

Tradition and the Individual Talent: Modes of Authorship in the Middle Ages

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(Conference Abstracts)

Atle Kittang: Authors, Authorships and Works: A Brief Theoretical Survey

My paper will present a brief recapitulation of some of the main problems concerning the relationship between literary works and their authors, and also open a discussion of the recent renaissance of biography in literary studies. Given my background from comparative literature, my examples and arguments will be taken from literary theory. Starting with the New Critics' discussion of the hermeneutics of authorial intention and their idea of the autonomy of literary works, I shall mention however briefly Foucault's historization of the concept of the "author" together with a couple of examples from poststructuralist and deconstructionist theory (Barthes, de Man). These theoretical examples will form the background for a closer look at the concepts of "authorship" and "work", considered from a sociological as well as from an aesthetic point of view. Finally, the paper will offer some rather melancholic meditations on the recent (and paradoxical) popularity of the biographical genre – even among academic professionals.

Slavica and Miloš Ranković: The Talent of the Distributed Author

What does it mean to be a talent in a tradition of modern literature? And what does it mean to be a talent in an oral or manuscript tradition? How does the claim of individuality even arise let alone persist in such densely networked cultural ecologies? And these individuals, these special individuals: what is their talent?

Questions such as these mark an inversion of sorts of past theories and our daily practices. The great reinterpretation of the authorial claim of the last century has been so successful that the burden of proof now lies squarely on the bare existence of the author as anything more than a fortunate owner of the copyright. Indeed, apart from a

few isolated pockets of habitual lingering, the old intuitions about originality and novelty of the modern as opposed to traditional narratives, for instance, have long been indefensible. The authors of this paper have no plans of resurrecting *that* author.

What we will argue, though, is that the folk psychology of authorship is a real force in the all-pervasive economy of credit and credibility that brings into being a kind of agency we may as well call the author, but which rather than an embarrassment is the very condition of heterogeneity that our contemporary sensibilities feed on. For example, we commonly evaluate the creative act as one that brings about a novelty somehow or other appropriate in the context with no appreciable debts of authorship. For those who study such acts, on the other hand, whether in traditional or modern art, and regardless of whether they are brought up on the evolutionary, connectionist, or poststructuralist models of creativity, this appropriateness in context is not a parameter that simply predates the novelty, and neither the creative act nor the measure of its appropriateness come without debts. Yet, we all, specialist or not, invariably think of a genius as someone with a virtuosic grasp of a body of knowledge or a set of skills, i.e. tradition, and therefore someone who effectively blurs the distinction between individual and communal creative investments by embodying both. In this sense, there may be nothing *a priori* to distinguish, say, a Shelley, Plath, or Rushdie from an Old Milija, Mr. Rureke, the anonymous author(s) of *Njáls saga*, or indeed the Compiler of the *Möðruvallabók*.

Of course, that there are no *a priori* differences does not imply that there is not in fact a whole range of creative evolutionary dynamics to distinguish the role the individual plays in various traditions and even in different ages of one and the same tradition. If anything, our study demonstrated for us a necessity for at least some awareness of an equally wide range of neural architectures and evolutionary algorithms that the sciences of complexity routinely deal in. Rather than alienating, we found that these understandings have the potential to only bring us closer to the texts we love.

Päivi Mehtonen: Me, Myself, and I: The Discontinuous Authority of First-Person Narration

This paper will explore the fundamental split in the identity of the first-person (singular) speaker who is both the subject and the object of his or her utterance. The

students of medieval literature from (at least) Leo Spitzer in the 1940s to the recent scholarship have emphasised that instead of denoting to a fixed textual identity or singular subjectivity, the ‘I’ in medieval literature is often multiple and discontinuous. At the same time, however, (non-medievalist) theorists of postmodern literature have celebrated the fragmented ‘I’ as a product of 20th-century literature; this and other “innovations” have demanded a new critical response that has (allegedly) managed to abandon the persistent assumptions of narrative theory based on mimetic, realistic, and psychological fiction (e.g. Brian Richardson).

This paper will attempt to reconcile these views by discussing medieval first-person narration in the light of some recent approaches to narrative. What sort of textual authority, or a cluster of authorities, is constituted by the first-person narration? Some answers will be suggested by comparing examples of both fictional and nonfictional forms of late medieval and early modern quest narratives (representing vision literature, spiritual quest, and philosophical discourse). The first-person narration as a medium often emphasises the presence and the present tense of the act of narration and thus resembles the narrative strategy of “autographical action.” This strategy responds to writing not as a mode of reconstruction or fictionalising of the past “but as a mode of action taken in the moment of writing.” Thus autography as self-writing (unlike autobiography or realistic fiction) “repeatedly sabotages both the narrative character and historical authority of autobiography” (H. Porter Abbott). We may add that such conscious sabotage serves different rhetorical ends as it persuades the reader to follow the act of narration as an effort – or a compositional struggle, be it emotional or rational – of the speaker.

What concerns us here is, first, the complex authoritativeness and interplay of the different ‘I’s constructed by first-person narration and, second, the stylistic mode of the pseudo-oral style (including features such as discontinuity, repetition, and simple forms of address) that often characterise the first-person quest narratives.

Michael Drout: I am Large, I contain Multitudes: The Medieval Author in Memetic Terms

The very existence of this conference demonstrates that ideas of authorship inherited from the Romantic period, however they may have been problematized in recent years, are simply not adequate to describe authorship in the medieval period. The

now-hoary trope of the author as “bricoleur” was always more accurately descriptive of writing in the Middle Ages than of the later works to which Derrida originally extended Lévi-Strauss’ concept, but the explanations of Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari are insufficiently empirical for doing much more than critical hand-waving about the nature of writing and authorship. Saying that all authors are “bricoleurs” or all writing is “bricolage” (or that all texts are “intertexts” *pace* Irigaray) is in the end trivial, because the specific mechanisms by which bricolage occurs are not adequately demonstrated.

Furthermore, the different types of bricolage that occur in oral traditional materials, and the still different modes of production in cultures (such as that which produced *Beowulf*) in which there is a mixture of oral tradition, borrowing from known (even if un-named sources) and cultural commonplaces (from a variety of cultures) cannot be differentiated by current literary theory. This is not to say that the theory is useless, only that it is insufficiently specific.

A meme-based approach to medieval authorship, however, has the potential to account for the insights of literary theory by placing them in a more empirical framework. In *How Tradition Works*, I showed that medieval texts, both literary and non-literary, could be characterized in terms of the interaction of various competing and cooperating “memes,” minimal units of cultural replication. The meme-based approach was very successful in describing self-maintaining traditions (such as Benedictine monasticism in tenth-century English), which were highly text-dependent and which had evolved complex and efficient routines for memetic hygiene. But at that stage I had not yet seen how to account for authorship.

In this paper, however, I use meme-theory to develop a meme-focused model of authorship that is a better “fit” for what we know of medieval authorship than the standard, post-structuralist models. Or, more accurately, I show how meme-theory can account for all of the post-structuralist insights into bricolage and intertexts while at the same time providing another layer of additional insights. A meme-based theory of authorship (combined with a meme-based theory of aesthetic selection), provides new analytical tools for understanding medieval authorship. The idea is not so much to overturn post-structuralist approaches, but to show how these can better be accomplished by breaking down authorship into a set of memetic interactions and then building up a more comprehensive, empirically sound analysis of the author in medieval literature. Daniel Dennett famously stated that “If you make yourself really

small, you can externalize anything.” My memetic approach develops the contrapositive of Dennett’s aphorism, showing how the author, in the words of Walt Whitman “is large,” containing “multitudes.”

Else Mundal: Modes of Authorship and Types of Text

The paper will discuss words and expressions used to describe the writing of texts and the role of the author in connection with different Old Norse types of text. The beginning of the oldest Old Norse text we have preserved, *Íslendingabók*: *Íslendingabók gørdða ek...* offers an interesting example. The word *ek*, ‘I’, shows the same self-consciousness as found in skaldic poetry, the verb *gørdða*, ‘created’, could hardly be used about, for example, the writing of a saga of Icelanders, and the title, *Íslendingabók*, ‘book of Icelanders’, underlines the writtenness of the text.

In the saga genres the role of the author differs, from a role similar to the one found in *Íslendingabók* in sagas of kings to a role that merges with the role of the oral saga-teller, the copyist of saga manuscripts and the reader/teller of written sagas in for example sagas of Icelanders and *fornaldarsögur*. In all the saga genres it is, however, interesting to notice that the “owner” of a saga is not the author, but the main character of the story. In the expression *sem segir í sögu hans*, ‘as said in his saga’, *hans* will always refer to the main character of the story, not to the author.

It has often been noticed that Old Norse has a word for ‘poet’, *skáld*, but not a word for ‘prose author’. That is however, not completely true, the word *skáld* was put to use in the compound *guðspjallaskáld*, ‘evangelist’. The use of *skáld* in this connection may be an interesting source for the semantic meaning of *skáld*. Divine inspiration could be to common denominator which made the Old Norse word *skáld* function in a word for ‘evangelist’. The lack of a word for ‘prose author’ has of course something to do with the oral culture prior to the written culture. There are, however, words and expressions which clearly shows that the Old Norse society had conceptions of ‘author’ and ‘authorship’, but these conceptions varied from one type of text to another.

Leidulf Melve: Conceptions of Authorship in the Eleventh-Century Polemical Literature

The paper addresses conceptions of authorship of authorship in the eleventh century by looking mainly at the polemical literature of the Investiture Contest. This literature - meant for public consumption - reveals not only how an awareness of the *auctor* emerge amongst the polemicists, but also the extent to which new conceptions of the creative, individual author are closely related to more general developments in the eleventh century, including the process of intellectual self-discovery, individualism, and textualisation.

Jonas Wellendorf: Writing and Rewriting Old Norse Literature

In the wake of the so-called new philology the notion of the instable or fluid work has gained some popularity in medieval studies, and the *mouvance* Zumthor had observed in some medieval texts and whose origin he ascribed to the medieval oral culture has resurfaced supplemented by Cerquiglini's variance of written literature. Now that the initial enthusiasm has given way to a more cautious attitude towards the universal applicability of the notions, I will like to use my paper to draw attention to the fact that some of texts were treated with more reverence than others, and that attitudes towards texts changed over time. My examples will be drawn from hagiographical literature in the Old Norse vernacular.

Farkas Gábor Kiss: *Communis quidam bonae doctrinae thesaurus:* Authorship and Inspiration in Late Medieval Commentaries on the *Book of Psalms* in (East-) Central Europe

The *Book of Psalms* deserves a distinguished place among the books of the Bible because of its ambiguous authorship (both personal and collective), and its widespread use in common prayer and liturgy, evoking the identification of the devout reader with the subject of the text, who impersonates of King David, Christ or Ecclesia according to the common allegorical layers of its Christian interpretation. Moreover, the Book of Psalms has been considered as a „kind of common repository for good science” at least from the *Enarratio in Psalmos* of St Augustine, a book, where safe ethical and theological doctrines are summarised in a performable and memorisable form. All these factors made the Book of Psalms one of the most

commented-upon Biblical books in Middle Ages. My aim in this paper is to examine how the overlapping layers of allegorical interpretation – King David, Christ, and Ecclesia equalled with the *corpus mysticum* of Christ – influenced the notion of the authorship and authority of these texts. Furthermore, the common understanding, that the book in its material presence contained the body of Christ, the Decalogue or the Trinity – identifiable down to the level of the segments of their body, induced the worship of this corpus of texts in a way similar to other types of late medieval 'bookish' devotion, as e.g. the *Liber Maria*, i.e. Virgin Mary identified with a book. Compiling from a wide range of sources, from St Augustine and St Jerome through Honorius d'Autun to Nicholas de Lyra, most commentators on the Psalms in 14th and 15th century in late medieval East Central Europe reshaped and modified the commonly used 'Aristotelian prologue' (the four Aristotelian causes of the book) into a form that could prove more acceptable for their targeted audience, either at the university, or in the monastery.

Gísli Sigurðsson: Poet, Singer of Tales, Storyteller and Author

Our thinking about authorship is dominated by the idea of the creator in the sense that Snorri Sturluson puts to the word: *Skáld eru höfundar allrar rynni eða málsgreinar sem smiðir gripa eða lögmenn laga*. Our problem, when it comes to medieval texts, is that we think about them in the same way as about the writings of modern authors, whose works are protected by copyright. I would like to suggest that we use some other words than "author" for the creative individuals who put together the texts we now cherish, be they sagas or eddas. Every individual who tells a story in prose or poetry, orally or in writing, must rely on his or her creative talent in order to attract the attention of the audience or reader. By using the term author about the person who put the texts to writing implies that the writing was the creative process and that whatever the writer received from tradition was something that was "only" preserved or transmitted. From what we know about oral tradition we should now be able to speak openly about creative traditional individuals – who are nevertheless not creating their stories in the same sense that we want our modern writers of fiction to be doing. Perhaps the medieval terminology serves us well here, that is to limit "authors" to the creators of the professional skaldic poetry and then refrain from talking about "authors" when it comes to other texts which were not put together by an author in the same sense as a line of skaldic poetry. Perhaps the medieval scribes were perfectly

right in not mentioning any “author” of any written saga – and perhaps our obsession with authors as individuals behind different texts has led us astray in our thinking about them.

Bernt Øyvind Thorvaldsen: The Author of *Prymskviða*. What Concept of Authorship Underlies Old Norse Eddic Poetry?

Several scholars present the Old Norse Eddic poem *The Lay of Þrymr* (*Prymskviða*) as a late and literary composition, and attributes the poem to one single author. Åke Ohlmarks and later Peter Hallberg even argued that the author was the well-known Icelandic scholar Snorri Sturluson. Hallberg claimed that similarities between *The Lay of Þrymr* and other texts (mainly Eddic poems) are allusions, which supports the idea of a “literary author” quoting older texts (from written sources).

That theory will be countered in the paper, since there are several reasons to argue that the poetic language of *The Lay of Þrymr* reflects another kind of composition, in which the composer expresses him- or herself by traditional forms and frames of reference. Thus the process of composition differs from modern concepts of authorship, since the creative process which shapes the text can be understood as “distributed”—authorship is collective rather than constituted by an individual. (The concept of the ‘distributed author’ is applied to the Old Norse context by Slavica Rankovic.)

However, the concept of the distributed author also enables an understanding of “heterogenous authorship”. A peculiar phenomenon in Eddic poetry is the presence of conflicting voices. In some cases, like *The Second Poem of Helgi Hundingsbani*, it is stated that the story being told is false or unbelievable. In other cases, like *The Lay of Skírnir*, there are diverging stories within what appears to be the same “text.” Such cases call for a concept of authorship which is open to a distributed process of composition, and to confrontation between voices within the text —and mentalities on the outside of the text.

Lauri Harvilahti: Dominant Research Practices, Oral Tradition and Medieval Authorship

In my paper I will examine some examples from different parts of Europe in order to elucidate ideologically influenced attempts to date the records of oral poetry, or even

to find exact historical parallel to the names of the heroes or even to their exploits. The role folklore and folk religion has played in cultural and social processes include diverse uses of oral tradition according to prevailing ideological currents and political tendencies. In many cases discursive practices, i.e. dominant, ideologically influenced approaches, have interpreted oral tradition according to politic and didactic aims.

One example is the early Finnish historian Daniel Juslenius (1676-1752), who regarded folk poetry as a proof of the ancient civilization of Finland and maintained, referring to a ballad text that in Turku (Åbo) there existed a school for the sons of the nobility in medieval times. Juslenius writes: *Mihi quidem aliud non succurrit quam vetus quoddam carmen patrio sermonem compositum* 'Truly I had no other source to aid me but an old Finnish poem'. This epic poem, called *Anteruksen virsi* 'The lay of Anterus' is a very typical medieval ballad, and the first Finnish ballad ever introduced in a literary form. Apparently the main purpose of citing the poem was the use of oral poetry as a historical source, the only existing form of records witnessing about the (supposed) high status of arts and learning of the medieval Turku people.

Sverrir Tómasson: Höfundr/Skáld: Author – Compiler – Scribe in Old Norse Literature

In this paper I will discuss how Old Icelandic writers describe their task. I will illustrate their use of Latin rhetoric and how they translate foreign Latin terms and use them in the vernacular. My main sources are some Old Icelandic prefaces in prose even though I will also take some poetical works into consideration, alongside with titles and colophons. In this connection I will try to cast some light on the use of some of the words used for poets, writers, fiction and other kind of writings.

One part of my paper will be devoted to the historical and mythological (poetic) writings of Snorri Sturluson (d. 1241) and I will discuss in some detail the prefaces of his saga of St Olaf and *Heimskringla*. It will be necessary to refer to older approaches to the problem of his authorship and therefore I will consider philological researches and the attitudes of those scholars who have recently adopted the so-called material philology.

At last I will try to illuminate how Old Norse writers use their prefaces to describe their aim with the work, how they lay weight on their own material not only when they write historical (or pseudohistorical) works but also fiction.

Aidan Keally Conti: Scribes as Authors?: Detecting Acts of Composition in the Process of Transmission

Exploration of the manuscript matrix, a term engendered by New Philology to evoke the cultivation of variation within medieval manuscript culture, has suggested the ways in which authorial control of a text and its parameters—if indeed a medieval author did exert such control—may be usurped by copyists, continuers, annotators, borrowers, compilers and readers. In efforts to grapple with the ensuing moveable and mutable texts, studies frequently endeavor to ascertain the specific variants and re-workings of individual scribes, yielding in turn the notion of the scribe as author (albeit within an inherited textual tradition). However, because the complete manuscript record of a work almost never endures whether due to random or designed destruction, precise moments of scribal intervention, error and whim remain conjectures. Rarely does one know the specific state of a particular text inherited by a given scribe, but the end result of the interaction between the tradition and the scribe is visible in the handwritten record.

This paper will examine a controlled copying experiment involving a dozen modern scribes and relate their activity to models of textual criticism, literary transmission, human error and creative reconstruction. The exercise does not aim to map a modern scenario onto the Middle Ages, but hopes to suggest heuristic tools that emphasize the dynamic between the individual and tradition in copying, concepts of the ownership of text, and the act of composition in the process of transmission.

Ingvil Brügger Budal: The Visible Stratification in a Medieval Text: Traces of Multiple Redactors in a Text Extant in a Single Manuscript

During the reign of King Håkon Håkonsson (1204-1263, regent from 1214), the Norwegian kingdom expanded and prospered, and by 1263, the kingdom was at its largest geographically. King Håkon Håkonsson desired to raise his kingdom to an international level. This was to be accomplished externally through the establishment of diplomatic and economical connections and internally through long-lasting peace and stability as well as reinforcement of central royal authority. New laws were introduced to establish an order of royal succession based on primogeniture and legitimacy; churches and monasteries were built and townships and defences strengthened. Students from the Nordic countries had long travelled abroad for

educational purposes, thus strengthening Norway's intellectual connection with the rest of Europe.

The king's eagerness to mould his realm according to European models and ideals of chivalry and knighthood is further visible through the introduction of courtly customs and the replacement of the indigenous titles with feudal ones. It is likely that his commissioning of translations of contemporary European literature was part of his endeavour to transform his people into cultivated courtiers. On the whole, there was a burst of literary activity during his reign. Indigenous literature was put into writing. At the same time, translations of foreign literature were also put to record. It is generally agreed that the French-speaking court of England was the place of origin for the source-manuscripts from which these translations were made.

By Håkon's reign, translation was by no means a new activity. A variety of foreign work, mainly hagiographical and historical literature, had been already been translated into Old Norse. The novelty is to be found within the genre and the intention of the translations which took place during the king's reign. Scholars do not concur completely on the purpose of these *riddarasögur*. Some argue that they were to be didactic, while others stress the entertaining value of these foreign tales of fair ladies and bold knights. It is quite plausible that these translated romances were put into the vernacular with the purpose of instructing the Norwegian nobility in chivalry and European culture, but whether the didactic aspect is reflected in the Old Norse translations or not, is open to discussion.

The oldest extant compilation containing Old Norse translations from Old French is to be found in the manuscript De la Gardie 4-7, dated to approximately 1270. Among the manuscript's texts are the *Strengleikar*-stories, translations primarily of Marie de France's *lais*, but also of some of the so-called anonymous *lais*. With one exception, none of the *Strengleikar*-stories are known from other sources than De la Gardie 4-7 and the mapping of the imprints several redactors (translators and scribes) have left on the text itself could be considered to be an impossible task. This paper will argue that it is indeed possible to map out several of the text's strata, some through the comparison with the Old French source text, but others are to be found within the text itself.

Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir: Work in Progress: The Making of *Reynistaðarbók* (AM 764 4to)

The Icelandic manuscript AM 764 4to (*Reynistaðarbók*) was written and compiled by more than a dozen scribes in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. It contains a wealth of diverse material, some of it radically edited to fit the mould of universal history. Its composition changed over time, as new material was added to the book and adjustments made to texts which had already been copied. In the paper I will look at the codicological aspects of the manuscript and the evidence they offer for understanding the interaction between the scribes, as well as studying how the overall structure and purpose of the book developed with the changes made to its contents. This will be discussed with reference to recent scholarship concerning the codicology and production of composite manuscripts, most importantly Elisabeth Ashman Rowe's studies on *Flateyjarbók* and *Hauksbók*.

Emily Lethbridge: *Eggertsbók*: Texts and Contexts

The late fifteenth-century Icelandic manuscript AM 556 a 4to (sometimes known as *Eggertsbók*), contains four sagas. The first of these (*Sigrarðs saga frækna*) belongs to the *riddarasögur* genre; the three remaining sagas (*Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar*, *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, *Harðar saga ok Hólmverjar*) are celebrated examples of the *Íslendingasögur* genre and furthermore, are linked thematically by virtue of the outlaw status of their well-known protagonists. A sister manuscript, AM 556 b 4to, contains two further *riddarasögur* (*Mágus saga jarls* and *Jarlmanns saga ok Hermanns*) and one *fornaldarsaga* (*Þorsteins saga Víkingssonar*). The circumstances that surrounded the manuscript's production are not known and I will begin my paper by thinking briefly about some of the reasons why these sagas, all of which are anonymous, might have been brought together in one collection. Following this, I will focus my attention on the three outlaw sagas. Elsewhere, texts of *Grettis saga*, *Gísla saga*, and *Harðar saga* are preserved in numerous, mostly post-medieval, manuscripts. In the majority of these copies, the narratives are presented in full from beginning to end; in these copies, a spectrum of textual variation can be identified ranging from orthographic variation at one end, to whole passages that diverge significantly in their textual articulation/configuration at the other end, so that it is justifiable to distinguish between multiple versions of the same saga. In addition,

further manuscript copies of these sagas contain narrative excerpts, or verses from each respective saga divorced from their prose contexts, or other miscellaneous material pertaining to each respective narrative. By surveying the way in which the three outlaw sagas have been collected together in one manuscript, Eggertsbók, on the one hand, and on the other hand, by examining the preservation and transmission of each of the three sagas from the medieval to the modern period, I hope to contribute something to what is known—and/or conjectured—about the scribal culture of medieval and post-medieval Iceland, and medieval and post-medieval attitudes towards the authorship and the transmission of these three saga narratives, and *Íslendingasögur* narratives more generally.

Henrik von Achen: Conditions of Medieval Authorship: Image-making Between Conventionality and Innovation

The paper endeavours to offer some basic reflections on the conditions of image-making in terms of authorship in the Middle Ages. There was but one Author and one Inventor: God. The artist, or rather, the image-maker, was a medium. The main task of images was to visualize the Saviour (*Imago*) and the history of salvation (*Historia*). This function depended on the readability of the pictures or images by an audience whose competence to ‘read’, to understand what was seen, was based on repetitions of familiar motifs accompanied by ecclesial catechesis and explanations. Obviously, the additional task of decorating the house of God was important, but this basic representational function determined how images appeared: they were not, and could not be, new, original and individual; instead they had to adhere to established conventions. Thus, the images had to be traditional, conventional and collective.

Even if one recognizes a tension between this functional mode of visualization and our notion of ‘art’ and ‘artists’, this does not mean that formal considerations had no role to play. In that sense we may, indeed, talk of art – remembering, however, that the medieval *ars* meant everything made by human hand and mind, ‘artificially’, as it were.

Hence, all image-makers had to operate within a field, delimited on one hand by existing conventions, on the other by a basic urge to invent new ways, and adapt the given as ingeniously as possible. The production of such images, then, took place in the team-work situation of a workshop, a mode of production which might add its

own features to the work, the local tradition both supporting and limiting the authorship.

Åslaug Ommundsen: Initials in Norwegian Medieval Manuscripts

Some of the finest examples of medieval art and craftsmanship are found in manuscripts; in full-page images, in marginal decorations or in initials. Among the Norwegian manuscripts and fragments which remain from the Middle Ages, however, only a few have received attention because of their form and decoration. The large majority of the manuscript material, especially that with a Norwegian origin, contains initials which are only modestly decorated, and as a result are often left unstudied and uncommented. It is time to take a closer look at these initials, at the people who were making them and the tradition they belonged to. This paper will have its focus on some of the initials found in manuscripts of a Norwegian origin, mainly those of the thirteenth century.

The research on the medieval scribal culture in Norway is entering exciting territory, where new scribes are being identified and their regional and institutional belonging discussed. These scribes not only copied text, but were also often the artists behind the coloured initials. Since the initials contributed to the organisation and reception of the book's contents, a scribe or scribal community was expected to put them in (although that did not always happen for various reasons). In the making of the initials the scribes did not only relate directly to the book in front of them, but also relied on their previous training, other books they had seen, and their own preferences. Creativity need not automatically be seen as a purely desirable element in this context, as there would be certain limits for personal creativity in the lay-out and decoration of a copied book. People would expect a book to look a certain way, have a certain appearance, link on to a tradition. Yet over time the style and range of the decorations, the aesthetic expression and the preferred colours changed, indicating a certain creative freedom.

In the Norwegian material different scribes display different levels of skill and care, and also different working methods: some seem to have copied the initials more or less directly from the exemplar, while others have decorated the initials using a repertoire of elements which he or she was able to combine in different ways. I will look at a few specific cases where scribes seem to have had a different approach to

the process of making initials, and how we can distinguish one approach from another.

Kristel Zilmer: Creating a Rune Stone: Commemorative Monuments in Early Medieval Scandinavia and the Question of Distributed Authorship

The ‘making’ of a commemorative rune stone in Viking Age and Early Medieval Scandinavia was a complex and demanding venture. The possible phases of such a practice could, for example, include ordering the inscription and establishing (or perhaps negotiating) its general message as well as potential particularities; finding a stone medium suitable for the purpose; then naturally the very act of carving the inscription of particular contents and design onto the stone; and finally, erecting the rune-marked stone of certain size and appearance at a chosen spot, thus transforming and/or attaching new meanings to the surrounding landscape (alternatively, one could equip an already existing natural boulder or rock face with a runic carving and in this manner attribute the natural site with an extended cultural meaning).

Different parties were necessarily involved in this process, the obvious result of which was a runic monument of broad commemorative purpose. In the field of runic scholarship, one typically speaks of the sponsor(s) or the commissioner(s) of rune stones commonly named first in the commemorative formula; then there are the actual rune carvers who could also be explicitly identified in terms of included carver formulas. In addition to that the role of rune-masters has been discussed, who could possibly provide an intermediary link between the commissioner and the carver, exercising a certain control over the inscription but leaving the practical tasks to the carver. At the same time, the rune-master and carver did not necessarily have to be different persons. Furthermore, it is also possible that at least some of the commissioners acted as rune-masters or that they even carved the inscriptions themselves.

Certain attention has thus been paid to the roles and distributed responsibilities of different parties involved in commissioning and carving rune stones. This current paper will in the meantime attempt to bring the discussion further from the point of view of connecting the analysis of such monuments of verbal and material culture with the notion of distributed authorship and looking at the wider network of agents participating in the act of ‘creating’ a rune stone. For example, we may ask what in

fact creates a rune stone – is it the act of bringing runes onto a particular monument as ordered and foreseen by some designated persons or rather the process through which the stone becomes part of the public domain and can be experienced and recreated by anybody who passes the site. The paper also examines the interrelated aspects of tradition and creative individuality as reflected in terms of the various verbal, visual and physical features of rune stones; in doing this particular attention will be paid to a number of inscriptions that connect with one well known rune-raiser family – the clan of a prominent man called Jarlabanki responsible for raising several rune stones in the landscape of Uppland in Central Sweden.

Mia Münster-Swendsen: Irony and the Representation of the Author in Anglo-Norman England: The Case of Lawrence of Durham

Despite A.G. Rigg's commendation in his survey of Anglo-Norman literature as the 'perhaps most interesting writer of the period', Lawrence of Durham (died 1154) remains a forgotten author. Due to centuries of neglect (Lawrence was still a celebrated writer in the later 12th and 13th centuries), to confusion of biographical and bibliographical facts (he has often been mixed up with another Lawrence, the later abbot of Westminster) and maybe mainly due to the difficulty of his Latin, Lawrence has largely been bypassed by modern scholars working on twelfth century literature.

Several reasons can be given why this author merits more attention, but given the theme of this conference his frequent autobiographical statements and the self-confident creation of his own literary persona in the most personal of his works, the *Dialogi* and the *Consolatio de morte amici*, make him a particularly interesting case-study.

The 'Dialogues' is a curious work in many respects. To my knowledge there is nothing quite like it in twelfth-century European literature and it cannot be fitted neatly into the frames of any well-established genre. Set in the intimately local background of a disastrous political crisis and revolving around the author's personal experience and involvement, it nevertheless seeks to teach universal lessons through a discourse between three friends, surprisingly given the seriousness of its subject, abounding in wit, ruthless banter and irony. Equally, the background of the *Consolatio* is dark, though here the disaster is confined to the personal emotional

sphere: Lawrence's own loss of a close friend and mentor. Presenting his authorial 'I' in a state of abject depression Lawrence bemoans his loss of the worldly triad of power, wealth, and honour. Both works testify to the self-conscious individuality of this twelfth-century Benedictine monk and while irony is a frequent feature of several English writers of the period, Lawrence differs from the majority of these in offering a startlingly self-ironical portrait that, many-sided and self-contradictory, is often far from flattering. In this paper, which is based upon my ongoing work preparing a biography of Lawrence, I shall attempt to provide further insight into Lawrence's use of irony, particularly in his highly original self-representation as an author.

Björn Weiler: Matthew Paris and Authorship

Matthew Paris, member of the Benedictine community of St Albans in England, and active c. 1235 – 1259, was one of the most wide-ranging writers of history in the thirteenth century. This range was a matter both of volume – combined, the modern printed editions of his texts run to nearly 5,000 pages – and of breadth – he wrote a work of world history (the *Chronica Majora*), of English history (the *Historia Anglorum*), and several saints' lives in both Latin (St Edmund Rich, St Stephen Langton) and Anglo-Norman (St Edward the Confessor et. al). He was, in addition, an accomplished draughtsman. And he was one of the most self-referential of medieval chroniclers: Matthew never shied away from highlighting his reputation and fame as an author, and did so both in his writing and his sketches (including one of the few self-portraits of a medieval chronicler). This raises a series of wider issues: Matthew's most famous work, for instance, the *Chronica Majora*, was, on the surface, a mere continuation of the Flores *Historiarum* of Mathew's fellow-monk, Roger of Wendover, and that, in turn, for much of the period up to c. 1200, merely copied other chroniclers. Yet, a more careful study of the texts reveals a considerable degree of revising and rewriting, of emendation and addition that clearly sought to bring Matthew's models in line with his own thinking about history, and the purpose and function of writing history. The *Chronica* is similarly famed for the large number of charters, letters and mandates that Matthew had incorporated, and included even a separate appendix of documents. In fact, many of these materials survive only in Matthew's *Chronica*. At the same time, where rival traditions exist, it has been possible to show a considerable degree of redaction and rewriting on Matthew's part. What does this tell us about Matthew Paris' concept of authorship? What was the

purpose of writing history, and what was the role of the individual recorder of events in structuring and presenting his sources? How far does Matthew Paris echo broader developments within thirteenth-century England? These are the questions to be explored in this paper.

Sigbjørn Sønnesyn: Obedient Creativity and Distinctive Copying: Tradition and Individuality in Twelfth-Century Latin Historiography in England

From the perspective of modernist notions of authorship and original individuality, the *modus operandi* of the protagonists of the great wave of English historians writing in Latin during the first 150 years after the Norman Conquest must appear rather puzzling. They were obviously constrained by deference to past authorities, even to the point of copying large chunks of older material into their own works, and they were equally bound by the professed aim of recording the truth about actual events of the past. While this left precious little room for what today would pass for individual expression, they still to a man (for they were all men) claimed some form of authorial ownership of the books they produced. They show clear signs of seeing their works as originating from themselves in a significant way, and they often tried to influence the fate of their texts after they have left their own hands. They consequently seem to be at the same time asserting and exerting both their individual creativity and their submissive obedience. In my paper I will argue that to the authors in question, there was no necessary opposition between these two to us very different elements.

At the core of my argument will be the claim that the apparent contradiction cannot be resolved at the level of the texts themselves or the intimate relationship between text and author regarded in isolation. Rather, the relation between historian and historiography within this intellectual environment must be seen against the backdrop of the then prevalent notion of intellectual tradition more generally, a notion which I will argue saw tradition as something dynamic and related to practice and activity rather than something static and reified. The practice of writing history must be seen in relation to the practice of literature in general, which in turn must be related to the fundamental practices and institutions within which the historians at hand lived and worked. While many scholars have remarked at what they perceive as an inherent opposition between the love of literature and scholarship and the religious obedience

professed by all significant historians of the period, I will argue that it is only through the obedience to the dominant religious and intellectual traditions of their time that the specific features of the individual historical works in question may be fully explained. Finally, I will claim that the constraints imposed by this obedience did not necessarily stifle individual creativity and talent, but rather that tradition provided the starting points and the principles within which the individual talents could contribute to and develop further the tradition itself.

Greti Dinkova-Bruun: *Auctor* or *Augmentator*: The Idea of Authorship in the Biblical Poems of Leonius of Paris and Aegidius of Paris

Leonius of Paris and Aegidius of Paris, Latin poets who lived and worked at the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century, both composed biblical verse. Leonius produced a lengthy verse *Octateuch Historie ueteris testamenti* (14065 hexameters) and Aegidius expanded Peter Riga's famous *Aurora* with ca. 5700 lines. Interestingly, both Leonius and Aegidius demonstrate in their writing a clear sense of their own unique authorial involvement with the material in front of them, be it the Bible or the work of a famous predecessor and authority. In the case of Leonius, this is evident from the almost certainly authorial glosses to his poem which draw the reader's attention to Leonius's own elaborations and comments on the biblical story by marking them with AU, AUT, AUTOR. In addition to these notes, the glosses name also the sources used by Leonius for his composition. Among them are Pomponius Mela, Origen, Josephus, Philo, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Bede and the *Glossa Ordinaria*, with Flavius Josephus being the most frequently cited authority. In this context, the presence of the marginal glosses referring to Leonius as 'author' is an astonishing example of authorial self-awareness which forces us to re-examine our understanding of the meaning of medieval authorship.

Aegidius of Paris, who expanded the *Aurora* while Riga was still alive, is even more self-aware. Aegidius justifies his interventions in the text of the *Aurora* by calling himself *redactor ultimus* who will improve the original by correcting Riga's clumsy language and by rearranging the events included in the work. And he insists that he has the right to interfere because he is *sacri ordinis professor*, whereas Riga is only a *simplex clericus*, and an old man to boot! Aegidius' attitude is another striking manifestation not only of authorial self-awareness and even presumptuousness, but

also of strong determination to promote himself. Aegidius would have probably remained quite unknown, if he had not trailed on the coat-tails of the *Aurora*, a medieval bestseller if ever there was one.

What emerges are two different but complimentary attitudes to medieval authorship. Both Leonius and Aegidius think of themselves as embedded in a complex textual matrix that encompasses not only the Bible and its many versifications, but also the vast range of sources on which they both depend and against which they assert their own authority. It seems that Leonius and Aegidius perceive themselves as both *auctores* and *augmentatores* which should not surprise us – after all the word *auctor* derives from *augeo*. The poets' sense of personal contribution is obvious but their authorial value is defined only against the tradition to which they belong.

Margareth Hagen: In Quest for the Author in the Universe of *Orlando Furioso*

In Italian literature the question of authorship has predominantly been discussed in relation to the authors Dante and Petrarch and the historical passage from the circulation of manuscripts to the revolution of typography.

It is well known that the equation of originality and creativity is of more recent date. In Western thought the word creator has been primarily linked to God, and only in a very limited sense to the artist, or to the producer of literary texts. God creates, man produces. Also in the platonic sense of the concept, create as *poiein*, it designates a creation out of an amorphous mass. In Renaissance culture tradition and recycling of literary material does not in any way stand in opposition to creativity.

Ludovico Ariosto lived and worked in an age of printed letters, he revised and published his masterpiece *Orlando Furioso* three times (1516, 1521, 1532). Nevertheless the question of authorship in the works of Ariosto is quite thrilling, because of the enormous intertextual web in his poem, its multidiscursive nature, and the omnipresent, ironical narrator playing with the three different historical layers of the poem (the classical, the medieval and the contemporary), all of which contribute to reveal many and quite different features of the author's face. Ariosto's poem is a prime example of the interplay between tradition and individual creativity.

In my paper I want to deal with Ariosto's representation of authorship in *Orlando Furioso* with reference to the different concepts of writer, creator and narrator. Hegel associated Ariosto and his narrative methods with medieval culture, due to the presence of a narrator interfering with the development of the story. The occurrence of the first person pronoun, I, in *Orlando Furioso* signifies in most cases the narrator, and not the self of the author. (Ariosto did, however, pen other texts which outlines his own identity, first and foremost the *Satires*.)

The different kinds of narrative techniques and the role of the narrator in *Orlando Furioso* have been thoroughly dealt with in the last decades, but nevertheless, as for the representation of the subject in the poem, we can't possibly claim that Ariosto distinguished between author and narrator in the way of a narratologist. It is probably more correct to refer to different kinds authorial narrators in *Orlando Furioso*, who present different distances to the historical author and also to the representation of authority. More precisely, I want to enquire whether it could be claimed that the omnipresent irony of the narrator of *Orlando Furioso*, so conscious of the Renaissance self-fashioning, also embraces the role of the author: Is the narrator of *Orlando Furioso* playing an ironical game, not only with the values of old chivalry, but also with the medieval *auctoritas*?