Norse Influence in North-West England: Jocelin of Furness’s Interpretation of the Name Waltheof

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Jocelin of Furness was a prolific hagiographer who lived during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.¹ He was the author of Lives of SS Kentigern, Patrick, Helena and Waltheof of Melrose, and as such he made an important contribution to the hagiography of the Insular world. His career has only recently attracted its due scholarly attention, but a book-length study of the saints’ Lives is now available (Birkett 2010). An AHRC-funded project has recently deepened knowledge of the context in which Jocelin worked and promises a new edition and translation of the Life of St Patrick.²

Jocelin was based at the Cistercian abbey of Furness, which was located on the Furness peninsula LNC (modern-day Cumbria). This area is now part of England, but the peninsula juts out into the Irish Sea and its inhabitants enjoyed a wide range of maritime contacts. A notable aspect of Jocelin’s career is the variety of cultural influences that can be detected in his oeuvre. These include an interest in Celtic saints, an awareness of English history and an appreciation of Cistercian values (Freeman 2002; Birkett 2010). Yet Jocelin’s work reveals surprisingly little interest in Scandinavia, the Scandinavian settlement of his locality or the Norse language. This bias is striking because Norse flourished in Furness, as witnessed by the numerous Norse place-names on the peninsula, and it survived until the twelfth century (see below, p. 55). Furthermore, the Furness community had up-to-date knowledge of Norway because they were engaged in a dispute with the archbishops of Nidaros over the right to elect the bishops of Sodor and Man (Woolf 2003, 173–78). Jocelin spoke English and there has been an occasional debate about whether he knew Gaelic (either Irish or Scottish) (Jackson 1958, 276; Bieler 1975, 164; Bieler 1978, 411–12;

¹ I am indebted to Dr Richard Dance for very useful discussion of the name-elements, providing references and reading a draft of this article. I am also grateful to Dr Clare Downham and Professor Margaret Clunies Ross for commenting on the draft, and for the anonymous reviewer’s insightful points. Dr Helen Birkett kindly supplied her notes on the relevant passage in the Madrid MS of the Vita.
² ‘Hagiography at the Frontiers: Jocelin of Furness and Insular Politics’, see <http://www.liv.ac.uk/irish-studies/research/hagiography/>. I was a participant and I gratefully acknowledge funding from the AHRC towards the research underlying the present article. My collaborators were Dr Clare Downham (Principal Investigator) and Dr Ingrid Sperber. Publications include Downham 2013 and Sperber, Bieler and Downham forthcoming.
In this article I argue that Jocelin’s interpretation of the name of St Waltheof sheds light on the Norse–English interface in northern England. Jocelin viewed the name as an English coinage, but his interpretation of specific name-elements betrays knowledge of Norse vocabulary. I suggest that these elements had entered the local English dialect of Furness in relatively recent times, at the point when Norse ceased to be spoken. Jocelin could have derived his interpretation from another text or informant, but if so, I view the local area as the most likely source. The analysis presented here has broader relevance because it indicates how the Latinate medium of hagiography may shed light on vernacular languages.

First, I set the onomastic comments in their hagiographical context since Jocelin, or his monastic predecessors, emphasised the religious connotations of the name. St Waltheof was an abbot of Melrose Abbey ROX, who died in 1159 following a distinguished ecclesiastical career in northern England and southern Scotland. Jocelin produced his Vita S. Waldevi/Life of Waltheof under the patronage of Patrick, abbot of Melrose 1206–07. Patrick’s abbacy was very short, and so it is possible to date the start of Jocelin’s work quite precisely (Vita Waldevi §121: AASS Augusti I, 274 D–F; McFadden 1952, 187–88, 341–2; cf. Birkett 2010, 201).3 The text is not yet available in an edition that meets modern critical standards and takes account of the full manuscript history. The text provided by Acta Sanctorum derived from material that is no longer extant but was once kept in the Augustinian house of Böddeken (diocese of Paderborn) (AASS Augusti I, 249–78; BHL no. 8783). George McFadden revised and translated this version in his 1952 doctoral dissertation, as well as providing a commentary (McFadden 1952; cf. McFadden 1955). Since then a late-15th-century manuscript has come to light that contains a version of the Vita, and I am very grateful to Helen Birkett for supplying information about the variant readings.5

The prologue to the Vita Waldevi begins with a dedication to William, king of Scots, Alexander his son, and Earl David (a brother of King William and earl of Huntingdon). These men descended from the marriage of David I, king of Scots, to Matilda of Huntingdon via their son Prince Henry; Matilda had already been married once and Waltheof was a child of that first marriage (see Table) (Vita Waldevi §§1–5: AASS Augusti I, 248D–49B; McFadden 1952, 92–95, 201–06; prologue ed. and tr. from the Madrid MS: Howlett 2000, 124–29).

3 The discovery of the incorrupt body is recorded s.a. 1171 in Chron. Melrose, 39.
4 Böddeken is mentioned at pp. 245E–F, 246A, 248C.
5 Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, MS II 2097 (cf. Lapidge and Sharpe 1985, 283; Bartlett 1995, 41 n. 17; Birkett 2010, 17).
Table: Descent of St Waltheof and the dedicatees (italicised) in *Vita Waldevi*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King William the Conqueror</th>
<th>[Adelaide]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earl Waltheof</td>
<td>Judith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Simon de Senlis</td>
<td>Matilda</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Waltheof</td>
<td>Prince Henry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon II de Senlis</td>
<td>King Malcolm IV of Scots</td>
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<td></td>
<td>King William I of Scots</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Earl David</td>
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<td></td>
<td>King Alexander II of Scots</td>
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Jocelin elucidates the descent of the dedicatees, reports that Waltheof’s body had been found incorrupt, and states that Abbot Patrick commissioned him to write the text. Next in the *Vita* there follows a description of the descent of St Waltheof himself, starting with William of Normandy’s conquest of England (see Table). Some space is devoted to the resistance of Waltheof’s grandfather and namesake, Earl Waltheof (d. 1076), who ended his career as earl of Northumbria. Earl Waltheof married Judith, niece of William the Conqueror, and she bore a daughter, Matilda (*Vita Waldevi* §7: *AASS Augusti I*, 250; McFadden 1952, 96–97, 208). Jocelin then describes the degradation of the English nobility by the Normans, the execution of Earl Waltheof and his apparent innocence. Earl Waltheof’s daughter, Matilda, married Simon de Senlis, earl of Northampton/Huntingdon and St Waltheof of Melrose was their second son.

Next Jocelin discusses Waltheof’s name: ‘secundus vocabatur Walthenus antiqui nominis & sanctitatis renovator & possessor’ (‘the second son was called Walthenus (Waltheof), the restorer and owner of an old name and its holiness’) (*Vita Waldevi* §9: *AASS Augusti I*, 250F; McFadden 1952, 99–100, 212–13). It was an appropriate choice:

Nomen vero istud Anglice dissyllabum est, cujus syllaba secunda si cor-repto accentu proferatur ‘electus sapor’; si producto, ‘electus latro’ inter-pretatur.\(^8\)

‘That name is certainly disyllabic in English, whose second syllable, if it were pronounced with a short tone, would mean “chosen fragrance”, or if with a long tone “chosen thief”.’

According to Jocelin, the name suited Waltheof because he was *vas electionis* ‘a chosen vessel’ (Acts 9:15), he emitted the scent of spiritual sweetness and he seemed to steal the kingdom of God *pio furto* ‘by pious theft’, humbly concealing his virtues and miracles (*Vita Waldevi* §10: *AASS Augusti I*, 251A; McFadden 1952, 99, 212–13).

Jocelin’s interpretation of the name *Waltheof* is partly dictated by the demands of the hagiographical genre. The name highlights Waltheof’s holiness and complements other aspects of Waltheof’s childhood, such as his preference for

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6 The incorrupt body had been exhumed several years decades before and is recorded *s.a.* 1171 in *Chron. Melrose*, 39.

7 The Madrid MS has *Wallevus* for *Walthenus*; *avici* for *antiqui*; and *revaror* for *renovator* (presumably a scribal error). The only significant variant here is *avici* which implies Waltheof was named after his grandfather (Birkett 2010, 217; Birkett pers. comm).

8 The Madrid MS is identical.
toy churches (Vita Waldevi §11: AASS Augusti I, 251B; McFadden 1952, 110, 214). This was an appropriate start in life for a man who renounced the world at the Augustinian house of Nostell YOW, was elected prior of Kirkham YOE, became a Cistercian and was eventually elected abbot of Melrose ROX (Bulloch 1955; Baker 2004). Jocelin’s etymology cannot be expected to be philologically accurate given that it promotes Waltheof’s saintliness. Nevertheless, Jocelin arrived at his interpretation by analysing the two elements of the name, and his discussion raises linguistically interesting points. Next I shall discuss the origin of the name-elements, before arguing that Jocelin’s understanding of them betrays significant Norse influence.

The name Waltheof is generally agreed to be ON Valþjófr in origin, although the precise etymology of the Norse name is debatable, as discussed below. Valþjófr was fairly common in Norway and was also exported to Iceland (Bugge 1890, 225–27; Lind 1905–15, 1071–73). The name arrived in northern England at the time of Scandinavian settlement and is particularly well attested in Yorkshire (Fellows-Jensen 1968, 330–31; PASE, persons listed under Waltheof 5 and 7). The spread of the name in the tenth and eleventh centuries probably reflects the intermarriage of Scandinavian and native Northumbrian dignitaries (Townend 2007, 6–11). The name continued to be used in northern England and southern Scotland until the time when Jocelin was writing, as witnessed by the Durham Liber vitae, in which the name was inscribed several times during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (Insley with Rollason 2007, 242; Piper with Rollason 2007, 148, 160). Waltheof thus became part of an Insular naming stock that persisted amongst the higher ranks of free society into the 12th century, and for even longer at lower social levels (Searle 1897, 477; Postles 2007, 116–62). The name developed prestigious associations with the houses of Bamburgh and Dunbar, and its Norse origins may not have remained significant or even perceptible to name-givers by Jocelin’s lifetime (Insley 1987, 185–88).

The popularity of the name ensured that numerous forms appear in documents from the 10th to the 13th centuries. It is not possible to give an exhaustive survey here and so I have chosen a selection of forms from across the chronological range. The earliest recorded form is Wælðeof dux in the witness

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10 Seventy Scottish instances can be seen by searching ‘People of Medieval Scotland database’, <http://db.poms.ac.uk/search/> – accessed 24/05/15.

11 The name was already associated with the House of Bamburgh by the tenth century; see PASE (Waltheof 1, 4 & 6) – accessed 24/05/15.
list of a charter of Æthelred II that grants 10 hides to Wilton St Mary’s WLT. The charter has been dated to 994 and most commentators consider it to be authentic (Kemble 1839–48 iii, 278–80, no. 687). This man can be identified with Waltheof, earl of Bamburgh, who was reported to be an old man by the time of Máel Coluim II’s siege of Durham in 1006 (De obsessione Dunelmi, 215). The form Walþeof dux also marks the appearance of Earl Waltheof (d. 1076) in the witness-list of King Edward the Confessor’s charter granting Ottery St Mary (DEV) to St Mary’s Rouen (Kemble iv, 1839–48, 148–50, no. 810). The D manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle provides the forms Wælþeof (1066, 1071), Waldþeof (1068) and Walþeof (1076, 1077) (Cubbin 1996, 81, 84, 87–88). This manuscript was first produced in Worcester or York in the 1040s and then reworked to an extent between the 1050s and 1070s (ASC D, lxv–lxvi; Keynes 2012, 547). All of this evidence comes from an Old English milieu and is broadly compatible with the normalised late OE form Wælþēof (von Feilitzen 1937, 403; cf. Fellows-Jensen 1968, 331). The interchange of a and æ is discussed below, and Waldþeof seems to be a rare and probably aberrant form.

There is plentiful evidence in documents of the Anglo-Norman period. In Great Domesday (1086) the most popular form was Wallef; with 73 occurrences; other forms include Waltef and Walteif: Some of these forms are likely to have been drawn from the returns to the Domesday commissioners; for example, a cluster of Walteu spellings occur in the entries for Acklam hundred YER (DB Yorks, 5E64–6; Yorkshire Domesday, fo 307r). The name is never spelt wæl- in Great Domesday, but the prevalent spelling wal- could be consistent with OE wæl. The rare name Wælhræfn provides a point of comparison since it is always spelt wal- in Domesday, but there are several pre-conquest instances of wæl (von Feilitzen 1937, 409–10; PASE s.n. Wælhræfn). The assimilation of lð to ll in the Domesday form Wallef is otherwise attested and has been ascribed to Romance influence (von Feilitzen 1937, 102; Fellows-Jensen 1968, xcii). Moving on to the 12th century, records of 12th-century charters include forms such as Gospatrico f. Walthef’ and Waldef f. Gamelli and Waltef. Thus the name’s original þ was rendered t, th, and d in the 12th century, changes that have been ascribed to Anglo-Norman influence (von Feilitzen 1937,100–02; Fellows-Jensen 1968, xcii–xciii, 330–31). Finally turning to Jocelin’s Vita, the Bollandists rendered the saint’s name Walthenus in their text, where -n- is a
common error for -u-. The Madrid manuscript has \textit{Walthevus} and \textit{Wallevus}, but modern scholars tend to prefer \textit{Waldevus}.

The earlier forms are in general compatible with the suggested anglicised version of the name, \textit{Walþēof}. If a speaker of Old English sought to interpret the etymology of the name, the first element might be understood as \textit{wel} ‘the slain’. This word seems to have become less well known by Jocelin’s day since there are only a handful of attestations in the Middle English period, several of which come from Lazamon’s \textit{Brut} (Kurath et al. 1952–2001, s.v. \textit{wal} n.2). In any case, Jocelin’s etymology differs from \textit{wel} ‘the slain’ and will be discussed shortly. The second element in its late Old English form resembles \textit{þēof} ‘thief’; the loss of the macron in the attested forms is a product of normalisation. This interpretation influenced Jocelin’s etymology of the name when pronounced with a long vowel: \textit{electus latro} (‘chosen thief’). Some of the twelfth-century forms indicate pronunciation of the long vowel of ME \textit{thēf} (< OE \textit{þēof}) in spelling of the Anglo-Norman period; an example is \textit{Wallief de Stotleia} (Fellows-Jensen 1968, 330; Scragg 1974, 49). Other forms (such as those ending in -\textit{ef}) may reflect reduced vocalism in the second element, a pronunciation that Jocelin relates to his etymology \textit{electus sapor}. This pronunciation is difficult to explain by reference to vocabulary in Old or Middle English, and so I now turn to the original Norse etymology of the name in order to assess whether Jocelin’s etymologies reveal Norse influence.

The etymology of ON \textit{Valþjófr} has sparked considerable debate. The first element is of uncertain origin, but it may be related to Primitive Germanic \textit{*walha} ‘foreign’, cf. OE \textit{wealh}. This element famously appears in the name of Queen \textit{Wealhþēow} in \textit{Beowulf}, although it is uncertain whether the ‘foreign’ connotation should be taken literally in this case (Gordon 1935, 169–75; de Vries 1961, s.v. \textit{val} 4; Fulk et al. 2008, liv, 472, and further references cited therein). Another option is Primitive Germanic \textit{*wala} ‘the dead; slain in battle’, ON \textit{valr}, cf. OE \textit{wæl} (Bugge 1890, 230; Fellows-Jensen 1968, 347). Jocelin’s interpretation does not reflect this understanding of the word, as discussed above in relation to the anglicised form of the name. An alternative derivation for the first element of \textit{Valþjófr} is ON \textit{val-} ‘choice’ (Bugge 1890, 230; Gordon 1935, 170–71; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989, s.v. \textit{val-} (3)). This tallies with Jocelin’s etymologies \textit{electus sapor} ‘chosen fragrance’ and \textit{electus latro} ‘chosen thief’. It is worth asking how Jocelin became acquainted with the word \textit{val} in the sense ‘choice’.

ON \textit{val} is attested as a loan in northern Middle English, in the form \textit{wāle} ‘a choice, an option’ (Björkman 1900, 256–57; Kurath et al. 1952–2001, s.v. \textit{waltherus} at p. 241B.

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Examples include *And of a thousand men o wal, He made him ledder and mariscal* from the version of *Cursor Mundi* in British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A.iii. This manuscript contains a 14th-century West Yorkshire version of the poem, which was originally written somewhere in northern England (Morris 1874–93 ii, 440 (ll. 7629–30)); cf. Horobin and Smith 2002, 157). The word also featured in Older Scots and has continued to be used until relatively modern times in contexts as diverse as choosing marriage partners and picking out stones from coal (*DOST*, s.v. *wale* n.; *SND*, s.v. *wale* n.1; cf. Wright 1905, s.v. *wale* sb. 2). It is interesting that Jocelin used this loan-word to interpret the first element of Walthere’s name. His dialect of English – or the dialect represented in his source material – must have belonged to the Norse-influenced parlance of northern England and southern Scotland. The etymology of the name provides a rare instance of vernacular dialect intruding into the highly Latinate medium of Angevin hagiography.

The second element of Norse name *Valþjófr* has sparked considerable debate. It appears to be ON *þjófr* ‘thief’ and scholars, both medieval and modern, have often interpreted it as such. For example, the longer version of *Friðþjófs saga ins frœkna* contains a verse in which Friðþjófr (who is in disguise at this point) calls himself various names ending in -þjófr, and alludes to their meanings. Thus Friðþjófr says he was called ‘Valþjófr, þá ek var æðri mönnnum’ (‘*Valþjófr* “slain men-thief” when I was higher than [other] men’). The antiquity of the verse is uncertain since it appears in the B recension of the saga, which stems from the 15th century, whereas it does not feature in the shorter, older A version. Even so, the poet’s interpretation of the element -þjófr is clear: it always means ‘thief’, while the first elements of the names mostly relate to violent activities. The surrounding prose in the B version of the saga also indicates that *þjófr* was interpreted as ‘thief’ (Rafn 1829–30 ii, 92; the interchange between Friðþjófr and King Hringr is presented more briefly in the A version: Rafn 1829–30 ii, 499).

This sense may, however, differ from the original etymology of the name-element. Sophus Bugge contended that names containing ‘thief’ would have
been unsuitable for ‘hæderlige, fribaarne mænd’ ‘honourable, freeborn men’. He suggested that the element in question was borrowed from OE þēow ‘slave’ but was later reanalysed as þjófr ‘thief’. In his view the ‘slave’ names originated amongst Scandinavian fighters who were taken into captivity while raiding in Britain, or amongst British slaves who were taken back to Scandinavia and eventually freed (Bugge 1890, 229–35, quotation at 229). Other commentators have agreed that there is a relationship between the name-elements þēow and þjófr but have disagreed on the direction of influence. One possibility is that OE þēow had a cognate term in Old Norse, namely þér (from Primitive Scandinavian *þewar) which was later reanalysed as þjófr ‘thief’ (e.g. Gordon 1935, 170–73; cf. other scholarship discussed in Janzén et al. 1947, 117–18). Another group of scholars have construed the name-element þjófr straightforwardly as ‘thief’, however unflattering it may have seemed (Björkman 1910, 174–75 n.1; for other scholars of this opinion cf. Janzén et al. 1947, 117; Björkman changed his view in Björkman 1912, 93). Whatever the ultimate origins of the element, early forms of Waltheof indicate that OE þēof ‘thief’ influenced the English rendering of the name. OE þēof and ON þjófr are cognate terms; the latter reflects the development of rising diphthongs in Norse during the Viking Age, but English speakers could have made the equation with þēof (Fellows-Jensen 1968, lxxxi; Townend 2002, 63). Thus Jocelin’s reference to latro ‘a thief’ makes sense in the context of the English language.

It is more difficult to understand Jocelin’s explanation for the second element when pronounced with a short vowel: electus sapor ‘chosen fragrance’. Indeed, the Bollandist editor of Vita Waldevi confessed his puzzlement: ‘At frustra inquisivi, quomodo per idem nomen aliter pronuntiatum electus sapor significari possit’ (‘But I have investigated in vain how ‘chosen fragrance’ could be meant by the same name pronounced differently’) (AASS Augusti I, 254A n. v). Jocelin (or his source) would have been acquainted with a late-medieval form of the name with reduced vocalism in the second element, as discussed above. Jocelin attempted to devise a separate explanation for this pronunciation, and came up with sapor ‘fragrance’. This interpretation confused the Bollandist editor because there is no obvious candidate in the English language for a word meaning ‘fragrance’ that resembles the sound that Jocelin described.

On the other hand, ON þefr ‘a smell’ provides a suitable basis for Jocelin’s interpretation, as noted also by McFadden (1952, 212–13; cf. Cleasby and Vigfusson 1957, s.v.). This word is only very rarely attested as a loan in Middle English: the noun occurs in Genesis & Exodus and the verb (< ON þefja) in

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19 Sophus Bugge was developing a suggestion by Frederik Schiern that Old English þēow corresponded to Old Norse -þjófr (Schiern 1858, 7; cf. Björkman 1912, 93). Again, Queen Wealhpéow provides an example of the name-element; see p. 49, above.
the Göttingen manuscript of Cursor Mundi, which has some northern features (Arngart 1968, 137 (l. 3340); Morris 1874–93 iii, 1341 (l. 23456); Kurath et al. 1952–2001, s.vv. thef n., thefen v.). The only near-cognate in English is the very rare Old English verb þefian ‘to pant, to be agitated’.  

In its earliest appearance the Norse word relates to the foul odour of carrion, but it could also denote pleasant scents. The word often appears in ecclesiastical contexts, where fragrant scents signify virtue and sanctity, whereas the unpleasant smells reflect sin.  

Jocelin’s application of electus sapor ‘chosen fragrance’ to St Waltheof fits remarkably well into this context. It is unlikely that English speakers in general, or even most speakers of northern Middle English, could have formulated the interpretation that Jocelin puts forward. There are two possible explanations: either the Norse word was loaned into a local dialect of English, but was never widely used; or the name had been interpreted by a person who knew some Norse. Either way, Jocelin’s interpretation of the name Waltheof attests strong Norse influence, but it is not immediately clear that it reflects his own dialect. I now consider Jocelin’s sources, which included oral testimony and written accounts. There are several milieus in which the interpretation of the name could have arisen, but I argue that the author was influenced by the Norse-influenced English parlance of the Furness peninsula.

Jocelin’s written sources probably comprised a dossier of Waltheof’s miracles from Melrose, and more doubtfully an earlier Vita by Abbot Everard of Holmcultram Abbey CMB. Jocelin presented most of his information as orally transmitted ‘a viris veridicis senioribus domus Melrosensis’ (‘from the trustworthy elders of the house of Melrose’) (Vita Waldevi §5: AASS Augusti I, 249B; ed. and tr. McFadden 1952, 95, 206). Waltheof’s cult was very much in the minds of the Melrose community at the time when Jocelin was writing since the saint’s body had been demonstrated to be incorrupt for a second time in 1206 (Vita Waldevi §§133–4: AASS Augusti I, 276C–D; ed. and tr. McFadden 1952, 197–98, 352–54). This incident seems to have prompted Abbot Patrick

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20 I am grateful to Richard Dance for this information. Bosworth and Toller 1898, s.v., suggested comparison with Icelandic þefja (‘to smell’) (cf. Toller 1921, s.v.; Holthausen 1934, s.v. defian; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989, s.vv. þefía, þefja, þefur).
22 I am grateful to Professor Margaret Clunies Ross for pointing out these resonances. Some instances with ecclesiastical associations are listed in ‘Dictionary of Old Norse Prose’, http://dataonp.ad.sc.ku.dk/wordlist_e.html – accessed 15/12/14, s.v. One example appears in the description of Paradise in Overgaard 1968, 4 (text A).
24 The date of the second exhumation was determined in Baker 1975, 62 n. 9.
to commission a new Life of the saint as part of a broader endeavour to achieve papal canonisation (Birkett 2010, 201–25). Thus the Melrose community were eager to convey traditions about Waltheof to Jocelin, and they no doubt had their own theories about the meaning of Waltheof’s name.

A second possible source of Jocelin’s etymology is the traditions surrounding St Waltheof’s grandfather, Earl Waltheof. The earl had been executed in 1076 for his part in a high-level conspiracy against William I, but some believed that he was innocent of his alleged crimes (e.g. Chron. John Worcester III, 26–29; cf. Lewis 2004). The pious resonances of the name (as proposed by Jocelin) would have suited the earl since a cult had grown up around the resting place of his body at Crowland Abbey LIN. Another striking parallel between the two Waltheofs was the incorruption of their bodies; Earl Waltheof’s corpse had been discovered intact during its translation by Ingulf (abbot 1085/6–1109), as noted by Orderic Vitalis (Historia Ecclesiastica ii, 346–47; cf. Gesta pontificum, §182.6 (I, 488–89); Watkins 1996, 96). Jocelin was aware of the miracles performed at Earl Waltheof’s tomb and he noted: ‘extat libellus in eodem coenobio conscriptus de miraculis ejus’ (‘there is in existence in the same house (Crowland) a small book composed of his miracles’) (Vita Waldevi §9: AASS Augusti I, 250F; ed. and tr. McFadden 1952, 99, 211). This libellus was probably composed to promote the case for Earl Waltheof’s canonisation in the later 12th century (Mason 2012, 191–92). Even so, it seems unlikely that Jocelin derived his information about the name Waltheof from Crowland sources. There is no analysis of the earl’s name in the extant version of the miracula, which probably derive from early 12th-century Crowland (Chroniques anglo-normandes II, 131–42; dated by Watkins 1996, 98). Neither is the name discussed in the fully developed Vita et passio Waldevi Comitis which was written after the translation of Earl Waltheof’s relics in 1219 (Chroniques anglo-normandes II, 99–142; for the date, see Watkins 1996, 97).

Earl Waltheof was also celebrated in Norse literature, which is worth examining given the Norse influence on Jocelin’s interpretation of the name. The earl is mentioned in the anonymous Haraldsstikki in connection with the battle of Fulford; this association is probably erroneous, but shows the earl’s fame in Scandinavia. Indeed, Earl Waltheof was a patron of the skald Þorkell

25 Compare William of Malmesbury’s accounts in Gesta regum §253 (I, 468–71), where he reports the differing views on the matter of the Normans and the English, with Gesta pontificum, §182.4 (I, 486–87), where he reports the English view and notes that it is supported by miracles at the tomb.

Skallason, which shows that an English dignitary could participate in the Scandinavian cultural world during the 11th century (Townend 2002, 154; Townend 2007, 18–19; Gazzoli 2011, 97–98). Þorkell may have had access to an Old English poem on Waltheof, which adds to the impression of interaction between the English and Norse cultural spheres (Scott 1952, 179; van Houts 1996, 172). The two surviving stanzas of Valhjófsflokkr portray the earl as a great warrior (sóknar Yggr ‘Óðinn of battle’) who was betrayed by King William. Yet there are no echoes of Jocelin’s emphasis on the holiness of the name Waltheof or indications that Waltheof was considered to be a particularly pious man. Valhjófsflokkr was composed shortly after Waltheof’s death, probably while Þorkell was still in England, but the stanzas are preserved in later-medieval Icelandic-Norwegian texts (Jesch 2001, 317, 322; Gazzoli 2011, 99). These accounts conjure up semi-imaginary scenarios for the poetry and there is no point of contact with the traditions available to Jocelin, apart from allusions to Earl Waltheof’s unjust killing and saintly reputation.

A final and more promising possibility is that the etymology was Jocelin’s own, or at least reflected traditions circulating in the vicinity of Furness Abbey. Indeed, Jocelin was capable of formulating place-name etymologies that were independent of his written sources, as in his discussion of Leac Phádraig in the Life of St Patrick (Sperber, Bieler and Downham forthcoming, ch. 73; Edmonds 2013, 41–42, n. 127). The name Waltheof continued to be used in the Furness peninsula and the abbey’s wider estates in the late medieval period. For example, Waltheof son of Edmund was a notable donor, whose lands helped to found Furness Abbey’s grange at Newby in the Yorkshire Dales (Coucher Book I, 129, 190, 201; Coucher Book II, 296–97, 301–04, 308–12). Men called Waltheof also appeared in lower social strata, such as Waltheof son of Adam, who gained his freedom from Alexander son of Roger of Kirkby Ireleth (Furness peninsula) in the early 13th century (TNA, DL 36/2 no. 145; deed printed in Coucher Book II, 705). The name survived for long enough to give rise to the Lancashire surname Walthew, which had become a hereditary family name by the 14th century (McKinley 1981, 314). Jocelin’s etymology may therefore reflect his own hagiographical take on traditions circulating in Furness and its environs.

Finally, then, it is worth considering why Jocelin’s put forward an interpretation of the name Waltheof that he defined as English, even though it reveals Norse

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28 For summaries of the traditions, see Scott 1952, 164–70; Scott 1953–57, 83–89. The confused contexts are discussed in Mason 2012, 194. An example of a reference to Waltheof’s sainthood is Fagrskinna, ch. 76 (pp. 294–95); trans. Finlay 2004, 235–36.
influence. The Norse language has made a strong imprint on the place-names of the Furness peninsula, as has often been acknowledged (Edmonds 2013, 32–34, 39–40 and references cited therein). The name *Furness* is itself Norse, containing *nes* ‘headland’ and a second element whose meaning has been debated (Ekwall 1922, 200–01; Whaley 2006, 122–23). There is some evidence that Norse speech persisted in Furness until a relatively late date. One indication is the name of Lake Windermere (*Winendermer* 1154–89), which lies on the edge of Furness Fells. John Insley has proposed that this name features the Continental Germanic personal name Winand inflected with ON genitive singular *-ar*. If so, the name must have been coined in the 12th century since continental names are unlikely to have arrived in the area much earlier (Insley 2005). There are two runic inscriptions on the Furness peninsula, one on a stone at Conishead Priory and the other on the tympanum of the old church at Pennington. The latter can be dated contextually since it names a certain *Gamall*, who is thought to have lived in the mid-12th century (Holman 1996, 73–78; Barnes and Page 2006, 307–12, 316–20). Some scholars have detected English influence on this inscription, but Matthew T ownend describes it as ‘perfectly acceptable Old Norse, albeit with weakened inflections’ (T ownend 2002, 194). The Pennington inscription is of particular interest because Jocelin of Furness has sometimes been identified with a certain Jocelin de Pennington, who was abbot of Furness in the 1180s. There is, however, no certainty about this identification because it rests on records that were copied into the front of the Furness Coucher Book in the early 15th century (TNA, DL 42/3, fol. 1r; *Coucher Book I*, 9; cf. Birkett 2010, 14).

Nonetheless the evidence presented above suggests that there was strong and persistent Scandinavian influence in the Furness peninsula. These cultural circumstances help to explain the presence of two Norse loan-words, one found generally in Northern Middle English and Older Scots but the other extremely rare, in the English dialect of Jocelin or his informants. It is necessary, however, to be wary of assuming a straightforward equation between the intensity of Scandinavian influence and the number of Norse loan-words in a given Middle English dialect. As Richard Dance has shown, Norse loan-words were diffused into areas where there had been little Scandinavian settlement, and some of them became characteristic of specific literary styles (Dance 2012, 1732–34). In Jocelin’s case, the *Vita* provides an insight into the linguistic situation very shortly after the decline of Norse as a living language in his locality, and Norse loan-words may have entered the local English dialect when the Norse speakers

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29 Townend has also highlighted the nearby ‘Ellabarrow’, whose name reflects Scandinavian tradition (Townend 1997, 34–35). For the debate about endurance of Norse and inscriptions, see Page 1971; Parsons 2001, 302–03, 306.
of the preceding generation shifted to English.

One model for this process is a small elite shifting to the language of their more numerous subjects, such as the Norman-French aristocracy of England becoming English speakers (Thomason and Kaufman 1988, 21, 41, 58, 68). Norse might have retained prestigious associations in Furness on account of the peninsula’s links to the Isle of Man, which was ruled by kings of Scandinavian origin (Stringer 2003, 31–33, 37; Edmonds 2013, 37–38). Yet it is difficult to envisage English as a low-status language given that Tostig – a Northumbrian earl and member of the English Godwinson family – controlled lands in the vicinity of Furness in 1065 (DB Yorks, 1L1–3, 6; Lancashire Domesday, fo 301v). Matthew Townend has presented an alternative view of Norse language death, in which Norse loan-words were ‘imposed’ by Norse speakers who were shifting to English. The Norse speakers had previously been able to understand English because the two languages were mutually intelligible, and the languages had similar status during the Viking Age. Townend has observed that this shift to English occurred relatively late in Furness and parts of the Lake District (Townend 2002, 201–10). Thus Jocelin’s local informants may have spoken an English dialect replete with Norse loan-words, and older members of society may have retained some acquaintance with the Norse language.

In conclusion, Jocelin of Furness’s interpretation of the name Waltheof raises interesting questions about two themes: the interaction of the Norse and English languages, and the sources available to hagiographers. It is impossible to prove that Jocelin formulated his own interpretation of the name, but he certainly tailored the analysis to suit the hagiographical genre. Traditions about the name may have circulated throughout northern England and southern Scotland, including the vicinity of Furness Abbey where Norse had recently been a living language. This would help to explain the presence of two Norse loan-words in Jocelin’s ‘English’ interpretation of the name. Jocelin’s oeuvre has been relatively neglected, and it may yet yield further information about the multilingual societies in which he lived and worked. There is reason to challenge Kenneth Jackson’s opinion that ‘the names and nature of places and people … seem to have meant comparatively little to him, and he mostly passes them over in a very cavalier fashion …’ (Jackson 1958, 281).

ABBREVIATIONS

OE Old English
ON Old Norse

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