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Article

Published Version

Sayers, W. (2009) Naming and renaming the Grampus.
Reading Medieval Studies, XXXV. pp. 79-91. ISSN 0950-3129
Available at <https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/84759/>

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Publisher: University of Reading

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Naming and Renaming the Grampus

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The grampus (*Orca gladiator* or *Orca orca* < Latin *orca* 'demon') is a cetacean belonging to the dolphin family. It is characterized by a rounded head, high dorsal fin, large teeth and nearly uniformly black upper parts and white under parts, with a strip of white over each eye. A fierce carnivore, its prey consists of seals, porpoises and the smaller dolphins. Hunting in packs it also attacks beluga whales. The habitat of the grampus is the northern seas, and its European range is from the shores of Greenland as far south as the Mediterranean. In the North Sea zone this would invite whaling expeditions from northern French and British coasts as well as from Scandinavia. A succession of names for the killer whale is well known from Antiquity to the present and etymologies, while not always transparent, are well established (and will be reviewed below): Latin *orca*, Old Norse *vagnhvalr*, Medieval Latin *crassus piscis*, Old French *graspeis*, *craspeis*, *craspois*, Middle French *orque*, *graspeis*, Middle English *graspeis*, *grappeis*, *grapeys*, *grapois*, Modern English *orca*, *grampus*, *killer whale* - even personalized as Keito and Willy.¹ Less clear are the dynamics (economic, cultural, or purely linguistic) behind the evolution in, and substitution of, successive names. The international constituent of this onomastic evolution will be at the focal point of this study.

Some time between 1135 and 1140 the Anglo-Norman chronicler Geiffrei Gaimar wrote an *Estoire des Engleis* for his patroness Constance FitzGilbert. His work, drawing on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as well as popular tradition, has a number of episodes that may originally have been composed in order to provide support for Danish claims on the English throne by showing prior Danish possession of the land. One of these is the story of Havelock the Dane in which we read of a ship-wrecked family eking out an existence on the shore:

De nostre nef maisun feïmes;
 Par un batel bien garesimes,
 Dunt nostre pere alad peschier.
 Peissuns eümes a mangier,
 Turbuz, salmuns e mulüiels,
 Graspeis, porpeis e makerels;
 A grant plenté e a fuisun
 Oümes pain e bon peissun.²

We built a house from the wreckage of our ship. We supplied ourselves well with a boat in which my father used to go fishing. We had fish to eat: turbot, salmon, mulwell, grampus, porpoise, and mackerel. In great plenty and abundance we had bread and good fish.³

The legendary account has no historical worth, of course, but it is not located in a world of fantasy. Thus, it must have been plausible for an early twelfth-century public to imagine a single man in a small boat fishing for the above stated range of marine creatures, although we are perhaps best advised to see in *graspeis* a member of the dolphin family and not the much larger killer whale, which would probably have been beyond the means of a single hunter. A more learned, less popular, and realistic account is found in the *Bestiaire* of the Anglo-Norman poet Guillaume le Clerc, writing during the first decades of the thirteenth century. In this work the inhabitants of the natural world become the object of Christian allegory. After some brief introductory remarks on medieval ichthyology Guillaume writes:

Hui mes vos volom reconter
 D'une grant merveille de mer.
 En mer sont li peisson divers
 Com en la terre sont les vers
 E li oisel amont en l'air.
 Li un sont blanc, li altre vair,
 Li un neir e li altre bis.
 Als en mer, jeol vos plevis,
 Sont li peisson diversement,
 Mes l'em ne poet mie ensemment
 De cels les natures saveir
 Com l'em pooet des bestes por veir,
 En la mer, qui est grant e pleine,

Est l'esturgon e la baleine
 E le turbot e le porpeis
 E un grant, qui a non graspeis.
 Mes un mustre I a merveillos,
 Trop culvert e trop perillos:
 Cetus a non selonc latin.
 As mariners est mal veisin.⁴

Now we should like to tell you of a great sea marvel. In the sea there are various fishes just as there are snakes on earth and birds up in the air. Some of these are white, others salt- and- pepper, some are black, others grey-brown. Just as diverse, I assure you, are the fish in the ocean, but one cannot know their natures as surely as one can in the case of animals. In the sea, which is vast and full, are the sturgeon and the whale, the turbot and the porpoise, and a large fish which is called graspeis. But there is a marvellous monster there, very treacherous and dangerous, whose name in Latin is cetus. It is no friend of mariners.

Guillaume then goes on to tell the familiar tale of how the greatest of the whales can be mistaken for an island, leading sailors to drop anchor and go ashore, with fatal results. The brief list of ichthyonyms represents what might be called the literary deployment of the catalogue device, in which a series of discrete terms is used to amplify a text, as here, or becomes the starting point for a panoramic scene of varied activity, as when Wace, another Anglo-Norman author writing about 1155, describes the embarkation of King Arthur's fleet for Gaul and calls up no fewer than twenty-five terms for ship's parts and sail-trimming activities (significantly, with a majority of these terms of Norse derivation). Use of the device is not limited to Gallo-Romance.

At the conclusion of *Skáldskaparmál*, his work on poetic diction, the thirteenth-century Icelandic author Snorri Sturluson has lists of names for things that might figure in kennings of the type 'whaleroad,' which we have in *Beowulf*, or be incorporated in a mythological reference. Just before a catalogue of over one hundred terms for ship types, ship parts, and names of legendary ships, Snorri has two roughly versified stanzas with the names of whales. Here the killer whale or *vögn* comes at the very end of the list, either because there were no other names with which it could alliterate (a rudimentary metrical device perhaps intended to assist memorization) or in order to give it some, perhaps ominous, prominence.⁵ And, indeed, the whale name does figure elsewhere in Snorri's work in a kenning for the giant Þjazi, here called *vagna vǫng-Rögnir* 'Rögnir (or chief) of the land-whales (giants).'⁶ In the kenning, the *vögn* or orca metonymically stands for all

whales while also conveying the specific associations reflected in our term 'killer whale.'

The ferocious nature of the killer whale was fully evident to the inhabitants of the medieval north. One of the earliest descriptions of whales is found in the thirteenth-century Norwegian *Konungs skuggsjá* or *King's Mirror*. In that part of the work devoted to the activities and habits of the merchant, the Father provides his Son with background information on the natural wonders that he may encounter in Ireland, Iceland, Greenland, and their waters, if he were to choose the life of a merchant. Included in his description of whales to be found in the Icelandic seas he observes:

Það er enn eitt hvala kyn, er menn kalla vagnhvali, og verða eigi lengri en 12 álna, og eru þeir tenntir efir sínum vexti svo mjög sem hundar og því líkir í ágirnd sinni við aðra hvali sem hundar við dýr. Þvi að þeir safnast flokkum saman og renna að stórum hvölum. Og þar sem mikill hvalur er einn staddur, þá bita þeir hann og mæðá, til þess er hann hefir bana. Kann og það vera, að hann drepur iðulega mikinn fjölda af þeim í stórum höggum í vörn sinni áður en hann verður dauður.⁷

There is another kind of whales called the grampus, which grow no longer than twelve ells and have teeth in proportion to their size very much as dogs have. They are also ravenous for other whales just as dogs are for other beasts. They gather in flocks and attack large whales, and, when a large one is caught alone, they worry and bite it until it succumbs. It is likely, however, that this one, while defending itself with mighty blows, kills a large number of them before it perishes.⁸

The Norse *King's Mirror* elsewhere describes some whales as 'fatter' than others and reference is here to the blubber that could be rendered as train oil and was an important end product of whaling, along with the flesh, which was often salted, and the hide, typically used in ships' ropes. The decomposition of a hunted or beached whale begins very quickly after death and soon makes the flesh inedible and valueless for the recovery of oil. Thus we find scenes of contention in the Icelandic sagas where parties of men dispute over a beached whale on the basis of shore rights. Typically one of the parties laying claim to the animal is already hard at work flensing when discovered by the other, since no time could be given over in advance to legal niceties.⁹

International recognition of the economic importance of the whale is evident in the account given by a Norwegian merchant, Ohthere, to King Alfred in the late ninth century of hunting marine mammals and trading on the far northern

Norwegian coast. Walrus was a prized catch but Ohthere tells Alfred that 'the best whale-hunting is in his own country,' that is, Hálogaland, also in the far north of Norway, and that he and a party of five men had once killed sixty whales in two days. These must have been animals that had come into the shallows, perhaps a school of pilot whales, and can hardly have been hunted from boats.¹⁰ Some evidence that whales were actively hunted in early medieval Britain, rather than simply slaughtered and flensed when they had become beached, is found in an Old English glossary, where Latin *cetarius* is equated with *hwælhunta*.¹¹ But does this represent more than a learned gloss? There is no other written reference to Old English whale-hunting but we should recall the conventions of the genres represented in the extant texts.¹² We do, however, find the killer whale reflected in the British place name *Walney* which reflects Old Norse **vagna-cy* or 'killer whale island'.¹³

In the Norwegian text cited above, the grampus is called *vagnhvalr*, where the second element of the compound is cognate with English *whale*, while the first is descriptive of shape (cf. Swedish *vagn* 'spindle') and refers to the very prominent dorsal fin of the cetacean. This is also reflected in such terms as German *Schwertwal* and Dutch *zwaardwalvis*, where the image is that of a sword. A Modern French term for the killer whale, *épaulard*, is related, although the current form looks like it should mean 'big-shouldered one' (< Fr. *épaule* 'shoulder'). The earlier name, subsequently drawn into the semantic sphere of *épaule*, was likely *espaart*, a form with an aggrandizing suffix based on OFr. *espee* 'sword'.¹⁴ As a consequence of Norse settlement in Neustria, some Old Norse terms for whales and sea mammals are reflected in the Norman dialect of French, itself determinative for a great number of specialized terms in Middle English related to nautical and maritime matters, e.g., OFr. *rohâl*, ME *rouel* 'walrus ivory' (from *hrosshvali*) or the Latinized *walmanni*, 'whalers'.¹⁵ But in Norman no direct descendant of *vagnhvalr* is to be found. Rather, forms suggestive of and antecedent to modern English *grampus* are met as early as the first decades of the twelfth century (see below).

First, a brief excursus: The Faroe Islands offer an example of how linguistic usage may vary considerably over time and space, and also according to register. In use at one time or another among this small insular population were no fewer than nine terms for the killer whale. A majority reference appearance, the high dorsal fin generating names such as *mastrarfiskur*, *-hvalur* 'mast whale,' *steyrhvalur* 'stake whale,' *vagn* 'distaff,' the markings, *bóghvíthvalur* 'shoulder-white whale,' *kjáfihvíti* 'white jaw.' Some refer to the whales' prey: *kobbahvalur* < *kobbi* 'seal,' *æduhvalur* 'eider whale.' Among these some appear to be Danicisms, that is, terms introduced into Faroes by Danish administrators, merchants and others, for

example, *rohvalur* < Da. *rovhval* 'predatory or killer whale.' One appears to be a noa term in response to a tabu against naming the fish explicitly when at sea. This is *nývil*. It too is based on the high fin, although part of the euphemism is to call it a 'little horn'; cf. Icelandic *hnýfill* 'small drinking horn.' The original meaning of the word is judged to have been lost early on, giving the noa term an even more hermetic quality.¹⁶ On the above translation of *vagn* by 'distaff' one might prefer, on the basis of the superstitious convention not to mention women's work at sea, to gloss it with the non-gender-specific 'spindle.' In several respects, origin and evolution of the name for the killer whale in the North parallels that for the narwhal. The original name for the latter is judged to have been *nálhvalr* 'needle whale,' referencing the extended upper left tooth. The substitution of liquids recast this as *nárhvalr*, which folk etymology explained as 'corpse whale,' leading to the rejection of the animal's meat. Morphology then dictated that the aberrant first element be reshaped, to yield modern Icelandic *náhvalur*.¹⁷

Although vogue words may catch on for inexplicable reasons, neologisms are usually the product of need or perceived advantage. What seems to have occurred in north-eastern France and Britain is the coinage in Medieval Latin of a new generic term for oil-bearing sea-creatures: *crassus piscis* or 'fat fish.' This term has no antecedents in classical Latin or the Mediterranean world and is just as clearly not the neologism of unlettered French or English fishermen.¹⁸ The generic, intended as a blanket term for fish and marine mammals (whales, seals, walrus, dolphins, sharks, perhaps even the cod) from which oil could be extracted, is more likely the product of the chancery than of the sea or shore, and is intended to situate these sea creatures in legalistic terms. Its use is documented from the early ninth century.¹⁹ A somewhat broader category of marine creatures in Britain was *piscis regius*, which included the sturgeon and its roe. Typically, local magnates sought to exert control over trade in these valuable commodities. These designations would have been among several instruments for the regulation and taxation by governments of the marketing of whale meat, oil, and hides, whether the products of beached whales or whales actively hunted at sea.

That this should be desirable in turn implies a certain volume for early medieval whaling based on knowledge of cetacean behavior and physiognomy, the weather and seas.²⁰ Also implicated are a sufficiently advanced naval technology to hunt, kill and bring ashore large marine animals. On shore would have been specialized sites for rapid flensing and rendering, what in a Latin text from Normandy are called *valsetae*, which implies an unattested Old Norse **hvalsetr*, 'whale(-butchering) site.'²¹ Crews both at sea and ashore would have been organized not only in terms of responsibilities but also as concerns economic stakes, and we may imagine owners, share-holders, employees, conceivably even

fleets of whaling ships sponsored by powerful economic interests such as monasteries. Subsequent stages would have involved marketing and distribution of salted whale meat, oil, hides and hide products, the supervision and taxation of these activities by authorities. At the far end of the process would have been issues of market reception, knowledge of whale products, their deployment in local cuisines and economies.²² These are only some of the many questions and topics raised by the early presence of the legalistic and regulatory neologism *crassus piscis*.

At this point we do not have a complete picture of any community in which whaling played a decisive role, although information from Normandy is the richest. Just as the Duke of Normandy could lay claim to shipwrecks on his coasts, so large sturgeons and *craspois* fell to him.²³ We learn that the monastery of St Denis was supplied from properties in Le Bessin and Cotentin with *crassi pisces*.²⁴ And from the *Vita Filiberti*, we learn that the regular presence of *crassi pisces* in the lower Seine valley provided both food and lamp oil for the monks of Jumièges and Noirmoutier.²⁵ Whale meat, classified with fish, was naturally an important part of the monastic diet on fast days and during Lent, but the high quality oil may have been even more prized by ecclesiastics for illumination materials.²⁶ Here it is appropriate to note that for Christian dietary purposes the whale was classified among fishes (on the authority of Isidore of Seville). Among this early documentation, of particular interest are the *Miracles of Saint Vaast* from the late ninth century and the Arras region. The account there suggests that whaling fleets might be formed of ships and men drawn from several different 'churches,' by which we might understand parishes, on the basis of a doubtless verbal contract drawn up for each expedition.²⁷ In the case in point, only two crews and ships among those canvassed agreed to invest in the expedition and put to sea. Once a whale had been brought ashore, it was butchered and shared out among the fishermen according to custom ('partes quae unicuique piscantium ex more debebantur miserunt').²⁸

Despite the preponderance of Norman and northern French evidence, the great geographical range of these practices is evident in an entry in *Regesta Regum Scottorum* from 1159: 'dim. sagimen craspesiorum qui in Forth applicuerint' (a measure of the oil of *graspeis* that come into the Forth)(on the form deriving from *craspeisius*, see below).²⁹ But southward, on the Bay of Biscay, *crassus piscis* is rendered *poisson à lard* in the compilation of maritime law called the *Rôles d'Oléron* after the island on the coast of western France near La Rochelle.³⁰ This suggests that northern French-Norman *graspeis* did not penetrate to more distant seaboard communities in the south of France, even though the central notion of fat-bearing fish was active there. As salt whale meat and oil became trade

commodities sold well beyond the shore, linguistic usage continued to evolve, so that while *craspois* meant a living marine mammal for the Norman whaler, it was the term for salt whale meat in inland zones and, even farther distant, for train-oil in the Dauphiné.³¹ As transportation distances increased, refined oil, more economical in terms of space and weight, would be a more attractive commodity for remote markets than salt meat.

The development of *crassus piscis* into *graspeis* could, in phonological terms, have occurred only in Gallo-Romance (as opposed, say, to Old English). The complex interplay between the spoken languages and documents in Latin is evident in a reference from the so-called *Laws of Ethelred*: 'homines de Rotomago qui veniebant cum vino vel craspisce dabant rectitudinem sex sol. de magna navi et vicesimum frustum de ipso craspisce' (Rouen traders who come with wine or *craspeis* pay a customs toll of six *solidi* for a large ship and a twentieth part of such *craspeis*).³² Thus by the year 1112 *crassus piscis* had assumed such status in popular speech as *craspeis* that it could be re-introduced into a Latin text but in linguistic guise (*craspisce* < *craspiscius*) that clearly reveals its immediate vernacular origin (cf. the example from the *Regesta Regum Scottorum*, above). What is noteworthy in this evolution is that the generic designation *crassus piscis* should have been assumed into spoken northern French without its generic inclusiveness (all oil-producing fish). It is tempting to think that the semantic narrowing from 'fat fish' to 'killer whale' occurred in the same, likely northern French, linguistic community, and at roughly the same time, as the widespread use of *craspeis* led to its reintroduction into Latin as *craspeisus*. This semantic limiting appears to have been a gradual one, since we have evidence of some indecision in the term's use before the orca became the exclusive species so designated.³³ If this narrowing was taking place prior to the Norse incursion of the ninth and tenth centuries, as the evolution from *crassus piscis* to *craspeis* surely did, it might explain why Old Norse *vögn* 'killer whale' left no apparent mark on later Norman speech. Much more speculatively, if a form close to *graspeis* were heard by Norse ears, it might have prompted associations with Old Norse *grár* 'malicious, unfriendly' (the *-r* is the nom. sg., a citation form) and have contributed to *graspeis* being associated exclusively with the killer whale. Conversely, if *graspeis* continued to carry a semantic content of 'fat fish,' it may have been adopted in Normandy as a noa term or euphemism, intended to mask this same predatory character.³⁴ Even though the names of the marine mammals hunted appear largely of Gallo-Romance origin, Norse nautical and whaling technology may have given the Normans an edge in whaling, e.g., hunting in deeper waters, and commerce, even though *crassus piscis* had been coined before their arrival. And the economic importance of the killer whale may have contributed to the near exclusive

application of the name *graspeis* to this species.

In post-Conquest Britain, *graspeis* regularly occurs in Middle English accounts and cookbooks, for example this recipe from 1475 for puréed peas: 'To serve on fysshe day with grappays, With sele fysshe or ellis with porpays.'³⁵ But the word was lost to continental French after the High Middle Ages, perhaps when Basque then Breton and French whalers began to introduce new products from North America on the European market. In English, the next stage of linguistic development was that variant forms of *graspeis* such as *granpois* became the object of folk etymology and came to be understood as deriving from French *grand poisson* 'big fish.'³⁶ The spelling *grampus*, which reflects this last stage, appears in the eighteenth century, and may have been a seaman's term. We may speculate that with the ending *-us* it had some of the effect of macaronic Latin, so that an expression such as 'huffing like a grampus' is lightly comical and, as much as it makes human behavior more animal-like, it also anthropomorphizes the whale.³⁷ The grampus's stylish black and white markings (as if drawn from an animated film), intelligence, aptitude for learning, playfulness and other factors led to captivity in aquaria and even entertainment spectacles. The commercial success of the 'Free Willy' films, the subsequent release in the wild of Keiko/Willy, and the attendant sentimentalizing cannot obscure the fact that the grampus is a predator, as the name killer whale, first attested in the late nineteenth century, was intended to convey.³⁸ The tension inherent in this situation is illustrated by a recent newspaper article entitled 'From Ocean Icons to Prime Suspects.'³⁹ It recounts how eleven killer whales entered Puget Sound on the coast of the state of Washington from the Pacific Ocean and in eight weeks devoured some 700 harbor seals. Similar incidents have been reported from the Aleutian Islands and Alaska, leading to the disappearance of sea otters and sea lions.

In conclusion, the history of English *grampus* is of interest on a number of counts: (1) its derivation from a utilitarian neologism *crassus piscis*, (2) its prominent status in the Norman and Anglo-Norman dialects of French, (3) the interplay between the vernacular and medieval Latin, in which oil-bearing marine mammals are grouped in the generic *craspeius*, generated by French *craspeis*, (4) the semantic narrowing of *graspeis* as it came to be applied almost exclusively to the killer whale, (5) the effects of folk etymology in English which associated the term with *granpois* as if meaning *grand poisson*, (6) the late stage *grampus*, in which the dynamics of linguistic change seem to have returned to the marine environment of the living mammal rather than onshore market for whale products, (7) the re-appearance in modern English of archaic designations in the currency of the phrase *killer whale*, and (8), not least, the many still unanswered questions of the determining factors (linguistic? economic? cultural?) which drove

this complex evolution. Throughout this development are concurrent changes in whaling technology and the economic importance of whaling. The current situation is dominated by issues of ethics as concern both hunting and captivity, and global biodiversity. Perhaps the current name *killer whale* will eventually yield an alternative that optimally accommodates current values. In this long terminological history, Latin *orca* has always been near to hand, just below the surface.

Notes

¹ For classical usage see E. de Saint-Denis, *Le vocabulaire des animaux marins en latin classique*, Paris, Klincksieck, 1947. In the early modern period some of these names were also used of a smaller dolphin-sized cetacean, the *Grampus griseus*.

² Geiffrei Gaimar, *L'Estoire des Engleis*, ed. A. Bell, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1960, vv. 439-46.

³ Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

⁴ *Le Bestiaire: Das Thierbuch des nomannischen Dichters Guillaume le Clerc*, ed. R. Reinsch, Leipzig, O.R. Reisland, 1892, vv. 2239-58. See L. Moulinier, 'Les baleines d'Albert le Grand', *Médiévales: Langue, Textes, Histoire* 22-23 (1992), 117-28 and, more generally, R. Baxter, *Bestiaries and their Users in the Middle Ages*, Stroud, Sutton, and London, Courtauld Institute, 1998.

⁵ Snorri Sturluson, *Edda: Skáldskaparmál*, ed. A. Faulkes, 2 vols, London, Viking Society for Northern Research, 1998, I.127, stanza 490.

⁶ Snorri, *Skáldskaparmál*, ed. Faulkes, I.31, st. 95, II.431, s.v. *vögn*, in his earlier translation of Snorri's work Faulkes identified Óðinn as the subject of the kenning; Snorri Sturluson, *Edda*, trans. A. Faulkes, London and Melbourne, Dent, 1987, p. 87.

⁷ *Konungs Skuggsjá: Speculum Regale*, ed. M. M. Lárusson, Reykjavík, H.F. Leiftur, 1955, p. 28f. For present purposes the transcription into modern Icelandic has been preferred over Larson's edition (n. 8) with its unstandardized orthography.

⁸ *The King's Mirror: Speculum Regale: Konungs Skuggsjá*, trans. L. M. Larson, New York, American Scandinavian Foundation, 1917, pp.120f.

⁹ *Föstbræðra saga*, Ch. 7, in *Vestfirðinga sögur*, eds. B. K. Pórolfsson and G. Jónsson, Íslenzk fornrit 6, Reykjavík, Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1943; *The Saga of the Sworn Brothers*, trans. M. S. Regal, in Vol. 2 of *Complete Sagas of Icelanders*, gen. ed. V. Hreinsson, 5 vols, Reykjavík, Leifur Eiríksson, 1997. The translator renders 'hval þann, er kom á Almenningar' (p.148) with 'a whale [that] had been washed ashore on common ground' (p. 343) but 'washed ashore' implies a dead animal, which the Icelanders would have been reluctant to use for food unless in very dire straits. It is preferable to see the animal as beached and its death as having occurred very shortly before the discovery of the carcass; the Icelandic verb is simply *koma* 'to come.' As the capitalization of the Icelandic editors suggest, this portion of the shore would have been one of perhaps several Commons.

¹⁰ *Two Voyagers at the Court of King Alfred: The Ventures of Othhere and Wulfstan*, ed. N. Lund, trans. Christine E. Fell, York, Sessions, 1984, p. 20.

¹¹ See L. Kindschi, *The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin- Moretus Manuscript 32 and the British Museum Manuscript Additional 32246*, doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1966, p. 68, and more generally, A. S. Cook, 'The Old English "whale"', *Modern Language Notes* 9 (1894), 65-68. For English reflexes of the bestiary tradition, see J.-F. Barnaud, *Le Bestiaire vieil-anglais: étude de traduction de textes animaliers dans la poésie vieil-anglaise*, Paris, AMAES, 2001, and D. R. Letson, 'The Old English Physiologus and the Homiletic Tradition', *Florilegium* 1 (1979), 15-41.

¹² While the evidence of a single site cannot be conclusive, M. Gardiner, J. Stewart, and G. Priestley-Bell conclude in 'Anglo-Saxon Whaling: Some Evidence from Dengemarsh, Lydd, Kent', *Medieval Archaeology* 42 (1998), 96-101, that the two groups of whalebones give clear evidence of the consumption of whale meat, but that the whales were probably stranded in shallows rather than hunted.

¹³ See G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Toponymie maritime scandinave en Angleterre, au Pays de Galles et sur l'Île de Man', in *L'Héritage Maritime des Vikings en Europe de l'Ouest*, ed. E. Ridel, Caen, Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2002, pp. 401-22 (419).

¹⁴ *Trésor de la langue française*, gen. ed. P. Imbs, Paris, Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1971-1994, VII, p. 1303.

¹⁵ In Normandy are found the family names *Le Vauman* and *Le Gaumer*, for these and *walmani*, see R. P. de Gorog, *The Scandinavian Element in French and Norman*, New York, Bookman Associates, 1958, p.98.

¹⁶ See W. B. Lockwood, 'The Faroese Whale Names', *Fróðskaparrit* 43 (1995), 73-84.

¹⁷ See W. B. Lockwood, 'The Etymology of Petrel, Mother Carey's Chicken and Narwhal', *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 16 (1968), 285-90, and W. Sayers, 'Lexical and Literary Evidence for Medieval Trade in Precious Goods: Old French *rohal*, *roal*, Middle English *rouel* "walrus (and narwhal?) ivory"', *NOWELE: North-Western European Language Evolution* 44 (2004), 101-19. For examples of the complexity of this terminological evidence across a larger linguistic zone, see Lockwood, 'Etymological Notes on Some Scandinavian Whale Names', *Maal og Minne* 1-2 (1994), 31-34.

¹⁸ Thus we find in the languages of medieval north-western Europe no whales names based on notions of speck, fat, or train (as in train oil), to cite only their English forms.

¹⁹ Literary and documentary evidence for the active hunting of whales, in addition to exploiting beached animals, is gathered in S. Lebecq, 'Scènes de chasse aux mammifères marins (Mers du Nord, VIe-XIIe siècles)', in *Milieus naturels, espaces sociaux: Études offertes à Robert Delort*, ed. E. Momet and F. Morenzoni, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1997, pp. 241-53. For this example, see 243, citing charters relative to the abbey of Saint-Denis ('Pièces justificatives', 6a-b, p. 251).

²⁰ For a general orientation to this complex of problems, see S. Lebecq, 'L'homme et le milieu marin dans le bassin des mers du Nord au début du Moyen Âge', in *L'Homme et la nature au Moyen Âge: Paléoenvironnement des sociétés occidentales, Actes du Ve Congrès International d'Archéologie Médiévale tenu à Grenoble (France), 6-9 octobre 1993*, ed. M. Colardelle, Paris, Editions Errance, 1996, pp. 180-88. Despite the promising title, B. Charles-Lacombe, *Maroniers, notoniers et pêcheurs dans la littérature française des XIIe, XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, Villeneuve-d'Ascq, Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2003, is little more than an assembly of literary motifs and passages, and contributes little to the analysis of the questions raised here.

²¹ F. Neveux, 'L'héritage des Vikings dans la Normandie ducale', in *L'Héritage Maritime des Vikings en Europe de l'Ouest*, 101-18, (p.116). A graphic sense of what such a site might have looked like some centuries later in the New World is found in L. Turgeon, 'Amérindiens et Basques, Chasseurs de Baleines à l'Île aux Basques (XVIe-XVIIe siècle): Reconstruction archéologique d'un site historique', in *Milieus Naturels, Espaces Sociaux*, pp. 255-71.

²² In a treatise on the management of a large household from the late fourteenth century, we read 'Craspoiz. C'est balaine salee, et doit estre par lesches cru et cuit en eaeu comme lart, et servir avec vos pois.' (*Craspois* is salt-cured whale meat, and should be thoroughly freshened - leached of salt - while still raw, then boiled in water like other salt meat; serve with peas or beans), *Le Mesnagier de Paris*, ed. Georgina E. Brereton and Janet M. Ferrier, Paris, Le Livre de Poche, 1994, p.706, § 207. For the householder, a variety of forms of grease were available: 'Burre ou sain, huile ou craspois/ Assez a amender ses pois' (Butter or lard, vegetable or whale oil, Enough to season her peas and beans), A. Jubinal, *Jongleurs et Trouvères*, Paris, A. Merklein, 1835, p.103.

²³ Chapter 68 of the *Très Ancien Coutumier de Normandie*, 'De crasso pisce', in *Coutumiers de Normandie*, ed. J. Tardif, (Latin text), Rouen, Cagniard, 1881, 1.1, p.63; (French and Norman text), Rouen, Lestringant and Paris, Picard, 1902, 1.2, p. 54, cited in Neveux, 'L'Héritage des Vikings', pp. 116f.

²⁴ 'Charte de l'abbé Hilduin de Saint-Denis relative au partage des biens entre mense abbatiale et mense capitulaire', Saint-Denis, 22 January, 832, published as 'AN, K9, No. 5', in J. Tardif, *Monuments Historiques*, Paris, no pub., 1866, pp. 84-86 (p.85).

²⁵ *Vita Filiberti abbatis Gemeticensis et Heriensis*, in *MGH, Scriptories Rerum Merovingicarum*, eds B. Krusch and W. Levison, Hannoverae et Lipsiae, Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1910, Vol. 5, Ch. 9, p. 590.

²⁶ See S. Lebecq, 'La Neustrie et la mer', in *La Neustrie, les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, ed. H. Atsma, Sigmaringen, J. Thorbecke, 1989, pp.405-40, and, more specifically, L. Musset, 'Quelques notes sur les baleiniers normands du Xe au XIIIe siècle', *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale* 42 (1964), 147-61, and J. Lestocquoy, 'Baleine et ravitaillement au Moyen Âge', *Revue du Nord* 30 (1948), 39-43.

²⁷ *Miraculorum sancti Vedasti*, in *MGH Scriptores*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1887, Vol. 15, Ch. 6, p. 400.

²⁸ See *Miraculorum sancti Vedasti*, above; cited with discussion in Lebecq, 'Scènes de chasse', p. 251. For a discussion of the interplay of custom, mammalian anatomy, economical and culinary value in the medieval hunt and the apportioning of butchered parts, see W. Sayers, 'Breaking the Deer and Breaking the Rules in Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan*', *Oxford German Studies* 32 (2003), 1-52.

²⁹ *Regesta Regum Scottorum*, ed. G. W. S. Barrow, 2 vols, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1960-71, I, 131, 177.

³⁰ The earliest recension of this collection of customary law is thought to date from the time of Richard I, perhaps in part dictated by the need to regulate the wine trade between Bordeaux and England. In a later recension we read: 'Touchant les gros Poissons à lard, qui viennent et sont trouvés à la rive de la mer, il faut avoir égard à la coûtume du païs, car le seigneur doit avoir partie au desir de la coûtume, la raison est bonne, car le sujet doit avoir obeissance et tribut à son seigneur', (As concerns large oil-bearing fish that come to land and are found on

the shore, the customary law of the region must be observed, for the lord should have his share as custom prescribes. This is reasonable, since a subject owes obedience and tribute to his lord), *Rôles d'Oleron*, ed. E. Cleirac, Rouen, 1671, p.114. Here it is evident that the customary law affects fish and marine mammals beached on shores with known owners who owed allegiance to specific lords, as distinct from whales brought to shore by whalers and then prepared for the market.

³¹ *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, ed. W. von Wartburg, 25 vols, Tübingen, Mohr, 1922-2003, VIII, s.v. *piscis*.

³² *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. F. Liebermann, 3 vols, Aalen, Scientia, 1960, vol.3, p.232, and more fully contextualized in N. S. B. Gras, *The Early English Customs System*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1918, p.155. The document is identified as the Billingsgate tolls of London, from the eleventh century, and gives what are probably the earliest extant customs duties of London enumerated in detail. One wonders whether whale products were a speciality of merchants from Rouen (*Rotomagus*) in the century of the Norman invasion.

³³ In a Scottish document *craspois* is glossed as *phocas* 'seal'; A. Ewert, 'The Glasgow Latin-French Glossary', *Medium Ævum* 25 (1957), 154-63 (p.160).

³⁴ See the Faroese evidence noted above.

³⁵ *Liber Cure Cocorum*, ed. R. Morris, Berlin, A. Asher, 1862, p.45.

³⁶ For Renaissance representations of the whale based on first-hand experience, see *The Whale Book: Whales and other marine mammals as described by Adriaen Coenen in 1584*, eds F. Egmond and P. Mason, with commentaries by K. Lankester, London, Reaktion, 2003. Olaus Magnus's celebrated map of Scandinavia and the North Sea, from 1539, shows a killer whale (*orcha*), with a prominent dorsal fin, off the shore of the mythical island Thile (Thule), and a crew of three men, possibly accompanied by a bagpiper, at work flensing a whale on the coast of the Faroes. An entertaining little foray in literary whale lore is R. Miskolcze, 'Notes on the Whale', *Semiotics 1995*, ed. C. W. Spinks and J. Deely, New York, Peter Lang, 1996, pp.214-21.

³⁷ This and related expressions such as 'blowing like a grampus', date to the mid-nineteenth century (e.g., as found in Dickens) and may represent sailors' speech come ashore rather than first-hand experience of the animals.

³⁸ The *OED* notes that the whales were called 'killers' as early as 1725, while the phrase 'killer whale' is first attested in 1884. While still being habituated to life in the wild, the killer whale Keiko, star of the 'Free Willy' movies, died of pneumonia in mid-December, 2003, in Taknes Fjord in Norway.

³⁹ *The Washington Post*, Saturday, 12 April, 2003, A3.