nevertheless, there appears to be a strong Mercian bias in the occurrence of this name; the individuals who bear it are often clearly Mercian, and it occurs most commonly in Mercia and Mercian-dominated areas. Taken in conjunction with the preference for *esne* as SLAVE in Farman, this material suggests a particular fondness for the word in the Mercian dialect.

In terms of chronology, the range in which most attested individuals named *Esne* lived is relatively small. Of the fourteen individuals in *PASE* who occur in at least one authentic charter, all but one have a *floruit* between 762 and 899; the remaining individual is the father of the Ælfheah who occurs in the will of Archbishop Ælfric, giving a date in the late tenth century. Four individuals have a *floruit* in the mid or late eighth century, one either in the late eighth or early ninth, five in the early ninth, two in the mid ninth, and one in the late ninth.⁵⁷⁷ Thus, there is clearly a peak in the occurrence of this name in the charter material roughly around the year 800. If, as appears to be the case, the name *Esne* was particularly associated with Mercia, this is not surprising, given that this period around the year 800 is at the height of the Mercian Ascendancy,

⁵⁷³ This name occurs as a patronymic for Æthelheah (*PASE*, Esne 8 [accessed 9th August 2014]); see also Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 274).

⁵⁷⁴ It is not immediately clear where this land is, although the previous clause refers to land at Fiddington and Newton in Gloucestershire (S1488, in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 14th April 2013]).

⁵⁷⁵ *PASE*, Esne 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 12, 15 [accessed 14th April 2013].

⁵⁷⁶ 'S1819', in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 15th April 2013].

⁵⁷⁷ *PASE*, Esne [accessed 25th September 2014].

including the Mercian control of Kent,⁵⁷⁸ when we might therefore expect to find Mercian names particularly prominent in the charter material. The evidence, therefore, suggests that while the common noun *esne* was widespread, the proper name *Esne* was one which was predominantly associated with a particular place and time.

Esne occurs in the bounds sections of a number of charters in the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus. In two cases, this is usually taken to be a personal name rather than a common noun. In Sawyer 298, *Esne* is capitalised in the editions: ‘ðonne on ðone dic ðær Esne ðone weg fordealf’ [then on the earthwork where *Esne* destroyed the way through digging].⁵⁷⁹ The *Esne* here is clearly an individual and the subject of the verb ‘fordealf’. This could be read as a common noun, whether ‘slave’, ‘man’, or some other form of labourer who had destroyed the way.⁵⁸⁰ However, this would give unusual prominence to such individuals, and so it is reasonable to maintain the current reading, suggesting some local figure associated with the public works implied by this clause. That being the case, we therefore have another occurrence of *Esne* as a personal name well outside Mercia, as the charter concerns land granted by Æthelwulf of Wessex to himself at South Hams in Devon in 846-47.⁵⁸¹ This is, as we have seen, unusual, but it does not significantly affect the pattern which has already emerged. Sawyer 553 reads ‘and lang stræte on Esnes stan. of Esnastanne on thone caldan weg’ [and along the road to *esne*’s stone; from *esne*’s stone on the old road].⁵⁸² Unlike in the previous instance, there is no reason to believe that the capitalisation here should reflect the use of *esne* as a personal name, given the lack of any other evidence to suggest this. It could as easily be a common noun, and its function is much closer to the remaining four charters, where it is an unmistakable place name element, involving some landscape feature and *esne* in the genitive. The nature of this material makes it impossible to state categorically whether this is a

⁵⁷⁸ S. E. Kelly, ‘Kent, Kingdom of’, in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Lapidge, Blair, Keynes and Scragg, pp. 269-70 (p. 270).

⁵⁷⁹ ‘S298’, in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 6th September 2014].

⁵⁸⁰ The meaning of *fordelfan* is uncertain (Toller, *Supplement*, p. 236).

⁵⁸¹ ‘S298’, in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 6th September 2014].

⁵⁸² ‘S553’, in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 16th April 2013].

personal name or a common noun, but the emphasis on the former may well be the result of the lack of attention paid to *esne* as a slave word.

The remaining four charters which contain *esne* or some form thereof in the bounds material do so as a place name element. In this form, *esne* occurs in pairs in Sawyer 1346 ('*esnig mædwæ*' and '*esnig mædwān*' [*esnig* meadow]),⁵⁸³ 528 ('on *esnes ham*' and 'of *esnes hamme*' [to/from the dwelling of the *esne*]),⁵⁸⁴ and singly in 630 ('on *esnes diges get*' [to the gate of the *esne*'s earthwork])⁵⁸⁵ and 582 ('to *esnadiche geate*' [to the gate of the *esne*'s earthwork]).⁵⁸⁶ The geographical scope of these references is much broader than is the case with personal names: Merstham in Surrey (528), Pucklechurch in Gloucestershire (553), Stoke Bishop in Gloucestershire (1346), Donhead St Andrew and Compton Abbas, on the borders of Wiltshire and Dorset (630), and Chalke in Wiltshire (582). It therefore does not have the narrow Mercian focus which characterises the use of the personal name, although there is a bias towards the western counties. These could be the names of individuals associated with these features, but could equally be specifics derived from *esne* as a slave word. Both *wealh* and *þræl* occur as specifics in place names,⁵⁸⁷ indicating that a slave word would not be inappropriate in this place. A common noun is at least as likely as a personal name, and has well attested parallels. The most critical lesson we can draw from the use of *esne* here, however, is the breadth and depth of its attestation. Far from being a minor term, it was substantially attested even in the 'non-literary' material.

As in the personal name material, it is not possible to tell whether these place name elements are related to the meaning SLAVE or MAN or some kind of servile or hired labour, although other evidence makes this last option highly unlikely. In the case of Sawyer 582 ('*esnadiche*') and 630 ('*esnes diges get*'),⁵⁸⁸ the apparent association of *esne* with large earth-

⁵⁸³ 'S1346', in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 16th April 2013].

⁵⁸⁴ 'S528', in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 16th April 2013].

⁵⁸⁵ '§630', in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 16th April 2013].

⁵⁸⁶ 'S582', in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 16th April 2013].

⁵⁸⁷ See 3.3 and 5.3.1

⁵⁸⁸ 'S582', 'S630', in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 14th August 2014].

moving projects⁵⁸⁹ may suggest a connection with hard labour such as that which servile persons might effect, or, alternatively, with the individuals who ordered, or were supposed to have ordered, it.⁵⁹⁰ However, it is impossible to reconstruct why these earthworks were considered as related to or belonging to an *esne*, so it is not possible to ascertain the reason behind these toponyms. In the case of Sawyer 1346, this problematic situation is further complicated by the use of the adjectival form ‘esnig’ to describe a ‘mædwe’.⁵⁹¹ This adjective is omitted from the current dictionaries, including Bosworth and Toller, which suggests that previous scholars have taken this as a patronymic or other derivative of *Esne* as a personal name. A meaning similar to ‘the slaves’ meadow’ or ‘a meadow belonging to servile workers of some rank’ is rather more satisfactory than ‘the men’s meadow’, particularly given the date, but this remains a matter of plausible conjecture, particularly given *esne*’s uninformative nature elsewhere. The ‘esnes ham’ of Sawyer 528 and ‘esnes stan’ in Sawyer 553 are similarly difficult to decode at this remove.⁵⁹² The former is translated as ‘Esne’s enclosure’ and ‘Esne’s meadow’.⁵⁹³ However, it is not necessary to translate this usage as a personal name, although other personal names are used in the bounds of this charter. Treating this usage as a common noun provides a translation which is equally reasonable; terms for servile persons occur with relative frequency in place names, denoting settlements associated with particular social classes.⁵⁹⁴ Thus, ‘the dwelling of the slave’ and ‘the stone of the slave’ are as plausible as translations here as those suggested by prior scholars.

It is clear that the use of *esne* as a common noun in place names overlapped with but was not identical to the area in which it was used extensively as a personal name. In the case of the

⁵⁸⁹ See the entries for the various forms of *dic* (Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 203; Toller, *Supplement*, pp. 151, 761).

⁵⁹⁰ The modern name ‘Offa’s Dyke’ provides a possible parallel.

⁵⁹¹ ‘S1346’, in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 16th April 2013].

⁵⁹² ‘S528’, ‘S533’, in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 14th August 2014].

⁵⁹³ ‘S528’ in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 17th April 2013].

⁵⁹⁴ *Charlton* and *Carlton* are also common place names, representing, respectively, the Old English *ceorl* and the Old Norse *karl* (*Dictionary of English Place-Names*, ed. by A. D. Mills, 2nd edn [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], pp. 71, 77).

place name element, while it is not possible to untangle the semantics of *esne*, its presence does suggest a significant amount of usage at a local level, indicating that, whatever its precise meaning may have been, this was not a word solely associated with the literary dialect or with erudite translation projects. Despite the gradual erosion of its precise legalistic meaning, *esne* remained useful and thus current in the practical, social world which generated place names.

4.5.5 Glossaries

Esne occurs in two Old English glossaries. It is difficult to relate its appearances here to its usage in the narrative texts, and thus to contextualise it semantically. London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius C. IX, which equates ‘*esne*’ with ‘*lixa*’,⁵⁹⁵ is itself is an antiquarian transcript dated to the seventeenth century.⁵⁹⁶ Both the nature of a glossary and the late date of the manuscript render any assessment of the age and provenance of the material extremely difficult at best. The Latin *lixa* generally means ‘sutler’ or, in the plural, ‘camp-followers, consisting of sutlers, cooks, servants, etc’.⁵⁹⁷ This may be related either to SLAVE or to the earlier meaning HIRED WORKER (MAN is rather too general to be plausible), but this specialised meaning is not recorded elsewhere. Without meaningful context, it is not possible to place this within the chronological and dialectal framework of *esne*’s wider development.

London, British Library Harley 3376, by contrast, is authentically Anglo-Saxon, dated to the final quarter of the tenth century or the first half of the eleventh, and potentially localised to the West of England.⁵⁹⁸ Thus, the compiler of the gloss most likely used or was familiar with *esne* himself, in one sense or another. However, the compound *esnecund* is a *hapax legomenon*, and the glossary is a list of rare Latin terms; the Latin lemma ‘*condiciorius*’ itself is obscure. Wright-Wülcker prints ‘*condiciorius*’, and, in place of any obvious meaning for the attested form, Oliphant

⁵⁹⁵ Neil Ripley Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 470.

⁵⁹⁶ ‘London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius C. IX’, in *The Electronic Sawyer* [accessed 9th April 2013].

⁵⁹⁷ Lewis and Short, *Dictionary*, p. 1073.

⁵⁹⁸ ‘Detailed Record for Harley 3376’, in British Library, *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts* <<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/welcome.htm>> [accessed 9th April 2013].

suggested a reading of ‘conducticius’.⁵⁹⁹ Lewis and Short record the latter form as meaning ‘of or pertaining to hire, hired, rented’,⁶⁰⁰ while the form *conducticius* occurs in twelfth-century ecclesiastical contexts to denote ‘stipendiary’.⁶⁰¹ If this reading of ‘condiciarius’ is correct, then *esnecund* is more akin to *esnewyrhta*, semantically speaking, than to any of the attested meanings of *esne* as the simplex in historical Old English. As Harley 3376 is a compilation of various sources, it is not possible to ascertain the age or dialectal provenance of this meaning.⁶⁰² However, the semantic similarity with *esnewyrhta* strongly suggests that both compounds were more conservative than the simplex form.

4.6 Poetry

4.6.1 Psalms

The Old English metrical versions of Psalms 51-100 are known collectively as the Paris Psalter, and are contained in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 8824, alongside a prose version of the first fifty psalms, some of which are discussed above.⁶⁰³ The metrical psalms contain the largest extant corpus of *esne* attestations in a single West Saxon text, thirty-one occurrences in total.⁶⁰⁴ This word

⁵⁹⁹ *The Harley Latin-Old English Glossary: Edited from British Museum Harley 3376*, ed. by Robert T. Oliphant, *Janua Linguarum, Series Practica*, 20 (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), pp. 11, 102.

⁶⁰⁰ Lewis and Short, *Dictionary*, p. 410.

⁶⁰¹ Latham, *Latin Word-List*, p. 105.

⁶⁰² Oliphant, *Harley Glossary*, p. 12.

⁶⁰³ M. S. Griffith, ‘Poetic Language and the Paris Psalter: The Decay of the Old English Tradition’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 20 (1991), 167-86 (p. 167); Emily V. Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England*, *Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature*, 88 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 228. While the prose psalms have sometimes been attributed to Alfred, the authorship of the metrical versions is even less certain (Richard Emms, ‘The Scribe of the Paris Psalter’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 28 [1999], 179-83 [p. 179]).

⁶⁰⁴ These instances were found by a ‘begins with’ search of the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus using ‘esn’ (*DOE* Corpus [accessed 4th March 2013]). See also, Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 273. The metrical psalms also used *þeow* and compounds thereof ten times and *scealc* thirteen times (using a ‘begins with’ search for ‘ðeow’, ‘þeow’, and ‘scealc’ (*DOE* Corpus [accessed 9th August 2014])). Thus, while other slave words are used in this text, *esne* is by far the most common.

occurs in fifteen separate psalms: 68, 77, 78, 79, 88, 104, 108, 115, 118, 122, 129, 131, 134, 135, and 142. Of these thirty-one uses of *esne*, all refer to slaves, and all but two directly gloss *servus* in the *servus Dei* metaphor. Psalm 77 reads ‘and him ða Dauid geceas, deorne esne’ [and he then chose David, his dear *esne*]⁶⁰⁵ for the Latin ‘et elegit David servum suum’ [and he chose David, his slave] (Vulgate, Psalm 17.70).⁶⁰⁶ The *servus Dei* metaphor indicates the nature of the relationship between David and God, while the adjective ‘deorne’, an addition in the Old English text, suggests a closeness and affection which modern commentators have difficulty ascribing to such a relationship.⁶⁰⁷ The clear lexical equivalence here between *servus* and *esne* is repeated throughout the metrical Psalms. *Esne* is used to describe the first-person persona of the psalm poet, as in Psalm 142: ‘forþon ic þin esne eom’ [because I am your *esne*] (142.12, p. 141). The combination of *esne* with the second-person pronoun *þin*, translating the Latin *tuus* here is very common (pp. 45-141). This combination reflects the narrator’s direct address to God, which sometimes necessitates this choice, but it also emphasises the personal nature of this servile relationship and the dependence of the slave. This combination is, of course, inherited from the Latin text, but it continually reinforces this aspect of the *servus Dei* metaphor.

In addition to this first-person address, *esne* is used to denote named characters in the psalms. As we saw above, it is used in particular of David, as in Psalm 77. In Psalm 88, the narrator refers as ‘Dauide dyrum esne’ [David (my) dear *esne*] (88.3, p. 56). It is also used of Abraham in Psalm 104 (104.6, pp. 79-80), and Israel as a whole (135.23, p. 131). This emphasises the personal aspects of this relationship and makes it clear that the servility embodied in the *servus Dei* trope need be neither demeaning nor low-status. The collocation of *deor* with *David* here, emphasised by the alliteration, foregrounds the close emotional bonds between the two parties and the high

⁶⁰⁵ Psalm 77.69, *The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius*, ed. by George Philip Krapp, ASPR, 5 (London: Routledge; New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), p. 44. All references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁶⁰⁶ The verse division and thus the numbering used by the Paris Psalter and by the standard Vulgate occasionally differ, and thus the Latin and Old English versions here are numbered each according to its own system.

⁶⁰⁷ Girsch’s discomfort with the description of spiritual relationships in terms of chattel slavery is evident throughout her article (Girsch, ‘Terminology’, 30-54).

esteem in which the *servus* may be held. It is therefore interesting that *esne* is used to gloss *servus* in these constructions. This indicates that *esne* lacked strong positive or negative connotations in the West Saxon texts, just as in Northumbrian. The metaphorical extension to high-status figures in the metrical psalms of the Paris Psalter means that this term can be applied to all ranks of society. The disreputable behaviour of the slaves in the Exeter Book riddles relies on the context rather than the choice of terminology to convey moral judgement.⁶⁰⁸ Similarly, in these psalms, the high-status of the *esne* is not implicit in the term itself but must be judged by its referents.

In Psalm 122, the link between literal slavery and the *servus Dei* construction is made clear by the following simile:

efne mine eagan synt ealra gelicast
þonne esne bið þonne ondrysnum
his hlaforde hereð and cwemeð

[equally, my eyes are of all most like the *esne* is when he obeys and pleases his venerated lord] (122.2, p. 120). The Latin text ‘*ecce sicut oculi servorum ad manum dominorum suorum*’ [behold, just as the eyes of slaves are on the hands of their masters], explicitly links this with the relationship between man and God: ‘*sic oculi nostri ad Dominum Deum*’ [thus our eyes are on the Lord God] (Vulgate, Psalm 122.2). The syntactic and lexical parallels between the two clauses emphasise this connection. Subjection and obedience are inherent to both social and religious forms of this relationship. For both the original composer of the text and for the Anglo-Saxon translator, the *servus Dei* was not an abstract and isolated concept, but one which was deeply rooted in ideas of the proper behaviour of the real slaves who surrounded them.

Psalm 118 is the longest psalm at 150 verses in the Vulgate and 176 verses in the Paris Psalter version (pp. 103-118). The psalm contains twelve uses of *esne*, and thus represents 39% of all the instances of this term in this text. Psalm 118 only uses another slave word in a single instance:

gemun nu, dryhten, þines wordes,
on þam þu me þinum þeowe hyht gesealdest

⁶⁰⁸ See 3.7 and 4.7.

[be mindful, Lord, of your word to your slave, by which you gave me hope] (118.49, p. 107). It seems likely that *þeow* was chosen here for its alliterative properties, and that, elsewhere, *esne* was the psalmist's 'default' choice to gloss *servus*. Both *þeow* and *esne* are used for the *servus Dei* construction; there is no semantic difference to explain the word choice. This is an inversion of the 'expected' pattern by which *þeow* is the default term for slaves in West Saxon and all other usages deviate from this norm. The norm, it seems, is not so normal, nor so uniform as might be thought, even within West Saxon.

As mentioned, there are two instances in the psalms in which *esne* does not gloss *servus*. The first of these occurs in Psalm 79: 'hu lange yrsast þu on þines esnes gebed?' [how long will you be angry against the prayer of your *esne*?] (79.5, p. 46), for the Latin 'usquequo fumabis ad orationem populi tui?' [will you fume perpetually against the prayer of your people?] (Vulgate, Psalm 79.5) The fear of divine judgement is one of many situations for which the *servus Dei* metaphor is particular apt. Just as the slave must fear the absolute power of his master, so the *servus Dei* must fear the absolute power of God. This facet of the metaphor was clearly as potent for the Anglo-Saxons as for the original composer of the psalms. Psalm 134 of the Vulgate, where *esne* is also used in the Paris Psalter, shows a similar association of the *servus Dei* trope with the exercise of absolute power (134.14, p. 129; Vulgate, Psalm 134.14). Similarly, Psalm 129.2 reads

wesan þine earan eac gehyrende
and beheldende mid hige swylce
on eall gebedd esnes þines

[may your ears also hear and attend with such mind to all the prayers of your *esne*] (129.2, p. 125), for the Latin 'Domine exaudi vocem meam fiant aures tuae intendentes ad vocem deprecationis meae' [Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my prayers] (Vulgate, Psalm 129.2). The Paris Psalter text, by replacing the Latin pronoun in 'deprecationis meae' with the nominal phrase 'gebedd esnes þines', transforms the plea from first-person to third-person, and makes the subservient position of the supplicant explicit. This is a stock phrase, shared with Psalm 79 (p. 46). While there is no strict lexical equivalence with the Latin text here, there is a clear equivalence in terms of ideas. Therefore, *esne* in the Paris Psalter only ever renders the idea of a slave, mostly

through glossing *servus*, but occasionally through contextual inference. It never glosses general terms for a man such as *homo* or *vir*, nor does it gloss other occupational terms.

The final two verses of Psalm 118 (175-76) are also found in a version of the Benedictine Office preserved in MS Junius 121, produced at Worcester between 1060 and 1072.⁶⁰⁹ It has been suggested that the Paris Psalter and these fragments shared an exemplar, with the whole text composed at Worcester in the latter part of the tenth century.⁶¹⁰ The two versions are identical in all significant particulars, differing mainly in orthography and some features of phonology. The Paris Psalter version of verse 176 reads,

la, sece þinne esne elne, drihten;

forðon ic þinra beboda ne forgeat beorhtra æfre

[lo, seek for your *esne* with strength, Lord, because I have not forgotten your commandments, always holy] (118.176, p. 118) and the Junius 121 text here is identical.⁶¹¹ Although there is considerable evidence for the shift SLAVE > MAN for *esne* in late Old English,⁶¹² it is clear that the scribe of Junius 121 was familiar with the meaning SLAVE. By revealing that the meaning SLAVE for *esne* continued until the end of the Old English period, this shows that the diachronic development of this term cannot be mapped as a straight line. The meaning SLAVE does not immediately give way before MAN, but is occurs in parallel with it for a time, even in the West Saxon material. Moreover, the appearance of *esne* in multiple versions of the same text points to its wide currency. It was not a term which was restricted to any clique or school of authors and scribes.

4.6.2 *Daniel*

⁶⁰⁹ Helen Foxhall Forbes, 'Oxford, Bodleian, Junius 121', in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.Ox.Juni.121.htm>> [accessed 11th March 2013]; Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, p. lxxv.

⁶¹⁰ Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, pp. lxxvii-lxxviii.

⁶¹¹ Psalm 118.176, 'Fragments of Psalms', in *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by Dobbie, pp. 80-94 (p. 86).

⁶¹² See 4.8.

Excluding the psalms discussed above, *esne* is extremely rare in the poetic corpus, occurring only ten times in the extant material in addition to its appearance in the metrical psalms.⁶¹³ Of these ten instances, nine occur within the Exeter Book riddles discussed at the end of this chapter. The remaining instance occurs in the Junius manuscript poem *Daniel*. Here, the text reads

Hine ðær esnas mænige
wurpon wudu on innan, swa him wæs on wordum gedemed;
bæron brandas on bryne blacan fyres

[many *esnas* threw wood into it (the fire), as it was commanded to them with words; they carried torches to the blaze of the shining fire].⁶¹⁴ *Daniel* is a very loose reworking of the biblical text, and there is nothing in the Latin of the Vulgate to suggest who carries out these actions, which are instead related in the passive voice: ‘Nabuchodonosor [...] praecepit ut succenderetur fornax septuplum quam succendi consuerat’ [Nebuchadnezzar [...] ordered that furnace should be kindled seven times more than it was accustomed to be heated] (Vulgate, Daniel 3.19). The nature of the Old English text, which does not explore these individuals but merely uses them as a convenient device, does not allow us to determine their precise social role. While there may have been an intermediary exegetical text which described this role more fully, it is equally likely that this choice was the poet’s own. The menial physical labour described in this passage, building the pyre on which the Three Children are to be immolated at the order of Nebuchadnezzar, points towards a subservient role, but the simplex *esne*, as we have seen, does not denote HIRED WORKER in Old English. Thus, it is most probable, given the labour and role, that *esne* denotes either SLAVE or another kind of bound worker whose role might be described using a metaphor of slavery. Certainly, the Latin of the Vulgate uses *servus* on multiple occasions to describe those who serve Nebuchadnezzar, as in Daniel 2.4. The most appropriate reading for *esne* here is SLAVE.

The text of *Daniel* is preserved in the Junius Manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11. While stylistic differences suggest multiple authorship, the poem as it stands was copied in the

⁶¹³ These ten items are the result of searches for all possible inflected forms of *esne* (*esne*, *esnes*, *esna*, *esnas*, *esnum*) in the web corpus and of appropriate orthographical variants (*DOE* Corpus [accessed 17th-19th January 2013]).

⁶¹⁴ 243b-45, ‘Daniel’ in *The Junius Manuscript*, ed. by George Philip Krapp, ASPR, 1 (London: Routledge; New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), pp. 109-32 (pp. 117-118).

same hand as *Genesis A* and *B* and *Exodus*, dated to around the year 1000.⁶¹⁵ It has not thus far proved possible to localise the production of the manuscript, although Canterbury, Winchester, and Malmesbury have all been suggested as possible places of origin.⁶¹⁶ It is therefore difficult to determine *Daniel's* place in the dialectal distribution of *esne*. The poem, like the others in the manuscript, is written in standard literary West Saxon with some non-standard features.⁶¹⁷ Taking this together with both the psalms and the riddles, it is clear that while *esne* was not hugely common in West Saxon poetry, it played a small but substantial part in the available stock of terminology. The West Saxon texts in which it is most common, numerically speaking, are poetical texts. Where its meaning is unambiguous, it clearly denotes a chattel slave. As slaves are not common in poetry, particularly the heroic material, the inclusion of *esne* as a notable feature of the poetic lexicon is particularly interesting, demonstrating the breadth of its currency.

4.7 Ambiguity in the Exeter Book Riddles

Esne is by far the most common item for chattel slaves used in the Old English riddles of the Exeter Book, appearing nine times in six separate riddles.⁶¹⁸ Meanwhile, *þeow*, despite its position in the West Saxon lexicon as a whole, occurs only once, in the first riddle.⁶¹⁹ *Þegn* occurs six times, across five riddles.⁶²⁰ *Wealþ* occurs three times, including the feminine form *wale*, in two riddles.⁶²¹ Thus, it is clear that, while its position in West Saxon overall is comparatively marginal, in the riddles of the Exeter Book, *esne* is surprisingly significant. This significance, closer examination reveals, is a function of *esne's* use as an intentionally ambiguous term. Just as the use of *wealþ* plays

⁶¹⁵ Paul G. Remley, 'Junius Manuscript', in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Lapidge, Blair, Keynes and Scragg, pp. 264-66 (p. 265); Krapp, *Junius*, p. x.

⁶¹⁶ Remley, 'Junius Manuscript', 265.

⁶¹⁷ *Daniel and Azarias*, ed. by R. T. Farrell (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 11.

⁶¹⁸ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 420.

⁶¹⁹ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 455.

⁶²⁰ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 455.

⁶²¹ Williamson, *Riddles*, pp. 458-59

upon the possibilities of social rank and ethnicity, so *esne* plays upon the ambiguities of MAN and SLAVE.

Critical opinion has tended to downplay *esne*'s use for chattel slaves in the riddles. Of the nine uses, Williamson glosses four of them as denoting MAN (27.8, 27.16, 44.4, and 63.5).⁶²² Aside from Riddle 44, it is not always clear why or if such a reading should be accepted, and a closer examination of each riddle is consequently important. Riddle 43, solved as 'Soul and Body',⁶²³ contains three instances of *esne*, the greatest number found in a single riddle. It is one of the most conservative portrayals of an *esne* in the riddle collection, dwelling upon the importance of obedience of the slave to his master, the soul, who is the 'guest' here. The riddle reads

Gif him arlice
 esne þenað se þe agan sceal
 on þam siðfate, hy gesunde æt ham
 findað witode him wiste ond blisse;
 cnosles unrim care, gif se esne
 his hlaforde hyreð yfle,
 frean on fore, ne wile forht wesan
 broþor oþrum (Riddle 43.4b-11a, p. 96)

[if the *esne* who should go with him on the journey serves him properly, they will find abundance and happiness decreed for them when they are safe at home, a countless number of kin. They will find sorrow if the *esne* obeys his lord and master on the journey badly, and will not be afraid as a brother for the other] (Riddle 43.4b-11a, p. 96). The riddle concludes by asking

hu se cuma hatte,
 eðþa se esne þe ic her ymb sprice

[how the guest is named or *esne* whom I speak about here] (Riddle 43.15b-16, p. 96). It is one of the central paradoxes of the riddle that it is the activity of the *esne* which will determine the fate of the *hlaford*, a paradox which can only be understood by the correct resolution of the riddle. By

⁶²² Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 420. Moreover, those which he does not gloss as MAN, he renders as 'servant'. This translation is fundamentally flawed. As we have seen, *esne* most frequently glosses *servus* and is clearly used in biblical contexts which involve chattel slaves. Its servile denotation, therefore, is 'slave' not 'servant' and the latter translation relies on a tradition of modern historiography which has been uncomfortable with Anglo-Saxon slavery, and which has thus tended to conflate these two terms unfairly. Therefore, the major possible meanings for *esne* here are 'man' and 'slave'.

⁶²³ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 277.

solving the riddle as ‘Body and Soul’, the audience realises that the slave whose service defines the fate of his master is the body, whose sins and privations determine the destiny of the soul. The riddle expresses the widely accepted doctrine that the body should be subservient to the soul. In doing so, it draws upon the trope of obedient and disobedient slaves, and thus makes a statement about the nature of slaves and their correct role in society. The body, as a fellow traveller, is a ‘broþor’, expressing the kinship of the soul and body as well as the brotherhood of man, but its main duty towards the soul is not brotherhood but service; the idea that the *esne* might be the *blaford’s* brother is intentionally jarring. By placing the onus of obedience on the *esne*, the riddle emphasises the importance of servile submission in a well-ordered society. Indeed, it is striking that the riddle does not dwell upon the need of the master to exact obedience, but the duty of the slave to render it. The slave rather than the master bears the burden of obligation. By emphasising the importance of the subservient role, the riddle promotes the view that the place of slaves is divinely ordained and their role is as critical as that of their masters.⁶²⁴ As in many of the other riddles which feature slaves, Riddle 43 allows us to explore the assumptions and attitudes which were associated with slave words. An approach to the riddles which concentrates solely on the solutions and not the content ignores the multiple levels on which Riddle 43 explores hierarchical relationships and the duties which accompany them. Such relationships in Old English often require the use of slave words including *esne*, words which not only refer to chattel slaves but also form a variety of metaphors and allegories which structure both social and spiritual perceptions.

Esne appears in Riddle 22, solved as the ‘Wagon of Stars’ or ‘a month’:⁶²⁵

swa hine oxa ne teah, ne esna mægen,
ne fæthengest, ne on flode swom,

[thus, no ox drew it, nor the strength of *esnas*, nor a riding horse, nor did it swim in the flood]

(Riddle 22.13-14, p. 81). The ‘*esna mægen*’ is one of the many physical forces associated with agricultural work which do not draw this wagon. Pelteret recognises that *esne* here denotes SLAVE,

⁶²⁴ The emphasis on the obedience of slaves is prominent in the Pauline teachings, including the famous injunction ‘*servi oboedite per omnia dominis carnalibus*’ [slaves, be obedient to your earthly masters in all things] (Vulgate, Colossians 3.22).

⁶²⁵ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 201.

but John Porter mistranslates ‘*esna mægen*’ as ‘asses’ strength’. It is in this context that we can begin to understand John Porter’s mistranslation of *esna mægen* as ‘asses’ strength’.⁶²⁶ Certainly, this reading has a superficial plausibility: Porter’s reading implicit classes *esnas* as part of a group of beasts of burden otherwise made up of ‘*oxa*’ and ‘*fæthengest*’. However, it also requires an unnecessary emendation of the text, one which he does not, in fact, make: Porter’s text, as Williamson’s, preserves the manuscript’s *esna*.⁶²⁷ The genitive plural of the weak masculine noun *assa*, ass, would be *assena*. Therefore, emendation would require both the alteration of the initial vowel and the contraction of the morphological ending. While such a process of contraction is not implausible, it not necessary to posit its occurrence here. Rather than reading the riddle’s lines as a list of *beasts* of burden, we should see them as a list of those, both animal and human, who might be expected to carry out heavy labour. The tendency of critics to avoid the issue of slavery has downplayed the role of slaves as human beasts of burden in the agricultural economy of Anglo-Saxon England. Moreover, the critical marginalisation of *esne* has led to poor recognition of its appearance and the assumption that it is a rare term, both of which here prevent Porter from interpreting this word correctly. This in turn reinforces the impression that *esne* is rare, locking scholarship into a vicious circle. In contrast to Porter, Williamson accepts the manuscript’s ‘*esna*’ at face value.⁶²⁸ The wagon’s size is, of course, paradoxical, and the relative strength of the ‘*oxa*’, ‘*esna*’ and ‘*fæthengest*’ is not relevant either to the solution of the riddle or to the interpretation of ‘*esna*’. Although slaves in this period could participate in skilled professions, they were often associated with heavy labour. Ælfric’s *Colloquy*, for instance, constructs slave labour as menial, physical, and

⁶²⁶ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 274; Riddle 22.13b, *Anglo-Saxon Riddles*, ed. and trans. by John Porter (Swaffham: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1995), p. 41. Porter’s translations are often less than exact, but the problematic treatment of *esne* makes it more vulnerable to such misinterpretation.

⁶²⁷ Riddle 22.13b, Porter, *Riddles*, p. 40; Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 55. Even if *assa* was declined strongly, *esne* would still be a less forced reading of the text.

⁶²⁸ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 420: here, ‘*esna*’ is included under the entry for *esne* in the index. See also, Riddle 20.10 (22.13), *Feast of Creatures: Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Songs*, ed. and trans. by Craig Williamson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982; repr. London: Scholar, 1983), p. 80. As *Feast of Creatures* contains only translations and therefore differs both in the numbering of the riddles and of the lines, when I refer to this edition, I include the standard riddle number and line number in brackets).

masculine.⁶²⁹ The shock of the modern audience when presented with slaves listed alongside agricultural animals was not necessarily shared by the Anglo-Saxon audience of this riddle.

Esne occurs twice in Riddle 27 in many editions, including Williamson's *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book*. The first possible occurrence is an emendation for the manuscript 'efne'. Williamson, Porter, Tupper, Trautmann, and Krapp and Dobbie all accept this emendation (Riddle 27.8a, p. 84).⁶³⁰ The unemended *efne* has been interpreted as a form of the verb *efnan*, 'to achieve or perform'. However, the text requires *efnan* to mean 'to throw down, lay low', which is problematic. Moreover, the syntax of this emended version is unusual.⁶³¹ Thus, the use of *esne* in Riddle 27.8 occupies a somewhat awkward place within the corpus of its extant usages. However, as already noted, *esne* is strikingly common in the vocabulary of the riddles, and, indeed, it occurs elsewhere in the same riddle. It would thus not be out of place in this line, and we can proceed to consider its place here.

Pelteret takes *esne* in Riddle 27 as 'a poetic variant for *wer*, *hæleð*, and *ceorl*', and takes this instance as a particularly obvious example of the meaning MAN.⁶³² Williamson translates it as 'man' in the glossary to *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book*,⁶³³ and as 'the young' in *A Feast of Creatures*.⁶³⁴ In his notes to the former, Williamson describes this person as a 'headstrong young warrior' who is less moderate in his habits than the 'old man'.⁶³⁵ Similarly, Porter uses the phrase 'green youth'.⁶³⁶ The meaning YOUTH is only found in conjunction with the meaning SLAVE (although not in reference to the same individuals), and only in the Northumbrian glosses on the gospels. It is unwise to extend this meaning to Riddle 27 without strong textual evidence.

⁶²⁹ Wyatt, *Slaves*, pp. 33-34.

⁶³⁰ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 216; Riddle 27.8a, Porter, *Riddles*, p. 48.

⁶³¹ Williamson, *Riddles*, pp. 84.

⁶³² Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 273-74.

⁶³³ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 420.

⁶³⁴ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 420; Riddle 25.7 (27.8), Williamson, *Feast of Creatures*, p. 85.

⁶³⁵ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 216.

⁶³⁶ Riddle 27.7, Porter, *Riddles*, p. 48.

Williamson's description of the *esne* as a 'warrior' is not borne out by either the text or any other explicit glosses in Old English.⁶³⁷ Moreover, there is no textual evidence here to support the preference for MAN over SLAVE for *esne*, or a clear distinction between the two meanings. Indeed, translating *esne* as 'slave' in this line provides a more satisfactory contrast with the 'ealdne ceorl' than the translations suggested by Williamson and Porter. Translating it as 'man' blurs the line between the two distinct categories. The low status of the slave contrasts sharply with the higher status of the 'ealdne ceorl', conferred by both age and legal freedom. The true power of the mead, the riddle-creature, lies in its ability to overthrow even such widely separated individuals:

nu ic eom bindere
 ond swingere, sona weorpe
 esne to eorþan, hwilum ealdne ceorl

[now I am the binder and the beater, immediately throw the *esne* to the ground, sometimes the old free man] (Riddle 27, 6b-8, p. 84). On the one hand, the fortitude of the characters is contrasted: the slave falls prey to the effects of mead immediately ('sona') while the old freeman only does so 'sometimes' ('hwilum'). This sets up a contrast between the moral and practical qualities of the *ceorl* and the *esne* which casts the latter in a decidedly unfavourable light. In this way, the use of *esne* here allows us a glimpse of the ideological constructs which were associated with slaves. This lack of morality and self-control is a recurring theme in the presentation of slaves in the riddles, and, here, the pairing of the *esne* and 'ealdne ceorl' casts it into stark relief. The *esne* is particularly susceptible to the effects of the mead because, as a slave, he lacks the moral fibre to withstand it. On the other hand, both the characters *do* succumb to the riddle-creature, indicating the socially levelling effects of the mead and the universal dangers of over-indulgence. Binding and beating are punishments particularly associated with slaves, and their application to the *ceorl* here is perhaps intended to startle the audience and make them second-guess the riddle's solution.

In the final lines of the riddle, SLAVE is again a more compelling translation for *esne* than those which have previously been offered:

frige hwæt ic hatte

⁶³⁷ The martial role of the *esne* in the *Dicts of Cato* (4.4.2), is implicit, due to an association with masculine activities, but not explicit, nor is WARRIOR part of its denotations here.

ðe on eorþan swa esnas binde
 dole æfter dyntum be dægges leohte

[say what I am called, who thus binds the *esne*, foolish after blows, on the ground in the light of day] (Riddle 27.15b-17, p. 84). Both Williamson and Porter translate those bound by the mead as ‘men’.⁶³⁸ The suggested translation of *esne* in line eight as SLAVE makes it logical to maintain this translation here. The phrase ‘on eorþan’ echoes the earlier ‘to eorþan’, linking the two passages. Moreover, the imagery of binding in these final lines is more striking if we read ‘*esnas*’ as slaves, playing upon the imagery of subjugation and bondage associated with slavery. This highlights the absolute power of mead, power comparable to that of a master over slaves. In the earlier part of the riddle, the distinction between the free and unfree influences their resistance to mead, but here all who fall under the influence of mead are its slaves. This reveals the apparent resistance of the ‘*ealdne ceorl*’ as an illusion. Indeed, the possible ambiguities, by which ‘*esnas*’ might initially be read as ‘men’, reinforce the utter powerlessness implied by the phrase ‘*esnas binde*’. Here, the legalistic distinctions between slaves and free men are metaphorically blurred to great moral, social, and literary effect. The use of *esne* in Riddle 27, then, is associated with complex negotiations of power, status, and morality which may seem to contradict one another, but which, ultimately, serve to emphasise the perils of strong drink.

We can see similar hints of social attitudes in two of the obscene riddles, 44 and 54, which use *esne*. In the Riddle 44, usually solved as ‘key’,⁶³⁹ *esne* describes the individual who engages in sexual activity, and, in the ‘correct’ solution of the riddle, uses a key:

þonne se esne his agen hrægl
 ofer cneo hefeð, wile þæt cuþe hol
 mid his hangellan heafde gretan
 þæt he efenlang ær oft gefylde

[when the *esne* lifts his own garment over his knee, he wants to greet that known hole, which he had filled just as long often before, with the head of his hanging thing] (Riddle 44.4-7, p. 42). Initially, it does appear that, unlike the riddles considered above, the most reasonable reading of

⁶³⁸ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 420; Riddle 25.13 (27.16), Williamson, *Feast of Creatures*, p. 85; Riddle 27.17, Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Riddles*, p. 49.

⁶³⁹ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 281.

esne here is ‘man’, Williamson and Porter’s suggestion.⁶⁴⁰ Both the *wer* in ‘weres þeo’ and *esne* refer to the same person, engaging in a single sequence of actions. Without any strong evidence to guide another reading, the most plausible gloss in a simple translation as MAN. The specifically masculine aspects of *esne* emphasise the sexual aspects of the riddle. However, the association of this individual with lewd and unseemly behaviour also fits with the pattern of the depiction of slaves in the riddles, both in the use of *esne* and of *wealh*.⁶⁴¹ On the one hand, we have the distasteful drunkenness of the slaves in Riddles 12 (*wale*) and 27 (*esne*), and, on the other, we have the public display of sexual behaviour here. The *double entendre* of the riddle suggests an uncomfortable relationship with and potential distaste for such behaviour. Therefore, while we could read *esne* as MAN here, it plays upon the associations with dubious or socially unacceptable behaviour found in conjunction with other words for slaves. Thus, the use of *esne*, rather than a more neutral word, such as *wer* itself, allows the riddle’s creator to imbue this portrayal with the connotations associated with other low-status characters in the riddle collection. This potential ambiguity in the use of *esne*, arising from the competing meanings which existed in the late Old English period, make it capable of more complexity than other terms in the same semantic fields, most critically *þeow*. The choice of vocabulary adds another layer of ambiguity, allowing and even encouraging the discovery of multiple layers of meaning, not just in the solutions of the riddles, but also in the imaginative social worlds which they depict.

Riddle 54, solved as a churn,⁶⁴² follows a similar pattern, both in terms of furtive sexual activity and the translation of *esne*. The riddle reads

þegn onnette; wæs þragum nyt
tillic esne

⁶⁴⁰ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 420; 4, Riddle 44.4, Porter, *Riddles*, p. 75.

⁶⁴¹ Pelteret accepts the reading ‘slave’ for *esne* here (Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 274). Although he is willing to accept that *esne* denotes SLAVE in a wider range of texts than has previously been thought, it is significant that the limited scope of his glossary does not allow him to realise the implications of this acceptance.

⁶⁴² Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 299.

[the retainer hurried; the good *esne* was sometimes useful] (Riddle 54. 7-8a, p. 100). *Esne* should clearly be read as SLAVE here, contrasted with *þegn*.⁶⁴³ The two terms are grammatically parallel, and may be read as parallel in terms of meaning, both describing the same individual, the man working sexually or churning butter. Alternatively, we can read the *esne* as the tool of the *þegn*, either the penis or part of the apparatus used in the churning. Porter and Mackie both adopt the latter reading.⁶⁴⁴ This requires the insertion of a personal pronoun, the omission of which would not be unusual in Old English poetry. Therefore, neither reading is clearly preferable. If the former is the case, then the riddle challenges conventional social hierarchy by equating the *þegn*, frequently heroic or mock-heroic in the riddles,⁶⁴⁵ with a slave. This breaks down the distinctions between the two, and between the socially valued service of the *þegn* and the servitude of the slave. As we have seen in other riddles, so too here the fine nuances of rank are considered from different angles to reveal their problematic nature. If this reading of the riddle is correct, the juxtaposition of *þegn* and *esne* reflects the importance of specific lexical choices in constructing and deconstructing the hierarchy of society.

On the other hand, if we read the *esne* as the tool of the *þegn*, then this riddle is a more socially conservative piece, although no less nuanced a portrayal of rank. In this reading, the *esne* and the *þegn* are distinct individuals who share this work. The *þegn* does not merely order the work done, but has his own part in it. The *esne*, being 'good' and 'sometimes useful' assists his social superiors. While the obedient submission of the *esne* is highly conventional, the occasional utility of the penis in sexual 'work' or as part of the churning mechanism is a rather curious image, as both of these items are *necessary* to the actions implied in the riddle. However, the implication that the *esne* is only 'sometimes' necessary adds to the sexual humour contained here. The joint action ties the imaginative world of the riddle into the real, social world of masters and slaves, in which slaves and free persons frequently worked together as part of family units, rather than slaves

⁶⁴³ This is the meaning given by Williamson (*Riddles*, p. 420), while Porter gives it as 'helper' (Riddle 54.7, *Riddles*, p. 85).

⁶⁴⁴ Riddle 54.7-8, Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Riddles*, p. 85; Riddle 54.7-10a, *The Exeter Book. Part 2, Poems 9-32*, ed. by W. S. Mackie, EETS, o. s., 194 (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p.147.

⁶⁴⁵ For instance in Riddle 37 (p. 89).

working in gangs.⁶⁴⁶ While this does not challenge notions of social hierarchy in the same way which the first interpretation does, it shows relationships between slaves and their social superiors which go beyond a simple hierarchy, and encompass subtle shades of compromise. On a lexical level, *esne* here simply denotes the chattel slaves who form one pole of the continuum of social rank, while the *þegn* forms the other.

The final riddle which uses *esne* is Riddle 63, usually solved as ‘beaker’.⁶⁴⁷

hwilum mec on cofan cysseð muþe
 tillic esne þær wit tu beoþ,
 fæðme on folm

[sometimes the good *esne* kisses me on the mouth in the chamber where we two are together, sometimes embraces me in his hands] Riddle 63.4-6a, p. 104). The fragmentary nature of the riddle makes it difficult to ascertain how to treat *esne* in this context. Williamson translates it as ‘man’ and Porter as ‘servant’.⁶⁴⁸ The quality of the beaker, which is ‘glæd mid golde’ [shining with gold] and the heroic connotations of *guma* in the phrase ‘þær guman drincað’ [where men drink] (Riddle 63.3, p. 104) may prompt a translation as MAN. However, if this passage is intended to subvert such heroic imagery, the presence of a slave is an intentional incongruity which, once again, plays upon the multiple potential meanings of *esne*. Moreover, while the riddle is not, strictly speaking, an obscene riddle, it has some potentially lascivious undertones, as the *esne* is seen ‘embracing’ and ‘kissing’ the beaker.⁶⁴⁹ The use of the dual ‘wit tu’ emphasises the intimacy between the pair. As in other riddles which use *esne*, there is an interplay between sexual behaviour and more ‘acceptable’ activities which seeks to trick the solver into an obscene guess. The servile denotations of *esne*, conflicting as they do with the high status of the object, emphasise the risque

⁶⁴⁶ Mazo Karras argues that slaves in medieval Scandinavia usually worked as part of the household, rather than in gangs, and it is reasonable to suggest that this may also have been the case in Anglo-Saxon England (Mazo Karras, *Slavery*, pp. 76-91).

⁶⁴⁷ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 323.

⁶⁴⁸ Williamson, *Riddles*, p. 420; Riddle 63.4, Porter, *Riddles*, p. 95.

⁶⁴⁹ This is influenced by Aldhelm’s Riddle 80, ‘De calice vitreo’, which includes the phrase ‘dum labris oscula trado’ (Aldhelm, ‘De calice vitreo’, in *Through a Glass Darkly: Aldhelm’s Riddles in the British Library MS Royal 12.C.xxiii*, ed. by Nancy Porter Stork, Texts and Studies (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies), 98 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), p. 202 (p. 202).

aspects. This brings the use of the term here into line with its challenging and ambiguous uses elsewhere in the riddles, where the contradictory binaries which are used to obfuscate and reveal meaning are not merely restricted to the solutions but extend to the imaginative world which these texts portray.

4.8 Chronology of the Simplex *Esne*

The study of *esne* thus far has attempted to understand what this term means in its various contexts, and to distinguish between its various denotations. This section uses this material to construct a chronology of its development, while acknowledging the complicating role which dialect plays.

Laws of Æthelberht - SLAVE: This text is thought to have been issued in Kent around the year 600.⁶⁵⁰ It survives in a late copy, dated to the first half of the twelfth century. The manuscript was probably compiled during the time of Bishop Ernulf (1115-24).⁶⁵¹

Laws of Hloþhere and Eadric - SLAVE: These laws may be dated to the period of the joint rule of the two kings (679-85), or may be a conflation of laws issued during their separate reigns (Hloþhere: 673-85; Eadric: *circa* 679-686). The language is more modern than that of the laws of Æthelberht and Wihtræd, suggesting updating.⁶⁵² Hloþhere and Eadric were ‘Cantwara cuningas’ [kings of the Kentish] (Prologue, p. 9), and therefore we can presume that the language and provenance of this text is Kentish. The manuscript provenance is the same as that of the laws of Æthelberht.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵⁰ ‘Æthelberht’s Code (Abt)’, in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 30th January 2014].

⁶⁵¹ Treharne, ‘Rochester, Cathedral Library, A. 3. 5’ [accessed 21st August 2013].

⁶⁵² ‘Hlothere and Eadric’s Code (Hl)’ [accessed 30th January 2014].

⁶⁵³ Treharne, ‘Rochester, Cathedral Library, A. 3. 5’ [accessed 21st August 2013].

Laws of Alfred-Ine (Ine) - SLAVE: Ine was King of the West Saxons.⁶⁵⁴ The code is believed to belong to the earlier part of his reign (688-726 overall).⁶⁵⁵ This is therefore an early West Saxon text. It is preserved as part of Alfred's law code, probably drawn up in the late 880s or early 890s,⁶⁵⁶ presumably in Wessex.

Laws of Wihtræd - SLAVE: The code is dated to 695⁶⁵⁷ and is called 'domas Cantwara cyninges' [the laws of the kings of the Kentish] (Inscription, p. 12) and thus is presumably from Kent. Its manuscript provenance is the same as that of the other early Kentish laws.

Riddles (22, 27, 43, 44, 54, 63) - SLAVE, MAN: The riddles are difficult to date, but might be as early as the eighth century. The language is West Saxon with Anglian elements, consistent with the rest of the Exeter Book, and includes some Northumbrian forms.⁶⁵⁸

Pastoral Care - SLAVE: As an 'Alfredian' text,⁶⁵⁹ this dates to Wessex at the end of the ninth century. It is preserved in two manuscripts which date from Alfred's lifetime.⁶⁶⁰ Hatton 20 was copied around 890-97, possibly in Winchester.⁶⁶¹ Cotton Tiberius B. XI is of the same age.⁶⁶²

⁶⁵⁴ Yorke, 'Ine', p. 251.

⁶⁵⁵ 'Ine's Code (Ine)', in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 30th January 2014].

⁶⁵⁶ Keynes and Lapidge, 'Extracts', p. 163.

⁶⁵⁷ 'Wihtræd's Code (Wi)' [accessed 30th January 2014].

⁶⁵⁸ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, I, 1, 32-33; Williamson, *Riddles*, pp. 3-10.

⁶⁵⁹ Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred*, p. 29; Malcolm Godden, 'The Alfredian Project and its Aftermath: Rethinking the Literary History of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 162, 93-122 (p. 121); Godden, 'Alfred', 1-18; Bately, 'Lexical Evidence', 69.

⁶⁶⁰ Sweet, *Pastoral Care*, p. v.

⁶⁶¹ Orietta Da Rold, 'Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 20, in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.Ox.Hatt.20.htm>> [accessed 31st January 2014].

⁶⁶² Sweet, *Pastoral Care*, p.xiii.

Laws of Alfred-Ine (Introduction) - SLAVE: This is the introduction to Alfred's law code which was probably drawn up in the late 880s or early 890s, perhaps after 893,⁶⁶³ and presumably in Wessex.

De Consolatio Philosophiae - MAN: The issues of date and places of composition for this text are the same as for the *Pastoral Care*.⁶⁶⁴ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 180 dates from the first half of the twelfth century, perhaps written in the South-East of England.⁶⁶⁵ The edition uses this manuscript to supplement the main version in Cotton Otho A. VI,⁶⁶⁶ which is badly damaged but originally mid-tenth century.⁶⁶⁷

Historia Ecclesiastica - MAN, SLAVE: This is dated to the end of ninth century or the beginning of tenth.⁶⁶⁸ It is associated with either Alfred's translation programme or a Mercian school of translation.⁶⁶⁹ The surviving text is West Saxon, but the translation was originally written in Anglian or Anglian-influenced West Saxon, most probably Mercian.⁶⁷⁰ If the text is not

⁶⁶³ Keynes and Lapidge, 'Extracts', p. 163; 'Alfred's domboc (Af)', in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 30th January 2014].

⁶⁶⁴ Moreover, Æthelweard specifies that this text was part of Alfred's translation programme (Whitelock, 'Prose of Alfred's Reign', p. 69).

⁶⁶⁵ Orietta Da Rold, 'Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 180', in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.Ox.Bodl.180.htm>> [accessed 15th August 2014].

⁶⁶⁶ Sedgefield, *De Consolatio*, pp. xi-xviii.

⁶⁶⁷ Susan Irvine, 'Fragments of Boethius: The Reconstruction of the Cotton Manuscript of the Alfredian Text', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 34 (2005), 169-81 (pp. 169-71).

⁶⁶⁸ Rowley, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁹ Rowley, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 5; Bately, 'Lexical Evidence', 69; Godden 'Alfred', 1.

⁶⁷⁰ Rowley, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 38; Whitelock, 'Prose', 77.

‘Alfredian’, the *terminus ante quem* is the beginning of the tenth century, as the oldest surviving manuscript fragments date from this point.⁶⁷¹

Soliloquies of Saint Augustine - SLAVE: As an ‘Alfredian’ text, the issues of date and place for the *Soliloquies* are the same as for the *Pastoral Care*. The text has some non-West Saxon forms.⁶⁷² Godden suggests that the *Soliloquies* and *Consolatio* may have been produced at Glastonbury, perhaps by those who taught St Dunstan.⁶⁷³ The manuscript, Cotton Vitellius A. XV, is from South-East England in the second quarter of the twelfth century, and is West Saxon with some non-West Saxon (predominantly Kentish) and Middle English forms.⁶⁷⁴

Paris Psalter (Metrical Psalms) - SLAVE: This may share an exemplar with the fragments of psalms composed at Worcester in the latter part of the tenth century.⁶⁷⁵ The manuscript can be connected with Canterbury on art-historical grounds,⁶⁷⁶ while Förster suggests a small southern English monastery.⁶⁷⁷ The manuscript dates from perhaps 1180-90.⁶⁷⁸ The language is West Saxon with some Anglian forms; Sievers suggests that the original translation was Mercian. The irregularity of the verse suggests a later date, perhaps the late ninth or early tenth century.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷¹ Bately, ‘Prose’, 98.

⁶⁷² Carnicelli, *Soliloquies*, p. 3.

⁶⁷³ Godden, ‘Alfredian Project’, 117-18.

⁶⁷⁴ Carnicelli, *Soliloquies*, p. 3.

⁶⁷⁵ Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, pp. lxxvii-lxxviii.

⁶⁷⁶ Emms, ‘Paris Psalter’, 180.

⁶⁷⁷ Krapp, *Paris Psalter*, p. xi.

⁶⁷⁸ Orietta Da Rold, ‘Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 8846’, in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.PBN.Lat.8846.htm>> [accessed 29th January 2013].

⁶⁷⁹ Krapp, *Paris Psalter*, p. xvii.

Fragments of Psalms - SLAVE: The text may share an exemplar with the Paris Psalter, composed at Worcester in the latter part of the tenth century.⁶⁸⁰ The fragments survive in Oxford, Bodleian, Junius 121, compiled at Worcester in the period 1060-72.⁶⁸¹

Vercelli Book Homilies - SLAVE: These homilies are preserved in Vercelli Biblioteca Capitolare, CXVII. The age of the homilies varies, although most date from the tenth century. The language is Late West Saxon with some other forms, and Scragg suggests that the collection may have been compiled from the library at either Rochester or St Augustine's, Canterbury.⁶⁸²

Dicts of Cato - MAN: This text has been dated variously to the mid tenth to mid eleventh century or the twelfth century.⁶⁸³ The latter is more likely on palaeographical grounds.⁶⁸⁴ Non-West Saxon forms in two of the manuscripts suggest that the exemplar was not West Saxon, but could be either Kentish or Mercian.⁶⁸⁵ The geographical provenance of the main manuscript, Cambridge, Trinity College, R. 9. 17 (819) is unknown.⁶⁸⁶

Gloss on the Lindisfarne Gospels - SLAVE, YOUTH: Aldred composed this gloss in the 950s-960s at Chester-le-Street. His dialect is Northumbrian. It has been more narrowly described as North Northumbrian, although this classification depends solely on the assumption that Owun's gloss was written at Harewood near Leeds and thus represents South Northumbrian.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁰ Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, pp. lxxvii-lxxviii.

⁶⁸¹ Foxhall Forbes, 'Oxford, Bodleian, Junius 121' [accessed 11th March 2013]; Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, p. lxxv.

⁶⁸² Scragg, *Vercelli Book*, pp. xx, xxxviii, xliii, lxxviii-lxxix

⁶⁸³ Cox, 'Dicts', 34; Treharne, 'Dicts', 484-85.

⁶⁸⁴ Treharne, 'Cambridge, Trinity College, R. 9. 17 (819)' [accessed 2nd October 2013].

⁶⁸⁵ Cox, 'Dicts', 32-33.

⁶⁸⁶ Cox, 'Dicts', 30.

⁶⁸⁷ Brown, *Lindisfarne*, pp. 4, 7, 96; Paul Bibire and Alan S. C. Ross, 'The Differences between Lindisfarne and Rushworth Two', *Notes and Queries*, 28 (1981), 98-116 (p. 99).

Gloss on the Durham Ritual - SLAVE: This was also composed by Aldred, and usually supposed to be later than his gloss on the Lindisfarne Gospels. One suggested date is 970.⁶⁸⁸ The manuscript was at Chester-le-Street at some point and in the north of England during the last twenty or thirty years of the tenth century.⁶⁸⁹

Gloss on the Rushworth Gospels (Farman) - SLAVE: Farman's gloss is Mercian and dates to the late tenth century.⁶⁹⁰ It was written 'æt harawuda', which could be a variety of places, the most commonly accepted of which is Harewood near Leeds. Coates, however, suggests that it could be Lichfield.⁶⁹¹

Gloss to the Rushworth Gospels (Owun) - SLAVE, YOUTH: The dialect is Northumbrian, often taken to be South Northumbrian (in contrast to Aldred's North Northumbrian). It is presumed that the gloss may have been completed at Harewood, although the manuscript of the Rushworth gospels may instead have been taken to Chester-le-Street in order to consult the gloss to the Lindisfarne Gospels, and the gloss completed there.⁶⁹² The gloss dates from the latter half of the tenth century.⁶⁹³

Daniel - SLAVE: *Esne* occurs in the section of the poem designated *Daniel A*, rather than *Daniel B*; only the latter corresponds to the Exeter Book poem *Azarias*.⁶⁹⁴ The date and place of composition

⁶⁸⁸ Brown, *Lindisfarne*, p. 90; Alan S. C. Ross, 'Conservatism in the Anglo-Saxon Gloss to the Durham Ritual', *Notes and Queries*, 17 (1970), 363-66 (p. 363).

⁶⁸⁹ Lindelöf, *Rituale*, p. xii.

⁶⁹⁰ Richard Coates, 'Scriptorium', 453.

⁶⁹¹ Bibire and Ross, 'Differences', 99; Tamoto, *Macregol*, p. xciv; Coates, 'Scriptorium', 453-58.

⁶⁹² Bibire and Ross, 'Differences', 99, 115.

⁶⁹³ Tamoto, *Macregol*, p. xxix.

⁶⁹⁴ P. J. Lucas, 'Daniel', in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Lapidge, Blair, Keynes and Scragg, p. 137 (p. 137).

for the poem as it stands is unknown. The geographic provenance of the manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian, Junius 11, is unknown, although Canterbury, Winchester, and Malmesbury have all been suggested as places of origin. The hand of *Daniel* has been dated to around the year 1000, providing a *terminus ante quem* at this point. However, codicological details suggest at least one prior exemplar containing this sequence of *Genesis*, *Exodus*, and *Daniel*.⁶⁹⁵ *Daniel*'s placement here in the chronology is thus tentative.

Institutes of Polity - SLAVE: Pons-Sanz places this in her group of undatable texts, although, of course, it must date from Wulfstan's productive period.⁶⁹⁶ Jost argues that it cannot have been composed earlier than 1008-10,⁶⁹⁷ and Pons-Sanz suggests that Wulfstan concentrated particularly on this work after 1016. Thus we can assume that it was written during his period at Worcester and York or York alone, and in the period 1008-23.⁶⁹⁸

Byrhtferth's Enchiridion - MAN: This was composed at Ramsey Abbey in the period 1010-12. The dialect is Late West Saxon.⁶⁹⁹

Heptateuch - MAN: The translation dates from the early eleventh century, probably the first two decades.⁷⁰⁰ The earliest manuscripts are datable to the first half of the eleventh century; Oxford,

⁶⁹⁵ Remley, 'Junius', p. 265; Krapp, *Junius*, p. x.

⁶⁹⁶ Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, pp. 24-25.

⁶⁹⁷ Jost, *Institutes of Polity*, p. 33.

⁶⁹⁸ Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, pp. 20-25.

⁶⁹⁹ Baker and Lapidge, *Enchiridion*, pp. xxvii-xxviii, xcv.

⁷⁰⁰ Andrea B. Smith, *The Anonymous Parts of the Old English Hexateuch: A Latin-Old English/Old English-Latin Glossary* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Brewer, 1985), p. ix.

Bodleian Library, Laud 509 can be more narrowly dated to the second half of the eleventh century, and its geographical provenance is unknown.⁷⁰¹

Rectitudines Singularum Personarum - SLAVE: This was probably composed at Bath Abbey or implemented in this area.⁷⁰² The *terminus ante quem* for its composition is the late eleventh or early twelfth century when Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 383 was compiled.⁷⁰³ Harvey argues that the Old English text must have been modernised not before 1060 at the earliest, and that it contains forms which are not older than 970 and probably date from after 1000. Liebermann believes that the text dates to 1020-30 and was written in Wessex or the southern part of central Mercia. Bethurum argues that it was rewritten from an earlier text by Wulfstan. It is mostly assigned to the early eleventh century, but could be mid-tenth century or even older, and there is a 'reasonable certainty that it originated in South-West England'.⁷⁰⁴

Glossary (British Library, Cotton Vitellius C. IX) - SUTLER, CAMP-FOLLOWER (*lixa*): As this text only survives in a seventeenth-century antiquarian manuscript, it is not possible to localise it either geographically or temporally.⁷⁰⁵

4.9 Commentary on the Chronology

This chronology is extremely tentative, due both to the problems in dating these manuscripts and the overlapping possible time ranges. The chronology includes only those texts which use the simplex *esne*, because, as shown, compounds such as *esnewyrhta* show distinct and divergent

⁷⁰¹ Marsden, *Heptateuch*, p. xxxvi; Orietta da Rold, 'Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud 509', in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Swan and Treharne <<https://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.Ox.Laud.509.htm>> [accessed 14th January 2015].

⁷⁰² 'Rectitudines Singularum Personarum (Rect)' [accessed 30th January 2014].

⁷⁰³ P. D. A. Harvey, 'Rectitudines Singularum Personarum and Gerefa', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 108, 426 (1993), 1-22 (p.1).

⁷⁰⁴ Harvey, 'Rectitudines', 4, 5, 7, 19, 21.

⁷⁰⁵ 'London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius C. IX' [accessed 9th April 2013].

semantics. Similarly, the material from charters and wills is omitted from this chronology as this onomastic and toponymic data strips *esne* of its meaning and thus does not admit a division into SLAVE, YOUTH, and MAN.

Contrary to Pelteret's suggestion that the meaning SLAVE for *esne* only developed in the later texts,⁷⁰⁶ it is clear from this chronology that the earliest texts use *esne* solely with this sense. Pelteret's omission of the earliest legal codes in the body of his study⁷⁰⁷ truncates the historical development of *esne* unduly, and thus accidentally leads to the presumption that the Alfredian texts preserve the earliest meanings of *esne*, when, in fact, they give us the first signs of its changing semantics. However, as Pelteret does discuss these codes in his glossary,⁷⁰⁸ his misreading of *esne* is active rather than simply passive; his interpretation relies upon previous misconceptions about the semantics of this term. The meaning SLAVE must develop from the association of *esne* with menial physical labour in Proto-Germanic, most probably within the context of a non-monetary economy in continental Germanic or early Anglo-Saxon society which blurred the distinction between hired labourers and slaves. Thus, SLAVE becomes the main established sense of *esne* by the time of the earliest extant Old English texts. It is easy to see how, in a non-monetary economy, the poorest hired labourers, paid not with wages in coin but provided with food and shelter, may have become indistinguishable from slaves. *Esne* does not *gain* this sense during the period of attested Old English; this is its original and dominant meaning in Old English. The earliest text which uses the meaning MAN is the Exeter Book riddles, if these are dated as early as the eighth century. If the riddles are dated later, the Old English *De Consolatio Philosophiae* and *Historia Ecclesiastica*, dated to the end of the ninth century or the beginning of the tenth, are the earliest texts to employ this meaning. In terms of the number of texts, SLAVE is the dominant sense, even in 'southern' texts, until at least the turn of the eleventh century. To complicate matters, the majority of apparently West Saxon texts which contain *esne* have non-West Saxon features, and we cannot be sure whether the appearance of *esne* as SLAVE in these later texts is one of these non-West Saxon

⁷⁰⁶ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 44, 273.

⁷⁰⁷ Pelteret's in-depth discussion of laws begins with Alfred (Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 80-81).

⁷⁰⁸ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 271-74.

features, borrowed from a dialectal in which the change had not yet occurred, or whether it represents the coexistence of both meanings within West Saxon.

The most recent texts, such as the *Enchiridion* and the anonymous parts of the *Heptateuch*, indicate a shift towards the meaning MAN. However, the possible timeframes for these texts fall close together and indeed overlap with those of texts which preserve the older meaning: *Institutes of Polity* (SLAVE: 1008-23), Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion* (MAN: 1010-12), *Heptateuch* (MAN: early eleventh century), and *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum* (SLAVE: possibly early eleventh century). Thus, the diachronic shift from SLAVE to MAN, is, in reality, vastly complicated by dialect and other factors, and thus its expression is non-linear and shows synchronic variation over a long period of time. Therefore, the earliest meaning, SLAVE, gives way to MAN (following the introduction of the compound *esnlice*) gradually in Late West Saxon. The key point of departure is the Alfredian period, during which the meaning MAN first appears. Meanwhile, it is clear that the sense MAN did not gain ground in either the Mercian or Northumbrian dialect areas before the end of the period. Rather than showing neologism in their use of SLAVE, the Mercian and Northumbrian gospel glosses represent dialectal variants which have not yet been affected by this change. Gutmacher is entirely wrong in his suggestion that the meaning MAN was restricted to the North, while Pelteret is wrong in assuming that the meanings SLAVE and MAN 'existed side by side in both the North and the South'.⁷⁰⁹ The meaning YOUTH, however, is a Northumbrian innovation, and, indeed, is restricted to Aldred's gospel gloss: Owun's dependence on Aldred in his use of this meaning suggests that while it may have been part of his passive vocabulary, it was not a meaning which he used independently. YOUTH is unmistakably a secondary development, and its frequent qualification by *geong* indicates its tentative nature.

The comparative scarcity of the meaning MAN makes it difficult to exclude the possibility that this was never a major denotation, particularly as Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion* and the anonymous

⁷⁰⁹ E. Gutmacher, 'Der Wortschatz des althochdeutschen Tatian in seinem Verhältnis zum Altsächsischen, Angelsächsischen und Altfriesischen', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 39 (1914), 1-83, s.v. *asni*; Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 274. While the texts which use both meanings, the riddles and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, contain both Anglian and West Saxon forms, neither can reasonably be called 'Northern'.

portions of the *Heptateuch* share other features. However, the most probable interpretation of the evidence is, as outlined above, that this is a diachronic shift which happened comparatively late in the Old English period. As *esne* is not attested in Middle English, it is not possible to ascertain why the term fell out of usage, but, if the meaning MAN continued to grow in prominence, this would have drawn it into a well-populated semantic field in which it was most likely a much more marginal term than it had been in the SLAVE field. While, as the Old English evidence for SLAVE indicates, such densely populated semantic fields could flourish, *esne's* semantic shift to the field MAN may have caused it to become superfluous and fall out of use. This places the onus for *esne's* disappearance not on the shrinking of the SLAVE word field, but on the semantic changes which *esne* itself underwent.

As discussed above, there are two plausible routes of semantic change for *esne*: HARVEST WORKER > HIRED WORKER > SLAVE > YOUTH or MAN or the linear HARVEST WORKER > HIRED WORKER > SLAVE > YOUTH > MAN.⁷¹⁰ In either case, the meaning MAN cannot, as Pelteret suggests, depend directly upon the meaning (HIRED) WORKER.⁷¹¹ Even a cursory examination of the comparative evidence, particularly from Gothic, reveals that (HIRED) WORKER is one of the earliest meanings of this root, while MAN is one of the latest. SLAVE is intermediate between the two in Old English. Setting aside modern preconceptions which view paid and servile labour as polar opposites, it is clear that (HIRED) WORKER developed to SLAVE through association with particular types of labour and with the low status and precarious position of these individuals; SLAVE developed to MAN through the weakening of its meaning. As discussed above, there is no evidence to prefer one of these two semantic trajectories (HARVEST WORKER > HIRED WORKER > SLAVE > YOUTH or MAN, or HARVEST WORKER > HIRED WORKER > SLAVE > YOUTH > MAN) over the other. The latter is perhaps more immediately pleasing, as the alternation of SLAVE/YOUTH and YOUTH/MAN is well established in a variety of languages, providing an easy set of transitions between the three meanings. However, there is no early or West Saxon evidence to support this, and thus we must conclude that the former is a better representation of the extant material. Both represent the

⁷¹⁰ See 4.3.9.

⁷¹¹ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 272-73.

reality that MAN and YOUTH were late developments, and both, therefore, show the surprising mutability of *esne* in Old English. The unusual speed of *esne*'s semantic change within Old English has, most probably, confused its interpretation by modern critics, who have conflated synchronic and diachronic features and misinterpreted the chronological sequence of events.

4.10 Conclusion

It is useful, at this point, to return to Bosworth and Toller's definition of the *esne*:

A man of the servile class, a servant, retainer, man, youth; mercēnārius, servus, vir, jūvēnis.

The *esne* was probably a poor freeman from whom a certain portion of labour could be demanded in consideration of his holdings, or a certain rent [gafol, q. v.] reserved out of the produce of the hives, flocks or herds committed to his care. He was a poor mercenary, serving for hire or for his land, but was not of so low a rank as the *þeow* or *wealh*.⁷¹²

This definition lies at the centre of the historiographical and lexicographical issues surrounding this term, as it creates and perpetuates false notions of the social role of these individuals. While *esne* is a complex term, SLAVE is its major denotation, rather than a late, minor, or piecemeal development, as Pelteret implies.⁷¹³ *Esne* is likewise a major slave word in many variants of Old English. Even when the various meanings cited by Bosworth and Toller are technically correct, they are neither coeval nor coequal. Both MAN and YOUTH are attested as meanings of *esne*, but are rather less significant than Bosworth and Toller's *Dictionary* implies, while 'a man of the servile class, servant' is a bowdlerisation of the meaning SLAVE. This was presumably driven both by the conflation of SLAVE and SERVANT, and by the attempt to distinguish the *esne* from the *þeow*. There is no evidence whatsoever for any association of *esne* with retainers, that is, high-ranking, free followers of some lord, an association which might align it more closely with *þegn* than *þeow*. In terms of the Latin *lemmata* listed in the dictionary, while the final three items are correct, *mercenarius* is a misrepresentation of the complex data, conflating the meanings of the compound with those of the simplex. By assuming that *esn-* as an unbound morpheme in such compounds is semantically identical to *esne* as a lexeme by itself, scholars have failed to examine the striking

⁷¹² Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 258.

⁷¹³ Pelteret, *Slave*, p. 273.

differences in how the two forms are used, and thus have attributed meanings to the simplex which do not represent its usage. The appearance of these meanings in the *Dictionary* in particular has promoted their uncritical acceptance. The difference between the two forms reminds us of the obvious, that a compound is often more than the sum of its parts. In the case of *esne*, the compounds are often conservative, or, more occasionally, innovative in relation to the meanings of the simplex form, thus attesting to different stages of *esne*'s semantic development and further complicating our sense of its chronological development.

Bosworth and Toller's *Dictionary* labels the *esne* as a 'poor freeman'. In reality, in terms of social and legal rank, *esne* only denotes the unfree. Bosworth and Toller's posited demand for rent and labour, tantamount to an early form of serfdom, lacks any basis in the texts, as does the attempt to distinguish it from the *þeow* and *wealh*. In contrast to Bosworth and Toller's image, reproduced by both Pelteret and Lisi, a close reading of the laws does not show that the *esne* was distinct from and superior to the *þeow*, much less that he enjoyed a greater degree of freedom. In the earliest laws in particular, *esne* exists in complementary distribution with *þeow*, both terms denoting the same class of individuals. Even where the semantics are more ambiguous, as in the phrase 'þeuwne esne', the *esne* and the *þeow* are never contrasted, never receive separate punishments, and never enjoy contrasting freedoms.

This synonymy is a feature of the wider use of *esne* for SLAVE, and is consequently an under-appreciated feature of the semantic field of slavery as a whole. Despite the prominence of compounds of *esne* in critical discourse, they are rare in the extant material, leading, for instance to such pairs as *esne* and *þeowweorc* in the laws of Wihtræd, in which the element in the later compound is semantically equivalent to the simplex *esne*. The gospel glosses are a particularly vivid testament to the extent to which the various slave words were interchangeable, even in their simplex forms. This is not synonymy which is motivated solely by poetical variation; *esne* is a comparatively rare term in poetry and not usually chosen for any specific alliterative function. Instead, the synonymy of *esne* with other slave words is a structural feature of the Old English lexicon, which clearly supported multiple different terms in this semantic field. Given the synonymy evident in other significant semantic fields, this should come as no surprise, but the

scholarly tendency to downplay the role of slaves has likewise obscured the synonymy here by seeking distinctions between the various slave words, distinctions which are simply not apparent in the source material.

As noted, synonymy is evident within each dialect, West Saxon, Mercian (in the form of Farman's gloss) and Northumbrian. On the other hand, synonymy is also a feature of the interplay between the dialects. *Esne* is not uncommon in West Saxon, and the evidence of Ine's law code as well as the various Alfredian translations suggests that it may have been particularly prominent in the pre-literary and earliest forms of this dialect. However, *esne* is more even common in the other two dialects for which we have significant evidence. Not only does the earliest material suggest that SLAVE was the oldest denotation of *esne* in Old English, but, in combination with the early Kentish laws and the Northumbrian and Mercian material, this implies that *esne* was of much wider significance than has previously been suggested, and, concomitantly, that the significance of *þeow* has been overstated. Although *þeow* is attested across the Germanic languages, this did not imply importance within Old English, where its appearance was restricted, both geographically and chronologically. Just as *þræll* displaced the cognates of *þeow* in Old Norse, so, too, *esne* temporarily displaced *þeow* in many variants of Old English. The chronological and geographical attestation of *þræl* in Old English is well understood, but, as this study demonstrates, this restriction was also a feature of other items in the semantic field of slavery. While *þeow* is undoubtedly one of the most significant terms for chattel slaves in Old English, its apparent hegemony is thus a feature of the dominance of literary late West Saxon. Aldred's choice of vocabulary in Matthew appears to be an attempt to accommodate his vocabulary to this norm, indicating its power and prestige, while the patterns apparent elsewhere in his glosses are a more accurate indicator of his own dialect. Even before the advent of the Norse *þræl*, other dialects preferred other terms, most clearly *esne*. *Esne* is thus not merely a poorly studied term used to denote chattel slaves, but a major term for a major social grouping.

The chronology of *esne* established in this study encompasses all the material in which the simplex *esne* occurs, both literary and non-literary, in order to give a comprehensive picture of the development of this term. This is distinct from earlier suggestions both in the particulars and in

recognising the rapid semantic change which *esne* underwent: HARVEST WORKER > HIRED WORKER > SLAVE > YOUTH or MAN. Prior emphasis on legal texts has made the establishment of this chronology difficult. Within Old English itself, this semantic change can be abbreviated to SLAVE > YOUTH or MAN for the simplex form, further demonstrating the inaccuracy of previous definitions. As noted above, alternation between SLAVE and YOUTH and SLAVE and MAN is not unusual. That Pelteret does not recognise YOUTH as a denotation of *esne* at all further emphasises his lack of attention paid to the literary, translation texts on the one hand and to SLAVE as a meaning of *esne* on the other.⁷¹⁴ Reading the semantic development of *esne* with more clarity and in the light of the chronology established here, it is clear that many of the shifts which this item undergoes are commonplace and almost conventional. The earlier part of the process (HARVEST WORKER > HIRED WORKER > SLAVE) is more opaque as it occurred in the pre-literary period, but it is probable that low status labour, powerlessness, and lack of kin ties were some of the factors that united the hired worker and the slave. This process is not visible in the Old English material, and may be rooted in social processes predating the *adventus Saxonum*, further separating the simplex form from the compounds which preserve earlier meanings. The rapid and complex semantic changes which *esne* underwent during the historical period are atypical of the Old English lexicon as a whole, but, as this study demonstrates, more common in the semantic field of slavery, as shown by both *þegn* and *wealh*. Both social change and the huge importance of such vocabulary in framing social relations may have hastened these changes, making the terminology used to describe social relationships one of the most malleable sets of vocabulary in the entire Old English lexicon. The rapid assimilation of *þræl* is a different phenomenon, but not unrelated, as both processes indicate that this semantic field was the subject of great change, both convergent and divergent.

The early Anglo-Saxon laws are held up as evidence for the *esnas* as a distinctive social class. However, when read without prejudice, these laws offer no such corroboration. As discussed in detail, both linguistic and legal evidence indicates that the *þeow* and the *esne* were equal. This changes our reading of the earliest laws dramatically. Whereas the previous reading implies a

⁷¹⁴ This denotation is entirely omitted from the description of *esne* in his glossary (Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 271-74.

tripartite division of society, with some class already apparent between the free and the unfree, when we understand that the *esne* is lexically and socially equivalent to the *þeow*, this social division disintegrates and reappears as a simpler free-unfree distinction. This changes our understanding of early Anglo-Saxon society by sharpening the linguistic distinction between the free and unfree, and consequently displacing the category of unfree but non-slave persons further forward in time. Simultaneously, it emphasises the importance of the fully unfree, that is to say, slaves, within Anglo-Saxon society. Not only is SLAVE central to *esne*'s meaning; *esne* is central to the semantic field SLAVE, and the figure of the slave is critical to Anglo-Saxon ideas of social order and hierarchy. *Esne* must thus be retrieved from its unwarranted place on the periphery of studies of Old English and of Anglo-Saxon society, and placed front and centre.

5. *þræl*

5.1 Introduction

þræl is the last of the items in this semantic field to enter the Old English lexicon, and much of the scholarly attention has been concentrated on its status as an early loan from Old Norse.⁷¹⁵ However, my primary focus here is on developing and critiquing the small amount of current work on the contexts in which *þræl* appears and the meanings which it bears. Pelteret provides his usual surveys of its contexts and meanings, and argues that it ‘seems to have possessed a pejorative connotation even in Old English’.⁷¹⁶ Girsch contrasts *þræl* with other Old English terms, which she believes had become too ambiguous to be used of chattel slaves:

only *þræl* was, and had consistently been, essentially free of ambiguity of any sort [...] Only *þræl*, which had consistently been applied to literal slaves since its entry into the language, could readily absorb the uses for which *þeow* no longer seemed suitable. It may have been unconsciously felt to be particularly suited to the essentially negative concept ‘slave’ because of its association with the Danes and all that they represented.⁷¹⁷

Similarly, Magennis argues that *þræl* ‘had a greater sense of ignominy’ than *þeow*.⁷¹⁸ This chapter argues that these readings misunderstand the denotations and connotations of *þræl*, and that this term could in fact be used in the full range of contexts in which slave words were required. The small range of texts in which it appears makes the positive and metaphorical contexts appear less important than was actually the case.⁷¹⁹ Therefore, this chapter assesses the distribution of *þræl* not only as a marker of old Norse influence but as part of the shifting complexities of the semantic field of slavery as a whole. The material containing *þræl* in Middle English provides important contextualisation for its role and meanings in Old English, given its rapid spread in the former and

⁷¹⁵ See 1.2.

⁷¹⁶ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 32, 316–17. See also, Pelteret, ‘Danelaw’, 183.

⁷¹⁷ Girsch, ‘Terminology’, 43.

⁷¹⁸ Magennis, ‘*Godes þeow*’, 158.

⁷¹⁹ Pons-Sanz notes that Pelteret’s assumption that *þræl* had acquired a pejorative connotation in Wulfstan’s idiolect is based on only one instance, the phrase ‘Anticristes þrælas’ discussed below (Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, pp. 182–82).

scant attestations in the latter.⁷²⁰ Conversely, as *þræl* is the only Old English slave word to become a major term in Middle English, this examination of its changing role helps us to understand how and why this semantic field changed over time.

This chapter begins by outlining the etymological and phonological development of *þræl*, including its borrowing into Old English and a brief survey of developments in Old Norse. The body of the chapter seeks to describe and analyse the uses of *þræl* in its contexts, both geographical and textual, and thus to produce a picture of its usage which includes both semantic and social dimensions. It treats the texts in terms of broad groupings, arranged in approximately chronological order: the Lindisfarne and Rushworth glosses, the Durham Ritual, the laws, the works of Wulfstan, and Ælfric's *Colloquy*. By its very nature, this progression also divides the relevant works into categories by author: Aldred (and, through Aldred's influence, Owun), the *Grið*, Wulfstan, and Ælfric. This thus foregrounds the limited number of authors who used *þræl*, and consequently the problems which we encounter when making absolute statements about what *þræl* could or could not denote in Old English. The final section of this chapter assesses the Middle English material, placing particular emphasis on the range of contexts in which *þræl* appears and its role as the sole lexeme in the Old English semantic field which continues to denote SLAVE until the end of the Middle English period. In addition to the development of a single term, this material traces the development of the *servus Dei* construct, highlighting the divergence between medieval and modern understanding of this concept.

5.2 Etymology and Phonology

⁷²⁰ The periodisation of Old and Middle English is essentially arbitrary, as shown by the appearance of the Soul and Body fragment in resources pertaining to both variants. Lass discusses the problems of periodisation, mentioning the conventional date 1066. He neither confirms the validity of this date nor suggests an alternative, but instead argues that we can talk more generally about 'different stages' of the language (Roger Lass, 'Phonology and Morphology', in in *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume II: 1066-1476*, ed. by Norman Blake [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], pp. 23-155 [p. 24]). I follow this approach here, taking the division between the two stages to be around the year 1100, but recognising that this is, in some ways, a false distinction, and that some texts which show all the features of classical Old English date from after this point. The distinction is a rough guideline rather than a boundary, and therefore these texts can be treated as Old English without any caveats.

þræl is almost certainly a loanword from Old Norse into Old English during the period of Norse settlement in England.⁷²¹ *þræll* in Old Norse, like *þræl* in Old English, denotes a chattel slave. The majority of the secondary literature, including Holthausen's etymological dictionary, takes *þræl*'s Norse origins as an item of faith.⁷²² Pelteret claims that

there is no doubt that this word is a borrowing from Old Norse. It does not appear in Old English before the time of the Scandinavian invasions, and its use in Old English is limited to three contexts, all related to the Norse world'.⁷²³

Pons-Sanz also concludes that it is a Norse-loan, but suggests a potential etymology of *þræl* as part of the inherited word-stock of Old English: **þraxil-* > **ðræxil-* > **ðræuxil-* > **ðræaxil-* > **ðræxil-* > **ðræil-* > *ðræil*. Despite this excursion, she argues convincingly that the <ll> forms in Old English must be explained as remnants of the Old Norse nominative singular *þræll*, the product of assimilation of the cluster /lr/.⁷²⁴ Furthermore, Middle English spellings with <a> in dialects where this reflects /a/ suggest a shortening of /æ:/ at the end of the Old English period. This only occurred before long consonants or consonant clusters.⁷²⁵ Thus, Old English forms with <ll> must reflect phonological reality rather than simply orthographic variation. The long consonant here could only be derived from processes which occurred in Old Norse but not in Old English. Finally, the geographically and chronologically limited presence of *þræl* in Old English texts supports, as Pelteret suggests, an Old Norse etymology, rather than an Anglian one. A search of the *Dictionary*

⁷²¹ See Dance, *Words Derived from Old Norse*, pp. 74-103 for a general discussion of Norse loanwords in Old English.

⁷²² Holthausen, *Wörterbuch*, p. 367.

⁷²³ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 316-17.

⁷²⁴ Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, pp. 58-59. The switch from <þ> to <ð> in the posited sequence gives the incorrect impression that there was a corresponding phonological shift. Both of these forms represent the unvoiced fricative /θ/. In the extant forms of *þræl*, <ð> is more common (thirty-three uses compared to twenty-one with <þ>), according to a search of the Dictionary of Old English corpus), but the majority of these occur in Aldred's works and in the Rushworth gloss influenced by him (thirty-one out of thirty-three). With the sole exception of Luke 4.20, Aldred also only uses forms with <ð> for *þeow* and *þegn*, as shown throughout Skeat's editions of the gospels, suggesting a broader preference for <ð>. The small size of the corpus gives Aldred's orthographical preference unwarranted significance.

⁷²⁵ Björkmann, *Scandinavian Loan-Words*, I (1900), 19; Dance, *Words Derived from Old Norse*, p. 83. See below for further discussion of these forms.

of *Old English* corpus shows no instances of *þræl* in texts dated before the middle of the tenth century, following extensive Scandinavian influence in England, while the other lexemes in this semantic field in Old English are attested from earliest stages of written Old English. Moreover, *þræl* appears almost exclusively in texts localised to the areas of concentrated Norse influence.⁷²⁶ The few texts from outside the Danelaw in which *þræl* occurs (*Grið, II* and *VIIa Æthelred*, and Ælfric's *Colloquy*) can be explained by direct influence by Danelaw authors, most usually Wulfstan. The balance of probability, therefore, indicates that the conventional treatment of *þræl* as a Norse loan is, as Pons-Sanz concludes, correct.

þræl is ultimately derived from the Proto-Indo-European root **tregb-* or **tragb-*, with the basic meaning 'to draw, drag on the ground'. Cognates in the daughter languages include Old Irish, *traig* ('foot'), Latin *trabere*, ('to drag'), and Welsh *troed* ('foot') and *troi* ('to turn').⁷²⁷ In the Germanic languages, this association with movement along the ground is primarily expressed by the meaning 'to run'. The Proto-Germanic verbal root **θreχ-*, to run, gives the Gothic *þragjan* and the Old English *þrægan*.⁷²⁸ This Proto-Germanic root gives the verbal noun **θraxilaz*, or possibly **θranxilaz*, from which *þræl* is most directly derived.⁷²⁹ No native cognate of this verbal noun survives in Old English, but the cognate *drigil*, denoting SERVANT or SLAVE, occurs in Old High German.⁷³⁰ The initial meaning of **θraxilaz* was thus 'a runner, one who runs'. Jan de Vries registers concerns with this interpretation and suggests a meaning closer to 'one who must perform

⁷²⁶ A 'whole word' search for the various orthographic possibilities returned results for the following forms: *ðrael*, *ðraellas*, *þræl*, *ðræl*, *þræla*, *þrælas*, *ðrælas*, *þræle*, *ðræle*, *ðræles*, *ðræles*, *ðræll*, *ðrælles*, *ðrælum*, *þrælríht*, *ðrælríht*, *ðrælum* (*DOE* Corpus [accessed 23rd August 2012]).

⁷²⁷ de Vries, *Wörterbuch*, p. 625; Pokorny, *Wörterbuch*, I, 1089.

⁷²⁸ *OED*, s.v. 'thrall'; de Vries, *Wörterbuch*, p. 625.

⁷²⁹ Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, p. 58. As Pons-Sanz notes, it is not possible to tell which of these forms is the true etyma for Old Norse *þræll*. The distinction has minimal impact on the later development of the word, so I propose to use **þrabilaz* throughout. Pons-Sanz further notes that **þranxilaz* could not be the source of an Anglian form, only of an Old Norse one, as the Anglian cognate would have /o/ before a nasal, rather than /a/ (Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, p. 58).

⁷³⁰ Pokorny, *Wörterbuch*, I, 1089.

some heavy labour'.⁷³¹ There is no evidence to support this interpretation, particularly in light of the Gothic and Old English verbs noted above. On the other hand, running is not uncommonly associated with low-status labour. The meanings of the verbal noun *runner* in Present-Day English include 'a person employed to perform various (generally menial or unskilled) tasks, typically involving moving from place to place. Also more generally: an assistant'.⁷³² Carola Small notes that foot messengers in the County of Artois received considerably lower recompense for the same journey than did their mounted counterparts, and were often paid on a similar scale to unskilled labourers such as builders' workmen.⁷³³ This suggests the low esteem in which such work was held, even when it was carried out in the service of high-status masters. It is easy to see how such menial labour at the direction of another could have become associated with slaves, particularly in a pre-monetary economy which paid them only with bed and board. Furthermore, *þeow* is also derived from a root associated with running, the Proto-Indo-European **tek^w*,⁷³⁴ indicating that the association between slaves and running was more widespread amongst speakers of the Germanic languages.

By the time of the earliest extant texts, the cognates of **θraxilaz* simply denoted social status, with no lingering connotations of running. Due to the comparatively late introduction of literacy into Scandinavia, the earliest uses of *þræl* in Old English predate its earliest appearances as *þræll* in Old Norse. The earliest use of *þræl* occurs in Aldred's glosses to the Lindisfarne Gospels, dated to the middle of the tenth century and is followed promptly by both his work on the Durham Ritual and Owun's gloss on the Rushworth Gospels.⁷³⁵ The earliest Old Norse use of *þræll* recorded in the substantial but not comprehensive *Ordbog over det Norrøne Prosasprog* occurs in the

⁷³¹ de Vries, *Wörterbuch*, p. 625.

⁷³² *OED*, s.v. 'runner' [accessed 28th September 2014].

⁷³³ Carola Small, 'Messengers in the County of Artois, 1295-1329', *Canadian Journal of History*, 25 (1990), 163-75 (pp. 168-69).

⁷³⁴ Holthausen, *Wörterbuch*, p. 362; Watkins, *Roots*, p. 90; Pokorny, *Wörterbuch*, I, 1059-60.

⁷³⁵ See 4.8 for further material on the dating of these texts.

AM655 IX 4° text of *Blasíuss saga*, dated to around 1150-1200, and written in Norway.⁷³⁶ The text is a translation of the legend of Saint Blasius.⁷³⁷ Its use is congruent with many of the appearances of slave words in Old English. *Þræll* also occurs in a single Runic inscription, from much the same period (1150-1200). This inscription is classified by the *Samnordisk Runtextdatabas* as ‘church graffiti’ (*krykografitti*) and occurs on the old church at Bø in Telemark. In its West Norse transcription it reads

svefn bannar mér, sótt er barna,
fjón svinkanda, fjalls íbúi,
hests erfaði, ok heys víti,
þræls vansæla. Þat skulu ráða.

[I am prohibited from sleeping: there is the sickness of children, the hatred of hard workers, the dweller of the mountain, the toil of a horse, and the torment of hay, the slave's misfortune. They must interpret it.] The form ‘þræls’ is an expansion of ‘þrls’ in the original text.⁷³⁸ The misfortune and discontent of slaves borders on the proverbial. Thus, the earliest Norse attestations of *þræll* indicate no particular semantic or contextual change between Old Norse and Old English, encompassing both metaphorical and literal meanings and thus associated with many of the *topoi* which accompany slave words in both Old and Middle English.

The Proto-Germanic noun **θraxilaz* belonged to the class of strong masculine a-stem nouns. In Old Norse, the stem vowel was lost in the pre-literary period, and the **-z* of the nominative singular ending was rhotacised to /r/, giving **θraxilr*. The final cluster /lr/ assimilated

⁷³⁶ *Ordbog over det Norrøne Prosasprog* (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen), <<http://onp.ku.dk>>, s.v. ‘þræll’, [accessed 21st August 2012]; ‘Blasius Saga’, in *Heilagra Manna Sögur: Fortællinger og Legender om heillige Mænd og Kvinder*, ed. by C. R. Unger, 2 vols (Oslo: Bentzen, 1877), I, 256-71 (p. 269).

⁷³⁷ Ármann Jakobsen, ‘The Friend of the Meek: The Late Medieval Miracles of a Twelfth-Century Icelandic Saint’, in *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c. 1000-1300)*, ed. by Lars Boje Mortensen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), pp. 135-51 (p. 143).

⁷³⁸ ‘N A104 (N A104) - Bø gamle kirke’, in *The Skaldic Project*, ed. by Margaret Clunies Ross, Kari Ellen Gade, Guðrún Nordal, Edith Marold, Diana Whaley and Tarrin Wills <<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/skaldic/db.php>> [accessed 24th August 2012].

to the first element,⁷³⁹ giving /ll/: **θraxill*. The /χ/ was lost medially between two vowels, giving **θraill*, and the preceding vowel was lengthened, giving **θra:ill*.⁷⁴⁰ I-mutation of /a:/ here led to /ε:/, orthographically <æ>.⁷⁴¹ The cluster /ε:i/ was contracted giving **θrc:ll*, written, according to standard orthographic conventions, *þræll*.⁷⁴² The earliest attestations of *þræl* in Old English show that it had been fully naturalised into the target language. The attested forms closely follow the expected Old English paradigm for a strong masculine a-stem noun, indicating that the standard Old English endings were appended to the root of the loan:

Table 21: Regular Forms of *þræl*

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	þrǣl	þrǣlas
Accusative	þrǣl	þrǣlas
Genitive	þrǣles	*þrǣla
Dative	þrǣle	þrǣlum

All these forms, save for the asterisked genitive plural, are attested in the extant corpus.⁷⁴³ The only exception to this regularity is the weak form *þræla* in the CCC 201, Cotton Nero A I and Hatton 113 versions of Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*. This replaces the expected *þræl* as the nominative

⁷³⁹ Jan Terje Faarlund, 'Old and Middle Scandinavian', in *The Germanic Languages*, ed. by Köning and van der Auwera, pp. 38-71 (pp. 40, 46); E. V. Gordon, *An Introduction to Old Norse*, 2nd edn, rev. by A. R. Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), §§ 56, 67, 76.

⁷⁴⁰ Gordon, *Introduction to Old Norse*, §§ 53, 64.

⁷⁴¹ Faarlund, 'Scandinavian', p. 40; Höskuldur Thráinsson, 'Icelandic', in *The Germanic Languages*, ed. by Köning and van der Auwera, pp. 142-89 (p. 145).

⁷⁴² Gordon, *Introduction to Old Norse*, § 58.

⁷⁴³ Campbell, *Grammar*, § 570. For the sake of simplicity, the forms in this chart have been slightly normalised: <þ> also stands for spellings with <ð>, <æ> for <ae> and <ę>, and <l> for <ll>. This standardisation does not affect the 'shape' of the paradigm. See below for discussion of these orthographic variations. A search for appropriate possible variants in the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus produced these highly regular results (*DOE* Corpus [accessed 26th September 2014]).

singular form.⁷⁴⁴ Both standard and non-standard forms occur here with no differentiation in their usage and meaning. As is the case with *þeow(a)*, *þræla* demonstrates the increasing confusion between weak and strong forms in the late Old English period, which happens both to the ‘native’ word stock and to recent loans such as *þræl*.

It is reasonable to assume, as Pons-Sanz does, that forms with final <ll> in Old English *þræl* are derived from the Old Norse nominative singular, *þræll*. The forms with <l> must equally be derived from either the other cases or from a simplification of the final liquid to a sound more familiar to speakers of Old English.⁷⁴⁵ However, because of Middle English forms with /a/, we know that any simplification of the final liquid or transfer of the consonant /l/ from other forms must have been orthographic and not yet phonetic. However, no trace remains of any meaningful grammatical distribution in the alternation between orthographic single and double forms in the Old English texts. Forms with <ll> only appear in the Aldredian gloss to the Lindisfarne Gospels, and occur only four times, forming a minority of the attested forms even here. Out of the seven appearances of the nominative singular of *þræl* in Aldred’s gloss, only one, in John 15.15, uses the digraph <ll> (p. 141). The other forms with <ll> occur in ‘ðrællas’ (accusative plural) in the same passage from John 15.15 (p. 141); ‘ðrællum’ (dative plural) in Mark 13.34 (p. 109); and ‘ðrælles’ (genitive singular) in Luke 12.46 (p. 135). These forms occur in all of the gospels except Matthew, in which *þræl* only occurs once overall. There is no strong association with either a particular book or a particular story. Aldred’s use of <ll> is not phonetic but scribal, and both <l> and <ll> must represent long and short sounds in undifferentiated distribution. The absence of a phonemic distinction between /ll/ and /l/ in this position in Old English itself probably drove this inconsistent treatment of the sounds in the written texts while the two remained distinct in the spoken language at least until the end of the Old English period. Thus, on the one hand we have

⁷⁴⁴ Wulfstan II, ‘Sermo Lupi ad Anglos Dani Maxime Persecuti Sunt Eos, quod Fuit Anno Millesimo .VIII. ab Incarnatione Domini Nostri Iesu Cristi’, in Wulfstan, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, pp. 261–66 (pp. 263–64); Wulfstan II, ‘Sermo Lupi ad Anglos Dani Maxime Persecuti Sunt Eos, quod Fuit Anno Millesimo .VIII. ab Incarnatione Domini Nostri Iesu Cristi’ (II), in Wulfstan, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, pp. 267–75 (p. 271). All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁷⁴⁵ Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, p. 59. See also Hogg, *Grammar*, I, §§ 7.80–81.

evidence both of the rapid morphological naturalisation of this lexeme and of the more gradual process by which its unfamiliar sounds were accommodated to the native phonemic repertoire.⁷⁴⁶ On the other hand, the latter attests to the continuing importance of Norse-speakers in the transmission of this term, and, taken together with the morphological features, this suggests the existence of truly hybrid contexts for its ongoing use.

5.3 Texts

5.3.1 Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels

Aldred composed his interlinear gloss on the Lindisfarne Gospels during the period when the community of St Cuthbert resided at Chester-le-Street (883-995; the gloss was probably composed *c.* 950-70).⁷⁴⁷ The place-name evidence suggests that Norse linguistic influence was more scarce here than in the more southerly parts of Northumbria, below a line stretching from the Solway to the mouth of the Tees.⁷⁴⁸ However, it is worth noting that, of the three major English settlement names using the element *þræl*, one falls in close proximity to Chester-le-Street: Tursdale, near Spennymoor in County Durham, approximately thirteen miles away.⁷⁴⁹ Although Aldred's Northumbrian may not belong specifically to this area, this place name suggests that *þræl* was of sufficient importance to encourage its use and preservation even outside the areas of major Norse linguistic influence. Owun added his Northumbrian gloss to Oxford, Bodleian Auct. D.2.19 (3946), the Rushworth Gospels, in the late tenth century. Bibire and Ross suggest that the place of composition was at Harewood, near Leeds, and this remains the most plausible and widely

⁷⁴⁶ The 'complete or partial assimilation to the native sound- and inflexional system is frequent' amongst Norse loanwords in Old English (Campbell, *Grammar*, §566).

⁷⁴⁷ Brown, *Lindisfarne*, pp. 6-7, 87. Brown herself prefers a date around 950, and elsewhere suggests a closer dating of 950s-960s (Brown, *Lindisfarne*, p. 4).

⁷⁴⁸ David Burnley, 'Lexis and Semantics', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume II*, ed. by Blake, pp. 409-99 (pp. 416-17).

⁷⁴⁹ *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names: Based on the Collections of the English Place-Name Society*, ed. by Victor Ernest Watts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 631. The others are Threlkeld in Cumbria (p. 613) and Thirlby in North Yorkshire (p. 608).

accepted suggestion; Owun's dialect is therefore assumed to be South Northumbrian.⁷⁵⁰ Owun's use of *þræl* is highly dependent upon Aldred's lexical choices, and thus the contexts in which this term occurs in Owun's gloss are not considered separately here as they reveal no additional information about this term.

The quantitative aspects of *þræl*'s use and distribution in the gospel glosses are detailed above.⁷⁵¹ On the qualitative side, *þræl* appears here in a wide variety of contexts which make it clear that this term was used as a simple equivalent to *servus* wherever the latter could appear. *Þræl* commonly denotes literal chattel slaves, as in Luke 7.3: ' & miððy geherde from ðæm hælend sende to him ældo wuto baed hine þætte gecuome & haelde ðrael his' [and when he had heard about the saviour, he sent to him the elders to ask him to come and heal his *þræl*](p. 73). The centurion's slave, called an *esne* in the previous verse, is not a metaphorical but a literal figure whose master must speak for him (p. 73).⁷⁵² Because slaves appeared both in the societies which generated these texts, and in Anglo-Saxon society as a recipient, there is an assumption of equivalence between these terms. The 'realistic' slave is almost a stock figure, and perhaps the most obvious use of slave words. While the use of *þræl* in truly metaphorical contexts is, as Girsch suggests, rare, we do find near-metaphorical constructions, as when Christ tells the disciples

uutedlice ne sægo ic þæt ne cuoeðo iuh ðraellas forðon ðræll nat þæt ne conn huæd wyrcað
hlafard his gie uutedlice ic cuoeð friondas forðon alle ðaðe þæt suæ huæd ic geherde from
feder minum cuða þæt cyðigo ic worhte iuh

[I do not now call you *þrælas* because the *þræl* does not know what his lord is doing; but I call you friends because I have made known to you everything whatsoever I have heard from my father] (Lindisfarne, John 15.15, p. 141). We are not intended to take the use of 'ðraellas' as literally indicative of the social and economic status of the disciples, but as a metaphor for a type of

⁷⁵⁰ Coates, 'Scriptorium', 453; Bibire and Ross, 'Lindisfarne and Rushworth Two', 99. See above, 4.8, for further discussion of the geographical provenance of these glosses.

⁷⁵¹ See 2.6 which includes discussion of the similarities and differences between Aldred and Owun's glosses.

⁷⁵² A slave collar from the period A.D. 294-325 has been found at Thelepte in Tunisia, the inscription on which describes the wearer as the slave of the centurion Emeritus (Thompson, *Archaeology*, p. 240). Thus, it is clear that this gospel passage refers to a normal chattel slave rather than forming part of some metaphorical construct.

relationship. The clause following ‘forðon’ draws upon the subservient position of true slaves to illustrate the nature of this connection. This is contrasted with the position of ‘friondas’, an analogy which implies greater equality between the two parties. The underlying imagery is that of the original authors of the gospels, but the choice of this lexeme reflects Aldred’s understanding as glossator. For him, the subservient role of the *þræl* contrasts with the equality of ‘friondas’. These terms denote different types of relationship with spiritual authority, and, in terms of the use of *þræl*, indicate more complex usage than that allowed by Girsch.

The most common usage of *þræl* in the gospel glosses is in the parables, as in Luke 12.43: ‘eadig ðe esne † ðrael ðone miððy cymeð se <hlaferd> gemoetað sua ðus doende’ [blessed is the *esne* † *ðrael* who, when his Lord comes, shall find him doing so] (p. 135). Amongst other occurrences, this type of usage appears in both the Lindisfarne and Rushworth versions of the parable of the *minas* in Luke, in the Lindisfarne version of the workers in the vineyard in Mark, and both Lindisfarne and Rushworth versions of the parable of the faithful servant in Luke (Lindisfarne, Mark 12.4, p. 93; Lindisfarne and Rushworth, Luke 12.46, 19.13, pp. 135, 183). Given the prevalence of slavery in the ancient world, it is not surprising to find this image so vividly displayed in the agricultural parables.⁷⁵³ The slave as a convenient image of various types of service transfers easily from this world to that of the Anglo-Saxons, and the use of *þræl* here demonstrates both its literal and its metaphorical facets. These parables break down such distinctions between the metaphorical and literal slave, as they operate on both levels at once. In Luke 12.43 cited above, the *þræl* is simultaneously a literal slave, acting in the real world in plausible ways in service to a human master, and a metaphor for those who treat God with all due reverence and greet the end of days in the correct fashion. The ‘eadig [...] ðrael’ of this passage and the ‘yfle ðrael’ of Matthew 24.48 (Lindisfarne, p. 201) are types both of slaves, good or bad, and of relationships with the divine. While slave words are often associated with negative behaviour, they were also connected to the ideal of the perfect slave. The blurring of literal and metaphorical in the parables indicates that the absence of *þræl* in positive metaphors, defined by the most narrow criteria, cannot be taken as

⁷⁵³ Combes’s *Metaphor* considers the various versions of this metaphor in detail.

evidence that this term could not be used to denote positive relationships, whether amongst humans or between the human and the divine.⁷⁵⁴

5.3.2 Durham Ritual

The Old English interlinear gloss to the Durham Ritual (Durham, Cathedral Library A. IV. 19) was composed in Northumberland by Aldred in the late tenth century.⁷⁵⁵ Although Aldred uses *þræl* widely in the Lindisfarne gloss, it only appears once in his gloss to the Durham Ritual:

broð' ðis <f'ðon> gifoelað gie in ivih þ & in crist hælend se ðe mið ðy on bisine godes were/væs no nednioma gidoemedede þætte woere hine efne gilic gode ah hine seolfne ofdvne ahnag bisine ðreles onfoende

[brothers, therefore feel this in yourselves which is also in Christ the Saviour: he who in the likeness of God did not judge it taking by force to be equal to God, but humbled himself, taking on the form of a *þræl*] (p. 21). This glosses Latin text taken from Philippians 2.5-7: 'semet ipsum exinaniuit formam serui accipiens' [he made himself powerless, accepting the form of a slave] (Vulgate, Philippians 2.5-7). Here, Christ is said to have taken on the form of a slave and the audience is enjoined to pursue the same humility. The next verse in the Vulgate explicitly links this image with obedience: 'humiliavit semet ipsum factus oboediens usque ad mortem mortem autem crucis' [he humbled himself, making himself obedient even to death, even to death on the cross] (Vulgate, Philippians 2.8). While the *þræl* here is the image of utter abasement, it is also positively charged, symbolic not of a state merely to be tolerated but one which should be actively sought. The metaphorical slavery of Christ and Christians is linked to the real slave by the importance of obedience both owed and given, and of humility. Girsch overlooks this occurrence, perhaps due to its non-standard spelling, leading her to the supposition that *þræl* only occurs in two negatively charged idioms.⁷⁵⁶ While Pelteret notes the existence of this passage, it does not appear to inform

⁷⁵⁴ Pons-Sanz notes further positive uses of *þræl* (Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, p. 183).

⁷⁵⁵ 'Manuscripts Du', in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 9th October 2012]; Lindelöf, *Rituale*, p. xliii.

⁷⁵⁶ Girsch writes that '*þræl* [...] is conspicuously lacking in collocations expressing metaphorical slavery; only two such locutions occur, and both are negatively charged' (Girsch, 'Terminology', p. 39).

his understanding of *þræl*'s usage.⁷⁵⁷ Magennis, reliant on Girsch's reading, believes that 'ignominious associations' are attached to *þræl* which would be problematic 'if the term were applied metaphorically to good people[...] which it never is'.⁷⁵⁸ Thus, the accidental omission of this single instance of *þræl* dramatically changes the assumptions which scholars may draw about its meaning and associations.⁷⁵⁹ Once we include this instance in the repertoire of *þræl* and integrate it fully into our understanding of this lexeme, it becomes obvious that while *þræl* is not common in positive metaphors, this is not due to the denotations and connotations of the term itself, which could be used in all possible contexts requiring a slave word.

5.3.3 Laws

II Æthelred preserves the terms of a treaty between Æthelred II and three Viking leaders, including Ólafr Tryggvason. The manuscript, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 383, was produced in the scriptorium of St Paul's Cathedral in London in the early twelfth century.⁷⁶⁰ Here, we are told that 'gyf Englisc man Deniscne ðræl ofslea, gyldre hine mid punde, & se Denisca Engliscne ealswa, gif he hine ofslea' [if an English person kills a Danish *þræl*, he shall pay for him with a pound, and likewise a Danish person shall pay for an English (slave), if he kills him] (§ 5.1, p. 222). While neither the text nor the manuscript has a connection with any Northumbrian scribe or author, the specifically Norse context makes the appearance of an Old Norse loanword such as *þræl* unsurprising. Indeed, this is the use of *þræl* which most obviously demonstrates its imminent Old

⁷⁵⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 317.

⁷⁵⁸ Magennis, 'Godes þeow', 158.

⁷⁵⁹ Even if only the two negatively charged collocations survived, two pejorative uses out of two is hardly a sufficient sample size to rule out many of the potential uses of slave words.

⁷⁶⁰ 'Catalogue of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220', in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/catalogue/mss.htm>>; 'Æthelred 's Treaty with Olaf (II Atr)', in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>>; 'Manuscript B', in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>>; Thom Gobbitt, 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 383', in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.CCCC.383.htm>> [accessed 24th March 2014].

Norse roots. Nevertheless, *þræl* here implicitly refers to English as well as Danish slaves. While the choice of this word was influenced by the unusual specifics of the composition of this text, the referents of *þræl* are not restricted by ethnicity or the legal polity in which they live. This in turn indicates that no specifically Scandinavian conditions of slavery were closely associated with this word, certainly not to the extent that we might expect to see if such conditions had driven its adoption into Old English.⁷⁶¹

London, British Library Cotton Nero A. I contains *Grið*, as well as a version of the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*. The texts from this part of the manuscript date from the first quarter of the eleventh century, and are closely associated with Wulfstan's circle. *Grið*, concerning the role of the Church, was most likely drafted by Wulfstan before 1014.⁷⁶² Wulfstan's direct role in drafting this text is most obvious in the phrasing of *Grið*: 'we witan, þæt þurh Godes gyfe þræl wearð to ðegene & ceorl wearð to eorle, sangere to sacerde & bocere to biscepe' [we know that through God's favour, the *þræl* becomes a retainer, and the freeman becomes a noble, the cantor becomes a priest, and the scribe becomes a bishop].⁷⁶³ This is a version of a phrase also used by Wulfstan in the *Institutes of Polity*.⁷⁶⁴ It is not possible to date the *Institutes of Polity* so precisely, but the established *terminus post quem* is 1008-10, although Wulfstan may have continued to revise and add to the text until the

⁷⁶¹ Campbell argues that 'the Scandinavian loan-words recorded in OE texts are mainly ones for ideas, persons, or things, which were either peculiarly Scandinavian, or of which the OE conception had been modified by contact with Scandinavian civilization' (Campbell, *Grammar*, §566). While this may be true elsewhere, it is evidently not the case with *þræl*.

⁷⁶² 'Manuscript G', in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 24th March 2014]; Owen Roberson, 'London, British Library, Cotton Nero A. i', in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.BL.Nero.A.i.htm>> [accessed 24th March 2014]). The geographical provenance is unknown ('Catalogue of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220' [accessed 24th March 2014]); Joyce Tally Lionarons, *The Homiletic Works of Archbishop Wulfstan: A Critical Study*, Anglo-Saxon Studies, 14 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2010), p. 15; Wulfstan, *Homilies*, pp. 1-6, 77; 'Be griðe 7 be munde (Grið)', in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 24th March 2014].

⁷⁶³ § 21.2, 'Be Griðe 7 be Munde', in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 470-73 (p. 472).

⁷⁶⁴ Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, p. 187.

end of his life.⁷⁶⁵ Thematically, these passages show the interest in the proper relations of various social groups to one another which is a hallmark of Wulfstan's use of *þræl* in the homilies. While this is often expressed as a concern for the breakdown of proper relations, here it takes the form of the 'natural' progression from one state to another. The possibility of advancement from 'þræl' to 'þegne' as part of the natural order and its comparison with advancement from 'bocere to biscepe' suggests that we cannot read any negative connotations into its use here. On a stylistic level, both phrases draw heavily upon alliteration for their power. While this alliteration may have encouraged the use of *þræl* to pair with *þegn*, *þeow* would have created the same effect. That Wulfstan chose *þræl* instead indicates his willingness to adopt new or unusual words in this semantic field.⁷⁶⁶ His involvement in the codification of several legal texts introduced his use of *þræl* to a wider audience, both participating in and encouraging its spread beyond the areas of the greatest Norse linguistic influence. The use of *þræl* here thus does not indicate either a change in the nature of the slave in general or a reference to a specific type of slave, but instead the addition of new material to the semantic field of slavery.

VIIa Æthelred can be dated to 1009 and proclaims ' & gif hwa þis ne gelæste, ðonne gebete he þæt, swa swa hit gelagod is: bunda mid XXX pænigum, þræl mid his hide, þegn mid XXX scillingum' [and if someone does not attend to this, then he must make amends as it is decreed:

⁷⁶⁵ Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, pp. 22-23. Thus, the composition of both the *Institutes* and *Grið* is likely to have occurred within the period in which Wulfstan was exposed to the Northumbrian dialect on a regular basis. Pons-Sanz argues that his term as archbishop was not the reason for the inclusion of such a substantial body of Norse loanwords in Wulfstan's writings, and suggests that the situation was more complex (Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, pp. 193-230). Even if this was the case, and Wulfstan encountered much of his Norse vocabulary elsewhere, his exposure to the Northumbrian dialect in which *þræl* was a dominant slave word may have been the deciding factor in his inclusion of this term in his writings.

⁷⁶⁶ See above, 3.6, for his treatment of *wiln*, and 4.3.11 for *esne*.

the householder with thirty pennies, the *þræl* with his hide, the retainer with thirty shillings].⁷⁶⁷ As in *Grið*, Wulfstan's involvement with the drafting of this code provides the Norse linguistic connection. It is interesting to note the use of 'bunda', another Old Norse loan, here, while 'þegn' would have been equally intelligible in both Old English and Old Norse. *þræl* has no strong connotations here, acting simply as a status term. § 5.1 uses 'þeowemen' in the same role (p. 262). In § 3, *þræl* contrasts with the free man, both the 'bonda' and the 'þegn'. This contrast is also a feature of *II Æthelred* and *Grið*. The punishments laid out in *VIIa Æthelred* distinguish between the free man who can pay for transgressions with monetary fines and the slave who can and must pay with his flesh, a legal distinction which is entirely conventional for this period. This makes the equation of the *þræl* with the *þeow* and *esne* of other codes clear, as similar penalties are prescribed for those denoted by these terms.⁷⁶⁸ The use of *þræl* for chattel slaves in these legal texts introduces a new item into the vocabulary available to those who codified the laws. Wulfstan's involvement in this codification provides a mechanism for this introduction, and, moreover, indicates that his willing adoption of 'new' terminology was not restricted by genre nor narrowly constricted by context.

5.3.4 Wulfstanian Homilies (*Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* and *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*)

þræl occurs in two of Wulfstan's homilies: *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, which, according to Pons-Sanz, belongs to the textual group dated to 1002-08, and the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, dated to around 1009. This places these two texts in the group composed after Wulfstan's elevation to the diocese of Worcester and the archdiocese of York in 1002. The non-linguistic evidence which suggests that Wulfstan spent protracted periods at York after his elevation to the archdiocese is complex, but

⁷⁶⁷ § 3, 'VIIa Æthelred: Bather Poenitenzedict', in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachen*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 262 (p. 262). All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text. 'VIIa Æthelred (VIIa Atr)', in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 24th March 2014]. Other possible places of provenance includes Winchester, and some connection with either Worcester or York is likely (Lionarons, *Homiletic Works*, p. 13). *VII Æthelred*, the Latin version of this code, was issued at Bath ('VIIa Æthelred [VIIa Atr]', 'Penitential Edict at Bath [VII Atr]', in *Early English Laws* <<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk>> [accessed 20th September 2014]).

⁷⁶⁸ See the discussion of *esne* in the early Kentish laws for parallel examples (4.3.1-4.3.3).

such stays seem likely. Some Norse-derived items (*lagu* and *grīð*) are present in Wulfstan's earliest texts,⁷⁶⁹ but the use of Norse loans increased during the later part of his career.⁷⁷⁰ Thus, it seems likely that his use of a greater number of Norse loans, including *þræl*, was the result of language contact during these periods in the Danelaw. However, Wulfstan was not merely a passive recipient of Norse loanwords. *Þrælrīht*, which appears in multiple versions of the *Sermo Lupi*, is the only compound of *þræl* to appear in the extant Old English corpus. This passage concerns the persecutions and degradations under which the English suffer, and the fullest form reads '& cradolcild geþeowode þurh wæltreowe unlaga for lytelre þyſþe wide gynd þas þeode, & freorīht fornumene, & þrælrīht genyrwde, & ælmesrīht gewanode' [and the infant is enslaved by bloodthirsty lawlessness for small thefts widely amongst this nation, and the rights of the free are taken away, and the *þrælrīht* is constrained, and the right of alms is diminished] (p. 269).⁷⁷¹ The passage is not primarily concerned with the rights of the *þræl*, and the principal purpose of this term here is as a classically Wulfstanian rhetorical flourish. This compound does not appear in any Middle English texts, and thus it is likely that Wulfstan coined it specifically for this passage as a contrast to *freorīht* and *ælmesrīht*. These two terms are themselves also Wulfstanian *hapax legomena*, occurring only here and, in the case of *freorīht*, in *II Cnut* (§ 20, p. 322).⁷⁷² While *ælmesrīht* is presumably more specific, *freorīht* and *þrælrīht* are less so: each refers generally to the rights enjoyed by one of the two major divisions of society, the free and the unfree. Thus, *þræl* here has no strong

⁷⁶⁹ Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, pp. 25, 199.

⁷⁷⁰ Pons-Sanz refutes the notion that Wulfstan acquired these terms through contact with the Vikings during his tenure in London and suggests that these terms had already become fully Anglicized (Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, pp. 203-07).

⁷⁷¹ Other versions occur in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201 (p. 262) and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 419 (Wulfstan II, 'Larspell', in Wulfstan, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, pp. 255-60 [p. 256]).

⁷⁷² A fragmentary search for 'freorīht' and 'ælmesrīht' in the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus reveals no other instances (*DOE* Corpus [accessed 15th March 2014]). Dance includes all three lexemes in the list of 'nominal compounds in "echoing pairs" in Wulfstan's Homilies that are unique to him' (Richard Dance, 'Sound, Fury, and Signifiers; or Wulfstan's Language', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. by Matthew Townend, *Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, 10 [Turnhout: Brepols, 2004], pp. 29-61 [p. 59]).

connotations and contrasts simply with *freo-*. This is a function which could have been fulfilled by any other term denoting SLAVE, and for which *þeow* was frequently used in West Saxon texts, both as a noun and as an adjective.⁷⁷³ Pons-Sanz argues that these compounds indicate that *þræl* participated in formative processes.⁷⁷⁴ This is true in a limited sense, but the lack of any other compounds in Old English and the literary character of these formations shows that such formative processes had not yet had any significant impact on the literary language, while simultaneously demonstrating the sophistication of Wulfstan's use of such loanwords.⁷⁷⁵

The CCCC 201 version of the *Sermo Lupi* has an additional instance of *þræl* which is absent from the other manuscripts. This immediately follows the *þrælribt* passage and reads 'ne þrælas ne moton habban þæt hi agon on agenan hwilan mid earfedan gewunnen, ne þæt þæt heom on Godes est gode men geuðon' [nor can *þrælas* have that which they have earned through labour, nor that which good men grant them by the will of God](p. 262). This explains what Wulfstan means by *þrælribt*, and is bracketed by similar passages elucidating *freoribt* and *ælmesribt*. This makes it clear that *þrælribt* does not refer to specific legal conditions but instead to a vaguer complex of rights to property which even the lowliest can reasonably expect to possess, but which are presently under threat. It is interesting to note the right to some level of property here, and that the possession of such rights does not conflict with the servile status of the *þrælas*.⁷⁷⁶ The rights of *þrælas* are contrasted with those of free men: 'frige men ne motan wealdan heora sylfra, ne faran þar hi willað, ne ateon heora agen swa swa hi willað' [free man cannot rule themselves, nor go where they will, nor dispose of their own things however they wish] (p. 262). These are specifically rights which slaves do not possess, the absence of which is part of the definition of the slave. Free men, deprived of these rights, are treated as if they are slaves, but a distinctive hierarchy remains as slaves lose an even more basic set of rights. Once again, the most fundamental quality of

⁷⁷³ See, for instance, Ælfric's use of the phrase *þeow man* in his *Grammar* (3.5).

⁷⁷⁴ Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, p. 172.

⁷⁷⁵ As Pons-Sanz says the 'level of integration in the linguistic system should not be equated with the number of attested occurrences' (Pons-Sanz, *Vocabulary*, p. 192).

⁷⁷⁶ See above, 1.3 on slaves and the ownership of property.

the *þrælas* which Wulfstan is interested in is the distinction between the free and the unfree and the role of the latter as part of the social hierarchy.

The majority of the other appearances of *þræl* in Wulfstan's work also occur in versions of the *Sermo Lupi*. These uses are not dispersed throughout the *Sermo* but concentrated in a small number of passages which dwell upon the role of slaves:

ðeah þræla hwilc hlaforde ætleape & of cristendome to wicinge wurðe, & hit æfter þam eft gewurðe þæt wæpengewrixl wurðe gemæne þegne & þræle, gif þræl þone þegen fullice afille, licge ægilde ealre his mægðe; and gif se þegen þone þræl þe he ær ahte fullice afille, gilde þegengilde.

[if any *þræl* escapes from his lord and from Christendom, and becomes a Viking, and after that it happens that a fight occurs between the retainer and the *þræl*, if the *þræl* slays the retainer completely, he will lie without compensation to all his kin; and if the retainer should completely slay the *þræl* who he previously owned, he must pay the wergild for a retainer] (pp. 263-64).

Wulfstan returns to this theme a little later: 'and oft þræl þone þegn þe ær wæs his hlaford cnit swiðe fæste & wircð him to þræle þurh Godes irre' [and often the *þræl* binds very fast the retainer who was previously his lord and makes him a *þræl* by the wrath of God] (p. 264). These passages demonstrate a concern for the disruption of social order and in particular the problem of runaway slaves. This echoes concerns about runaways found in other Old English texts, as well as the fluctuations in rank due to social turmoil.⁷⁷⁷ The idea that a runaway slave may be able to act both without penalties for his desertion and as if he were a *þegn* himself is clearly a major locus of social disruption for Wulfstan, while the depiction of disobedience of slaves is entirely conventional. The *þrælas* of Wulfstan's imagination here are 'bad' because they are disobedient, willfully abandoning their 'natural' places. They are implicitly contrasted with the 'good' slave, the product of a well-ordered society, who is, by definition, obedient. The alliterative pairing of *þræl* and *þegn* reinforces this image, juxtaposing the highest and lowest levels of society. Although Wulfstan uses *þeow* elsewhere in the *Sermo*, indicating that this word was available to him, it only appears in *servus Dei* type constructions used to denote the clergy (p. 262). Girsch's argument that *þeow* had shifted mainly to the metaphorical realm by the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, leaving *þræl* to denote

⁷⁷⁷ See 4.3.8.

chattel slaves,⁷⁷⁸ is plausible here but not justifiable over the corpus as a whole. We can equally read Wulfstan's use of these two slave words in a very different light. In this reading, *þræl* is not absent from positive collocations such as the *servus Dei* construct because it could not be used in such senses, nor is *þeow* absent in literal senses because it had become a purely metaphorical term. Instead, exposure to Northumbrian, in which *þeow* was not a major slave word, and in which *þræl* had begun to displace earlier items, may have led Wulfstan to adopt a general preference for the latter term.⁷⁷⁹ If these homilies were intended for use in the Danelaw, *þræl* would have been more immediately intelligible than *þeow*, which, the evidence from the Northumbrian gospels suggests, was not a major slave word in this dialect. However, in the case of the *servus Dei* construct, the well-established use of *þeow* as part of the stock phrase *þeow Godes* may have made it more difficult for Wulfstan to displace this item here due to the force of habit. This displacement did occur later, as indicated by the evidence from Middle English, but had not yet become widespread. Thus, it is not *þræl* which requires special circumstances, but the retention of *þeow* in this limited category of phrases.⁷⁸⁰

The sole use of *þræl* in Wulfstan's homilies which occurs outside the *Sermo Lupi* is in the *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*: 'and swa gerade manswican þe on ða wisan swæslice swiciað oftost on unriht & ðurh þæt deriað for Gode & for worulde, þæt syndan forbodan & Antecristes þrælas þe his weg rymað, þeah hy swa ne wenan' [and so the skilful deceivers who plausibly deceive the wise most often into sin, and through that injure God and the world, are the messengers and *þrælas* of the Antichrist, who open the way for him, although they do not believe so].⁷⁸¹ This is often remarked upon, as by Girsch, as it is one of the few metaphorical uses of *þræl* in Old English.⁷⁸² That the

⁷⁷⁸ Girsch, 'Terminology', p. 43.

⁷⁷⁹ Dance calls Wulfstan 'notably fond' of *þræl* and its derivatives. This marked preference is hardly the only case in which Wulfstan prefers a Norse loan over a 'native' term from the same semantic field; his predilection for *lagu* over *æ* is a notable example of the same phenomenon. (Dance, 'Signifiers', pp. 45, 51).

⁷⁸⁰ By 1400, *þeow* survived only in stock phrases (Pelteret, 'Danelaw', p. 184), and the patterns shown by Wulfstan here may be the beginnings of this process.

⁷⁸¹ Wulfstan II, 'De Septiformi Spiritu', in Wulfstan, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, pp. 185-191 (p. 190).

⁷⁸² Girsch, 'Terminology' p. 39.

‘gerade manswican’ are the slaves of the Antichrist is closely related to the other negative metaphorical use of *þræl* in Old English, occurring in Aldred’s gloss: ‘ðeðe wyrcað synne ðrael † ðea is synnes’ [he who does sin is the *þræl* † *þeow* of sin] (Lindisfarne, John, *capitulum lectionis* [23], p. 5). The specific reference to the Antichrist is unusual and reflects Wulfstan’s millenarian preoccupations. The general metaphor of slavery to sin or false gods is, however, of considerable antiquity, found, amongst other instances, in the *Peri Pascha* of Melito of Sardis.⁷⁸³ Wulfstan’s use of the metaphor here deprives the evildoers of true agency and even awareness of their own deeds. Taken together with the Aldredian material, this passage shows that both of the major authors to use *þræl* repeatedly were able to use it to form metaphorical constructions.⁷⁸⁴

5.3.5 Ælfric’s *Colloquy*

The version of Ælfric’s *Colloquy* in which *þræl* occurs is taken from London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A. III, dated to the middle of the eleventh century and associated with Christ Church, Canterbury.⁷⁸⁵ The use of *þræl* in Ælfric’s *Colloquy* is the single anomaly in its otherwise simple pattern of this term’s distribution. For the Latin ‘<si> <ideo> me expellitis, ut sic faciatis, tunc eritis omnes coci, et nullus uestrum erit dominus’ [if you expel me for that reason, as you may thus do, you will all be cooks, and none of you will be the lord], the Old English reads ‘gif ge forþy me fram adryfaþ, þæt ge þus don, þonne beo ge ealle þrælas, & nan eower ne biþ hlaford’ [if you therefore expel me, as you may thus do, then you will all be *þrælas* and none of you will be lord] (p. 37). ‘Þrælas’ is clearly not a direct translation of ‘coci’, but rather draws upon an assumption that cooks would be slaves, reinforced by the apposition between *cocus* and *dominus*. The force of the passage does not dwell upon the culinary tasks of the cook but rather upon his subservience to his lord, thus suggesting the more general term used in the Old English gloss. The manuscript

⁷⁸³ Combes, *Metaphor*, p. 103.

⁷⁸⁴ Owun, too, uses it in metaphors, but in this as elsewhere he follows Aldred’s usage.

⁷⁸⁵ Owen Roberson and Orietta Da Rold, ‘London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A. iii’, in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.BL.Tibe.A.iii.htm>> [accessed 24th March 2014]; Ælfric of Eynsham, *Colloquy*, pp. 1-3.

provenance provides no explanation for the use of *þræl* here, and the most obvious mechanism to account for the presence of this word is the correspondence between Ælfric and Wulfstan. We have seen the influence of this correspondence in Wulfstan's use of Ælfrician terms in the case of *wiln*.⁷⁸⁶ Here, it is apparent that this process was not unidirectional. This communication provides a channel for the complex exchange of vocabulary between the various dialects (or dialect-influenced forms of literary West Saxon), while Ælfric's fondness for more unusual vocabulary and a tendency to seek out synonyms may have added impetus to this borrowing.⁷⁸⁷

5.4 Overview of Manuscripts

While the texts containing *þræl* are consistently Northumbrian, there is a greater degree of variation in the provenance of the manuscripts, which come from such diverse places as Worcester, the South-West including Exeter, St Paul's in London, Canterbury, and various places in the North. This latter group of manuscripts includes Durham Cathedral A. IV (the Durham Ritual), London, British Library, Cotton Nero D. IV (the Lindisfarne Gospels), and Oxford, Bodleian Auct. D.2.19 (3946) (the Rushworth Gospels). For this group of interlinear glosses, the composition of the text is effectively simultaneous with the creation of its single manuscript witness.

The manuscripts containing *þræl* in the Wulfstanian material are often associated with either York or Worcester, and thus retain strong connections with Wulfstan himself. London, British Library Cotton Nero A. I may have been produced at either Worcester or York.⁷⁸⁸ While Liebermann suggested that the manuscript was produced at Canterbury, Wanley argued for Worcester, and Bethurum concurred.⁷⁸⁹ Wulfstan held the archepiscopate of York in plurality with

⁷⁸⁶ See 3.6. For a detailed examination of this relationship, see Malcolm R. Godden, 'The Relations of Wulfstan and Ælfric: A Reassessment', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*: ed. by Townend, pp. 353-74.

⁷⁸⁷ See Mechthild Gretsch's 'Ælfric, Language and Winchester', in *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. by Magennis and Swan, pp. 109-137 for a discussion of his style

⁷⁸⁸ Lionarons, *Homiletic Works*, pp. 15-16.

⁷⁸⁹ Wulfstan, *Homilies*, p. 6.

the episcopate at Worcester from 1002 to 1016, and the latter was the richer see in terms of its library as well as its financial resources.⁷⁹⁰ Bethurum placed Cotton Nero A. I as part of this library, and in particular of the library's collection of English laws. Furthermore, she suggested that the archbishop himself played an active part in the compilation of this legal collection, while Ker suggests that some of the marginalia may be written in Wulfstan's own hand.⁷⁹¹ The second part of the manuscript, the part in which this material occurs, was not compiled in Northumbria, but it was compiled under strong and probably direct influence from Wulfstan himself. Thus, it is not surprising that Wulfstan's idiolect, specifically his preference for Norse-derived terms including *þræl*, is so strongly evinced in this manuscript.

Similarly, Oxford, Bodleian, Hatton 113, known as St Wulfstan's Homiliary, was also produced at Worcester, although somewhat later, probably under the aegis of St Wulfstan of Worcester.⁷⁹² While it was probably produced well after Wulfstan II of York's death in 1023,⁷⁹³ Hatton 113 nevertheless was closely associated with Wulfstan himself, and produced in a scriptorium in which early and potentially autograph copies of Wulfstan's works were available. Therefore, as is the case with Cotton Nero A. I, it is not surprising that Hatton 113 reproduces lexical choices (here *þræl*) which are not native to the area of the scriptorium but which are a feature of Archbishop Wulfstan's idiolect. Similarly, Oxford, Bodleian, Bodley 343, which also includes the *Sermo Lupi*, was produced in the mid to late twelfth century, 'most likely originating in a small scriptorium in the West Midlands with ties to Worcester'.⁷⁹⁴ The Worcester manuscripts of Wulfstan's work which use *þræl* are effectively an outlier of Northumbrian-influenced (and thus Norse-influenced) Old English created by specific political and organisational circumstances.

⁷⁹⁰ Wulfstan, *Homilies*, pp. 59-63.

⁷⁹¹ Wulfstan, *Homilies*, p. 61; N. R. Ker, 'Hemming's Cartulary: A Description of Two Worcester Cartularies in Cotton Tiberius A. xiii', in *Studies in Mediaeval History Presented to Frederick Maurice Powicke*, ed. by R. W. Hunt, W. A. Pantin and R. W. Southern (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), pp. 49-75 (p. 71).

⁷⁹² Wulfstan, *Homilies*, p. 4; Tally Lionarons, *Homiletic Works*, pp. 12-13.

⁷⁹³ Wulfstan, *Homilies*, p. 4.

⁷⁹⁴ Tally Lionarons, *Homiletic Works*, p. 16.

Manuscript witnesses to texts which use *þræl* do occur from outside this area, however. The interest in and continued use of many of these texts, such as the Wulfstanian material, drove this process of copying and transmission. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201, produced at Exeter in the middle of the eleventh century, contains the largest number of separate texts using *þræl* of any Old English manuscript: *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, *Institutes of Polity*, and the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*.⁷⁹⁵ Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 383, which contains *II Æthelred*, was produced at St Paul's in London, while both London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A. III and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 419 were produced at Canterbury.⁷⁹⁶ Thus, we find *þræl* in both southwestern and southeastern manuscripts. It is clear, therefore, that these texts were distributed widely without altering their wording to reflect the local dialect. A single text such as the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* could be copied at Worcester (Cotton Nero A. I, Bodley 343 and Hatton 113), Exeter (CCCC 201) and Canterbury (CCCC 419). The popularity of the message in the *Sermo Lupi* and Wulfstan's authority contribute both to the spread of the text and to the preservation of Wulfstan's lexical choices. The fact that not a single version of the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* contains a replacement form for *þræl*, which is otherwise a term of very limited currency, suggests that such scribes were deliberately and methodically copying Wulfstan's own lexical choices here. Therefore, the apparent spread of *þræl* in terms of manuscripts need not represent the prior spread of this lexeme in the Old English literary dialect, although it may have been aided by its dissemination in non-literary forms of the language. If this is the case, it implies scribes who were willing to copy pre-existing forms of *þræl*, confident of their intelligibility, but not yet willing to use it innovatively. Equally, the distribution of manuscripts containing Wulfstanian works which used this term may have encouraged the rapid acceptance and integration of this term in Early Middle English. An ever-expanding 'subterranean' spread of *þræl* in non-literary forms would go some way

⁷⁹⁵ Elaine Treharne, 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 201', in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Da Rold, Kato, Swan and Treharne <<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.CCCC.201.htm>> [accessed 27th March 2014]; Lionarons, *Homiletic Works*, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁹⁶ 'Catalogue of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220', Gobbitt, 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 383' [accessed 19th July 2014]; Lionarons, *Homiletic Works*, pp. 14, 16.

towards explaining the vast difference in the distribution of *þræl* between Old English and even the earliest Middle English texts.

5.5 Middle English

The semantic field of slavery was greatly reshaped in the transition from Old to Middle English. A search of the *Middle English Dictionary* for ‘slave’, including terms for serfs and servants, yields a number of terms: *bonde*, *bondeman*, *caitif*, *caitifte*, *captivite*, *carl*, *cherl*, *esclave*, *ethel-theowe*, *felaue*, *man*, *slave*, *servaunt*, *servauntesse*, *thein*, *theu*, *thral*, *wale*, *womman*. The appearance of French loans such as *servant*, *serf* and *chaitif* is unsurprising.⁷⁹⁷ Other terms change meaning or become more prominent, as is the case with *carl/cherl*. Nevertheless, with the exception of *esne*, most of the major terms for slaves in Old English remain for at least part of the Middle English period, although attested increasingly rarely. As a rough guide, however, the *Middle English Dictionary* gives only two examples for the use of *wale* (*wealh*) as slave, one in the *Body and Soul* fragments discussed above, which is Old English with Middle English linguistic forms, and one in the phrase ‘ælc þrel & ælc wælh’ in *Lazamon’s Brut* (7412, p. 384). *Theu* is similarly much less frequently attested in Middle than in Old English.⁷⁹⁸ However, *thral* is much more significant: there are more than twice the number of examples given for this form in the *Middle English Dictionary* than for *theu*.⁷⁹⁹ In comparison to the small number of attestations and limited range of texts of *þræl* in Old English, the *Middle English Dictionary’s* corpus of prose and verse returns 606 results for *thral** in fifty-six texts.⁸⁰⁰ The few critics who have commented on the changes in the semantic field of slavery between Old and Middle English have assumed that this change was a result of the decline

⁷⁹⁷ *MED*, searching for ‘slave’ in the ‘search entries’ function [accessed 24th February 2014]; *The Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, ed. by David Trotter et al., <<http://www.anglo-norman.net>>, s.v. ‘servant’, ‘serf’, ‘chaitif’ [accessed 27th March 2014].

⁷⁹⁸ *MED*, s.v. ‘theu’ [accessed 24th February 2014].

⁷⁹⁹ *MED*, s.v. ‘thral’ [accessed 22nd July 2014].

⁸⁰⁰ *MED*, searching the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* using ‘thral*’ [accessed 22nd July 2014]. This does not allow for orthographical variation.

of slavery.⁸⁰¹ The survival of a range of terms, both new and inherited, indicates that this is not the case. This study further demonstrates the continuing importance of ‘slave’ as a concept of wide and varied utility which prompted the continued use of slave words throughout this period. *Thral* is a major term denoting SLAVE in Middle English and its prominence is a key feature of the restructuring of this semantic field. Skaffari includes it in the list of the ten most frequently used Norse loanwords in the Early Middle English period (1150-1250).⁸⁰² Thus, it is critical to our understanding of how slave words made the transition from Old to Middle English.⁸⁰³ *Thral* is also substantially attested from Older Scots in the form *thirl*. The first Scots usage cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is Barbour’s *Bruce* from circa 1380.⁸⁰⁴ The *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* cites multiple instances from at least the fourteenth century onwards, by which time it is clear that *thirl* had developed some senses unique to Scots, as in the prominent set of meanings related to a striction to a particular mill or smithy.⁸⁰⁵ This makes it clear both that the borrowing and spread of *þræll* was not a small scale phenomenon and that *thral* developed independently in Older Scots and Middle English.

Methodologically, the examples given in the *Middle English Dictionary* entry on *thral* provide a useful range of attestations which span the Middle English period from 1225 to 1500 and include all the available meanings.⁸⁰⁶ Due to the much greater amount of material available in Middle English and the focus of this study, it is not possible to consider every use of *thral* in

⁸⁰¹ For instance, Pelteret argues that the decline of *þeow* is the result of the end of slavery (Pelteret, ‘Danelaw’, p. 184).

⁸⁰² J. Skaffari, ‘“They Take Both Earls and Thralls”: Notes on Anglo-Saxon Borrowing of Norse Words’, *X Conference of the International Society of the Anglo-Saxonists (ISAS): The Anglo-Saxons and the North*, Helsinki, Finland, 6-11th August 2001 [unpublished conference paper].

⁸⁰³ This is the headword form given by the *Middle English Dictionary*, and will be used when talking about the lexeme generally. The original orthography of the relevant editions is given here when quoting specific examples.

⁸⁰⁴ *OED*, s.v. ‘thrall’ [accessed 15th January 2015].

⁸⁰⁵ *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931-2002), accessed from <<http://www.dsl.ac.uk/>>, s.v. ‘thirl’ [accessed 26th February 2014].

⁸⁰⁶ *MED*, s.v. ‘thral’ [accessed 22nd July 2014].

Middle English here. This section uses a subset of examples drawn from the *Middle English Dictionary's* citations to illustrate the various uses to which this term was put in Middle English. The case study on Chaucer which draws this chapter to a conclusion shows how many of these usages could be used and reshaped by such a prolific author. The material for this is drawn partially from the *Middle English Dictionary's* examples and partially from the searchable corpus of Chaucer's works for further examples.⁸⁰⁷

The earliest texts cited by the *Middle English Dictionary* for *thral* date from around 1200-1225, including the book of *Vices and Virtues*, where, in the translation of Psalm 142, we find the familiar trope of the soul as the slave of God: 'et non venias ad iudicandum cum servo tuo' [and do not come into judgement with your slave] (Vulgate, Psalm 142.2); 'ne go ðu noht in to dome mid ðine þralle' [do not go into judgement with your *thral*].⁸⁰⁸ From the same period, the *Middle English Dictionary* also cites *Hali Meiðbad*, the homily *In diebus dominicis* from London, Lambeth Palace Library 487, and *St Margaret of Antioch*. It includes citations for the continued use of *thral* throughout the very late Middle English period (circa 1500): the *Trental of St Gregory* and the lyric *As I walkyd vppon* (NIMEV 373).⁸⁰⁹ More generally, the *Middle English Dictionary* contains citations for *thral* in, amongst others, the *Ancrene Riwele*, Layamon's *Brut*, the earlier version of the Wycliffite Bible, a substantial proportion of Chaucer's works, Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, the *Cursor Mundi*, *Piers Plowman*, various passion plays, *King Horn*, Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, Malory, and Hoccleve.⁸¹⁰ This demonstrates the continuing and widespread importance of slave words, both as

⁸⁰⁷ *Chaucer Concordance*, ed. by Gerard NeCastro (University of Maine at Machias, 2007) <<https://machias.edu/faculty/necastro/chaucer/concordance/>> [accessed 22nd July 2014].

⁸⁰⁸ *Vices and Virtues, being A Soul's Confession of its Sins, with Reason's Description of the Virtues: A Middle English Dialogue of about 1200 A. D.*, ed. by Ferdinand Holthausen, EETS, o. s., 89, 159, 2 vols (London: Trübner, 1888-1921), I (1888), 105.

⁸⁰⁹ *MED*, s.v. 'thral' [accessed 25th February 2014]. The *Middle English Dictionary* also includes a citation from the Chester Plays from 1600, but with the indication that it may have been composed earlier. *As I walkyd vppon* is catalogued in the *Digital Index of Middle English Verse (The DIMEV: An Open-Access, Digital Edition of the 'Index of Middle English Verse'*, ed. by Linne R. Mooney, Daniel W. Mosser, Elizabeth Solopova, Deborah Thorpe and David Hill Radcliffe, based on the *Index of Middle English Verse* (1943) and its *Supplement* (1965) <<http://www.dimev.net>> [accessed 19th July 2014]).

⁸¹⁰ *MED*, s.v. 'thral' [accessed 26th February 2014].

an element in the construction of various metaphors and in reference to literal slaves. Whereas in Old English, *þræl* was used only by a handful of authors, in Middle English its dialectal spread and the importance of the image of the slave made it almost commonplace.

Because of this frequent usage, it is not surprising to find *thral* tagged in many of the texts in the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English*. The earliest text containing *thral* which it cites is the twelfth-century version of the *Poema Morale* in Cambridge, Trinity College B.14.52, located to West Essex, far from the areas in which *þræl* occurs in Old English. The range of texts in which *thral* appears is consistent with the overall production and survival of manuscripts from this period, and includes a particularly marked cluster in the West Midlands.⁸¹¹ It is clear that the geographical restriction of Old English *þræl* to the (northern) Danelaw and Wulfstania texts was quickly eclipsed in the Middle English period. This implies that its spread was fast and decisive, displacing but not annihilating *þeow* and other slave words, and thus that *þræl* may have been rather more widespread in spoken Old English than in the written language.⁸¹² As many of the most important Old Norse loans are not attested at all in the written record before Middle English,⁸¹³ the prompt spread of a term which *was* attested in Old English is perhaps not surprising, but it also indicates the prominence and versatility of slave words. Dance counts *thral* as one of the ‘core’ Norse-derived terms in the Early Middle English texts from the South-West Midlands which he considers.⁸¹⁴ The southwards spread of *thral* is therefore part of the integration of Norse-derived core vocabulary into the English lexicon, on a par with the spread of items such as *lagu* and *grīð*. The eclipse of the West Saxon literary dialect, of which *þræl* was not a part, and the rise of the Midlands dialects, of

⁸¹¹ *A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English, 1150–1325*, compiled by Margaret Laing [<http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/laeme2/laeme2.html>]. Edinburgh: Version 3.2, 2013, © The University of Edinburgh, using a search of the corpus files by tag and/or form, tag type restricted to lexis, searching by tag, using the lexel ‘thral’ [accessed 27th September 2014]. The information for the manuscript can be accessed from the Index of Sources, under ‘B.14.52’. See also Dance, *Words Derived from Old Norse*.

⁸¹² The ‘Tremulous Hand’ glosses *þeow* with *þræl*, indicating that the former had been supplanted by the latter and was ‘clearly undesirable now in a written context, hence no longer current’ (Dance, *Words Derived from Old Norse*, pp. 230–31).

⁸¹³ Burnley, ‘Lexis and Semantics’, pp. 418–19.

⁸¹⁴ Dance, *Words Derived from Old Norse*, pp. 277, 301.

which it most likely was a part, facilitated this process.⁸¹⁵ The evidence is that *þeow* did not dwindle because of the decline of slavery but because of the spread of *þral*, borne by the increasing prominence of the dialects in which it was one of the key words denoting SLAVE.

Along with its geographical spread, *þral* became more grammatically productive during the Middle English period. It shows a very limited degree of productivity in Old English, and, as with the other terms discussed in this study, it failed to supplant *þeow* in the formation of compounds. In Middle English, however, it becomes significantly more productive. Alongside the original noun, *þral*, we find an adjective, *þral*, the nouns *þraldom*, *þralhede*, *þralshipe*, *þrallesse*, and the verb *þralLEN*. The range is not huge, and the root *serv-* is rather more productive,⁸¹⁶ but the items formed on the root of *þral* encompass many of the concepts which were, in Old English, provided by the root *þeow-*. For instance, we have *þralLEN* for *þeowian*, *þrallesse* for *þeowe(n)(e)*, and *þraldom* for *þeowdom*. *þral-* is clearly fully integrated into the compounding system here: *þrallesse* has a French suffix attached to the Norse root. Similarly, the abstract noun *þraldome* has a Norse analogue, but is formed with a native suffix.⁸¹⁷ The range and variety of terms indicate the full integration of *þral* into the lexicon and the extent to which it replaced *þeow* in its various functions.

Despite its prominence, *þral* was eventually eclipsed by the new loan *slave*. While this lexeme occurs as early as the ninth century to denote the unfree in continental documents, it entered English relatively late, via the French *esclave*. The first instance cited in the *Oxford English*

⁸¹⁵ Norman Blake, 'The Literary Language', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume II*, ed. by Blake, pp. 500-541 (p. 501) points out that Middle English literary production was geographically and thus dialectally more diffuse than the Old English. Elsewhere, he writes that 'the West Saxon standard was collapsing in the face of these new pressures', and that no similar 'central unified system' replaced it (Norman Blake, 'Introduction', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume II*, ed. by Blake, pp. 1-22 [p. 10]). Thus, Middle English was not the product of a single dialectal community. However, Dance shows the particular productivity of the South-West Midlands in the Early Middle English period, a region which was transitional between the Anglian and West Saxon dialects (*Words Derived from Old Norse*, p. 13, 17-19). The shift in linguistic dominance to the South-East Midlands further divorced literary Middle English from the forms and preferences of West Saxon and its descendants (Lass, 'Phonology and Morphology', pp. 32-33).

⁸¹⁶ *MED*, using a search for 'þral*' and 'serv*' [accessed 25th February 2014].

⁸¹⁷ Dance, *Words Derived from Old Norse*, p. 162.

Dictionary is from the *South English Legendary*, written around the year 1290.⁸¹⁸ The paucity of attestations in the *Middle English Dictionary*, particularly before 1400, indicate that it was slow to gain ground. However, their distribution was not mutually exclusive: both were used by Chaucer.⁸¹⁹ *Slave's* displacement of *thral* lies outside the scope of this study as the latter was widely used until the end of the Middle English period. However, the coexistence of these terms demonstrates the continuing extent of synonymy in this semantic field and the gradual process by which successive terms rose to prominence and fell from favour.

Although chattel slavery disappeared in England before the majority of Middle English texts were written, *thral* does occur to denote chattel slaves, often when translating or referring to classics, scripture, and patristic works.⁸²⁰ In the mid-thirteenth-century poem *Genesis and Exodus*, the Israelites complain

Betre is us get we wenden agen
And in egipte ðralles ben,
Ðan we wurðen her swerdes slagen,
And ure kin to sorge dragen.

[it is better yet for us to return and be *thrals* in Egypt than here to be killed by swords and our kin afflicted with calamity].⁸²¹ Thus, 'ðralles' here refers to the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt. Similarly, the Fairfax version of the fourteenth-century *Cursor Mundi* describes the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt as 'þe þraelle of pharaon' [the slavery of pharaoh].⁸²² *Thral* is also used on

⁸¹⁸ *OED*, s.v. 'slave' [accessed 28th September 2014]. The *Middle English Dictionary* dates this text to 1300 (*MED*, s.v. 'slave', [accessed 22nd July 2014]).

⁸¹⁹ *MED*, s.v. 'slave' [accessed 26th February 2014]. The *Chaucer Concordance* records five uses of the form 'slawe' and twenty-one of 'thral'; *thral* has additional forms (*Chaucer Concordance*, searching for 'slawe' and 'thral' in various forms [accessed 22nd July 2014]).

⁸²⁰ Pelteret suggests that 'by the early 1100s [...] the substance had gone out of the institution' (Pelteret, *Slavery*, p. 254).

⁸²¹ 3719–22, *The Story of Genesis and Exodus, An Early English Song, about A. D. 1250*, ed. by Richard Morris, EETS, o. s., 7, 2nd edn (London: Trübner, 1873), p. 106. This is a paraphrase of Numbers 14.3, in which the Israelites bewail their fate and suggest that a return to slavery in Egypt as 'captivi' is preferable (Vulgate, Numbers 14.3).

⁸²² 6304, *Cursor Mundi (The Cursor o the World). A Northumbrian Poem of the XIVth Century in Four Versions*, ed. by Richard Morris, EETS, o. s., 57, 59, 62, 66, 68, 101 (59, 62), 3 vols (London: Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1874–93), II, (1875–76), 364.

occasion in the Wycliffite Bible to gloss *servus*, as when Esther tells Ahasuerus that it would be better for her and for her people if ‘in to þrallis & þrallessis wee weren sold’ [we were sold as *thrals* and *thralesses*] than slain at the behest of Haman.⁸²³ The Vulgate here reads ‘servos et famulas’ (Vulgate, Esther 7.4). Similarly, the *Midland Prose Psalter* (IPMEP 114) uses ‘þral’ to describe the sale of Joseph into slavery in Psalm 104.⁸²⁴ Thus, significant texts in which slavery is an important feature preserved the use of *thral* to denote chattel slaves. Old English used *þræl*, *inter alia*, to translate Latin terms, in particular *servus*; Middle English used *thral* for the same purpose.

Slave words including *thral*, as we have seen, formed a number of metaphors in Old English, and, unsurprisingly, Middle English continues to use slave words metaphorically, both in the established religious senses and in the context of courtly love. In *Hali Meidhad*, when promoting the religious over the secular life, the author declaims ‘þet is eauereuch wif þet is hire were þreal, ant lueð i wurðinge, he antheo baðe’ [that is every woman who is her husband’s *thral*, and they live in filth, he and she both].⁸²⁵ Here, women are cast as the slaves of their husbands. That this slavery is an abhorrent and debased state is emphasised by the use of ‘wurðinge’. This metaphor recurs elsewhere in the text, where the division between the *thral* and the free is emphasised: ‘ant of godes brude ant his freo dohter (for ba togederes ha is), bikimeð þeow under mon, ant his þrel, to don al ant drehen þet him likeð, ne sitte hit hire se uuele’ [and from God’s bride and his free daughter (for she is both of these together) she becomes a slave under a man and his *þrel*, to do and to suffer all that he wishes, no matter how ill it suits her] (p. 4). This inverts the usual image of the nun as an *ancilla Dei*, as it depicts married life as thralldom, a lowly state which one may escape by pledging oneself to the religious life. Furthermore, ‘þeow’ and ‘þrel’ are used as

⁸²³ *MS Bodley 959: Genesis-Baruch 3.20 in the Earlier Version of the Wycliffite Bible*, ed. by Conrad Lindberg, Acta Universitatis Stockholmensis, 13, 8 vols (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1959-97), IV (1965), 121.

⁸²⁴ *Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter together with Eleven Canticles and a Translation of the Athanasian Creed*, ed. by Karl D. Bülbring, EETS, o. s., 97 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1891), p. 128.

⁸²⁵ ‘Hali Meidhad’, in *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and ‘Ancrene Wisse’*, ed. by Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 2-43 (p. 12). All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

simple synonyms here for stylistic variation; the equivalence between the two terms is clear.⁸²⁶ On the other hand, the text also uses 'þrel' to translate Mary's declaration that she is an *ancilla Dei* at the Annunciation (p. 40). Here, it emphasises Mary's humility, but is not used of any unnatural and undesirable state of subservience. These divergent uses suggest that while the author could use this term in novel ways, this did not imply any exclusive association with those contexts. The common thread here is the association of *þral* with the Latin *ancilla*. While *þræl* is only used for masculine slaves or those for whom gender is not specified in Old English, the use of *þral* here indicates that this distinction was less clear-cut in Middle English. While feminine slave words such as *þrallesse* do exist, the eclipse of words with long-established feminine cognates such as *þeowen* made the distinction less significant on a lexical level. Thus, the use of *þral* for *ancilla* here continues the association of all the Old English slave words considered in this study with their Latin counterparts.

Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne* uses the image of release from slavery to describe baptism:

Hyt makþ þe fre þat er were þral
Fro þe fendes seruage al.

[it makes you all free from service to the devil who before were *þrals*].⁸²⁷ The image of baptism as manumission from slavery to sin and the devil occurs from the earliest Christian writings.⁸²⁸ Its presence here demonstrates that Middle English employed the full range of slave metaphors, including those which dated from antiquity, and that the legal reality of chattel slavery was not a precondition for the retention and usefulness of slave words. This is closely related to the 'slave to sin' idiom which is also associated with *þral* in Middle English. In the *Prik of Conscience*, we are

⁸²⁶ Dance includes *þraldome* under the list of items used for sequential variation and from a 'desire to avoid monotony' (Dance, *Words Derived from Old Norse*, pp. 253-56). The use of the simplex slave words here shows that this desire was more widespread; this study overall demonstrates that such variation was also a function of the Old English use of slave words.

⁸²⁷ 9560-62, Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *Handlyng Synne*, ed. by Idelle Sullens, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 14 (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1983), p. 239.

⁸²⁸ Combes, *Metaphor*, pp. 110-16.

told ‘ffor þai salle be stresced in helle als thralle’ [for they shall be confined in hell as *thralls*],⁸²⁹ casting slavery as the consequence of sin. This is closely related to the formulation of the *synnes þral* in Aldred’s gloss. In addition to uses such as this which associate slavery with sin in general, we also find uses of this trope in which slavery is associated with specific sins. In the *Confessio Amantis*, Gower describes the dangers of drunkenness:

The wyn drynketh him and bint him faste,
And leith him drunke be the wal,
As him which is his bonde thral
And al in his subjeccion.

[the wine drinks him and binds him fast and lies him drunk by the wall, as his bound *thral* and all in subjection to him].⁸³⁰ The play on ‘drynketh’/‘drunke’ emphasises the unnatural quality of such drunkenness, by making the man and not the liquid the object which is consumed. ‘Thral’ demonstrates the depth of such ‘subjeccion’. The use of this idiom here to refer to a very specific sin indicates how fully a Middle English author could exploit this metaphor. In the social realm, the association of sin with metaphorical slavery must have reinforced the association of literal slaves and other social inferiors with the behaviour which led to this state. The sinner as slave and the slave as sinful are two parts of the same ideological complex.

Not all metaphorical uses of *thral* in Middle English refer to this state in such negative terms. In the ‘Abraham and Isaac’ sequence of the *Ludus Coventriae*, Isaac addresses God and stresses his own abasement before him in the wake of Abraham’s attempted sacrifice:

at þi byddyng to dye with knyffe
I was fful buxvm evyn as þi thralle

[I was entirely obedient even as your *thral* to die by the knife at your bidding].⁸³¹ The use of the *servus Dei* trope here emphasises Isaac’s humility and obedience to God, particularly apt as God has

⁸²⁹ *Prik of Conscience*, ed. by James H. Morey (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publication, 2012), Part 7, l. 456.

⁸³⁰ VI.72-75, John Gower, ‘Confessio Amantis’, in John Gower, *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. by G. C. Macaulay, EETS, e. s., 81, 82 (82) 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1900-01), II (1901), 1-478 (p. 169).

⁸³¹ 247-48, *Ludus Coventriae or the Plaie Called Corpus Christi: Cotton MS. Vespasian D. VIII*, ed. by K. S. Block, EETS, e. s., 120 (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), p. 51.

exerted the power of life and death over him, like a master over his slave. Isaac's obedience, however, is willing given, a quality of the ideal slave and one which emphasises the natural and desirable qualities of this state. Isaac's description of himself as 'fful buxvm' explicitly aligns this image with other descriptions of slaves in Middle English in which this adjective is prominent, as when the 'þral vn-buxsum' [disobedient *þral*] is listed as one of *The Abuses of the Age* (NIMEV 4051).⁸³² This idea of obedience is one of the desirable attributes of 'real' slaves, but also a key feature of the construction of the 'good' *servus Dei*, present both in the Classical and biblical source material, and in the Old English texts which use the slave words discussed here.

Although the examples considered thus far use *þral* to denote SLAVE, this term undergoes considerable semantic change in meaning during the Middle English period, retaining its established denotations but broadening to include other related meanings. Such semantic change may occur where the relationship between the word form and the *denotata* remains constant but the *denotata* themselves change.⁸³³ In Middle English it is therefore not always possible to tell whether *þral* refers to a slave, to some other oppressed class or state, or to some blurring of the two. Equally, this makes the *Middle English Dictionary's* distinction between metaphorical and literal usages problematic. The hymn *Seynt Thomas* (NIMEV 187.5), on the martyrdom of Thomas à Becket, decries the state of the church before his death 'freed' it: 'Al Holy Chyrch was bot a thrall' [all holy Church was no better than a *þral*].⁸³⁴ On the one hand, this is as a simple metaphor: the subjection of the English Church to temporal power is comparable to the subjection of a slave to his master. On the other, this use may represent the extension of the meaning of *þral* to include any state of subjection, no longer restricted solely to the condition of human chattels. This latter reading is not metaphorical. The two possible senses are closely related, and there is no

⁸³² 10, 'Ten Abuses', in *An Old English Miscellany: A Bestiary, Kentish Sermons, Proverbs of Alfred and Religious Poems of the Thirteenth Century from Manuscripts in the British Museum, Bodleian Library, Jesus College Library, etc.*, ed. by Richard Morris, EETS, o. s., 49 (London: Trübner, 1872), p. 184-85 (p. 184).

⁸³³ Burnley, 'Lexis and Semantics', pp. 486-87.

⁸³⁴ 1, 'Seynt Thomas', in *The Early English Carols*, ed. by Richard Leighton Green, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 62 (p. 62).

obvious way to distinguish between them here, although the latter abstraction probably derives from the former, which is more closely rooted in social reality.

In other cases, *thral* appears to denote various servile states which may or may not be equated with chattel slavery. The *Speculum Sacerdotale*, enjoining men to the Acts of Mercy, uses this term to describe the ransomed prisoner: ‘byinge of the þrall oute of prison’ [redemption of the *thral* from prison] is one of the ‘almes dedes’ [deeds of alms] which is recommended.⁸³⁵ Imprisonment, not chattel slavery, is the defining quality of the *thral* here; the two states are linked by subjection and lack of personal freedom. Similarly, Robert Mannyng of Brunne’s *Chronicle* repeatedly uses *thral* in senses where it applies generically to the lowest social classes. Here, the speaker attempts to foment discord between brothers:

Ert þu thralle or bastard,
or more vile, or more cuhard,
þat þou salle do him þerfor homage
& ert of þe same parage?

[are you a *thral* or a bastard or more menial or more cowardly, that you will therefore do him homage, and are you of the same rank?].⁸³⁶ Later, Robert Mannyng of Brunne contrasts ‘gentille’ [member of the nobility or gentry] and ‘þralle’ (10779, p. 350). In the *Speculum Sacerdotale*, the *thral* is distinguished by imprisonment, a situation which may change; here, the distinction is based upon birth and class. While it contrasts the high-born with the low, the latter are not chattel slaves, and the distinction is based upon a contemporary social hierarchy. Similarly, *King Horn* contrasts the ‘þral and king’ and ‘þralhod’ and ‘kniȝthod’.⁸³⁷ The *thral* on the one hand and the knight or king on the other are the extremes of the social hierarchy. *Thral* here plays

⁸³⁵ *Speculum Sacerdotale*, ed. by Edward H. Weatherly, EETS, o. s., 200 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 79.

⁸³⁶ 2813-16, Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *The Chronicle*, ed. by Idelle Sullens, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 153 (Binghampton, NY: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghampton, 1996), p. 157. All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁸³⁷ 430, 445-46, *King Horn: An Edition Based on Cambridge University Library MS Gg. 4. 27 (2)*, ed. by Rosamund Allen, Garland Medieval Texts, 7 (New York: Garland, 1984), pp. 157-58. When, as here, short quotations are entirely intelligible to speakers of Present-Day English, I do not provide translations.

much the same role as in the contrasts between the *wealþ* and the *þlaford* in Ælfric's writings. Thus, changes in the structure of society subtly change the nature of this contrast.⁸³⁸

Chaucer would have found many of the meanings discussed above familiar; he too used *þbral* variously and flexibly. By the latter half of the fourteenth century, most poems included both Old Norse and French loans, and thus it is not surprising to find *þbral* in Chaucer's works, although no more than about 200 Old Norse words occur in his idiolect.⁸³⁹ The prominence of *þbral* amongst Norse words tallies well with its place as a core item in the Old English and Early Middle English terminology adopted from Old Norse. The *Parson's Tale* repeatedly frames the sinner as the slave to sin, as when God warns humankind 'for youre synne ye been woxen thral' [for your sins, you have been made a *þbral*].⁸⁴⁰ Paraphrasing Seneca, Saint Augustine, and Saint Peter's warnings against sin, the Parson calls his audience 'servauntz and thralles to synne' [servants and *þbrals* to sin] (151, p. 290). He also argues that since sin is 'the firste cause of thraldom', 'thise lordes ne sholde nat mucche glorifien hem in hir lordshipes, sith that by natureel condicioun they been nat lordes over thralles, but that thraldom comth first by the desert of synne' [these lords should not glorify themselves greatly in their lordship, because they are not lords over *þbrals* by natural circumstances, but because that *þbraldom* comes first as the result of sin] (754, 756, pp. 313-14). The 'thralles' here must be contemporary peasants and neither chattel slaves nor metaphorical constructs. These extracts illustrate the complexities of *þbral*'s meaning, and the lack of any distinction between literal and metaphorical usages. Indeed, the two are closely related.

While many of these images are fairly conventional, Chaucer puts his own twist upon them. In *Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton*, Chaucer appropriates the 'marriage as slavery', warning that his audience shall 'ben thy wives thral, as seyn these wise' [be your wife's *þbral*, as the wise say].⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁸ See 3.5 and 3.6.

⁸³⁹ Blake, 'Literary Language', p. 523; David Burnley, *A Guide to Chaucer's Language* (London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 146.

⁸⁴⁰ 136, Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Parson's Tale', in Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by F. N. Robinson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 288-328 (p. 290). All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁸⁴¹ 20, Geoffrey Chaucer, 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton', in Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Robinson, pp. 655-56 (p. 656).

The Wife of Bath uses the same image, claiming that her husband ‘shal be bothe my dettour and my thral’ [shall be both my debtor and my *thral*].⁸⁴² The humour here is derived in part from the inversion of the ‘natural’ order. Chaucer adds an inventive touch with the abjection of the husband as *thral*, while demonstrating the versatility of the terminology. Chaucer’s imagery of slavery does not merely draw upon a common stock of phrases but reinvents these phrases for his own dramatic purposes. Here, this inverted image serves both the persona of *Lenvoy* as a caustic critique of women and marriage, and the Wife of Bath as a cheerful embodiment of this anti-feminist stereotype.

Thral also appears in metaphors concerning romantic love, where it has both positive and negative aspects, embodying differing perspectives on that emotion. Crisyede at first prefers liberty to love, arguing that if she loves, she will

put in jupartie

My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee

[put my peace of mind in jeopardy and *thrallen* my freedom].⁸⁴³ Later, however, she argues that those who view love as ‘thraldom’ are envious and mistaken (855-59, p. 501). Similarly, Dido, attempting to prevent Aeneas’ departure, offers to be ‘his thral, his servant in the leste degre’ [his *thral*, his servant of the lowest order], accompanying this with physical debasement.⁸⁴⁴ Her proffered slavery is a direct contrast to the fact that she is ‘a gentil woman and a queen’ [a noble woman and a queen] (1306, p. 613). As discussed above, the *thral* often serves as a contrast to nobility. Here, this contrast brings the paradox of love, particularly unequal love, into sharp focus.

In *The Book of the Duchess* the lover becomes the slave of love itself:

Dredeles, I have ever yit

Be tributarye and yive rente

To Love, hooly with good entente,

And through plesaunce become his thral

⁸⁴² 154-59, Geoffrey Chaucer, ‘The Wife of Bath’s Prologue’, in Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Robinson, pp. 105-116 (p. 107).

⁸⁴³ 772-73, Geoffrey Chaucer, ‘Troilus and Crisyede’, in Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Robinson, pp. 471-585 (p. 500). All references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

⁸⁴⁴ 1313-15, Geoffrey Chaucer, ‘The Legend of Good Women’, in Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Robinson, pp. 587-630 (p. 613).

With good wille, body, hert, and al.

[Assuredly, I have ever yet been the subject and given rent to love, wholly with good intention, and through pleasure become his *thral* with good will, body, heart and all].⁸⁴⁵ While the ‘thralldom’ is a general type of subservient relationship, the specifics are pointedly feudal (‘be tributarye and yive rente’). This relationship is the archetype of a perfect feudal relationship, one which is entered into willingly (‘with good wille’), and exalts love as servitude, rather than urging caution. The appearance of *thral* in such constructs indicates that the imagery of slavery was not a static inheritance from the Classical past but a topos which was constantly recycled and renewed, capable of adaptation to both changing social structures and a wider variety of possible contexts.

Chaucer’s use of *thral* is not restricted solely to metaphorical usages, but also occurs in relation to slavery in Classical and biblical sources. In the *Monk’s Tale*, we are told how Nebuchadnezzar enslaves some of the Israelites:

The fairest children of the blood roial
Of Israel he leet do gelde anoon,
And maked ech of hem to been his thral.

[he had the fairest children of the royal blood of Israel gelded and made each of them his *thral*].⁸⁴⁶

Their chattel slavery here finds its physical manifestation in their castration, the literal and symbolical loss of power. In the *Physician’s Tale*, Apius compels Claudius to claim that Virginia is his slave: ‘my servant [...] my thral by right’.⁸⁴⁷ The use of both ‘servant’ and ‘thral’ conflates these two statuses. However, while the former is defined in terms of human relationships, the latter is a specifically legal term in this context. The latter’s significance thus lies in the absolute nature of Claudius’ claim of ownership, not merely as master but as legal owner. As we have seen in the *Parson’s Tale*, Chaucer also uses *thral* for those of low but indistinct rank. In the *Knight’s Tale*, Arcite bewails his squirehood to Theseus:

⁸⁴⁵ 759–68, Geoffrey Chaucer, ‘The Book of the Duchess’, in Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Robinson, pp. 327–346 (p. 339).

⁸⁴⁶ 2151–53, Geoffrey Chaucer, ‘The Monk’s Tale’, in Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Robinson, pp. 241–52 (p. 243).

⁸⁴⁷ 183, Geoffrey Chaucer, ‘The Physician’s Tale’, in Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Robinson, pp. 190–93 (p. 192).

And now I am so catyf and so thral,
 That he that is my mortal enemy,
 I serve hym as his squier povrely.

[I am now so much a prisoner and a *thral* that I must serve him who is my mortal enemy humbly as his squire.]⁸⁴⁸ The *thral* here is not a chattel slave but the squire, subject to unwelcome, unpleasant, and unfamiliar abjection due to his disguised service in his enemy's household. This imposes a contemporary concept on a Classical text, and reveals that *thral* could be used to denote many different statuses in that contemporary society. The feature which these statuses share in common is a degree of subjugation, abjection, and obedience, often, although not always, forced. The *thral* has become a linguistic construct through which a vast range of types of service are revealed and examined. The interconnections and commonalities of these various relationships are affirmed and explored through shared vocabulary.

5.6 Conclusion

Closer study of the Old English texts which use *þræl* makes it clear that these authors used this term as a simple synonym for the Latin *servus*. It is therefore more similar to the standard West Saxon *þeow* than commentators such as Girsch have been willing to admit.⁸⁴⁹ *þræl* was not simply a word which could be used in a limited variety of contexts but a broad-based slave word which could be adapted to a multitude of metaphors as its usage spread. While *þræl* features in comparatively few metaphorical constructions in Old English, this is a consequence of the nature of the data. It is not appropriate to extrapolate Wulfstan's division between *þeow* and *þræl* onto the language as a whole, simply because his works account for a large proportion of a small body of attestations. If Wulfstan's language was an accurate representation of the overall potential of *þræl*, the widespread use of this term in Middle English would require a dramatic reversal in its development. We have evidence that *þræl* was used in both positive and negative metaphors by Aldred, suggesting that his usage was rather broader than Wulfstan's. As Aldred was a

⁸⁴⁸ 1545-1554, Chaucer, 'The Knight's Tale', in Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Robinson, pp. 37-66 (p. 46).

⁸⁴⁹ Girsch, 'Terminology', pp. 30-54.

Northumbrian, his usage may reflect the semantic breadth of *þræl* more accurately, while Wulfstan's adoption of the term was more cautious.

The distribution of texts containing *þræl* points strongly to its Old Norse origins, while the distribution of manuscripts suggests a mechanism for its early spread. *þræl* was clearly borrowed into Old English in the Danelaw and became current sometime before the middle of the tenth century. Owun's more conservative use of *þræl*, compared to Aldred, suggests that it was less common in his South Northumbrian dialect than in Aldred's dialect. The existence of native synonyms for SLAVE places *þræl* in the category of loans for basic concepts which were already represented in the Old English lexicon, such as *lagu* and *bonda*, a category which demonstrates the depth of language contact in this period. Finally, the continued use of other slave words in both Old English and Early Middle English indicates that *þræl* did not displace them, but rather formed part of a complex and shifting semantic field in which synonymy was an important feature. The terminology of slavery was not a closed or finite set, but open to influence from language contact as well as internal semantic change.

One of the most notable features of *þræl* in the Old and Middle English periods is its consistent use to denote SLAVE, despite the extraordinary changes which took place in the structure of English society and of the English lexicon, in contrast to the changes which *wealh* and *esne* underwent. That is not to say that the term *þræl* remains entirely static. The range of metaphors which it forms in Middle English shows innovation, especially in the field of courtly love, but also continuity. The semantic range of *þræl* broadens demonstrably in the Middle English period to include a greater range of semi-free and servile roles which shared certain aspects in common with the chattel slave. The semantic shift is the result of gradual social change which blurred the distinctions between the unfree and the lowest classes of the free or semi-free. In turn, it gradually reframed the relationship of man to God as expressed by the *servus Dei* idiom, diminishing the distance between the human and the divine, and suggesting more consensual modes of interaction. Ironically, it also led to the conflation of slaves, serfs, and servants which has caused such problems in the translation of medieval and Classical slave words.

The Middle English material on *thral* contextualises not just Old English *þræl*, but the Old English semantic field of slavery as a whole, providing evidence of the restructuring of this field between Old and Middle English. The dialectally limited spread of *þræl* in Old English, compared to its wider distribution in Middle English, points towards the importance of dialectal factors, specifically the decline of West Saxon and the rise of Norse-influenced varieties. Alone of the substantial Old English vocabulary denoting SLAVE, *þræl* survived with an associated meaning into Present-Day English, despite the decline of chattel slavery. By Chaucer's time, it was clearly a widely used term which could appear in many different and even apparently contradictory contexts even in the works of a single author. The apparent contradiction is a function of the extraordinary range of metaphors based on the image of the slave. The decline of chattel slavery did not end the need for words denoting chattel slaves; these terms were still required by Christian and Classical imagery which drew heavily upon a stock of such expressions.⁸⁵⁰ The metaphors which were originally derived from these literatures remained vibrant and continued to expand and evolve to fit new genres and new circumstances. *Thral* in Middle English occurs in a variety of conventionalised images and apparent stock phrases which are deeply embedded in the language of power and powerlessness. The integration of these metaphors into the dominant mode of Christian thought ensured the survival of terms denoting SLAVE beyond their original social milieu, and it is in these texts that we can trace a clear continuity and consistency of usage. Metaphor plays a limited but significant role in the use of *þræl* in Old English, but the Middle English material illuminates the importance of such *topoi*. Obedience remains the defining characteristic of the slave, an association which the greater amount of material describing these individuals in Middle English makes explicit. Conversely, the disobedient slave becomes the symbol of a disordered society. While studies such as Pelteret's are invaluable, the slave in medieval England is as much a theological and metaphorical concept as a human being.

⁸⁵⁰ Pelteret articulates the former opinion when he writes that 'if Old English *þeow* was simply a legal status word, we should expect it to disappear once slavery had gone, as indeed it did' and argues that 'the negative connotations that gathered round the word [*þræl*] provided a reason for its survival after the concept of slave that it denoted had disappeared' (Pelteret, 'Danelaw', p. 184). This present study demonstrates not only that these negative connotations did not exist, but also that the concept of the slave never disappeared, even when slavery as a social reality dwindled.

6. Conclusion

In this study, I have demonstrated that *wealh*, *esne* and *þræl* are synonymous, both with one another and with Old English *þeow* and Latin *servus*. They are not merely minor terms in a minor field but part of a culturally significant complex of ideas. This synonymy functioned in distinctive ways and changed both with time and with place. Although slaves themselves rarely speak in Old English literature, we can no longer dismiss them as insignificant either to this literature or to the language which framed it. Both this synonymy and the range of contexts in which slave words occur demonstrate the importance of these concepts to Anglo-Saxon society. Modern scholarship has tended either to ignore slaves altogether or to underestimate the role which the concept of the slave played outside the socio-economic and legalistic realm. This chapter summarises the findings of this study and how this must change our relationship both with the original language and culture, and with the historiographical and linguistic resources which seek to systematise it, especially Bosworth and Toller's *Dictionary*. In particular, I concentrate on the way in which modern preconceptions about the past have shaped our relationship with its language, and reiterate the need to engage with the texts directly to escape a cycle of confusion and misinterpretation. I conclude by exploring some directions for further scholarship suggested by the methodology and the conclusions which I have reached in this present study.

6.1 Metaphor

In *The Body in the Mind*, Mark Johnson writes that 'through metaphor, we make use of patterns that obtain in our physical experience to organize our more abstract understanding'.⁸⁵¹ It is this quality of metaphor which makes the slave such a pervasive figure in Old English literature, and enables the use of slave words in contexts very far removed from the daily drudgery of the chattel

⁸⁵¹ Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974), p. xv. Lakoff argues 'the core of our conceptual systems is directly grounded in perception, body movement, and experience of a physical and social character' (George Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987], p. xiv).

slave. The literal slave is the ‘pattern’ for the human soul as the slave to God. Through this metaphor, Anglo-Saxons and their Biblical and Classical antecedents sought to understand and define their relationship with the divine in terms which were rooted in their own societies. It is also this quality which renders the distinction which Pelteret draws between the literal and spiritual senses of *esne* and *þeow* invalid.⁸⁵² By attempting to create this division, Pelteret, amongst others, ignores the fact that the spiritual sense is rooted in everyday encounters with literal slaves, and that both metaphorical and literal slaves share many features in common, features which texts such as the Alfredian translations treat in some detail. Many of these metaphors are inherited from the Classical past along with the texts in which they occur, but they clearly present no problems for the Old English authors who rework them to their own ends. Moreover, this strict division between the two apparent senses has obscured the use of other lexemes in this semantic field to form more subtle figures of speech. This has led to an equally false distinction between slave words which can be used metaphorically and those which cannot. This study has shown that *þræl*, *wealh*, and *wiln* were more commonly used in spiritual and metaphorical senses than has been previously assumed, and that such use is part of the core function of this semantic field.

Because this thesis is a semantic study, it covers the full range of texts in which the case-study words occur. The previous scholarly tendency to concentrate on ‘practical’ texts such as law codes has, for its part, obscured the significance of metaphor *per se*. Thus, it has been assumed that slave words become useless when slavery ends.⁸⁵³ In Chapter 5, particularly the material on Middle English, I demonstrate the continued and indeed widening utility of such terminology in the context of Christian theology and the literature of courtly love. The presence of slaves in society was not a prerequisite for the continued use of slave words, so long as slavery remained a useful metaphor. Shaw notes ‘slavery as a concept, as a type of labour that might potentially be required in the running of a viable economy and society, remained embedded in the European thinking of

⁸⁵² Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 273, 305.

⁸⁵³ Pelteret argues that *þeow* disappears because ‘it was so tied to a defined legal institution’ (Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 41-42).

the period'.⁸⁵⁴ While the economic aspects which Shaw emphasises are undoubtedly important, we might equally say that slavery 'as a concept' remained important as long as it was used to structure personal relationships. Such relationships, and therefore the terminology used to construct them, were deeply entangled with the dominant religious paradigm. Over time, the Middle English *thral* became more synonymous with *servaunt*, changing the quality of this metaphor as the daily experience of those using it changed.⁸⁵⁵ Thus, while the slave as a metaphor was no longer necessarily rooted in immediate social reality, it *was* mediated through the experience of contemporary social relationships. Moreover, this was a sufficiently slow process to cause no rupture in the terminology used.⁸⁵⁶ It is this gradual process which ultimately manifests itself in the use of the Present-Day English phrase 'the servant of the servants of God' to translate the Pope's title *servus servorum Dei*, and the tendency of scholars since at least the nineteenth century to translate Anglo-Saxon slave words as *servant*. Girsch's complaint that 'to the Anglo-Saxon mind [...] the concept of a God surrounded by slaves would have seemed vaguely Oriental, decadent or unbecoming'⁸⁵⁷ is anachronistic on several levels, not least because it projects modern conceptions of slave-holding societies as an oriental Other onto the thoughts of the imagined Anglo-Saxon. Without ventriloquising the Anglo-Saxon to the same extent, it is clear from the widespread use of slave-based metaphors for spiritual service in Old English literature that this discomfort is not an accurate representation of Anglo-Saxon attitudes to slavery and service. Rather, Girsch's emotive statement is the culmination of a linguistic process which began with the semantic shifts which *thral* underwent in Middle English, and was dramatically shaped by the nineteenth-century abolitionist movement. In other words, we are linguistically conditioned to expect the servant of

⁸⁵⁴ Shaw, 'Wolf', p. 40.

⁸⁵⁵ See Andreas Blank, 'Why Do New Meanings Occur? A Cognitive Typology of the Motivations for Lexical Semantic Change', in *Historical Semantics and Cognition*, ed. by Andreas Blank and Peter Koch, Cognitive Linguistics Research, 13 (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter: 1999), pp. 61-89 (p. 71) who argues that 'changes in our conception of the world can also lead to the transformation of an already existing complex conceptual system by the loss of one or more concepts, by shifting concepts or by introducing new ones'.

⁸⁵⁶ Faull claims that 'when Anglo-Saxon culture was replaced by a feudal society, the old class terms were replaced by ones suited to the new conditions' (Faull, '*Wealk*', 37). This is manifestly not the case.

⁸⁵⁷ Girsch, 'Terminology', 41.

God metaphor, while the slave of God has been erased by time and linguistic change. While this process of change from SLAVE to SERVANT in the *servus Dei* metaphor has its roots in the medieval period, SERVANT can no longer be allowed to stand as a genuine interpretation of the Old English evidence. In that period, the *þeow*, the *esne*, the *þræl*, the *wealh* and the *wiln* were most definitely slaves and not servants, both metaphorically and literally.

6.2 Synonymy

In this study, I have undermined the distinctions which previous scholars such as Pelteret, Magennis and Girsch have drawn between the various terms in this semantic field, and have shown that *esne*, *wealh*, and *þræl* were synonyms for *þeow* and *servus*. *Wealh*'s feminine forms, *wiln* and *wale*, were likewise partial synonyms and corresponded closely to Old English *þeowen* and Latin *ancilla*. This system of synonymy draws terms from a wide variety of etymological backgrounds, attesting to the various linguistic and social processes which brought lexemes into this semantic field: the foreigner, the harvest worker, and the (Norse) runner. David Burnley argues that there are very few 'total and complete synonyms' in language generally and 'although many lexemes share senses, few are capable of precisely the same range of occurrence: they are differentiated either by some discrepancies in sense or by pragmatic meaning'.⁸⁵⁸ However, David Crystal believes that 'for two items to be synonyms, it does not mean that they should be identical in meaning, i.e. interchangeable in all contexts, and with identical connotations'. He further observes that 'synonymy can be said to occur if items are close enough in their meaning to allow a choice to be made between them in *some* contexts, without there being any difference for the meaning of the sentence as a whole'.⁸⁵⁹ While total synonymy may indeed be rare, there is no perceptible difference in the use or connotations of the various slave words discussed in this study, and therefore they are synonyms both in Burnley's sense and in Crystal's wider definition.⁸⁶⁰ The key difference is not to

⁸⁵⁸ Burnley, 'Lexis and Semantics', p. 491.

⁸⁵⁹ David Crystal, 'Synonymy', in *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, ed. by David Crystal, 6th edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), p. 470 (p. 470).

⁸⁶⁰ This does not apply, however, where *wealh* is used in its ethnic sense. *Wiln* is a partial synonym because it is only distinguished by gender.

whom these words refer but the time and place in which they are used. As I discussed above, synonymy is usually taken to be a major feature of Old English poetry and the heroic diction which it uses.⁸⁶¹ The extent of synonymy in a non-heroic semantic field such as SLAVE is, however, striking and points to the importance of this concept in Anglo-Saxon culture: ‘when an entire culture is expert in a domain [...] they have a suitably large vocabulary’ for that domain.⁸⁶² The evidence especially from *esne* indicates that this synonymy was not merely a feature of literary genres in their modern sense, but also of a whole range of texts, including the law codes. In turn, the synonymy of the various Old English slave words suggests that early Anglo-Saxon society was less complex than has previously been thought, lacking an obviously ambiguous stratum of ‘semi-free’ peasants or a multitude of different classes of slaves. This therefore demands a re-examination of when and where such complexity appeared, and, indeed, whether it did so during the Anglo-Saxon period. Previous interpretations of the *esne*, as typified by Bosworth and Toller’s *Dictionary*, have almost suggested that the *esne* was a kind of proto-serf, liable to greater obligations than the freeman, such as a tithe of his produce, but still personally free.⁸⁶³ With this proto-serf now thoroughly discredited, we must ask what kind of picture of societal changes the legal texts really present. Furthermore, the synonymy which I have uncovered here and which is an apparently literary or poetic feature of legal texts should prompt a paradigm shift in how we interpret the legal language. It may thus have repercussions for our understanding of their composition and transmission, blurring the distinctions which modern scholarship has drawn between genres. It may therefore hint at the oral contexts from which the diction of the laws arises.

6.3 Dialect

Dialect distinguishes each of the three case-study words, *wealh*, *esne*, and *þræl* both from one another and from *þeow*. *Wealh* is Late West Saxon; *esne* Early West Saxon, and more rarely Late

⁸⁶¹ Hogg, ‘Semantics and Vocabulary’, pp. 298-99. Hogg also notes here that ‘complete synonyms’ appear to occur in Old English ‘at least from our rather distant point of view’.

⁸⁶² Lakoff, *Dangerous Things*, p. 308.

⁸⁶³ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 258.

West Saxon, Mercian and Northumbrian; and *þræl* Northumbrian; *þeow* is dominant only in Late West Saxon. It is difficult to ignore the dialectal element of the use of *þræl*, but this is an aspect of this semantic field which scholars have otherwise tended to overlook. Pelteret argues that *þræl* was able to survive the linguistic extinction event of the end of chattel slavery because it had developed pejorative connotations.⁸⁶⁴ I have demonstrated here that this is not the case: *þræl* could be used in both positive and negative contexts. The most probable cause of *þræl*'s emergence in Middle English is the changing balance of power between the various dialects. Both *þeow* and *wealh* are characteristically West Saxon; in other dialects they are either absent in the sense SLAVE or much less important. *Esne*, meanwhile, undergoes a semantic shift from SLAVE to MAN at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period which probably removed it from this semantic field by the Early Middle English period. *þræl*, by contrast, had already clearly gained traction in Northumbrian in the tenth and early eleventh centuries. Dance places *þræl* in the core Norse vocabulary of the early South-West Midland texts.⁸⁶⁵ The eclipse of literary West Saxon and the northwards shift of the linguistic centre of gravity of elite forms of English changed the dominant set of slave terms, and brought *þræl* to prominence in Middle English. There is consequently no need to seek, as Pelteret and Girsch do, a reason within the denotations and connotations of *þræl* itself for its changing fortunes.⁸⁶⁶ The extent of synonymy demonstrates that such extraordinary reasons do not exist; dialect is the true mechanism for the shift.

The distribution of slave words in Old English generally brings to attention the often unexplored dialectal aspects of the lexicon as a whole. Even where a lexeme occurs in more than one dialect, it can be particularly associated with one variant, as is the case both with all the case-study terms and with *þeow*. Tusó's 'Dialectal Synonymy' suffers from deep methodological flaws and my research supersedes it in the semantic field of slavery.⁸⁶⁷ Nevertheless, it is valuable in that it

⁸⁶⁴ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 41, 46, 250.

⁸⁶⁵ Dance, *Words Derived from Old Norse*, pp. 272-73, 277, 301.

⁸⁶⁶ Girsch argues that *þræl* was 'essentially free of ambiguity of any sort' including metaphorical usages, and thus 'could readily absorb the uses for which *þeow* no longer seemed suitable because of the latter term's supposed amelioration' (Girsch, 'Terminology', p. 43).

⁸⁶⁷ See 2.4.

indicates a wide range of dialectally differentiated semantic fields which may operate along similar lines to that for slavery, and which also deserve further study in order to deepen our understanding of Old English dialects. While Late West Saxon is the most widely attested dialect, it is not always representative of the language as a whole, and the Old English lexicon was static neither in time nor in place, as the *Dictionary* and thus the *Thesaurus* suggest.⁸⁶⁸

I have argued that the significant changes which the terminology of slavery underwent during the Old English period were in part due to the cultural significance of this semantic field, and further dialectal work may uncover subtle change of this kind on a broader scale. In the case of all three case-study words, it has been possible to tentatively identify a centre from which the linguistic change, semantic shift or borrowing, radiated. Thus, comparatively new electronic resources, used in conjunction with close reading and other semantic tools, allow us to localise our understanding of language change far more definitively than has previously been supposed. The introduction of *wealh* and *þræl* in particular into the semantic field of slavery is the product of specific political contexts, but their usage is not yoked to these circumstances. Meanwhile, the geographical distribution of *esne*'s various senses suggest the loan-like processes by which semantic shift spread through the Old English language community.

Wulfstan uses *wiln*, *esne*, and *þræl* to denote SLAVE. His use of all three terms for this meaning is unique in the attested Old English corpus and places him at the meeting point of the various dialects.⁸⁶⁹ Wulfstan's tenure at Worcester and York is critical to this linguistic nexus. However, it is worth noting that, in Dance's words, 'in the lexicalization of these diagnostic word-fields [*sapiens*, *prudens*, *superbus*] Wulfstan consistently sides with the Alfredian West Saxon usage, as against the Anglian', and equally that 'Wulfstan does not seem concerned to go along with

⁸⁶⁸ See Alaric Hall, 'Glosses, Gaps and Gender: The Rise of Female Elves in Anglo-Saxon Culture', in *Change in Meaning and the Meaning of Change: Studies in Semantics and Grammar from Old to Present-Day English*, ed. by Matti Rissanen, Marianna Hintikka, Leena Kahlas-Tarkka and Rod McConchie, Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki, 72 (Helsinki: Société Néophilologique, 2007), pp. 139-70, which argues for semantic change in *ælf* during the attested Old English period.

⁸⁶⁹ *Wealh*, *esne* and *þræl* all also occur in the works of Aldred, but here, in the *Durham Ritual*, *wealh* occurs as FOREIGNER, CELTIC SPEAKER (p. 189).

Ælfric's choices, at least as far as the *prudens* and *superbus* fields are concerned'.⁸⁷⁰ Thus, while Wulfstan cherry-picked slave words from the various dialects, and undoubtedly did the same in other key semantic fields, this is not true of his approach to the language as a whole. His use of these slave words, then, is a product of the importance of slaves in his works, both as metaphors for churchmen and literally for members of society. Thanks to his prominent role in compiling the law codes of Æthelred and Cnut, Wulfstan provided a mechanism for the acceptance of these terms into the legal lexicon. As with the use of *esne* in the early laws, Wulfstan's willingness to use less common terms in both homiletic and legal texts breaks down our current understanding of legal diction, and reveals synonymy in this semantic field as an important feature of many law codes. This feature seems to have caused contemporary audiences no problems in interpretation, as when *þeow* and *esne* are used interchangeably in the laws of Æthelberht.⁸⁷¹ In the case of *þræl*, this inclusion in the legal diction was one route amongst many for the rapid absorption of this term into the literary language in the Early Middle English period. While Wulfstan's use of Norse loans is well understood and Sara Pons-Sanz, amongst others, examines it extensively, his use of terms culled from other dialects within Old English has attracted less attention. Studies such as Dance's essay on 'Sound, Fury and Signifiers' and my own work, both of which use a smaller set of semantic fields to consider Wulfstan's vocabulary, allow for greater exploration of these issues. Wulfstan's use of slave words is both an indicator of wider trends in the use of these terms and a mechanism for further change. The popularity of Wulfstan works and their wide dissemination may have encouraged the uptake of *þræl*, or his use of this term may simply have been indicative or a wider trend. Further narrowly focussed research may answer this question.

6.4 Dictionaries and Bias

The inaccurate definition of *esne* given in Bosworth and Toller's *Dictionary* is the most egregious, if not the only, example of the mistreatment of Old English slave words. In the case of *esne*, the dictionary definition bears little relation to the denotations of this lexeme in context:

⁸⁷⁰ Dance, 'Signifiers', p. 47.

⁸⁷¹ See 4.3.1.

A man of the servile class, a servant, retainer, man, youth; mercēnārius, servus, vir, jūvēnis. The *esne* was probably a poor freeman from whom a certain portion of labour could be demanded in consideration of his holdings, or a certain rent [gafol, q. v.] reserved out of the produce of the hives, flocks or herds committed to his care. He was a poor mercenary, serving for hire or for his land, but was not of so low a rank as the *þeow* or *wealh*.⁸⁷²

A more accurate definition would be ‘*slave*; Late West Saxon, *man*; Northumbrian, *youth*’, noting that the first meaning is by far the most significant. The confusion for other slave words is more subtle, but no less problematic. Both *wealh* and *þræl* are defined by Bosworth and Toller as ‘slave’ and ‘servant’; in the case of *þræl*, the *Dictionary* adds ‘thrall’, presumably only because of the etymological connection between the Old and Present-Day English versions of this term. The nominal form of *þeow* is likewise described as ‘a servant; often with the stronger sense of slave’.⁸⁷³ Pelteret correctly omits the sense SERVANT for the three latter terms, *wealh*, *þræl*, and *þeow*,⁸⁷⁴ but, as discussed extensively above, his attitude towards *esne* is much less rigorous. I have also shown that attempts by scholars such as Pelteret and Girsch to attach connotations beyond the denotation SLAVE to these terms are incorrect and fundamentally flawed; they often omit key texts, as is the case with *þræl*’s positive appearance in the *Durham Ritual*.⁸⁷⁵

More generally, Bosworth and Toller’s *Dictionary* is still the touchstone for the translation of many Old English words, and the conflation of SLAVE and SERVANT elides the substantial difference in legal and social status between these classes; the incorrect definition of *esne* has reduced the significance of this term in this semantic field and in scholarship generally. Because of the importance of Bosworth and Toller’s *Dictionary* to the field of Anglo-Saxon studies as a whole, its misconceptions have become those of each successive generation of scholars. The definition given for *esne* in Toller’s *Supplement*, while imperfect, is a much closer reflection of the true semantics of this term, although it omits SLAVE entirely and only gives SERVANT for the servile aspect of this term.⁸⁷⁶ Most critically for ongoing scholarship, casual users of the *Dictionary*, those

⁸⁷² Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 258.

⁸⁷³ Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, pp. 1053, 1064, 1173.

⁸⁷⁴ Pelteret, *Slavery*, pp. 305, 316-17, 319-22.

⁸⁷⁵ See 5.3.2.

⁸⁷⁶ Toller, *Supplement*, p. 194.

who simply seek the definition of an unfamiliar word, are much less likely to consult the *Supplement*. This is a vicious circle: as this study demonstrates, *esne* should not be regarded as a rare word but as part of the core vocabulary of many Old English dialect. As such, it should not be so unfamiliar to users of the *Dictionary*.

Thus, while Bosworth and Toller's *Dictionary* occupies a canonical role, the online version should be amenable to emendation, and, ultimately, to revision of the core entries. Ideally, the definitions of these terms and particularly of *esne* should be amended, as should the corresponding material in the *Thesaurus of Old English*, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and the latter's offshoot, the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*. In seeking such an emendation, however, we should also be aware of the motivations behind the original mistranslations. Scholarship such as Jane Mills's *Womanwords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Patriarchal Society*, Kristen Macintosh's 'Biased Books by Harmless Drudges', and Rachael Gilmour's *Grammars of Colonialism* has begun to explore the biased nature of grammars and dictionaries, and the ways in which such bias is informed by prevailing cultural attitudes. Gilmour traces the attitudes towards the languages of Southern Africa evinced by the nineteenth-century colonists who attempted to describe them, and particularly the ways in which such languages were compared to the European norm in attempts either to justify or to condemn them.⁸⁷⁷ Attitudes toward the languages of the European past were similarly conditioned by a desire to remake the Anglo-Saxons as suitable ancestors for the English of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, or their idealised images of themselves. Chris Bishop describes a similar process in 'Civilising the Savage Ancestor', by which 'barbaric' aspects of the Anglo-Saxon body such as tattoos were increasingly obscured both in the literature and especially in the visual art of the nineteenth century.⁸⁷⁸ As I noted in my introduction, scholars of this period were unwilling to discuss early medieval slavery in detail, and, where possible, chose to ignore its

⁸⁷⁷ Jane Mills, *Womanwords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Patriarchal Society* (London: Virago, 1991); Mackintosh, 'Biased Books', pp. 45-63; Gilmour, *Grammars of Colonialism*, pp. 38-39, etc.

⁸⁷⁸ Chris Bishop, 'Civilizing the Savage Ancestor: Representations of the Anglo-Saxons in the Art of Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *Memory and Medievalism*, ed. by Fugelso, pp. 55-76.

presence altogether.⁸⁷⁹ The treatment of slave words in Bosworth and Toller's *Dictionary* is an extension of this process, and an example of the kind of bias Mills, Macintosh and Gilmour identify. In the case of the Anglo-Saxon terminology of slavery, the most overt instance of this is the treatment of *esne*, which expels it from this semantic field entirely, but the use of SERVANT also makes the other words more culturally acceptable. In 1837, when the original *Dictionary* was published, servants were still a common feature of English households, and the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire by the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 was a recent event. In 1785, before the abolition of the slave trade, William Cowper had written that

Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
receive our air, that moment they are free.
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing.⁸⁸⁰

The ideological climate in which the dictionary entries were composed thus saw slavery as fundamentally alien but servants as an everyday part of society. This was combined both with the belief that Anglo-Saxon England was a model for contemporary society, and with the lexical confusion between slavery and servitude which had developed from the Middle English period onwards. Consequently, the Anglo-Saxon slave all too often became a servant in translation, and sometimes even less than that. As discussed above, extensive synonymy is often recognised as a marker of cultural significance. Thus, even more recent scholarship has downplayed such synonymy as part of the wider discomfort in admitting that 'our' ancestors may have engaged in anything so abhorrent as slavery. Consequently, slave words have suffered from continuing neglect and

⁸⁷⁹ Buck-Morss discusses the ways in which both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinkers and modern historians have hidden or ignored the existence of the West African slave trade. Examples include how Jean-Jacques Rousseau, while railing against slavery, fails to mention *Le Code Noir*, which governed all black slaves in all French territories, or the evils of the slave trade; the inconsistency of American colonists in applying 'natural rights' theory; and Simon Schama's failure to mention the involvement of the Dutch in the slave trade in his work on the 'Golden Age' (Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* [Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009], pp. 23-25, 33-36).

⁸⁸⁰ 40-45, William Cowper, 'The Task, Book 2, A Timepiece', in William Cowper, *The Poems of William Cowper*, ed. by John D. Baird and Charles Ryskamp, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-95), II (1995), pp. 137-60 (p. 140).

mistranslation. While modern scholars should recognise the effect of our own biases on the practice of lexicography, the reassessment of slave words should seek to expose and redress the effects on present-day understanding of the Anglo-Saxon past of an earlier, often nationalist and imperialist ideological bias. In very different ways, the slave was as much a key figure of Anglo-Saxon society as he was of the societies of Antiquity, and at least as deeply rooted in the language. To continue to rely upon dictionary definitions which ignore this is implicitly to accept the notion that ‘England’ in the early Middle Ages was somehow special and different, above the common way of things.

6.5 Further Work

This study is necessarily selective in its exploration of the Old English semantic field of slavery, because the amount of material in which slave words appear is vast. The most obvious field for further study is the use of both *þeow* and *þegn*. In particular, H. R. Loyn’s work on *þegn* is in need of updating. My work has established a chronology for the various denotations of *esne*, and may provide a model for refining Loyn’s chronology. My study of the Northumbrian and Mercian gospel translations shows that *þegn* was more widely used in these texts than in the West Saxon forms, including in the sense SLAVE. One potential refinement of Loyn’s chronology might consider whether this non-West Saxon usage is a chronological outlier, a function of dialect, or part of some wider pattern which also encompasses West Saxon usages. I have suggested in this study that Aldred’s usage of *þegn* appears to belong to an older language stratum which was displaced in West Saxon. It would be useful to develop this idea in the context of other non-West Saxon texts, particularly in relation to non-standard Latin *lemmata* such as *angelus*. In *The Dream of the Rood*, the apostles are described as *þegnas*.⁸⁸¹ This is often taken to be a consciously heroic formulation, but deeper examination of this terminology may indeed reveal that it was an ‘obvious’ choice of terminology for followers. I have also demonstrated how apparently ‘minor’ terms may be key to our understanding of a semantic field. *Scealc* is the only term in the semantic field of slavery which is primarily poetic, and thus its range of attestations may prove of particular interest.

⁸⁸¹ 75b, *The Dream of the Rood*, ed. by Michael Swanton, 3rd edn (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1978), p. 98.

Bosworth and Toller define *scealc* only as ‘servant’, ‘(a term of reproach)’, and ‘man, soldier, sailor’, yet, as discussed in Chapter 2, *scealc* is part of the inherited Proto-Germanic terminology of slavery.⁸⁸² Given the lack of other slave words in the heroic lexicon, *scealc*’s exclusively poetic nature in the extant corpus of Old English is a curious and possibly significant diversion from the norm. It may, therefore, tell us something about how and where slaves could be integrated into this lexicon, and why this word fell out of use in more prosaic texts.

I have demonstrated that *wealh*, *esne*, *þræl* did not denote SERVANT, nor did these terms refer to other types of labourers of no defined status. Therefore, we should ask, both lexicographically and historiographically, what evidence we have for these groups. The redefinition of the *esne* in the early laws as SLAVE which I propose here shows that the apparent class intermediary between the free and the unfree for which previous scholars have argued was a chimera. Thus, future work might consider when such an intermediary class came into existence, what their true legal and social status was, and what words were used to denote them. This has repercussions for our understanding of the entire structure of Anglo-Saxon society and the way in which it changed across time. Equally importantly, we must consider what other areas of synonymy, particularly in the early laws, have erroneously been taken to refer to different concepts. This may expand our understanding of the areas in which ‘poetic’ variation was common and the ways in which it functioned. Finally, we must ask which other neglected areas and individuals in Anglo-Saxon society may benefit most immediately from a reassessment of the words used to denote them, and which modern ideas have influenced our current understanding of these areas. The study of Anglo-Saxon women has progressed far too slowly since Christine Fell’s *Women in Anglo-Saxon England*, and is ripe for such reassessment. My work on female slave words in the gospels, and in particular on *wiln* and its relationship with *wealh*, makes a contribution to this debate. This could be expanded in future by study of other occupational terms which apply specifically to women, and by a more general consideration of the semantic field WOMAN. The impact of semantic studies on our understanding of Anglo-Saxon England is not merely a question

⁸⁸² Bosworth and Toller, *Dictionary*, p. 822.

of depth or subtlety but also of the ways in which we can check our own cultural preconceptions against the primary evidence.

6.6 Final Thoughts

Prior study of Old English semantics has relied upon etymology as a crutch for meaning.⁸⁸³ Nowhere is this more apparent than in the various attempts to define the *esne*. This individual is no more the equivalent of the Gothic *asneis* than of the Proto-Germanic harvest worker. Attempts to restrict the meaning of *wealh* and *þræl* by their etymological origins are equally flawed. The etymological aspects of the semantic field of slavery are fascinating in their own right, but their interest is diachronic, not synchronic. The three words which I investigate here are synonyms, both for one another and for both West Saxon *þeow* and Latin *servus*. Sometimes they occur together in one linguistic variant or another; sometimes they are more clearly separated by time and place. Modern assumptions about both slaves and Anglo-Saxon England have obscured this synonymy, but this class was crucial not just economically but theologically and socially. The slave was the metaphor which underpinned the idea of service, and thus confirmed the hierarchical structure of society as a whole. We can no longer say without qualification that this slave was the *þeow*; in most dialects, the most common term seems to have been *esne*. Ælfric's ploughman famously complains 'micel gedeorf hit ys, forþam ic neom freoh' [the work is great, because I am not free] (p. 21). If we could ask him who he was, depending on time and place he might as easily have called himself a *wealh*, an *esne*, or a *þræl* as a *þeow*.

⁸⁸³ Strite, *Semantic-Field Studies*, pp. 22, 44-45.

Appendix 1

This appendix consists of Table 22. It contains the material collected from the four Old English gospels edited by Skeat, and shows each instance of a slave word in these gospels, collated alongside its counterparts from the other gospels and the Latin text of the Lindisfarne Gospels. The collection and interpretation of this material is discussed in 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6.

Table 22: Slave Words in Four Gospel Translations

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Incipit praefatio eiusdem to Lindisfarne (p. 5)	þeowdom	N/A	N/A	N/A	servitus
Headings to readings Matthew 11	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Matthew 12	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Matthew 28	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Matthew 35	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Matthew 41	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Matthew 45	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Matthew 46	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Matthew 47	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Headings to readings Matthew 53	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Matthew 61	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Matthew 63	þeow(a)	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus
Headings to readings Matthew 63 (double gloss)	þræl	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Headings to readings Matthew 68	þeow(a)	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus
Headings to readings Matthew 68 (double gloss)	esne	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Headings to readings Matthew 73	þeow(a)	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus
Headings to readings Matthew 81	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Matthew 83	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus
Headings to readings Matthew 88	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Matthew 5.1	þegn	discipul	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 5.2 (double gloss)	N/A	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 5.25	þegn	þegn	þegn	þegn	minister
Matthew 8.9	þegn	cempa	þegn	þegn	miles
Matthew 8.9 (double gloss)	innheardmann	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 8.9	þeow(a)	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Matthew 8.9 (double gloss)	N/A	þeow(a)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 8.21	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 8.23	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 9.10	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 9.11	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 9.14	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 9.14	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 9.19	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 9.37	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 10.1	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 10.24	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 10.24	þeow(a)	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 10.24 (double gloss)	esne	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 10.25	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 10.25	þeow(a)	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 10.42	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 11.1	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 11.2	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 12.1	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 12.2	þegn	discipul	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 12.49	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 13.10	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 13.27	þeow(a)	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 13.27 (double gloss)	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 13.28	þeow(a)	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 13.28 (double gloss)	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 13.36	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 14.2	cniht	þegn	cniht	cniht	puer
Matthew 14.12	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 14.15	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 14.19	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 14.19	þegn	leornere	he	he	discipulus
Matthew 14.22	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 15.2	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 15.12	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 15.23	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 15.32	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Matthew 15.33	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 15.36	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 15.36	þegn	leornere	he	he	discipulus
Matthew 16.5	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 16.13	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 16.20	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 16.21	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 16.24	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 17.6	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 17.10	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 17.13	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 17.16	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 17.19	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 18.1	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 18.23	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 18.26	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 18.26 (double gloss)	þeow(a)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 18.27	þegn	esne	N/A	N/A	servus
Matthew 18.28	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 18.28	efenþegn	OMITTED	efenþeow(a)	efenþeow(a)	conservus
Matthew 18.29	efenþegn	efenþeow(a)	efenþeow(a)	efenþeow(a)	conservus
Matthew 18.31	efenþegn	efenþeow(a)	efenþeow(a)	OMITTED	conservus
Matthew 18.32	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 18.32 (double gloss)	esne	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 18.33	efenesne	efenþeow(a)	efenþeow(a)	efenþeow(a)	conservus
Matthew 18.34	pinere	tintreþegn	witnere	witnere	tortor
Matthew 19.10	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 19.13	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 19.20	esne	geong	geong	geong	adulescens
Matthew 19.22	esne	geong	(geong) mann	(geong) mann	adulescens
Matthew 19.23	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 19.25	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 20.17	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 20.27	þeow(a)	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 20.27 (double gloss)	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 21.1	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 21.6	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 21.20	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Matthew 21.34	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 21.35	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 21.36	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 22.3	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 22.4	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 22.6	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 22.8	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 22.10	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 22.13	þegn	þegn	þegn	þegn	minister
Matthew 22.16	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 22.16	Herodes þegn	Herodes þegn	herodianisc	herodianisc	herodianus
Matthew 23.1	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 23.11	ambihrtmann	þegn	þegn	þegn	minister
Matthew 24.1	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 24.3	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 24.45	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 24.45 (double gloss)	N/A	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 24.46	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 24.48	þrael	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 24.49	heafodling	efenþeow(a)	efenþeow(a)	efenþeow(a)	conservus
Matthew 24.50	þræl	esne	wealh	wealh	servus
Matthew 25.14	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 25.19	þeow(a)	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 25.21	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 25.23	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 25.26	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 25.30	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 25.41	engel	engel	engel	engel	angelus
Matthew 25.41 (double gloss)	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 26.1	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 26.8	discipul	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 26.8 (double gloss)	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 26.17	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 26.18	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 26.19	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 26.20	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 26.26	þegn	discipul	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 26.35	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Matthew 26.36	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 26.40	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 26.40 (double gloss)	discipul	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 26.45	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 26.51	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Matthew 26.56	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 26.58	þegn	þegn	þegn	þegn	minister
Matthew 26.69	þeowe	mennen	þeowen	OMITTED	ancilla
Matthew 26.69 (double gloss)	N/A	þeowe	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 26.71	þeowe	oþer	wiln	wiln	ancilla
Matthew 26.71 (double gloss)	þeowe	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Matthew 27.64	þegn	leornere	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 28.7	þegn	discipul	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 28.8	þegn	discipul	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 28.12	cempa	cempa	þegn	þegn	miles
Matthew 28.13	þegn	discipul	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Matthew 28.16	þegn	his [þa]	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Headings to readings Mark 10	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Mark 11	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Mark 19	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Mark 20	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Mark 29	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Mark 32	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Headings to readings Mark 35	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Mark 43	þeow	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus
Headings to readings Mark 46	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Mark 2.15	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 2.16	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 2.18	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 2.18	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 2.18	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 2.23	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 3.6	Herodes þegn	Herodes þegn	herodianisc	herodianisc	herodianus
Mark 3.7	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 3.9	þegn	þegn	cniht	cniht	discipulus
Mark 4.34	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 5.31	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 6.1	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 6.29	þegn	þegn	cniht	cniht	discipulus
Mark 6.35	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 6.41	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 6.45	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 7.2	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 7.5	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 7.17	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 8.1	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 8.4	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 8.6	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 8.10	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 8.14	N/A	þegn	he	he	N/A
Mark 8.27	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 8.27	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 8.33	þegn	þegn	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Mark 8.34	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 9.14	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 9.18	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 9.28	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 9.31	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Mark 10.10	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 10.13	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 10.23	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 10.24	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 10.43	hera	hera	þegn	þegn	minister
Mark 10.43 (double gloss)	ambihtmann	ambihtmann	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mark 10.44	þræl	þræl	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Mark 10.44 (double gloss)	esne	esne	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mark 10.46	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 11.1	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 11.14	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 12.2	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Mark 12.4	þræl	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Mark 12.13	Herodes þegn	Herodes þegn	herodianum	herodianum	herodianus
Mark 12.43	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 13.1	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 13.34	þrael	þrael	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Mark 14.12	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 14.13	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 14.14	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 14.16	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 14.32	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 14.47	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Mark 14.47 (double gloss)	þræl	þræl	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mark 14.50	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Mark 14.51	(geong) esne	(geong) esne	geongling	geongling	adulescens
Mark 14.54	ambihtmann	þegn	þegn	þegn	minister
Mark 14.65	ambihtmann	ambihtmann	þegn	þegn	minister
Mark 14.66	þeowe	þeowe	þinen	þinen	ancilla
Mark 14.69	þeowe	þeowe	þinen	þinen	ancilla
Mark 16.5	(geong) esne	(geong) esne	geong	geong	iuvenis
Mark 16.7	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Headings to readings Luke 24	þrael	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Headings to readings Luke 28	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Luke 36	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Luke 40	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Luke 40	esne	N/A	N/A	N/A	iuuenis
Headings to readings Luke 42	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Luke 45	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Luke 51	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Luke 52	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Luke 53	þræl	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus
Headings to readings Luke 53	esne	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus
Headings to readings Luke 67	esne	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus
Headings to readings Luke 77	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus
Headings to readings Luke 78	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Headings to readings Luke 81	esne	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus
Headings to readings Luke 86	þeowdom	N/A	N/A	N/A	captivitas
Headings to readings Luke 88	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Luke 89	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Luke 94	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings Luke p.11 (foot)	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Luke 1.2	ambihtmann	ambihtmann	þegn	þegn	minister
Luke 1.38	þeowe	þeowe	þinen	þinen	ancilla
Luke 1.48	OMITTED	þeowe	þinen	þinen	ancilla
Luke 2.29	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 4.20	þegn	þegn	ambihtmann	ambihtmann	minister
Luke 5.30	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 5.33	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 6.1	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 6.13	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 6.17	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 6.20	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 7.2	esne	N/A	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 7.3	þræl	N/A	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 7.8	þræl	N/A	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 7.10	esne	N/A	he	he	servus
Luke 7.11	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 7.14	esne	N/A	geong	geong	adulescens
Luke 7.18	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 7.19	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 8.9	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 8.22	þegn	N/A	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 9.10	þegn	þegn	apostol	apostol	apostolus
Luke 9.14	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Luke 9.16	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 9.18	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 9.40	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 9.43	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 9.48	þegn	se	he	he	ille
Luke 9.54	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 10.23	þegn	N/A	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 11.1	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 11.1	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 12.1	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 12.22	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 12.37	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 12.38	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 12.43	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 12.43 (double gloss)	þræl	þræl	N/A	N/A	N/A
Luke 12.45	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 12.45	OMITTED	þeowe	þinen	þinen	ancilla
Luke 12.46	þræl	þræl	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 12.47	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 12.48	se	se	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	qui
Luke 14.17	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 14.21	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 14.21	þegn	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 14.22	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 14.23	þegn	þegn	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 14.26	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 14.27	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 14.33	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 15.22	esne	N/A	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 15.26	þræl	N/A	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 16.1	þegn	N/A	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 16.13	esne	N/A	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 17.1	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	N/A	discipulus
Luke 17.5	þegn	þegn	apostol	apostol	apostolus
Luke 17.7	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 17.9	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 17.10	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 17.22	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
Luke 18.15	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Luke 19.13	þræl	þræl	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 19.15	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 19.15	esne	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Luke 19.17	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 19.22	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 19.29	þegn	þegn	cniht	cniht	discipulus
Luke 19.39	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 20.10	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 20.11	esne	N/A	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 20.45	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 22.11	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 22.26	ambihtere	ambihtmann	þegn	þegn	ministrator
Luke 22.39	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 22.45	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
Luke 22.50	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
Luke 22.56	þeowe	þeowe	þinen	þinen	ancilla
Luke 22.56 (double gloss)	þinen	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Incipit argumentum secundum Iohannem p. 1	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Incipit argumentum secundum Iohannem p. 1	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 3	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 6	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	Nicodemus
Headings to readings John 13	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 19	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	Nicodemus
Headings to readings John 23	þræl	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
Headings to readings John 23 (double gloss)	þeow(a)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Headings to readings John 33	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 33	efenþegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	conservus
Headings to readings John 34	esne	N/A	N/A	N/A	servus
Headings to readings John 34	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 35	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 36	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 37	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 39	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 40	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 42	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 43	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
Headings to readings John 44	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	discipulus
John 1.35	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
John 1.37	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 1.43	þegn	þegn	Philippus	Philippus	Philippus
John 1.45	Nathanael	þegn	Nathanael	Nathanael	Nathanael
John 1.45 (double gloss)	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
John 1.46	Philippus	þegn	Philippus	Philippus	Philippus
John 2.2	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 2.5	ambihtmann	ambihtmann	þegn	þegn	minister
John 2.9	ambihtmann	ambihtmann	þegn	þegn	minister
John 2.11	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 2.12	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 2.17	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 2.22	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 3.22	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 3.25	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 4.1	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 4.2	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 4.8	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 4.27	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 4.31	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 4.33	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 4.51	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
John 6.3	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 6.8	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 6.12	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 6.16	þegn	þegn	N/A	N/A	discipulus
John 6.22	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 6.22	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 6.24	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 6.60	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 6.61	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 6.66	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 7.3	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 7.32	ambihtmann	ambihtmann	þegn	þegn	minister
John 7.45	ambihtmann	ambihtmann	þegn	þegn	minister
John 7.46	þegn	ambiht	þegn	þegn	minister
John 7.50	þegn	þegn	Nicodemus	Nicodemus	Nicodemus
John 8.31	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 8.34	þræl	þræl	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
John 8.35	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
John 9.2	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 9.27	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 9.28	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 9.28	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 10.13	esnemon	esnemon	hyra	hyra	mercenarius
John 10.13 (double gloss)	celmertmonn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
John 11.7	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 11.8	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 11.12	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 11.54	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 12.4	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 12.16	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 12.26	hera	hera	þegn	þegn	minister
John 12.26 (double gloss)	þegn	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A
John 13.5	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 13.16	esne	þegn	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
John 13.22	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 13.23	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 13.35	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 14.1	N/A	N/A	leornungniht	leornungniht	N/A
John 15.8	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 15.15	þræl	þræl	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
John 15.15	þræl	þræl	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
John 15.20	þræl	þræl	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
John 16.17	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 16.29	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 18.1	þegn	þegn	N/A	N/A	discipulus
John 18.1	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 18.2	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 18.3	mannmægen	þreat	folc	folc	cohors
John 18.3 (double gloss)	þegna werod	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
John 18.3	hereman	ealdormann	þegn	þegn	minister
John 18.10	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
John 18.10	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
John 18.12	ambihtmann	ambihtmann	þegn	þegn	minister
John 18.15	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 18.15	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus
John 18.16	þegn	þegn	leornungniht	leornungniht	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
John 18.16	duruweard	duruweard	duruþinen	duruþinen	ostiaria
John 18.17	þir (duruhaldend/ dureweard)	þir(duruhaldend)	duruþinen	duruþinen	ancilla (ostiaria)
John 18.17 (double gloss)	þinen (duruhaldend/ dureweard)	þinen (duruhaldend)	N/A	N/A	N/A
John 18.17	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 18.18	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
John 18.18	ambihtmann	ambihtmann	þegn	þegn	minister
John 18.19	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 18.22	þegn	þegn	þegn	þegn	minister
John 18.25	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 18.26	esne	esne	þeow(a)	þeow(a)	servus
John 18.36	þegn	þegn	þegn	þegn	minister
John 19.2	þegn	þegn	þegn	þegn	miles
John 19.6	þegn	ambihtmann	þegn	þegn	minister
John 19.26	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 19.27	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 19.27	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 19.38	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 19.39	þegn Nicodemus	Nicodemus	Nicodemus	Nicodemus	Nicodemus
John 20.2	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 20.3	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 20.4	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 20.8	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 20.10	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 20.18	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 20.19	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 20.20	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 20.25	þegn	ambihtmann	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 20.26	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 20.26	þegn	N/A	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas
John 20.27	þegn	þegn	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas
John 20.28	þegn	þegn	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas
John 20.30	ambiht	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 20.31 (double gloss)	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
John 21.2	þegn	þegn	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas
John 21.2	þegn	þegn	Nathanael	Nathanael	Nathanael
John 21.2	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus

Chapter and Verse	Lindisfarne	Rushworth	CCCC 140	Hatton 38	Lindisfarne Latin
John 21.4	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 21.7	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 21.8	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 21.12	hliniende	þegn	þara þe þær sæt	þara þe þær sæt	discumbens
John 21.12 (double gloss)	restende	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
John 21.14	ambiht	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 21.20	ambihtmann	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 21.20 (double gloss)	þegn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
John 21.23	ambiht	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus
John 21.23 (double gloss)	þegn	ambiht	N/A	N/A	N/A
John 21.24	þegn	þegn	leornungcniht	leornungcniht	discipulus

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