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A New Suggestion about Weland *Be Wurman* in *Deor*

Hwær sint nu þæs wisan Welandes ban,/ þæs goldsmiðes þe wæs geo
mærost?

(Where are now the wise Weland's bones,/ of that goldsmith who was once
most famous?)

--*Meters of Boethius*, 10: 33-34)¹

The Old English poem *Deor*, “a set of *exempla* of unfortunate Germanic notables ... who suffered heavy disasters which could yet be overcome,”² begins with the captured smith Weland experiencing trouble *be wurman*: *Welund him be wurman wræce cunnode*.³ Because no simple reading of that clearly written line has seemed to make adequate sense grammatically, editors have emended the problematic word *wurman* in various ways. The most popular emendation interprets *wurman* as what it most looks like to modern eyes, “worms,” taken to refer to the serpentine decoration on objects that the smith is making or the shape of the objects themselves.⁴ But the Old English word for “worm” with the meaning snake or dragon is *wyrm*, a strong masculine noun, and the plural dative following a preposition would be *wyrmum*, so this interpretation is a significant departure from the given text, *wurman*. A different kind of textual problem, but one germane to this discussion, appears in *Waldere*,⁵ the only other Old English poem in which Weland appears as a “Germanic notable.” A group of letters in F (=fragment) 2:23 of that poem has elicited emendation because the first

part of this word is invisible to the modern eye; it seems to read *_ifl_*, which Ute Schwab argued could be part of the word *wifle*, “javelin.”⁶ This word is followed in the next line of text in the manuscript (the break dividing the verse-line) by *un mægas*, which editors combine into the unique word *unmægas* and interpret to mean “false kinsmen,” i.e., false friends. The whole verse-line can then be translated “when with the javelin false friends return [to do battle],” or something to that effect; but this is guesswork. In his recent edition of the poem, Jonathan B. Himes adds the floating *un* particle to the end of the previous word, reads that word with the aid of ultraviolet light as *[Nifle]un*, and argues that this is the name of the dynasty better known as the Nibelungs (Niflungar in Old Norse),⁷ the legendary ruling elite of the historical Rhineland kingdom of Burgundy.⁸ On this basis Himes translates the line “when Nibelung kinsmen renew attacks,”⁹ which makes much better sense within the dramatic context of the Burgundian nobles’ confrontation with Waldere. If *wurman* in *Deor* is similarly taken as a proper noun, in this case naming in Old English the central stronghold of that same Burgundian kingdom, *Wormatia* in medieval Latin,¹⁰ there is no need to emend it. The phrase *be wurman* is analogous to the Latin *juxta Wormatiam* found in numerous texts, and to modern German *bei Worms*.¹¹

In order for the place name Worms to be a viable reading of *wurman*, however, a reasonable case must be made for the possibility of locating Weland’s captivity in the Rhineland area of Waldere’s story, even though the narratives of Weland and Waldere are themselves quite separate. This

discussion of place will begin by introducing the people involved in the events in *Waldere* and the associated Latin epic *Waltharius*, and their violent meeting in the Vosges mountains south of Worms. Next, attention turns to the unexpected appearance of Weland the smith with his family in *Waldere*, and then to Weland alone in captivity at the beginning of *Deor*. Suggestions follow about how the exemplary smith accrues a story and how he becomes attached to the broader history and legends of the Germanic “heroic age.” The essay concludes with what might have prompted the *Deor* poet to introduce a continental city-name into the first line of his poem, and why Weland was available to be cast as the victim located there.

THE LEGENDARY CONTEXTS OF *WALDERE* AND *DEOR*

Waldere concerns an episode in the story of Walter of Aquitaine, the title character, in a legend that became widely distributed in later times. The fragmentary nature of the Old English poem (two fragments of about thirty lines each) means that it must be read against the tenth-century Latin epic *Waltharius* to get the full story.¹² The Latin poem tells of the flight of the betrothed hostages Waltharius and Hiltgunt from Attila the Hun with stolen treasure, of their interception on crossing the Rhine by the greedy king Guntharius (Gunther), along with his comitatus including the warrior Hagan —both Burgundians destined to live on in the later *Nibelungenlied* —and of Walter’s heroic stand against them all, one man against a band of twelve. The poet locates that battle at the mouth of a stony cleft in the northern Vosges mountains and places the king’s stronghold nearby at *Wormatia* on

the Rhine (modern Worms).¹³ Gunther is associated with the early and brief Rhineland kingdom from his beginnings, when the historical Gundicarius established the kingdom of the Burgundians ca. 411, and Waltharius himself, identified as a Visigothic prince in *Waltharius*,¹⁴ may be traceable to the historical Wallia or Walja (ca. 385-419), a Visigothic leader who was granted a region in Aquitaine in 417 with the understanding that his warriors would serve there as foederati for Rome.¹⁵ These two personal names remain attached to these two places even when their historical antecedents give way to legend.¹⁶ The Old English *Waldere* concerns a small but central part of the story inhabited by the same people as those in the Latin epic. At this point in the narrative, Waldere and the princess Hildegyth¹⁷ are holed up in the mountain cleft with their stolen treasure, having been waylaid by the Burgundian king Guthhere (*wine Burgenda*, F2:14) who wants to take it, and the three of them are talking (i.e., making speeches at each other) during a break in the fighting.

Two of the words they use allude to their geographic location and reveal the Anglo-Saxon poet's familiarity with names associated with place in the story. In the first speech, after encouraging Waldere to fight on,¹⁸ Hildegyth anticipates that Guthhere (Guntharius) will either flee from the battle to seek his *ealdne eðel* ("ancient home") or die here on the spot (F1.30-31). As we know from the Latin poem, Gunther's "ancient home" is the stronghold of Worms on the Rhine not far north of where they are now situated. The other localizing word, *Nifleun* (as Himes reads it), comes in

Waldere's speech. When taunting Guthhere, he brags that his byrnie will not fail him when the *Nifleun* kinsmen (the Burgundians) attack him again (F2.23-24). Thus the Old English poem localizes Walter's Rhineland confrontation first with the word *eðel* at F1.30, referring to the Burgundians' stronghold, and later with the word *Nifleun* at F2.23, referring to the Burgundian Nibelung dynasty. (*Nifleun*, with internally placed *f* voiced as in *wulfas* "wolves," is so closely cognate with Latin *Nivilon* at line 555 of *Waltharius*¹⁹ that the pronunciation would be nearly identical, so the Latin word is probably a calque on the early German name of the dynasty.) Even if one chooses to disregard *Nifleun* as a proper name,²⁰ or even to challenge the word's existence, there can be no doubt that tradition locates Walter's fight with his Burgundian attackers in the Rhineland kingdom centered on Worms.²¹ That place-name is not mentioned in the fragments of *Waldere* that we have, but neither are the Rhine, the Vosges, or any other place-name associated with the story. Guthhere's *ealdne eðel* and the dynastic name *Nifleun* imply the presence of the Burgundians' fortified town.

Unexpectedly, however, the names of Weland and his son Widia appear in these two brief fragments of *Waldere*, providing the only early link between the Weland and Walter legends. (Widia and Walter appear together in later stories, though without Weland.²²) The *Waltharius* poet refers to the legendary smith only in passing in the phrase *Wielandia fabrica*, "Weland's work," describing Walter's armor,²³ much as Beowulf describes his byrnie as *Welandes geweorc* at line 455 of the poem about that hero.²⁴ In Meter 10 of

the Alfredian *Boethius*, quoted at the head of this essay, Weland the goldsmith begins to be humanized as he is called “wise,”²⁵ but later in the fourteenth-century, the romances *Horn Childe* and *Torrent of Portugal* merely mention his name as swordsmith.²⁶ No story is associated with the smith on any of these occasions, so when he is introduced at F1.2 of *Waldere* simply as maker of the famous sword Mimring, this traditional allusion comes as no surprise. But in F2.4-10, another passage about Waldere’s sword, Weland has suddenly acquired a family. (The subject of *genam* in the fourth line below is Widia, named three lines previously):

“Ic wat þæt [h]it ðohte Ðeodric Widian
 selfum onsendon, and eac sinc micel
 maðma mid ði mece, monig oðres mid him
 golde gegirwan. lulean genam,
 þæs ðe hine of nearwum Niðhades mæg,
 Welandes bearn, Widia ut forlet;
 ðurh fifela gewe[ea]ld forð onette.”

(“I know that Thidrik thought to send it [the sword] to Widia himself, and also great treasure, precious objects with the sword, many other things with it elaborate with gold. He [Widia] received that long-due reward

because from captivity Niðhad’s kinsman, Weland’s son, Widia rescued him; through the giants’ domain [Thidrik] hastened forth.”)²⁷

In these lines Weland is named as the father of Widia and Niðhad is named as Widia’s “kinsman,” which implies contact between the smith and the

king's daughter (named Beaduhild in *Deor*), then in lines 8-10 Widia's rescue of ðeodric (Thidrik, Theodoric) is mentioned. The three references taken together imply a "Widia" narrative that the audience of the poem is assumed to know, including a backstory about the hero's birth. We know that birth story from the carvings on the early eighth-century Anglo-Saxon Franks Casket²⁸ and from two Old Norse versions from centuries later: the verse *Völundarkviða* ("The Poem of Weland"),²⁹ and the prose *Þiðrekssaga* (*Thidrikssaga*, "The Saga of Thidrek of Bern").³⁰ From these sources we learn that King Niðhad (Niðuðr in *Völundarkviða*, Nidung in *Þiðrekssaga*) captured Weland, then crippled and imprisoned him on an island to make precious objects for him. In vengeance the smith murdered the king's two sons and made fine goblets of their skulls as cruel "treasures" for the greedy king, raped his daughter Beaduhild, then on wings that he either created magically (implied in *Völundarkviða*, stanza 29:1-3) or manufactured (in *Þiðrekssaga*, chapters 112-113), he rose up into the sky (*hófz at lopti*³¹). After hovering above the king to gloat about his deeds, he flew away to freedom.

Though not quite as obliquely as in *Waldere*, the first two stanzas of the Old English *Deor* refer to this same revenge story. (*Be wurman* is left untranslated below):

Welund him be wurman wræces cunnade,
 anhydig eorl earfoþa dreag,
 hæfde him to gesipþe sorge and longap,
 wintercealde wræce, wean oft onfond

sippan hine Niðhad on nede legde,
swoncre seonobende, on syllan monn.
þæs ofereode; þisses swa mæg.

Beadohilde ne wæs hyre broþra deap
on sefan swa sár swa hyre sylfre þing,
þæt heo gearolice ongietan hæfde
þæt heo eacen wæs; æfre ne meahte
þriste geþencan hu ymb þæt sceolde.
þæs ofereode; þisses swa mæg.

(Weland, *be wurman*, knew persecution [or hardship, or
exile],

that resolute nobleman, he suffered miseries,
had as companions sorrow and longing,
wintercold suffering, often experienced woe
after Niðhad had put fetters upon him,
supple sinew-bonds on the worthier man.

That passed and so will this.

Beaduhild was not with her brothers' death
so sorrowful in her heart as from her own situation,
once she had clearly understood
that she was pregnant. She could not ever
think bravely what she should do about that.

That passed and so will this.)³²

In the refrain following the first stanza, the phrase *þæs ofereode* refers to Weland's escape from captivity, and the same words following the second stanza refer to how Beaduhild's fears connected with her pregnancy (most

likely fear of her father's murderous wrath) proved groundless after she gave birth.³³ The manner in which adversity is overcome appears in neither stanza, yet all who comment on the second stanza read the refrain as implying that Beaduhild's situation improved with the birth of Widia, and they name him even though no child is mentioned.³⁴ The unexpressed link between the two stanzas is Weland's cruel agency in both the murder of Beaduhild's brothers and the girl's pregnancy, but the poet keeps the focus upon each victims' mistreatment, their anguish about their situation, and recovery from it, Weland's as well as Beaduhild's, and the poet manages to present the smith positively by suppressing his violation of Beaduhild.³⁵ Unlike this poet of *Deor*, however, the *Waldere* poet has no interest in the princess, only in hero stories involving captivity or dire straits: Weland's captivity by Niðhad, Thidrik's by giants, and Waldere trapped one against many in his sheltering mountain cleft. All three situations are linked by the sword Mimring made by Weland,³⁶ and Weland himself seems interesting to the *Waldere* poet mainly as the father of the famous giant-fighting Widia, known best in Old English from *Widsith*, where he is named Wudga.

LOCATING WELAND (PINNING HIM DOWN)

Nor does the *Waldere* poet display much interest in location, at least in the brief fragments we have, referring only by the word *eðel* to the Burgundian city that is linked so firmly to Guntharius/ Guðhere by both history and legend, recalled in *Waltharius* as *Wormatia* and in the *Nibelungenlied* as Worms (*Wormz* and other forms with final sibilant), and mentioned in

Thidrikssaga and elsewhere by a different but related name, *Vermista*, *Verniza* (with several other variants).³⁷ Since no equivalent tradition links Weland so firmly to place, one must find other support for reading the phrase *be wurman* within this Rhineland context and locating the smith there in his captivity by Niðhad.

Happily, that is the general vicinity in which received opinion locates the origin of Weland's story. As Lotte Motz says, "Scholars agree in placing the Volundr (Weland) legend within areas of north or north-west Germany,"³⁸ William A. Paff affirms that Velent (Weland) in *Thidrikssaga* "has strong traditional associations with northern Germany,"³⁹ and Ursula Dronke, referring to the Old Norse *Völundarkviða*, observes that "the names of the three main characters in the poem, Volundr, Niðuðr, Boðvildr, are not found in personal names in Old Norse or Old English historical records. In German records, however, all three are found."⁴⁰ The author of the preface to *Thidrikssaga* ascribes the assembled stories of that work directly to German sources and specifically refers to Saxony.⁴¹ The saga-writer weaves together every German narrative that he can draw into the life story of Theodoric ("Thidrek of Bern," i.e., of Verona), and he includes the story of Walter (Valtari and Hildigunn) in chapters 241-244 and that of Weland, whom he calls Velunt and domesticates, in chapters 57-79.

Despite Weland's probable origins in northern Germany, however, in later works he and his homeland are moved northward. The *Thidrikssaga* author gives Velunt a home on Zealand in Denmark and has Viðga (Widia)

call himself a Dane and go home to his Danish father, while the more magically-inclined *Völundarkviða* poet makes Volundr a Finnish prince, in keeping with the Old Norse idea that the Finns were particularly adept at magic. That story opens with the smith living blissfully with a swan-maiden wife in the “Nordic-named Úlfdalir”⁴² (Wolfdale) and describes him as an elf.⁴³ Those fairy-tale elements do not, however, appear in other early stories about the smith. Even when he displays a skill so great that it might be thought supernatural, as in constructing a flying-machine, Weland usually appears quite human, complete with human emotions. (When associated with the folklore smith who practices his craft underground or in tombs, his nature becomes more eerie.) The contrast in the manner in which the two Scandinavian stories portray Weland shows how his home and even his nature, human or elvish, can be altered according to the teller’s preference. Place in particular is available for exportation to a location of the storyteller’s choice, as is demonstrated by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Vita Merlini*, composed in Latin ca 1150. That Welshman locates the smith *Guilandus*, maker of magnificent cups, *in urbe Sigeri*, which may be the old Welsh Kaer Sigont near the Roman city Segontium in Wales, by his time in ruins.⁴⁴ Both the Old English and Old Norse storytellers (and Geoffrey alluding to him in Latin) assign Weland a location that makes sense to them or fits in with their narrative plan.

This license to relocate Weland to a place familiar to or desired by the storyteller reflects the fact that, as Roberta Frank observes, he “has no

known historical prototype,"⁴⁵ no fifth- or sixth-century human to whom his name can be traced, as can the names of Gunther and Walter. Instead, Weland's name most often appears as an appellative based on his role as the exemplary smith, an icon of smithdom, as noted above. The author of *Thidrekssaga* begins with this point in chapter 194 when introducing (or creating) an extensive lineage for Viðga/Widia: "Viðga was the son of Velent, whom the Vaeringjar call Völund because of his skill."⁴⁶ Both the names "Deor," as the formerly-valued (dear) singer punningly identifies himself at line 37 of that poem, and "Widsith," wide-faring speaker of the poem of that title (and another *scop*), similarly personify ideas. Beginning with the premise that, like these two *scop*'s names, "Weland" is descriptive rather than a parentally-given name, one might imagine a development something like this: Weland-the-smith begins as a personification of his craft—as nobody, really, just an indication of excellence, typically bringing to mind no more a person than the "Gucci" label does today.⁴⁷ Somebody recognizes the phrase "Weland's work" as the kernel of a story where the smith can become a person taken captive and mutilated, as valued smiths sometimes were in order to anchor them in place.⁴⁸ Such cruelty asks for at least a pair of protagonists, one to enact the persecution and another to suffer it; the suffering leads to a desire for revenge, and a revenge story ending in the pregnancy of a princess is obviously open to a birth story, making possible a Son-of-Weland continuation. This scenario of an original mutilation and revenge story rich in potential rejects romantic theories of an ancient myth

in which the smith Weland has supernatural status, though he accrues such status in later folklore. In her study of *Volundarkviða*, Lotte Motz proposes an aggregation of elements similar to those I've suggested, although she does not base the origin of Weland's story in Weland's name, as I do. She bases her idea about the story's origins on social history: "After studying the poem and its interpretations I conclude that it owes its present form to a number of cultural environments. A story, current in the primitive setting of north-Eurasian peoples, where water birds are of importance, incorporated themes associated with the figure of the master-craftsman of agricultural communities, and was then reshaped by a poet with the outlook of a warrior society."⁴⁹ By the eighth-century time of the Franks Casket, Weland has already accrued a revenge-and-escape story recognizable from its illustrations alone, then in later narratives, as we have seen, he gets a family that ameliorates the violence of that story. In Chapter 79 of *Thidrikssaga* (of ca. 1250) he actually returns to Beaduhild and marries her, and the potential smith-character implicit in the appellation "Weland" (of my theory) becomes fully-fleshed in narrative, having picked up elements along the way of the Daedalus /Icarus story.⁵⁰

The character of Widia, on the other hand, was probably formed before he was inserted into the Weland drama, perhaps drawn there by the magnet of alliteration⁵¹ in response to a narrative vacuum, a son-slot asking to be filled. As Frederick Norman says, "The father-son relationship, Wayland-Widia, mentioned in *Waldere* and implied in *Deor*, cannot have been

original,” and he explains that father and son come from differently located traditions: “Widia is a Gothic hero whose exploits were known among the Langobards [...]. Wayland seems to have belonged to the more northern parts of southern Germania, possibly Continental Saxony, more probably Continental Anglia.”⁵² Most would agree that Widia gets his name from the early Gothic king Vidigoia mentioned by the historian Jordanes in his *Getica* (ca. 552),⁵³ and, as those with names derived from history often do, he comes into the story with a status already won. Jordanes lists him as one of four famous heroes (*et aliorum*) “whose reputation in this nation is great” (*quorum in hac gente magna opinio est*), warriors of whom great deeds are told and sung to the cithara (the harp).⁵⁴ Determining at what time and place Vidigoia/Widia gets inserted into Weland’s family would be interesting in terms of dating these stories, as he does not seem to be known at all to the *Waltharius* poet (whose interest lies elsewhere, however), or by name to the poet of *Deor*. Widia’s absence in those works pertains to my argument, to which he is relevant only for the vagueness of his attachments and geographical origins, and as another aspect of Weland’s evolving story.⁵⁵

It appears that later prose writers exploited Weland’s lack of geographical association and the vagueness of Widia’s Gothic homeland to appropriate the great and wily craftsman and his mighty warrior son for Scandinavia. The *Deor* poet, who demonstrates knowledge of several Germanic legends and considerably artistry in deploying them, does much the same kind of appropriation of Weland, with the difference that he is not

bringing his smith home, as the Norse writers do to Scandinavia. Instead he is advancing his thematic purpose as he locates Weland in captivity in a place that is not his home. According to the story, Weland is held captive in close enough proximity to King Niðhad's court for the princess Beaduhild and her brothers to visit him casually, so in terms of the logistics of the implied plot behind this first stanza of *Deor*, the location of Niðhad's court is more relevant to this inquiry than is Weland's homeland. Yet only the *Völundarkviða* poet betrays any interest in assigning him a home.

Scholarship on that later poem has had its effect on the issue of place even in *Deor*. When the prose introduction to *Völundarkviða* begins by proclaiming "There was a king in Sweden called Niðuðr," and in stanzas 7 and 14 the king is described as "lord of the Niárar," it is natural enough to assume, as Frederick Tupper, Jr., did in 1911, that this Niára tribe is Scandinavian along with other elements of the transferred story. Tupper therefore associated the Niárar and their King Niðuðr with the district of Nerika in Sweden,⁵⁶ and several scholars accepted this particular Swedish identity without question. But Kemp Malone denies that Tupper correctly identified Niðuðr's tribe, pointing out that the name of the king "seems to be of German (Saxon) origin."⁵⁷ Dronke goes even further: "The fact that the names Niðuðr and Viðga are found outside the Volundr story only in Jordanes *Getica* ... suggests that the Volundr story may be of Gothic origin."⁵⁸ It appears that the *Völundarkviða* poet added the Swedish-sounding tribal names at the beginning, along with the Nordic swan-wives, to develop a

northern story that originated somewhere farther south.⁵⁹ The effect of this is to enhance the story's structure while turning it into a Norse artifact. Unlike that author, the *Deor*-poet seems especially to direct our attention to a series of episodes *all* laid in greater Germany.

WELAND AND THE "GOTHS" IN *DEOR* ⁶⁰

That strong statement requires a look at the poem as a whole in terms of tribal affiliations. In six sections, each clearly marked off by a capital, the poem tells of these characters: Weland, Beaduhild, Mæðhild and Geat (in one section), Theodric, Eormanric, and finally, following a thoughtful section about change in the world, the speaker "Deor" himself. In an extended argument mostly irrelevant to this essay but rich in scholarship useful here, Richard North refers repeatedly to the Gothic emphasis of *Deor*: "With the exception of Deor [the singer] at the end, the heroes in this poem are all related to the Goths." He evokes Widia as the first Goth in the poem, "whose begetting the poet alludes to in *Deor* 1-12."⁶¹ But Widia is not present in the poem and, as suggested above, may not even have been known to the poet as the named son of Weland (despite Malone's opinion that he was⁶²). With this familiarity in doubt, Weland's location may provide a firmer connection to the poet's "Gothic" agenda; we return to this theme of place below. The figure following Weland and Beaduhild in the poem is Geat (with Mæðhild), about whom North has much to say; sufficient here is that in documents of ninth-century England someone of this name appears "not only as the ancestor of the West Saxons, but also as the deified founder of the Goths."⁶³

Next, *Deor* refers to two clearly historical Ostrogothic kings, Theodric and Eormanric, both presented as oppressors rather than victims of hardship. After the philosophical section about change in the world, the poem concludes with the *scop* Deor, speaker of the poem, inserting himself into the traditional story of a singer named Heorrenda (Old Norse Hjarrandi, Middle High German Horant). Even excepting Deor himself, as North suggests above, the poet may have regarded the hero Heorrenda as a “Goth.” Norman asserts starkly that [the origin of] the Heorrenda story is “located east of Continental Anglia,” and adds that later “the Scandinavian version developed mythological notions that do not concern us in our present context.”⁶⁴ He supports neither statement with evidence, but a later move of the story to Scandinavia with the addition of supernatural content seems plausible, especially in view of what happens when the Weland story goes north. If, then, the identities listed here are accurate, the poet’s agenda is clear. For whatever the reason, he is populating his poem with suffering “Goths.”⁶⁵

The *Deor* poet takes advantage of the inviting blank page that is Weland and the nebulously German/Gothic associations of Niðhad to introduce the implicit geography of his poem at the very beginning. He does this by placing the suffering smith somewhere *be* (“by” or “near”) the city of Worms, famous in both history and legend as home of the Burgundians. While not technically Goths, they are related to that *gens* by language and custom—and blessed with an “ancient home” alliterating on W. Just as

alliteration might have played a role in attracting Widia to Weland, that same attractive force might have influenced the *Deor* poet's choice of place as well.⁶⁶

I am not the first to suggest that *wurman* in *Deor* is a place-name. When Tupper turns his attention to *Deor* in 1911, he is led by the Old Norse stories locating Weland in Scandinavia, and his own association of Niðuðr and his Niárar with Nerike (modern Närke), to propose translating the word *wurman* as "Wermaland" (Old Swedish Værmer, modern Swedish Värmland), neighbor to the northwest of Närke.⁶⁷ Other considerations make Tupper's proposed location unlikely,⁶⁸ but the footnote he adds is astute: "Localization in the first line of *Deor* seems quite in keeping with our poet's love of definite backgrounds (ll. 15, 19, 23, 36)."⁶⁹ Responding to Tupper, Bruce Dickins says in 1915, "*Wurman* might conceivably be a blundered place or tribal name,"⁷⁰ and in 1921 Theodor von Greinberger asserts without hesitation that *wurman* is indeed a tribal name.⁷¹ In the same year, Frederick Klaeber attempts to put to rest the idea of *wurman* as a tribal name by pointing out that it would require the preposition *mid* (among), not *be* (by).⁷² Years later in 1975, when T. A. Shippey translates *be wurman* "among the Wermas(?),"⁷³ he justifies that questioned tribal name in a footnote: "Probably this is a false translation of *be wurman*, but all others involve considerable argument."⁷⁴ R. D. Fulk, aware of these suggestions about tribe and place, says, "If the word is a name, it is one that is not found in early Germanic myth."⁷⁵

But perhaps it is. If the smith Weland is projected from a word referring to his craft, he will lack the inherited ties to place or tribe of the semi-historical characters mentioned in *Waldere*, *Deor*, and *Widsith*,⁷⁶ and the poet is then at liberty to locate him in his place of captivity wherever he pleases. That the word *wurman* names the location he chose is supported by the word's grammar. Following the preposition *be*, *wurman* is most reasonably understood as the dative (locative) form of a weak masculine noun *wurma*, which looks like a name (cp. *Widia* and *Widian* in *Waldere*, F2), and coming after *be*, it strongly suggests a place-name. Though I find no other usage of the preposition *be* plus a city-name in Old English, the phrase *juxta* + city-name is a standard collocation in Latin, and the phrase *be Iordane* in the Old English *Genesis* (lines 1921 and 1932)⁷⁷ should be sufficient evidence to confirm the possibility of the usage of *be* plus a place-name in *Deor*:

Welund him *be Wurman* wræces cunnade . . .

(Weland experienced persecution *near Worms* . . .)

My place-name suggestion about this line rests on several premises, somewhat frail individually but strengthened when brought together. First, the dynastic name *Nifleun* appears to have been known to an Anglo-Saxon poet writing about the legendary Burgundians (Himes' argument, that I accept), and it is well known that this tribal name was associated with Worms.⁷⁸ Second, if the Rhineland tale was available to one poet, another poet might have had access to it also,⁷⁹ and scavenged it for features useful

in a series of tales about “unfortunate Germanic notables,” such as a handy place in which to locate that thematically germane but untethered story of Weland and Beaduhild. Third, if the poem has such Gothic tendencies as North suggests, that aspect should be established in the first stanza. Finally, as may seem obvious, an onomastic attachment to place tends to stabilize narrative. That is to say, if the name of a legendary hero becomes associated with a location, like “Walter of Aquitaine” and “Thidrek of Bern,” or if a place is embedded in a story, as the Rhineland is integral to the legend of the Nibelungs, it is difficult (not impossible) to move a principal character from such an established locality, whereas assigning a preferred location to an unattached person or story is much easier. The homeland of Attila in Eddic poetry and associated stories offers an excellent example of this. Historically, that warlord’s fortress-city was probably somewhere on the Great Hungarian Plain, but in the medieval stories about him, Attila and his Huns are quite happily at home in a Westphalian “Hunaland” with its capital at Susat (modern Soest) in what is now western Germany.⁸⁰ Weland the Smith, accruing a story that does not attach him to any particular place, can similarly be taken anywhere, whereas Guthhere, bearing his burden of history inherited from the fifth-century founder of a known Rhineland kingdom, is firmly attached to that location.

In an important paper of half a century ago, Fred C. Robinson says that “there is one type of textual difficulty where it would seem that a conservative stance is indicated; that is, in those passages where an

emendation, though long accepted, has not really yielded a satisfactory reading [...]. In such cases the principle of restoring the manuscript reading may happily lead to the discovery that the scribal form is really better than had at first been thought.”⁸¹ When discovery of the dynastic name *Nifleun* in *Waldere* opens up the possibility of another Anglo-Saxon poet having access to the same legendary geography, reading *wurman* in *Deor* within this context does indeed lead to the discovery that the scribal form works well—as another useful name, a city-name conveniently alliterating with “Weland” as a place to locate the smith in his lonely *wræce*.⁸² Although neither this current proposal nor any other about that unique word is susceptible of proof, availability of the Burgundian story makes the *Deor* poet’s use of a name derived from or echoing Wormatia/Worms not only possible, but more plausible as a solution to the problem of *wurman* than any emendation.

¹Acknowledgments: I am grateful to Roberta Frank and Winder McConnell for suggestions that I have incorporated into the argument of this essay, and, as always, to the Interlibrary Loan staff of Shields Library of the University of California at Davis, especially Jason Newborn.

Alfred's Meters of Boethius, ed. Bill Griffiths (Pinner: Anglo-Saxon Books, rev. ed. 1994), pp. 77-78.

² C.L. Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature* (London: Harrap, 1967), p. 81.

³ I use the standardized name "Weland" throughout (except in direct quotation), even though the name is spelled with a u in *Deor*. The word *wræce* that I translate "trouble" is usually translated "hardship" or "persecution"; the phrase *earfoða dreag* ("he suffered miseries") in the following line is in apposition to the phrase *wræce cunnode*. The slightly different word *wræce* (*wracu*, suffering) appears in line 4. All these words emphasize Weland's status as *wræcca*, an exile, which is how he is imagined in Alfred's *Boethius*, Meter 10:73: *ænne wræccan* (*Meters*, ed. Griffiths, p. 77). The principal editions of *Deor* used in this discussion are those by Kemp Malone, *Deor* (London: Methuen, 1933), and George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie in *The Exeter Book* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), pp. 178-179, notes pp. 318-319. Other editions consulted include those by Bruce Dickins, with translation, in *Runic and Heroic Poems of the Old Teutonic Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), pp. 70-77; by Joyce Hill in *Old English Minor Heroic Poems* (Durham: Durham University English Department, 1983, corr. 1987), pp. 34-35, notes pp. 43-44; and by R.D. Fulk in *Eight Old English Poems*, ed. John C. Pope, 3rd edition rev. R.D. Fulk (New York: Norton, 2000), pp. 37-38, commentary pp. 111-120.

⁴ Malone interprets these objects as decorated swords (*Deor*, pp. 4-5). Editors of *Deor* emend the word *wurman* because they find it, as Robert Nedoma does, grammatically “inexplicable” for its context: “The Legend of Wayland in *Deor*,” *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 38 (1990), p. 134. R.D. Fulk lists two attempts to explain the word without emending and five different emendations, rejecting all because “none carries sufficient conviction” (*Eight Poems*, p. 114). The two most popular emendations are *wyrmas* “worms,” interpreted as the serpentine shapes on Weland’s artifacts (as by Malone), and *wearnum*, the “restraints” placed on Weland in captivity. In *Legend*, pp. 134-136, Nedoma examines these and other suggestions and concludes by proposing a new one, that *wurman* is an “etymologically transparent” name referring to Weland’s tormentor Niðhad metaphorically as a snake, but he immediately retracts this idea (p. 136). Perhaps the most convincing “snake as ornament” argument is that by Robert Cox in “Snake Rings in *Deor* and *Volundarkviða*,” *Leeds Studies in English*, 22 (1991), pp. 1-20. Cox specifies the *wurman* as snake-shaped “rings” (bracelets, armbands) like those used as currency in the Germanic Iron Age, and he translates the first line of *Deor* accordingly, taking *be* as locative: “Welund endured torment amidst [his] snake[ring]s” (9). In that situation, however, one would expect the preposition to be *mid*.

⁵ Editions of *Waldere* used in this discussion are those by Jonathan B. Himes, *The Old English Epic of Waldere* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars’ Publishing, 2009), cited in what follows as *Epic*; F. Norman, *Waldere* (London: Methuen, 1933); and Arne Zettersten, *Waldere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979). Other editions consulted include the anthologies mentioned in note 2 by Dickins (pp. 56-63) and Hill (pp. 36-38, notes pp. 44-45).

⁶ Ute Schwab discusses this line in her edition, *Waldere: Testo e Commento* (Messina: Libreria Peloritana, 1967), pp. 209-17, concluding that the word under scrutiny is *wifle*. Her solution is incorporated by Zettersten (p. 21, with note on pp. 27-28) and by Hill, who nevertheless expresses doubt (*Minor Heroic*, p. 45).

⁷ Himes, *Epic*, pp. 26 and 89.

⁸ The historical Burgundian tribe settled in the Worms area in 413, its warriors were defeated in battle and their king slain in 437, and those who remained were relocated ca. 443 south to Sapaudia, the Savoy area of France. That new kingdom lasted until their defeat by the Franks in 534. After that, the Burgundian name became associated with later kingdoms located there and elsewhere in France.

⁹Himes, *Epic*, p. 81.

¹⁰ For the standard etymology of this name, see

<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worms#Name>.

¹¹ As in the city name “Bermersheim bei Worms,” for example. Another example of this usage, or one similar to it, is the location of Chaucer’s Wife of Bath’s home, not in the city itself but *bisyde Bathe* (General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, line 445). In *Some New Light on Chaucer* (New York: Henry Holt, 1926), J. M. Manly suggested that the poet was thinking of the parish of “St. Michael’s *juxta Bathon*” (pp. 231-33). *The Riverside Chaucer* (gen. ed. Larry D. Benson [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987]) reports this identification along with Robertson’s observation that *bisyde Bathe* could refer to any nearby village (p. 818, note on line 445).

¹² *Waltharius*, attributed to Ekkehard I, Dean of St. Gall (d. 973), is edited and translated by Abram Ring (Leuven: Peeters, 2016). Another edition is available

online at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/waltharius1.html> (accessed on 3/21/2017). Though Ring favors the attribution to Ekkehard I and an early tenth-century date (p. 14), he summarizes the extensive controversies about author and date that persist (pp. 8-15); see also Brian Murdoch's summary of these in *The Germanic Hero: Politics and Pragmatism in Early Medieval Poetry* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996), p. 91. In *Mocking Epic: Waltharius and Alexandreis and the Problem of Christian Heroism* (Madrid: Studia Humanitatis, 1980), Dennis M. Kratz states his preference for a mid-ninth-century date (p. 16) and presents the reasoning for dates proposed by others (pp. 16-17, n2). The same uncertainty about date pertains to *Waldere*, making it impossible to assess the relationship between the two works. When Himes mentions that the manuscript of *Waltharius* appears a whole century later than the late ninth-to-tenth-century date of the *Waldere* fragments (*Epic*, p. 6), that comment suggests securer knowledge of the date of each work than we actually have.

¹³ Lines 432-33 of *Waltharius* refer to the river Rhine flowing *ad urbem nomine Wormatiam*. The specificity of sites in the poem may reflect local knowledge and interest, first that of the young poet, identified in the manuscript as a monk of St. Gall in nearby Switzerland and his epic in hexameters "as an academic exercise in the Vergilian mood" for his master Geraldus (Dickins, *Runic* 4), and later of Geraldus himself, who dedicates the poem to the bishop of Strasbourg. Later Ekkehard IV of St Gall (d. 1060) apparently takes up the poem and corrects the Latin, explaining that the "Germanisms" offended the ears of his patron Aribo, Archbishop of Mainz (d. 1031). This information about the role of Ekkehard IV is from the 1911 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (vol. 28, p. 298, citing the *Casus Sancti Galli*, cap. 80), and if accurate at all it is relevant to both the date and the geography of the poem. Mainz is only some

25 miles north of the Burgundians' traditional home fortress, and the battle site in the poem is about half that far to the south, "some ten miles as the crow flies from Worms" (Dickins, *Runic.*, 38, note).

¹⁴ Waltharius is identified as an Aquitanian, i.e., Visigothic, prince at lines 77-79 of the Latin epic (Ring, p. 40).

¹⁵ According to Brian Murdoch (cited in n. 12 above), Walja ruled the Visigoths from 415 to 418 (*Germanic Hero*, p. 90, note p. 96. See this note for further sources about the identification of Waltharius as Walja). There is no hint of evidence that Walja was ever held hostage in his youth or encountered a Burgundian attack in the Rhineland, though the later Burgundians became neighbors of the Visigoths when moved to Savoy (see note 8 above), and in 451 warriors from both tribes joined forces in the famous Battle of the Catalonian Plains against Attila and his Huns--from which Attila withdrew. These events occurred long after Walja's death.

¹⁶ In "Walter of Aquitaine," PMLA 7 (1892), Marion Dexter Learned describes the borderland between saga and history at which these princes meet as "enchanted ground" (p. 157). Though writing over a century ago, Dexter has done the most to reveal the historical and quasi-historical sources of these protagonists. He supports his findings with copious useful quotation, and demonstrates how Paulus Diaconus in two works pits Attila's Huns against the Burgundians without reference to the Roman General Aetius, thus setting the stage for legends to come about hostilities between these two peoples. In the case of Gunther's attack on innocent travelers in *Waltharius*, the "enchanted ground" may be actual and found on a map, as place-names in the two Walter poems lead us to their Rhineland location. (Later versions of the story even inscribe the battle's location in Walter's name, referring to him as Walter of

Wasgenstein, i.e., of “the stone-cliff of the Vosges,” Latin *Vosagus*.) Himes offers a photograph of a ruin on a rocky craig associated with the Wasgenstein (*Epic*, p. xii).

¹⁷ Hildegyth’s name does not appear in these fragments of the poem. It is supplied by scholars as the Old English equivalent of her name found in other languages.

¹⁸ Himes analyzes in detail the arguments about the identity of the speaker in this first fragment (pp. 56-68), concluding that “Hildegyth appears indeed to be the speaker of F1 as scholars have long believed” (p. 68). It is odd that there was ever uncertainty about Hildegyth as speaker when by goading the hero to greater deeds she is fulfilling a standard woman’s role in heroic narrative, the role of inciter explored by Jenny Jochens in *Old Norse Images of Women* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp. 162-203.

¹⁹ The word *Nivilones* occurs in a sentence at lines 555-56 of the Latin poem: *Nōn assunt Avarēs hīc, sed Francī Nivilōnēs,/ cultōrēs regiōnis* (“These are not Avars here, but Frankish Nivelons, dwellers in this region”). The poet’s change of the *gens* from Burgundians to Franks reflects the reality of his day, when the Franks had taken over the area of Worms after the Burgundian survivors of the 437 slaughter were moved south to a different area of France. (See note 8 above.) The words *Nivilones* and, if accepted, *Nifleun* represent the earliest known appearances of this dynastic name.

²⁰ Since no other name is capitalized in these two fragments, nor is capitalization of proper names a standard usage in Anglo-Saxon times, Himes’ sighting of the trace of a capital N might be seen as actually damaging his argument, but he defends the unusually capitalized pronoun *Se* referring to God in Fragment 2:25 (two lines later) by saying, “Scribes sometimes

distinguished references to deity or favored individuals this way.” Perhaps the scribe regarded *Nifleun* as naming a favored dynasty. The other main problem, lack of alliteration in the resulting line, could be due to scribal incompetence; Himes faults the scribe elsewhere (see pp. 27-35). It would be wise to align these supportive arguments together to strengthen the attractive reading. I accept the word *Nifleun* primarily because of its close identity with Latin *Nivelon* and similarity to Old Norse *Niflung*.

²¹ Norman’s examples in his section III, “The Different Versions of the Story” (*Waldere*, pp. 7-13), show recurring references to the Rhineland location.

²² *Widia* (as *Wittega*, etc.) appears in some later stories about Theoderic in which Walter also appears as a champion of the king, but *Weland* does not feature in those tales. The evidence suggest that *Widia* son of *Weland* and *Widia* the Gothic warrior belonged to two distinct stories, rarely joined in the tradition. For tracking of these stories see Henning Larsen, “Viðga in Scandinavian Hero Legend,” *Scandinavian Studies and Notes* 6 (1920), pp. 75-81. Larsen does not observe that the English branch of the *Weland*-*Widia* legend contains just four relevant items: the Franks Casket, *Widsith*, *Deor*, and *Waldere*. A child of *Weland* and *Beaduhild* is implied on the Franks Casket and in *Deor* but left unidentified, the *Widia* of German story appears in *Widsith* as *Wudga* (with *Hama* but no *Weland*), and only in *Waldere* is *Widia* named as the son of *Weland* in Old English. This earlier absence of named family members for *Weland* may support Himes’ theory of the poem’s Frankish connections.

²³ *Waltharius*, line 965 (Ring, p. 120).

²⁴ *Beowulf*, line 455 (*Klaeber’s Beowulf*, ed. R.D. Fulk, Robert Bjork, and John D. Niles [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008], p. 17).

²⁵ The Alfredian “Meters of Boethius” introduces an extended digression concerning Weland *þæs goldsmiðes* in Meter 10, lines 33-43, mentioning no family but possibly alluding to the revenge tale with the word *wræccan* at line 38. For the Boethian line *Ubi nunc fidelis ossa Fabricci manent*, Meter 7, line 15), the translator substitutes “*Hwær sint nu þæs wisan Welandes ban?*” (“Where are now the wise Weland’s bones?”; meter 10: 33, with the phrase *wisan Welandes ban* repeated in lines 35 and 42). Substituting the fabulously skillful craftsman for the famously incorruptible Roman consul Fabricius is not a mistake based on a misunderstanding of the Latin, as some once thought (e.g., Oliver F. Emerson in “Legends of Cain, Especially in Old and Middle English,” *PMLA* 21/4 [1906], 909-910). In line 35 the Anglo-Saxon translator states his intention as he plays on the meaning of the consul’s name, *fabricii*, “artificer” (cp. *Wielandia fabrica*), in order to insert an eleven-line poem about how someone undergoing hardship (*wræccan*, cp. *wræces* in line 1 of *Deor*) cannot be robbed of his Christ-given skill (line 37), and he artfully frames his poem with the repeated *ubi sunt* question about the location of Weland’s bones (Griffiths, *Alfred’s Meters*, pp. 77-78). Despite the word *ubi*, this phrase has no relevance to actual place. I introduce the Alfredian passage to show that this Anglo-Saxon interpolator (whoever he actually was) had no trouble regarding Weland as a thoroughly human craftsman.

²⁶ In the Auchinleck MS version of *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, the princess explains that Weland is the maker of the sword Bitterfer (400-403; <https://auchinleck.nls.uk/mss/horn.html>); and in *Torrent of Portugal* the “King of Pervense” (Provence) offers Torrent a sword named Adolake made by “Velond” (*Torrent of Portyngale*, ed. E. Adam for the Early English Text Society [1887], p. 16; lines 420-403).

²⁷ Himes, *Epic*, p. 80, with my translation. Rather than making line 7b a parenthesis as Himes does, I prefer to treat it as the initial main clause of a separate sentence (following Dickins, *Runic*, p. 61; Hill, *Minor Heroic*, p. 37; and Zettersten, *Waldere*, p. 19).

²⁸ H. R. Ellis Davidson suggested that the Weland-Beaduhild picture on the Franks Casket juxtaposed to that of the Virgin with Child implies that an important boy-child will also be born to Beaduhild ("The Smith and the Goddess: Two Figures on the Franks Casket from Auzon," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 3 [1969], 216-226). If one reads completely across the front panel left to right, an interesting thematic progression emerges that suggests a temporal sequence: First is the smith's initial vengeance in killing the little boys (in the recent past, as implied by the corpse and skull), then is shown his first move toward a second vengeance, as he hands Beaduhild a cup to get her drunk so that he can impregnate her (in the immediate future), then comes his preparation for escape by killing geese, and finally, at far right, sits a young woman with babe in arms (the Virgin).

²⁹ Ursula Dronke, ed. and trans., *The Poetic Edda*, vol. 2. *Mythological Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 243-254, cited in what follows by title, stanza number and line.

³⁰ Edward R. Haymes, trans., *The Saga of Thidrek of Bern* New York: Garland, 1988), cited in what follows by the title *Saga* and chapter number.

³¹ *Volundarkviða* 29:5-6. The phrase *Hlæiandi Volundr/ hófz at lopti* is repeated in lines 38:1-2.

³² Lines 1-14 from Malone, *Deor*, pp. 23-24, with my translation.

³³ At this point in *Deor*, Beaduhild might be worried about her father's reaction to her loss of virginity, which destroys her bride-value. In stanza 33 of *Völundarqviða* the smith warns Niðuð not to harm or kill his "wife" (brúði minni).

³⁴ Both the Franks Casket and *Deor* allude to Beaduhild's pregnancy, which implies there will be a child on the way. In *Völundarqviða* the smith foretells the birth (stanza 33). Like all other commentators on *Deor*, Norman assumes the identity of Beaduhild's child: "Her triumph came because she bore a famous son, Widia" ("Problems in the Dating of *Deor* and Its Allusions," *Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honour of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr.*, eds. Jess B. Bessinger and Robert P. Creed [London: Allen and Unwin, 1965], p. 209).

³⁵ In his article "What Has Weland to Do with Christ?: The Franks Casket and the Acculturation of Christianity in Early Anglo-Saxon England" (*Speculum* 84 [2009], 549-81), the historian Richard Abels argues that the two narrative scenes carved on the front of the casket, depicting Weland and the Magi, concern responses to good and bad lordship, and he identifies Niðhad, the king who has maimed and imprisoned the smith, as the bad lord in Weland's story. What is surprising is Abels' demonstration that Weland's acts of vengeance, acts that we would regard as despicable crimes of murder and rape, would not have seemed so unreasonable in a culture where "vengeance was as much a matter of moral obligation as reciprocal gift giving" (p. 572), a duty endorsed or at least understood even by important churchmen such as Bede (pp. 572-581).

³⁶ Himes explains how these lines create boxes within boxes of captivity narratives: "By alluding to both Niðhad and Weland in the appositions for Widia, the speaker embeds another tale of captivity and release within the

allusion to Æodoric and Widia's adventure in the giants' domain. The poet thus compresses a three-fold theme of captivity into this passage, setting Walter's predicament at the hands of Guðhere alongside those well-known exempla of Germanic legend" (*Epic*, p. 40).

³⁷ According to William A. Paff, all the place names in this strange series, including others not listed here, refer to Worms (*The Geographical and Ethnic Names in Æiðrikssaga: A Study in Germanic Legend* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959], p. 214).

³⁸ Motz, "New Thoughts on Volundurkviða," *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* 22 (1986-89), 64.

³⁹ Paff, *Geographical*, p. 53.

⁴⁰ Dronke, *Edda*, II, 269-70 and note 30.

⁴¹ Haymes, *Saga*, p. 3.

⁴² Dronke, *Edda*, II, 287.

⁴³ Völundr is called an elf (elf prince or wise elf) in stanzas 10, 13, and 32 of *Völundarkviða*.

⁴⁴ John Jay Parry identifies Geoffrey's *urbs Sigenus* as "the old Welsh Kaer Sigont (now Caer Seiont), a name perhaps transferred to Carnarvon from the ruins of the Roman station of Segontium on the hill a short distance above the present city" (note 13 in Perry's translation of the *Vita Merlini*, online at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/eng/vm/>). Considering how these mentions of Weland are locally appropriated, Parry's choice of Sigont may be a more likely identification by the Welsh author than "the town of Siegun in Germany, celebrated for its iron-works" proposed by Georges-Bernard Depping and Francisque Michel: in *Wayland Smith* (1833, translated "with additions" by S. W. Singer [London: William Pickering, 1847], p. xxxiii, footnote; available

online). That German town may have been in Geoffrey's source, however, with the similar-sounding place names allowing him to move the smith to Wales.

⁴⁵ Frank, "Germanic Legend in Old English Literature," *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 92.

⁴⁶ Apparently unaware of the saga writer's prior insight, Jacob Grimm suggests that Weland's name is based on a present participle connected with the Old Norse word *vél* ("skill"), related to the English word "wile" (stratagem) (*Teutonic Mythology*, Vol. I. trans. James Steven Stallybrass [London: George Bell and Sons, 1882], p. 368). More recently James Bradley (citing work by Gillespie) explains: "Old English *Weland* and its Middle High German cognant *Wielant* derive from the present participle of an (unrecorded) proto-Germanic verb **welan* which probably meant 'to work dexterously, with craft' and which in Old Norse gave rise to such words as *véla* 'create, construct with art,' and *smið-véla* 'art of metal-work'" ("Sorcerer or Symbol?—Weland the Smith in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture and Verse," *Pacific Coast Philology*, 25 [1990], p. 41).

⁴⁷ My thanks to David Allen for suggesting that the phrase "Weland's Work" might function as a type of hallmark.

⁴⁸ See Dronke, *Edda*, II, 268-69.

⁴⁹ Motz, "New Thoughts," p. 50. Ursula Dronke proposes yet another scenario for the development of the story in her chapter on *Völundarkviða* in *Edda*, II, 269-90.

⁵⁰ Dronke summarizes points of contact between the flight stories of Daedalus/Icarius and Weland in *Edda*, II, 265. Norman takes this affinity farther and with it expresses a view quite different from those who imagine an ancient Germanic legendary origin for the smith. "Ultimately," he says, "the story told

of Weland is probably of classical origin" ("Problems," p. 56, cited in n 5); cp. Bradley, "Sorcerer," p. 142 (cited in n 46). More specifically it is the theme of the captive smith's escape on manufactured wings that is likely borrowed from the Daedalus story, whether transmitted through oral culture or more directly by a reader of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (VIII 183-235). For discussion of this flight aspect of the Weland story shown on Viking Age stone monuments in northern England and Sweden, see Lilla Kopár, *Gods and Settlers: The Iconography of Norse Mythology in Anglo-Scandinavian Sculpture* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. 11-19.

⁵¹ "The family connection may have been constructed for purely alliterative reasons, just as Wade became the father of Wayland and thus the grandfather of Widia" (Norman, "Problems," p. 207).

⁵² Norman, "Problems," p. 207.

⁵³ Jordanes, *History of the Goths* (*Getica*, available online in Latin at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/iordanes1.html#l>). Jordanes, citing the historian Priscus, refers to Vidigoia with a geographical location. On his way from Constantinople to visit Attila, Priscus says, "Crossing mighty rivers -- namely, the Tisia and Tibisia and Dricca -- we came to the place where long ago VIDIGOIA, bravest of the Goths, perished by the guile of the Sarmatians" (*Getica* 34:178). Jordanes describes Vidigoia as the heroic subject of songs already ancient in his time, a casual remark that I find no reason to disbelieve. As Viðga in *Thidrekssaga*, this "bravest of the Goths" assumes such importance as the king's champion "as almost to overshadow his master" (Larsen, "Viðga," 75). (He lends Thidrik his sword Mimming in chapter 221, a loan referred to in *Waldere* Fragment 2:7, which shows the two works so far apart drawing on similar traditions.) But in the other Old English poem that mentions him,

Widsith where he is named Wudga, he has nothing to do with Weland, nor is Weland assigned as his father in the Middle High German poem *Virginal* where, named Witige, he again fights giants. For more on this episode see Norman, *Waldere*, pp. 32-33.

⁵⁴ *Getica* 5:43. Here Jordanes has Vidigoia and the others he mentions living “above the sea of Pontus,” the Black Sea.

⁵⁵ It seems likely that Widia emerged into the story world in the character of a heroic warrior whose vagueness of background allowed him to become famous in different stories, for fighting giants in the Theodoric context and as the son needed to fill in Weland’s family, a family that may best be seen evolving in *Thidrikssaga* where Viðga’s two roles are combined. There, the son of Velunt (Weland) is born and named Viðga in chapter 79, Vaði (Wade) is Velunt’s father (chapter 57), and a mermaid is Vaði’s mother (chapter 23); the saga-writer finally knits these family units together in chapter 194. In chapter 336 Viðga rides into a lake to escape fighting Thidrek, but in the *Swedish Chronicle of Thidrek* his sea-woman great-grandmother rescues him and carries him back home to Denmark, where he and Thidrek meet later and fight to the death (chapters 439-441).

⁵⁶ Frederick Tupper, Jr., “The Song of Deor,” *Modern Philology* 9 (1911), 266. Ursula Dronke points out that “etymologically there can be no connection” between *Niárar* and *Næríki* (*Edda*, II, 309). Tupper does observe that Niðhad’s home is moved around between countries in the stories that mention him.

⁵⁷ Malone, *Deor*, p. 40.

⁵⁸ *Edda* II, 270, n30.

⁵⁹ Dronke identifies Anglo-Saxon vocabulary in the Scandinavian poem (*Edda*, II, 276-278), which leads John McKinnell in “The Context of *Völundarkviða*,” *Saga-*

Book of the Viking Society, 23 (1990-93), to list and analyze these words in detail (pp. 1-13) and conclude that analysis by saying, "It is in the Yorkshire of the 10th or early 11th century that I would tentatively place the poem" (p. 13). He updates his argument in "*Vǫlundarkviða: Origins and Interpretation*," chapter nine in *Essays on Eddic Poetry*, ed. Donata Kick and John D. Shafer (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014). As McKinnell firmly makes clear, his analysis refers to the provenance and date of the Old Norse poem, which leaves space for the Weland story itself to originate on the continent before reaching Yorkshire (see McKinnell, "Context," p. 9).

⁶⁰ I place quotation marks around the word "Goths" because the *Deor* poet seems to understand the term loosely, as in lines 22b-23a where Eormanric ruled "widely the folk of the Gothic realm," i.e., perhaps including Germanic tribes broadly related to the Goths. My title here echoes that of Richard North in *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 153, where it heads a section that has provided sources and inspiration for this one, though my argument is unrelated to his.

⁶¹ North, *Heathen Gods*, p. 160.

⁶² In his Glossary of Proper Names under "Beadohild," Malone says: "There was no original connexion, of course, between the hero Widia and Beadohild's bastard son, but the identification of the two seems to have been made early" (*Deor*, p. 38). I have suggested above that the identification of her son with Jordanes' Gothic hero came relatively late.

⁶³ North, *Heathen Gods*, p. 154.

⁶⁴ Norman, "Problems," p. 211. By "mythological notions" Norman seems to refer to the story according to Snorri in his *Edda* (*Skaldskaparmál*, Chapter 50), concluding with the everlasting battle (*Hjaðningavíg*) and Hild's

transformation into a demonic figure raising the dead warriors. Such a conclusion would be insupportable in a poem structured on the hopeful slogan *þæs ofereode*.

⁶⁵ North claims that Peter Heather, on the evidence of *Widsith*, believes “that a manuscript of *Getica* was in circulation in ninth century England” (*Heathen Gods*, p. 154, note 91). If this is true, access to Jordanes’ work may also have something to do with the Gothic content of *Deor*.

⁶⁶ Kemp Malone understands the sources of *Deor* differently: “Native tradition gave the poet a basis for his last section, and probably for the first two sections as well; the third, fourth, and fifth sections were based on German story” (*Deor*, p. 22). Obviously, like others such as Norman (“Problems,” p. 209), I doubt that the first two sections of *Deor* about Weland, Niðhad and Beaduhild represent a “native” Anglo-Saxon tradition as opposed to a German one. The next three sections of *Deor*, those that Malone identifies as “German,” concern Geat, either a personal or tribal name, probably the latter; ðeodric (Theodoric of Bern; few if any accept Malone’s view that he is the Frankish Theodoric, son of Clovis); and the famous Eormanric, king of the Ostrogoths. The final two stanzas of the poem include the reflections of an anonymous *sorgcearig* (“mournful person”) followed by the personal difficulties of the speaker, who names himself “Deor” (“highly valued”) and claims that he was previously a *scop* (singer) of the Heodenings (Old Norse Hjaðningar) who has been ousted by another singer named Heorrenda, a name synonymous with Hjarrandi in Old Norse and Horant in the Middle High German *Kudrun*. Thus in *Deor* (according to this view), the poem’s only first-person speaker projects himself as a character in a Continental story known in both Scandinavia and Germany.

⁶⁷Tupper, “The Song of Deor,” p. 266.

⁶⁸ Nedoma refers to “the temporal and cultural distance” casting doubt upon Tupper’s hypothesis (“Legend,” p. 135).

⁶⁹ Tupper, “The Song of Deor,” p. 266.

⁷⁰ Dickins, *Runic*, p. 71.

⁷¹ Von Greinberger, “Déor,” *Anglia* 45 (1921), 394.

⁷² Klaeber, “The First Line of *Deor*,” *Beiblatt sur Anglia* 32 (1921), 38-40.

⁷³ Shippey, *Old English Verse* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1972), p. 76.

⁷⁴ Shippey, *Old English Verse*, p. 200.

⁷⁵ Fulk, *Eight Poems*, p. 114 (cited in note 3 above).

⁷⁶ These include Gundeharius of Burgundy, Theodoric of Bern, and possibly Walja of the Visigoths in Aquitaine. Important, but floating free like the Gothic Vidigoia (Widia), is Beaduhild’s father, Niðhad, Old Norse Niðuð, whose name is likely to be an echo of Jordanes’ Latin “Nidada,” a king of the Goths. The historical Goths were notoriously footloose.

⁷⁷ *The Junius Manuscript*, ed. George Philip Krapp (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 58.

⁷⁸ An online search reveals that the Burgundians’ city is referred to by name 106 times in *The Nibelung Tradition: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Francis G. Gentry, Winder McConnell, Ulrich Müller, and Werner Wunderlich (New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁷⁹ While we have no evidence that the *Deor* poet knew any stories other than those he includes, Norman points out that there “is no need to assume that the acquaintance of the *Deor* poet with heroic material is confined to the material he uses. It would be most odd if he happened to know nothing but tales with a happy end. [...] On the contrary, the poet must have been steeped in heroic

material if he managed to find so many examples of misfortune outlived” (“Problems,” p. 210).

⁸⁰ Both city and territory of Soest are located roughly in the area of modern North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) in western Germany. For an extended discussion of Attila’s Hunaland, see Paff, *Geographical*, pp. 91-107. That relocation in story of the home of the Huns from an uncertain historical site somewhere far to the east on the Great Hungarian Plain influences the Scandinavian Niflung legends. It may explain how the kingdom of Atli (Attila) is so accessible to the Burgundians Gunnar and Högni (*Waldere’s* Guthhere and Hagen) in the Old Norse *Atlakviða* and *Völsungasaga*. Also see Paff’s discussion of the Hýnir (Huns) in *Geographical*, p. 108.

⁸¹ Fred C. Robinson argues for the value of retaining manuscript spellings in “Two Non-Cruces in *Beowulf*” (repr. from *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 11 [1966], 151-60), *The Editing of Old English* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 47-55; I quote him here from page 47. “Non-Cruces” was among the first scholarly articles on *Beowulf* that I read long ago as a graduate student. It made a great impression on me, as did the author himself, and I dedicate this argument for a non-emendation to his memory.

⁸² Adding a definite place to the Weland stanza also adds to the chiasmic structure of the poem occasionally noted by others. The artist-smith of unsurpassed skill confined by Niðhad at the beginning is balanced against the artist-singer expelled by his lord at the end when his skill is surpassed (by Heorrenda’s). Having Weland’s place of captivity named and therefore situated, emphasizes the effect of Deor being deprived of his *londryht*, glossed “estate” by Malone, but including status associated with a family history that is connected with place and entitlement. Whereas Weland is fettered in place and

employed against his will, Deor is forbidden the physical place along with
“good employment” (line 38b) to which he feels entitled.