Acknowledgments

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A Note on Verses, and Names

Skaldic verses, which are numbered by the half-line, are presented in two ways: one of these is the long-line format which is consistent with Gustav Neckel's edition of Eddic verse; the other is the half-line format which Neckel replaced. Although the latter has been superseded in most editions of Eddic verse, it was used in Finnur Jónsson's 1912–1915 edition of skaldic poetry, was preserved in Íslenzk Fornrit (1933–), and is presently getting a renewed lease of life in *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* (2009–), the definitive series from Brepols. Some skaldic verses are so significant as to be quoted more than once, by different contributors, in either of these line formats and with differing translations, but in the end the text will (mostly) be the same.

Names in this volume are worth noting in two ways. Formally, personal names from the Anglo-Saxon period have been modernized or changed in recent centuries according to the conventions of each discourse. In one way, Cnut is still known as "Canute," Æthelred as "Ethelred" and so on, in newspapers and other media in which *æ* and other outdated letters are unknown. In another way, the forms "Knútr," "Æðelræd," "Þorkell," and "Hǫrðaknútr" represent the scholarly ideal but are too intricate for cross-disciplinary appeal. The solution here will be to find a middle ground, writing "Cnut," "Æthelred," "Thorkell," and "Harthacnut." This book standardizes these and other known names from the period within a system which makes them recognizable. Important figures with names from other languages, such as Polish or Russian, appear, if they are well known, with spelling a little closer to English. Variant forms for people-names,

such as "Abodrites" or "Obodrites," will also appear. Scandinavian names are here subject to a compromise of their own in which most are spelt according to the conventions of Old Icelandic (also known as Old Norse). This is because the non-runic Old Scandinavian literary sources of the tenth and eleventh centuries are skaldic poems, which were nearly all made by Icelanders, whose descendants started writing down their language at the start, and the poems towards the end, of the twelfth century. Because the Danes did not write longer Danish texts in Roman characters until the thirteenth century, most Old Scandinavian names which are not familiar in the English discourse (in contrast to "Thorkell the Tall," for example, which is), are spelt in the normalization of thirteenth-century Icelandic that has become common over a century of editing these texts. The fact that the sagas – the later narrative sources for Cnut from Scandinavia which preserve skaldic verses – were written mostly in this century in Iceland often gives their stories an illusion of historicity. As stories, the sagas have so defined our understanding of the period that their spelling is often accepted even for Old Danish names. To take King Sveinn Haraldsson, Cnut's father, as an example: the English called him "Swegen" before the Norman Conquest and "Sweyn" after, while today there is also "Swegn," "Swein" or even "Swen." This book calls him "Sveinn," mainly because that is how the skalds, speaking to us through their modern editions, refer to him. The same usage, with less justice, will be adopted for his grandson King Sveinn II Ástríðarson (ca. 1047–1076), whom English-speaking scholars call "Sweyn," "Swein," or "Sven Estrith(s)son," and Danish ones "Svend Estridsen." That is because this Sveinn, son of Earl Úlfr by Cnut's sister Ástríðr or Estrith, was also commemorated by Icelanders, as well as by Adam of Bremen, who called him "Suein." There again, the names of some of Cnut's associates, such as "Urk," are so unusual as to preclude change to the forms in which they appear. Who could have seen that Urk (founder of Abbotsbury abbey in Dorset) would have been an "Órækja" had he gone to Iceland instead? (Bolton, is the answer.) Consistency may never be achieved.

Ideologically, one people-name is worth noting in an area of nomenclature where scholarship now seeks to set a moral example. Recently the term "Anglo-Saxon," normal for some scholars, has been dropped by others in favour of "early medieval English" or "early British" in response to a common problem, the wrongful appropriation of this and other historical terms by racist political agitators. Our response to the problem is not to surrender this term to extremists, but to keep "Anglo-Saxon" alongside "English," the substitute which causes less offence. While "English" is more accurate than "British" for the language and society of eastern Britain in the tenth and eleventh centuries, this book acknowledges that "Anglo-Saxon," used by the people for themselves, remains the only fitting name for the history, literature, archaeology, sculpture, craftwork, architecture,

iconography, and palaeography of a Latin-based culture embodying elements not only from Wales, Scotland and Ireland, but also from France, Flanders, Germany, Poland, Italy, Tunisia, Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Syria, to name some other sources of influence. Of course, Anglo-Saxon England had elements also from Denmark and Norway: after a while, the people of "the Danelaw," that is, most of England to the east of Watling Street and some to the west of it, considered themselves English most of the time, using whatever local name obtained; at other times and to other people they would have said they were Danish, after their older language; at the same time many speakers of *dǫnsk tunga* (the Danish tongue) were Norwegian Gaels in the north-west, as well as Icelanders visiting England some of whom were of Irish descent. For ease of reference, "Danish" and even "Anglo-Danish," as in our title, will be used here for Scandinavians in England in the early eleventh century.

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