
Book Section:
Karkov, CE (2017) The Franks Casket speaks back: The bones of the past, the becoming of England. In: Frojmovic, E and Karkov, CE, (eds.) Postcolonising the Medieval Image. Routledge , Abingdon, Oxon UK , pp. 37-61. ISBN 9781472481665

https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315232164

THE FRANKS CASKET SPEAKS BACK: THE BONES OF THE PAST, THE BECOMING OF ENGLAND

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Introduction

The Franks Casket is a small (9 x 7.5 x 5.1 inches) box made from the jawbone of a whale, [1] probably in Northumbria or at least by a Northumbrian artist, possibly at the monastic site of Whitby, or that of Jarrow, or that of Ripon, most likely in the first half of the eighth century (figs. 1–5).[2] The Franks Casket is a thing, but what sort of a thing is it? It is a box, a casket, a composition of whale-bone panels, a gathering, a carving, a sculpture, bone, body, whale.[3] Its ambiguous nature is central to its meaning and message. Much speculation has been devoted to what the casket might originally have contained, and certainly its contents, whatever they may have been, would have had an impact on our understanding of the casket and the stories it tells. Based on its size and iconography it may have been a jewel box (so many of its stories revolve around treasure); it may have held a book (books tell stories), bone protecting skin; it may have held a relic, living bone enclosing living relic, the absent made present here in this place. It might also have been a gift, the product of an act of devotion, a commodity, plunder.[4] Its composition is easier to explain. With the exception of the lid, the design of each panel is similar: a narrative scene or scenes surrounded by a lengthy identifying inscription with additional labels sometimes provided for individual events or figures. The lid has been damaged so that only one panel carved with a battle scene involving a figure labelled 'Ægili' (Egil) survives, but it is possible that a lengthy inscription was once carved on the missing portions. The similarities in design suggest that the narratives are meant to be read in conjunction with each other. The inscriptions are carved in a variety of orientations,

an arrangement that both draws attention to their difficult and puzzling nature, and draws the viewer/reader into a physical relationship with the casket that helps to bridge the past and elsewhere of which the casket speaks with the here and now of the viewer. We sometimes have to pick it up, turn it or our heads upside down, and so forth to make out just what is being said.

This essay has two purposes. Firstly, it will explore the casket as a postcolonial space in which a series of appropriated narratives tell a story about the coming into being of Anglo-Saxon England.[5] Secondly, it will consider the role of the casket's materials and materiality in creating that space. The casket tells stories of home and of exile. It is itself an exile, made from the bones of a whale stranded on the island's shore. One of the Old English descriptions of the whale is as an ealond/unlond (literally island/unland),[6] an un-land that is now on this island. Land and water, there and here, past and present are united in the place and space of the casket. It is and it creates a 'third space' in Homi Bhabha's sense of the term. For Bhabha, the third space was in many ways paradigmatic of the life of exile. It could take the form of a doubling, the attempt to replicate the space of the homeland in the place of exile, to bring the there here and the past into the now, always an impossibility as the two can never be the same. The third space thus becomes a space of liminal anxiety, neither one place nor the other, a space divided against itself.[7] For the Anglo-Saxons this was a complex hybrid space that looked back to doubled homelands, both real and imagined, and the Franks Casket creates a space in which stories and customs of and from those homelands, the 'Germanic' and the 'Roman', confront, echo, and rub up against each other.

Language and translation are crucial to the creation of this space – the Old English and Latin languages, the runic and Roman alphabets, and the translation (or

lack thereof) between the verbal and the visual. Translation can also be understood as the 'transfer of language, culture and power', an act which in and of itself creates a third space. In this case, the power of the Roman church and Empire translated into Anglo-Saxon England as part of a new Christian empire, and a mythic Germanic past translated into Roman history to create the story of a conquering chosen people. The deployment of multiple languages and alphabets into the voice of the casket maps the history about which it speaks. Translation, like the casket itself, gathers together or unites texts and cultures at the same time that it emphasises their eternally separate natures, their differences, the gaps between peoples and places.[8] The casket thus acts as a bridge that both spans and unites the actual and historical spaces from and in which its stories speak. As such, a Heideggerian framework is useful in figuring the casket as a postcolonial thing – a bridge, a gathering, a *đing*.[9]

Exile

In order for places to be bridged or peoples to be gathered they must first be separate, and stories of exile are central to the creation of a new postcolonial space by both the casket, and the Anglo-Saxons more generally. As noted above, the casket is itself an exile, the remains of a whale that crossed the sea to be washed up on Anglo-Saxon land. From the beginning, the Anglo-Saxons were keenly aware of their own status as exiles. In his De Exidio Britanniae, written in the late fifth or early sixth century, Gildas described the coming of the Angles and Saxons to Britain in their warships, and the remoteness of the island in which they settled.[10] While Gildas also made it clear that the Anglo-Saxons did travel back and forth between the island and the continent, the myth became one of exile without return. Bede also recounted the arrival of the conquering 'Germanic' peoples (Germaniae), famously dividing them

into the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, and stating that Angulus, the homeland of the Angles, remained uninhabited at the time that he wrote in the early eighth century.[11] In this story there was no return. Bede's phrasing makes it clear that the Angles. Saxons, Jutes, Franks and others who settled on the island of Britain did have a conception of themselves as 'Germanic' peoples, but the word itself is Roman, not Germanic, and to the Romans 'Germanic' was a blanket term for all the so called barbaric (non-Roman) peoples who had settled east of the Rhine.[12] It also included the Goths, the Vandals, the Geats and others. In the eighth century the Anglo-Saxons may well have remained aware of the names of these various peoples, but the exact locations of their homelands would by this time have been imagined at best. Bede, for example, imagined it as at least partially deserted. As Nicholas Howe, amongst others, has shown, for Anglo-Saxon authors from Bede through to the eleventh century, the Germanic homelands were 'less a region to be mapped than … one to be evoked', a setting for myth and story that 'transformed the past into a territory'.[13] History became location, and the histories told by the casket are relocated into the new place of exile. The idea of a mass migration, a type of biblical exodus, was based initially on the writings of Gildas and Bede,[14] and was itself a myth as the journeys of these peoples and their settlement in England were processes that took place gradually over the centuries. Nevertheless, the myth persisted and much of Old English poetry is concerned with tales of migration and the appropriation of land.[15] The Anglo-Saxons were exiles in a new promised land. They had crossed the North Sea just as the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea,[16] and the sea remained important to Anglo-Saxon identity. Ealond (or iglond), the Old English word for island, is 'a compound combining water (ea) and land (land/lond)', and thus a word that would have resonated very differently in the mind of an Anglo-Saxon than it does in our minds

today.[17] The sea also remained the only firm geographical frontier for the island's inhabitants.[18] It was the path of exile as well as a barrier that any new invader would have to cross. It offered freedom and protection, yet it could also carry a threat.

Anglo-Saxon appropriation of the exodus myth set the Germanic alongside the biblical and ensured that the biblical homelands of the Israelites also became imaginary homelands for the Anglo-Saxons, and doubly so, as they were the birthplace of the Christian Roman church brought north across the sea to the island by Augustine, who himself became an exile in this new land. For Bede, the 'Germanic' peoples who had settled in Britain were deserving of Augustine's conversion precisely because of their exodus. As Howe notes, it was Augustine's mission that allowed Bede to join 'Germanic and Christian history',[19] just as it was the larger Christian mission that allowed for the recuperation of an imperial vision by the Roman church.[20] The Anglo-Saxon church was born of this double exile, that of the Anglo-Saxons and that of Augustine. There were other exiles too whose stories are alternately evoked and silenced by the narratives of the Franks Casket: the imperial Romans now absent from Britain (although the ruins of Roman Britain remained visible across the land), and the Britons themselves who, according to Bede, were originally exiles from Armorica,[21] and who were now either exiled or conquered and colonised by the Anglo-Saxons. The Britons were the Other against whom the Anglo-Saxons would construct their identity prior to the Viking age, and the absence of the Britons haunts the Franks Casket – though perhaps they are there, hidden within the ambiguities of the Hos panel (fig. 3)

Bridge

The bridge gathers together lands and geographies, and in doing so creates 'location', creates a new space for dwelling in.[22] Anglo-Saxon England was a hyphenated, a new and hybrid, place. Linguistically, the hyphen is a bridge uniting or gathering together the originally different peoples, the Angles, the Saxons, the Jutes and others into one common hybrid people, just as the casket gathers them together visually. But the hyphen, and indeed the divided and opposing panels of the casket, also serve as signs of that original difference or otherness that remain as a trace within the incipient nation. For Heidegger, the bridge gathered together earth, sky, divinities and mortals. While the casket's makers clearly had not read Heidegger, the casket does gather together land and water (ea, lond, unlond), the human and the divine, history and myth, and relocates them in a new Anglo-Saxon place. Its multiple narratives tell stories that are sometimes identifiable, like the story of Weland the Smith (fig. 1), and sometimes not, like the mysterious tale of Hos and the sorrow mound on the side panel that remains in the Museo del Bargello in Florence. When gathered together the panels compose larger narratives of virginity and rape, evil and heroism, life and death, brotherhood and betrayal, danger and redemption, defence and victory, exile, civilisation and wilderness, treasure and its loss, the conquerors and the conquered, land, empire, nation, and so forth. In telling these stories the casket breaks down the relationship between subject and object by forcing us into dialogue with it. Not only do we engage in narration through the act of reading, but in many instances the casket tells us only part of a story, and we have to tell ourselves the rest; it gives us a riddle, and we have to supply the answer. For an Anglo-Saxon reader this would have meant that these stories that were so much a part of the creation of England were constantly retold and kept alive, and also that the peoples who made up England were constantly being gathered together anew each time the casket was viewed. The past brought into

the present, the there into the here and now. The hybridity of the country was mirrored in the hybridity of the box. These narrative strategies – the juxtaposition of past and present, the incessant remembering – would continue as a feature of both Anglo-Saxon poetry and prose. The Battle of Brunanburh, for example, places memories of migration alongside those of the recent and successful battle as a means of uniting appropriation with defence of the land by God's chosen people.[23]

So what stories does the casket gather together? For which peoples and places does it serve as a bridge? The scenes on the casket are divided equally between the Anglo-Saxons' imagined homelands so that three are devoted to stories from 'Germanic' legend, and three to stories from the history of Rome and the Roman church. They are all accompanied by inscriptions: some in Latin, some in Old English, some in the Roman alphabet, and some in runes (both conventional and encoded). These stories from separate and very different peoples and traditions are appropriated and retold by this polyglot Anglo-Saxon object, and in that retelling they are translated into Anglo-Saxon stories. They are also troubled narratives. They do not create a place of peace or harmony.

Most discussions of the casket will start with the front panel (fig. 1) because common sense tells us that that is the place that anyone opening the casket would start, but really one could just as easily make the same claims about the lid, since anyone carrying the casket would actually see this panel first. Time on the casket is not linear, however, so ultimately there is no 'correct' sequence in which the panels should be viewed or read. I'll start conventionally enough with the front panel. On the left is a scene from the story of Weland the Smith in which the hamstrung Weland, exiled and imprisoned at King Nithhad's court, is in the process of making a cup from the skull of one of the king's sons before raping his daughter, Beaduhild (who

subsequently gives birth to the hero Widia),[24] and flying away on wings made from ducks' feathers. On the right the three magi (labelled ᛗᚨᚷᛁ, 'mægi') accompanied by a duck present their gifts[25] to the enthroned Virgin and Child. The scene takes place in Bethlehem, the 'house of bread',[26] a location that reminds us that Christ's body will be broken and consumed as was that of the prince – or the whale from whose bones the casket was made – a meaning that is brought out with particular effect on the casket by the way in which Christ's body is encircled by the Virgin as if presented on a eucharistic paten. An Old English poetic inscription carved in runes surrounds the two scenes emphasising that they are all meant to be read together, though the exact connections between images and inscription remain ambiguous. The inscription presents the reader with a prosopopeic text that borrows from the convention of textual riddles, but goes far beyond those riddles in its play with materiality. Assuming that we begin reading at upper left, the inscription states:

> fisc flodu ahof on fergenberig
> warþ gasric grorn þær he ongreot giswom
> hronæs ban
> (The fish beat up the seas [or rose by means of the sea] onto the mountainous cliff [or burial place]; gasric became sad when he swam aground onto the shingle. Whale's bone.)[27]

Sea, land, and bridge between the two. The casket states in no uncertain terms that the whale has crossed the sea and is in exile, his bones literally bridging the two elements as well as the world of nature and that of humankind. 'Gasric' is usually translated as 'king of terror', but it has also been proposed that it is the name of the whale, meaning something like 'the one strong in life or power'.[28] The section of the verse referring to gasric the 'king of terror' (or one strong in life/power) reads retrograde along the

bottom of the panel, clearly emphasising the reversal of the whale's fortune, and the words 'whale's bone', not part of the verse inscription, are carved along the left edge of the panel next to the scene of Weland the Smith. Whether we read 'gasric' as the actual name of the whale or not, the phrase 'king of terror' (or 'one strong in life/power') does effectively serve to name the whale via its identification with terror, life or power, so that the casket itself, like so many of the figures depicted on it, has a named identity, drawing attention to its existence as both historical being and thing. Past becomes location. The identification of the living material from which the casket is made is also placed alongside the panel depicting the manufacture of a different type of container from the bone (the skull) of what was once a living being (the prince). Inscription and panel riddle on the shift from being to becoming, from free living creature to captive precious possession. The arrangement of the words 'whale's bone' (hronæs ban) identifies the casket's origins and helps to establish its materiality alongside a panel filled with things (tongs, cup, birds, feathers) that are busy transforming or being transformed. The juxtaposition of the two makes clear that there is a connection between the casket's history and materiality and the stories it tells. Its material is thus essential to its function as bridge, as will be explored further below. But the words hronæs ban can also be read as stranded or cast up, again like the whale itself, exiled from its home in the sea, cut up and carved, just as Weland has been exiled, captured and cut.

This panel, indeed the casket as a whole presents us with multiple narratives of transformation that map but do not explain the becoming of the casket, the movement from whale to box, as well as the coming into being of Anglo-Saxon England. But the casket offers us hints that that process of becoming is not yet complete. Neither the individual narratives (visual or textual) nor the casket as a

whole offer narrative resolution, and they tell us this in their own different ways. If the inscription that surrounds the two scenes on the front of the casket suggests that we are meant to read the two together, that there is some synchrony or harmony between the two, the visual composition of the panel tears that harmony apart. The scenes are divided from each other by a band containing interlace ornament, and the action of the two panels moves in opposite directions: from right to left in the Weland panel, and from left to right in the Adoration of the Magi. Even as we want to read narrative parallels, typologies, and unified messages, the arrangement of the visual narratives emphasise dissonance and threaten any sense of unity. There is a threat of violence and destruction, stories are pulling apart as well as locking together,[29] just as the bridge simultaneously unites and draws attention to the fragility of union, to separateness, distance, and discord The identity of both box and country are then on-going processes.

The front panel offers a reading in microcosm of the Franks Casket as a postcolonial thing. It bridges and brings together peoples, creatures, and cultures from elsewhere, translating them into this very Anglo-Saxon thing/place in which they dwell, a world the original owner of the casket would also have inhabited. The multiple narratives provide a cultural performance, an enactment of origin myths, and a re-enactment in miniature of the Anglo-Saxons' own migration from the continent, and from their own real and imagined roots in the worlds of Rome (here represented by the Roman Christian church) and Germania. In doing so, the casket also creates doubles. Like the Anglo-Saxons, these people, their myths and histories came from across the water into England. The casket itself, the whale, crossed the water to come aground in England. The front panel makes it clear to the viewer that just as the casket presents us with multiple narratives of transformation, it also presents us with

multiple narratives of home and exile that may double but are also very different from each other.

Gathering

The bridge gathers that which is apart into one location. Heidegger's concept of gathering was mystical, the fourfold gathering of earth, sky, the divine and the mortal. The Anglo-Saxons might well have thought of the Christian church, and specifically the Roman church as functioning in something of the same way. On one level, the Franks Casket is a bridge that gathers the pagan, the mythical, or secular history in such a way that it might dwell at peace within the Christian church. As noted above, Bede, who was writing about the same time and in the same area of England in which the casket was produced, saw Augustine's mission to the English as bringing the chosen but pagan Anglo-Saxons into the salvation of the church. But the Germanic scenes are not ones of peace. Rather they focus on battle, death, sorrow and exile, the Rome that the Franks Casket gathers together with its 'Germanic' narratives, is pagan and imperial as well as Christian, and violence predominates over peace. All the scenes on the Franks Casket have a double nature that haunts the casket as a whole.

On the lid (fig. 2) a battle between Egil the archer (generally identified as Weland's brother) and a group of warriors rages around what was originally the casket's handle. Egil appears to be defending his home, which includes a hooded woman, most likely Egil's wife, Alruna, standing beneath an arch with double-headed birds or serpents above her head and beneath her feet.[30] This may be an apotropaic image, a symbolic defence of the casket and its contents, but in carrying the casket it is the bearer's hand that would be surrounded by battle, by the arrows and spears that

circle the missing handle. They may be read as defensive, but they may also be read as aggressive. The image of a falling warrior apparently stabbing one of his comrades in the back of the head raises questions of duplicity and deceit.

The origin of the Germanic Weland and Egil story is an uncertain if not imaginary geography, but it may have arrived on the island with the Anglo-Saxons themselves. According to Völundarkviða (which was probably not composed until the period 900–1050, but which certainly reflects earlier legends),[31] the three brothers Weland, Egil, and Slágfiðr married three Valkyries whom they had first encountered in swan form. Alruna, Egil's wife, was also said to be the daughter of a Roman emperor.[32] She was then both a shape-shifter, and a woman who, through marriage, both united and tore apart peoples and realms. Years after their marriage Alruna left Egil and he followed her into exile, never to return. Weland's swan-maiden wife eventually left him as well. Sometime later he became the prisoner of king Nitthad, from whom, as we have seen, he finally escaped by making a flying machine out of birds' wings.

The basic story was very popular in Anglo-Saxon England, even though it is impossible to tell how many of the details were current at the time the casket was made.[33] Weland was said to be the maker of Beowulf's mail shirt and Waldere's sword Mimming.[34] Both heroes feature in poems that involve treasure, battles in or over foreign lands, and the coming into being of kingdoms. Weland is alluded to in the Exeter Book poem Widsith, a catalogue of kings and heroes of early history and legend which, like the casket, translates the past into the here and now. The poem simply lists his father Wade as ruler of the Hällsings,[35] but describes the heroism of his son Widia at greater length.

Wudgan ond Haman —

ne wæran þæt gesiþa þa sæmestan,

þeah þe ic hy a nihst nemnan sceolde;

ful oft þam heape hwinende fleag

giellende gar on grome þeode;

wræccan þær weoldan wundnan golde

werum ond wifum Wudga ond Hama.[36] (lines 124b–130)

(Widia and Hama—they were not the worst of comrades, although I might name them last. Often from that troop, whistling in flight, a screaming spear at enemy people. The exiles there wielded wound gold, men and women, Widia and Hama)

Weland features much more prominently in the poem Deor, also preserved in the Exeter book. Deor is a poem about the consolation the past (some of the same past catalogued in Widsith) can provide to the present. The first two verses are devoted to the Weland legend.

Welund him be wurman wræces cunnade

anhydig eorl earfoþa dreag,

hæfde him to gesiþþe sorge ond longaþ,

wintercealde wræce; wean oft onfond,

siþþan hine Niðhad on nede legde,

swoncre seonobende on syllan monn.

Þæs ofereode, þisses swa mæg.

Beadohilde ne wæs hyre broþra deaþ

on sefan swa sar swa hyre sylfre þing —

þæt heo eacen wæs; æfre ne meahte

> þriste geþencan, nu ymb þæt sceolde.
> Þæt ofereode, þisses swa mæg.[37] (lines 1–13)
> (Weland himself by worms (swords?) knew torment, the strong-hearted noble endured troubles for his companions. He had sorrow and longing, winter-cold torment. He often found woe after Nitthad lay fetters on him, slender sinew-bonds on the better man. That passed away, so may this. Beadohild was not for the death of her brother as sad at heart as for her own trouble, that she had clearly realised that she was pregnant. She could never think about how that should turn out. That passed away, so may this.)

But the words of the poems are rather different from those of the casket. If there was an inscription that spoke about the Egil panel it is now lost, and the inscription that surrounds the depiction of Weland speaks not about him but about the whale swimming ashore and the casket, the whale's bone. Weland's own bones went on to become part of the skeleton on which King Alfred went about constructing a distinctly united Anglo-Saxon identity during his struggle to gain control over the Scandinavian settlers.[38] The Alfredian translation of Boethius's De Consolotione Philosophiae meditates on their loss, using the same ubi sunt topos as the Deor poet. In lines that depart radically from the Latin original, Alfred asks, 'Hwæt synt nu þæs foremeran 7 þæs wisan goldsmiðes ban Welondes? Hwær synt nu þæs Welondes ban, oððe hwa wat nu hwær hi wæron' ('Where are now the bones of that famous and wise goldsmith Weland? Where are now the bones of Weland, or who knows where they were')?[39] The words simultaneously translate Weland's bones into an Anglo-Saxon past (via a Roman text), and link the goldsmith with the king himself through both his wisdom and his craft. The smith is a craftsman of gold, the king a craftsman of both text and kingdom.[40]

On the right side of the casket (fig. 3) is a mysterious scene believed to derive from an as yet unidentified ‘Germanic’ legend. The surrounding inscription is in alliterative verse and encrypted. The inscription is in Old English, but substitutes older runic forms based on the consonants that end the Old English names for the runic letters for all its vowels.[41] The inscription reads:

Her Hos sitiþ on harmberga
agl[·] drigiþ swa hiræ Ertae gisgraf
sarden sorga and sefa torna

or

Her Hos sitiþ on hæumberga
agl[·] drigiþ swa hiræ Eutae gisgraf
sæuden sorga and sefa torna

The generally accepted translation reads ‘Here Hos sits on the sorrow mound; she suffers distress as Ertae had imposed it upon her, a wretched den (or wood) of sorrows and torments of mind’. However, Tom Bredehoft has suggested that three of the runes should not be read as 'r'-runes but as cryptic runes that should be read as the letter 'u'. He suggests translating the verses as 'Here Hos sits on the high hill; she endures agl[·] as the Jute appointed to her, a sæuden of sorrows and troubles in mind'.[42] Both readings provide echoes of the inscription on the front of the casket in their words. There is the general tone of sadness, Hos's change in fortune when a sad fate was imposed on her, the lone torment suffered by the stranded whale and the mind of Hos, the imagery of death, and the sorrow mound, or high mound, that recalls the fergenberig encountered by the whale – or indeed the whale, the unlond, itself.

At the centre of the panel the words risci (‘rushes’ or ‘reeds’) wudu (‘wood’) and bita (‘biter’) are inscribed above the horse’s back, beneath its feet and in front of its head respectively. While the scene cannot be connected conclusively to any known text or story, the creature sitting on the mound at left, its muzzle bound by a serpent, is presumably Hos, the distressed one. Another figure appears to be contained within a burial mound between the horse and the hooded figure with the staff.[43] A cup above the mound helps to draw attention to this part of the scene. The word used here for barrow is a form of beorg, and the inscription and scene echo the inscription on the front of the casket in which the whale crossed the sea and became stranded on a high beorg. The three cloaked figures on the right remain a mystery.

If Bredehoft's reading is correct, the mysterious personal name Ertae becomes recognisable as a Jute (Eutae). He suggests that read within the overall context of the panel, with its two horse or horse-like figures, is embedded a reference to Hengest and Horsa, the two Jutish brothers who crossed the sea to figure prominently in one of the Anglo-Saxon’s origin narratives.[44] The reference to the two brothers in this panel would provide a neat parallel for the brothers Romulus and Remus depicted in the opposite panel on the casket's left side, to which I will return shortly. Alternatively, might Hos, tortured by a Jute, figure the Britons within the casket’s narratives?

The Hos panel remains enigmatic with its mysterious setting and personal names. We no longer know the story (or stories) of the creatures that inhabit it. On the left, a hybrid figure, presumably Hos, sits silenced by a serpent as an armed warrior approaches her. At centre, the figure beneath the mound is flanked by an angry looking horse and a hooded figure holding a staff. Which of these is the ‘biter’ to which the word carved above their heads refers? And who is the hooded figure grasped or restrained by two similarly hooded figures? This mysterious figure looks

directly out at us, both confronting us and drawing us into the event, doubling our gaze in and offering us another way of coming to terms with the space of the casket. The inscription may not help us to identify the story being told, but it does make clear that the story is one of sorrow, distress, torment, attack, and possibly death. The inscription also highlights the importance of language on the casket. Its hybridity, like that of Hos, helps to create the strange and foreign third space that is the casket.

On the back of the casket is a scene of the sack of the temple in Jerusalem by the Emperor Titus and his troops (fig. 4). The temple is pulled apart, Jerusalem falls, and its people are taken hostage. The inscription, in a mixture of the Old English and Latin languages, and runic and Roman letters reads 'her fegtaþ titus end giuþeasu hic fugiant Hierusalim afitatores' ('Here Titus and a Jew [or Jews] fight. Here the inhabitants flee Jerusalem'). The inscription changes from Old English and runes for the first part, in which Titus and the Jews fight, into the Latin language and Roman alphabet for the description of the flight of the Jews, and then remains in Latin, but switches back into the runic alphabet for the final word 'inhabitants'. It may be that the change in language and alphabet is intended to draw attention to the mention of the Holy City of Jerusalem,[45] and/or its destruction by Rome, signalling the start of a new order.[46] However, the move from Old English to Latin and back again also serves to embed the Latin within the Old English and the Roman within the runic. As is the case with the Ruthwell Cross,[47] or with Bede's description of Heavenfield or Gregory's meeting with the Angle boys,[48] the languages and alphabets suggest a complex layering of time, voice, geographies and peoples. An event from Rome's history is told in Old English, the words identifying the Jewish city of Jerusalem are written in Latin, but its inhabitants are identified in Anglo-Saxon runes. Certainly Jewish history disappears here beneath both the Latin and the Roman, just as the city,

its temple and its people ‘disappeared’ into the world of Rome, but what happens to the Jews is more complex. The word ‘affitatores’ is a corrupt form of the Latin ‘habitatores’, but written in runes, transforming the inhabitants of Jerusalem into a people that is both Roman (language) and ‘Anglo-Saxon’ or ‘Germanic’ (alphabet), yet not quite either. The inscription draws attention to transformation or metamorphosis (as did the inscription on the front of the casket, though that was a transformation of a different sort), and furthers the Anglo-Saxons’ self-identification with the Israelites.[49] At lower left the word dom (‘judgment’) is carved next to a scene of judgment, and at lower right the word gisl (‘hostage’) next to a scene of a figure or figures being led away. A figure seated beneath the throne at left holds out a cup in a gesture reminiscent of that of Weland the Smith on the front of the casket, suggesting that the two scenes of exile and imprisonment are meant to be read together.

On the left side of the casket (fig. 5) an inscription reading ‘romwalus ond reumwalus twœgen gibroþær afœddæ hiæ wylif in romæcæstri oþlæ unneg' (‘Romulus and Remus, two brothers, a she-wolf nourished them in Rome, far from their native land’) surrounds a scene of the twins suckled by a she-wolf while a second wolf and four shepherds (or are they soldiers) look on. In this case, the words ‘a she-wolf nourished them in Rome’ are inscribed upside down, so that the viewer/reader must turn either the casket or her/his head upside down to make sense of them. But Romulus and Remus are also upside down, and while their unusual pose often receives comment, it is usually left at just that, comment. The Romulus and Remus motif was known in Anglo-Saxon England. It was present in the remains of Roman art that still stood across the north of England at the time the casket was made. It was also present in Anglo-Saxon coinage and on the ivory plaque from Larling, Norfolk, with which this panel is so often compared.[50] In all those images, the twins

are placed beneath the she-wolf in the usual fashion, right side up. There is also a curious doubling about this panel. Two twins, two wolves, two groups of shepherds discovering them. Twins aside, that doubling is not part of the traditional story. Furthermore, there is a rough symmetry to the panel, and a rhythmic repetition of pattern and line (the lines of the shepherds' spears, the looping patterns of the foliage) that draw the eye to the groups of paired figures. Why the pairs? Why the doubles? The twins also, somewhat unusually, pull away from each other. The doubling, the turning of both the twins and the phrase describing their nourishing in Rome upside down might be intended to alert us to the fact that there is another side to this story. Yes, it is one of the great foundation stories of the city of Rome, and of course the Anglo-Saxons were always interested in appropriating a good Roman origin legend, but the foundation of Rome also involved a dispute between the brothers as to where it should be built, the murder of Remus by Romulus, and Romulus's subsequent rape of the virginal daughters of the Sabines and the Latins. In its allusions to murder and rape, the panel has obvious connections with the scene of Weland on the front of the casket. And of course the fact that the twins were exiled as infants to hide them from an evil king has parallels with the story of Christ. Like the figure of the double, these stories mirror, echo and haunt each other; they are alike, but they are not the same.

The Anglo-Saxons may not have been ethnically Roman, but their religious and intellectual connections to the city cannot be overestimated.[51] As noted above, it was the second, and perhaps the more important, of their imagined homelands. It was both a distant land across the sea and this promised land to which they had come, this third space. Through England's claims to Rome's first 'Christian Emperor', through the Church, and through the ruins of empire that surrounded them, and from which many Anglo-Saxon churches were built,[52] Rome's origins became England's origins,

and Rome's colonial architecture became the Anglo-Saxons' postcolonial architecture. Much has been made of the possible typological readings of the Roman stories told by the casket,[53] according to which Romulus and Remus become representative of good Christians nourished by the Church, and Titus's sack of the temple in Jerusalem becomes a figure of the New Covenant and the Christian Church replacing the Old Covenant and the Temple of the Jews.[54] But these are also colonial stories, and violent ones at that. The sack of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE occurred after the city had declared its independence from Rome. According to Josephus, God had deserted the Jews for their sins and gone over to the side of the Romans. Over a million people were killed in the battle that followed and 97,000 were captured and enslaved. The city was sacked and the temple destroyed.[55] This was a triumph for Titus's Flavian dynasty, and it became one of its foundation stories, commemorated publically in one of the relief panels of the Arch of Titus on the Via Sacra in Rome. The treasures from the temple were taken back for display in Rome itself,[56] and Rome eventually came to replace Jerusalem as the power centre of the Christian church. The scene of judgment in the lower left quadrant of the panel may link the judgment of God against the Jews with the judgment of Titus as emperor,[57] but there is nothing overtly Christian about either the way the two scenes are depicted or in the inscriptions that speak to us about them. Similarly, in the Romulus and Remus panel the two brothers have been turned upside down and pull away from each other. And what should we make of the second wolf who licks at, bites, or is perhaps dead beneath their feet? The words 'afæddæ hiæ wylif in Romæcæstri' are also written upside down, a curious arrangement if the nourishment of the Roman mother-church was intended to be the main focus of the panel.[58] Instead, the words presented most clearly to the reader's eyes tell us that Romulus and Remus were two brothers

and that they were in exile ‘far from their native land’. Rome, like the twins, and like the whale, had a double nature. It may have been the centre of the Christian church, Romulus, the twin who lived, but it was also a ruined and defeated empire, Remus, the twin who died. In the case of the casket’s back panel, again the inscription tells us of war and destruction. Here there is fighting, exile, and those very problematic hybrid inhabitants. The Adoration of the Magi is the only indisputably Christian image on the casket, but even that is a story of empire (the city of Bethlehem was subordinate to Rome), exile and violence (the massacre of the innocents to come). In saying this I am not denying that the casket has Christian content or meaning, but that is certainly not its only content, and it is not the content about which the casket itself speaks most loudly.

Gildas wrote at length about the suffering of the Britons under the Romans, a suffering due in part to their own duplicitousness.

> So the Romans slaughtered many of the treasonable, keeping a few as slaves so that the land should not be completely deserted. The country now being empty of wine and oil, they made for Italy, leaving some of their own people in charge, as whips for the backs of the inhabitants and a yoke for their necks. They were to make the name of Roman servitude cling to the soil, and torment a cunning people with scourges rather than military force. If necessary they were to apply the sword, as one says, clear of its sheath, to their sides: so that the island should be rated not as Britannia but as Romania, and all its bronze, silver and gold should be stamped with the image of Caesar. [59]

He also explicitly compared the defeat of Britain by the Saxons to that of the Jews, and the ruin of Britain to that of Jerusalem. In his description of the destruction wrought by the Saxons on the Britons he quotes both Psalms 74 and 79: ‘They have

burned with fire your sanctuary to the ground, and they have polluted the dwelling place of your name' (Ps 74.7); 'God, the heathen have come into your inheritance; they have desecrated your holy temple' (Ps 79.1).[60] Bede also describes some of the problems the people of the island suffered under Roman rule, though in nothing like Gildas's dramatic and emotional language. He prefaces his account of the persecution and martyrdom of St Alban, 'fruitful Britain's child', with a statement that locates Britain within the Empire during the persecutions of Diocletian.

> Intera Diocletianus in Oriente, Maximianus Herculius in Occidente uastari eccleias, affligi interficique Christianos decimo post Neronem loco praeceperunt. Quae persecution omnibus fere ante actis diuturnior atque inmanior fuit; nam per x annos incendiis ecclesiarum, proscriptionibus innocentum caedibus martyrum incessabiliter acta est. Denique etiam Brittaniam tum plurima confessionis Deo deuotae sublimauit.
>
> (Meanwhile Diocletian in the East and Maximianus Herculius in the west ordered the churches to be laid waste and the Christians persecuted and slain, the tenth persecution after Nero. This one lasted longer and was more cruel than any of the previous ones; it continued without ceasing for ten years accompanied by the burning of churches, the outlawry of innocent people, and the slaughter of martyrs. In fact Britain also attained to the great glory of bearing faithful witness to God.)[61]

Both portray the Britons as a people alternately colonised and abandoned, at times treacherous, at times betrayed. They have a double nature, and their fate is frequently doubled by that of either the Romans or the peoples of their continental homelands.

Land also has a double nature on the casket. The beorg as both word and memory echoes through its inscriptions and narratives. The word can mean hill or

mountain and helps unite this land, the fergenberig on which the whale that is the casket was stranded, with the hills on which the city of Rome was founded, and on which the city of Bethlehem was located,[62] and on which the temple stood. The latter was believed by Bede, following 2 Paralipomenon 3:1, to be Mount Moriah.

> For he himself is the mountain of mountains that rose indeed from the earth as a result of his taking flesh but transcends the power and holiness of all the earth-born by the peak of its singular dignity. That is to say, on this mountain the city or house of the Lord has been built because unless it fixes its root in him, our hope and faith are nothing. He is rightly called Mount Moriah, that is the mountain of vision, because he deigns to watch over and help his elect whom he preserves for the eternal vision of his glory as they toil in this passing life.[63]

A mountain rises as Christ takes flesh, while Gasric's flesh is taken from his bones when he is raised up onto the mountain.

The temple was for Bede a place of 'reconciliation' for Jews and gentiles,[64] though that is not, of course, the way it is depicted on the Franks Casket. However, the exile and enslavement depicted on the casket were one of the historical precedents for, and a part of the Anglo-Saxon claim to the temple both spiritually and historically – in the sense that the story became part of Bede's historical narrative. In his homilies and commentaries, but most especially in his Historia ecclesiastica, Jew and gentile, the 'Mediterranean and barbarian spiritual and cultural traditions are inextricably entwined in the conversion and building up of the Church among the gens Anglorum'.[65] The Anglo-Saxon Church thus became in effect the successor to the temple on its mount, something that is visualised and spoken on the casket by the use of the Latin and Old English languages and the Roman and runic alphabets in the

inscription surrounding this panel. Moreover, at the time that the casket was made the two mounts upon which the temple was located and upon which the Nativity and Adoration of the Magi took place were also being claimed in a way for England. Both sites were associated with the journey of Constantine's mother Helena to the Holy Land, and with the churches that she and her son had built there. During the eighth century legends began to circulate that Helena was British, and that Constantine was born, and/or named emperor, in the north of Britain.[66] England's association with the buildings on these sites thus extended back through Rome and the Empire, even if Helena was in fact British rather than Anglo-Saxon. The British are an absent presence, haunting the casket and its lands. Their absence reminds us that, like the Romans, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes were colonising peoples. They stifled the voices of a culture at the same time that they gave voice to their own hybrid postcolonial world.

But beorg can also mean barrow or tumulus, a place of death rather than life. The whale dies on the fergenberig, and Bethlehem was also the site of the massacre of the innocents. The juxtaposition of the inscription locating the whale's death with Weland's slaughter of the prince and the adoration of the magi calls this event to mind even though it is not depicted. Similarly, Romulus and Remus fought over the land on which Rome was to be built. Remus wanted to found the city on the Aventine Hill, and Romulus on the Palatine Hill. Romulus prevailed, Remus was killed and the hills became a tomb as well as a place of origin. And then there is the harmberga or hæumberga, the 'sorrow mound' or 'high hill' on which Hos (?) sits facing a scene that includes an inhabited tumulus or barrow at its centre. Whatever the story being told here, the Germanic homeland is imagined as a place of death as well as a place for the birth of heroes such as Widiu.

Germanic or Roman, all the stories carved in the casket's panels depict exile, violence, loss and the transformation of peoples from one state to another. The casket gathers them together and doubles them, creating a third space. The twins Romulus and Remus and the brothers Weland and Egil are exiles caught up in the fall of one order and the rise of another, as were Hengest and Horsa, the two Jutish brothers said to have led the Anglo-Saxons own migration, and seemingly referenced in the Hos panel. The parallels between these stories are not exact. The stories of long ago and distant homelands are doubled and retold in the new homeland. The casket does not provide narrative resolution, teleological histories, or closed readings. Hengest and Horsa were killed in battle against the Britons who inhabited the island before them. Or, putting it another way, they were silenced by the Britons in their attempt to silence the Britons themselves, an event that may just perhaps be signified by the muzzled and buried figures on the Hos panel.[67] Certainly this panel speaks loudest about silencing, sorrow and death.

There are also new foundations, the foundation of the Christian church in the body of Christ, the foundation of Rome, the city that would claim that church as its own, and the foundation of the Anglo-Saxon church in its image. But here too the Britons haunt the casket. It was in the seventh and eighth centuries, the period in which the casket was created, that the Northumbrian church (and kingdom) was busily expanding north and west into what had been British territory. The bringing of Christianity to the Britons, many of whom were already Christian, was a doubling in miniature of Augustine's bringing Roman Christianity to England.

Thing

I have repeatedly stressed that the materials and materiality of the casket are central to the postcolonial history it narrates and the third space it helps to establish. It is a thing in multiple senses of the word: as a material thing, as speaking thing, and as a place of judgment. Heidegger wrote that 'We call the disclosive taking up and perceiving of the written word "reading" or "lection" … i.e. col-lection, gathering',[68] and through the act of reading, or interacting with this thing and its words, the viewer/reader becomes a part of the gathering, a part of the reading and telling of its stories and their translation of the past into the here and now. As Lorraine Daston has commented, there is something uncanny about things that speak,[69] because they seem to hover between animate and inanimate, subject and object, being and becoming. I would add that that sense of uncanniness is heightened when that thing speaks cryptically or in riddles, as does the Franks Casket. It is both narrator and narrative and it draws attention to this fact by riddling on its own thingness, its own materiality. It does not speak in the first person voice of, say, the eighth-century Ruthwell Cross with its long meditative runic poem,[70] or the ninth-century Alfred Jewel, which, like so many other Anglo-Saxon speaking objects, describes its own making: 'Aelfred mec heht gewyrcan' ('Alfred had me made'). Rather, the casket tells stories through its inscriptions, its images, and the unspoken space between the two.

The casket is a narrator of history, and its words and languages are essential parts of what it says, what it is, and how we read. The inscriptions on the casket name people and places, but they do not name scenes; the titles we now attach to them are all modern. The naming of people, place, or action (or lack thereof) in the inscriptions has implications for how we understand its narratives. Naming is a mode of control that seems to give us a means of understanding and possessing an object or an image, but in reality it serves simply to emphasise the gap between what is represented and

our desire to possess it in which lies the death of the object.[71] To name the scenes has the effect of silencing the larger stories about which the casket speaks, encouraging us to read only the single episode in front of our eyes rather than engaging in a deeper reading of the larger myth or historical narrative of which it is a part. Typological or syncretic readings of the casket encourage us to do just this, but as the poem Widsith demonstrates,[72] the Anglo-Saxons also understood individual events as part of larger historical narratives. The lack of naming of the Weland the Smith scene demands that we project back in time to the events leading up to the murder of the princes, and then forward in time to the rape of the daughter and the birth of the hero in order to understand what has been depicted. In the scene of the Adoration of the Magi, we can also read both what comes before and what comes after: the birth of Christ, the massacre of the innocents, the crucifixion, the very events that connect it typologically with the scene of Weland the Smith. Reading backwards and forwards in time creates a layering of time that translates the past into this location, the third space of the casket and eighth-century England. The inscriptions repeatedly tell us 'here', 'here', 'here', this is happening now, here. Her Hos sits on the sorrow mound, her Titus and a Jew fight, her the inhabitants of Jerusalem flee.[73] The here and now is thus continually haunted by the ghosts of other times and other places; the present bone is haunted by the absent bodies. The casket itself encourages just this type of reading by translating its own past into the present, its transformation from whale to box, the one doubling and haunting the other.

Heidegger tells us that a ðing (Old High German and Old English 'meeting', 'council', 'assembly' or 'court of justice') like the act of reading the written (or in this case carved) word, is a gathering.[74] Ðing and thing have perhaps been too easily and too frequently brought together by those interested in thing theory or object oriented

ontologies,[75] but in the case of this thing assemblies in which we see judgment enacted, or the results of it having been enacted, are very much a part of its meaning. Weland is ordered hamstrung, the sorrowing Hos endures the judgment of someone else, Titus decrees destruction and imprisonment on the Jews, and so forth. The casket then becomes a gathering in the sense of a place in which judgment is enacted, judgment that centres around exile, conquest and the claiming of land.

The Franks Casket is a location, a place, but also a not place, a living thing (land and unlond). The whale from which it was made was stranded and died on the island that is now England, but the whale was itself also an island of death for seafarers travelling over the water. According to medieval tradition, the whale could be mistaken for an island – an unland (unlond) that functions as an uncanny double of an actual land – that brought death to those who cast themselves up on its shores. This is made clear in the Exeter Book poem The Whale, in which the whale is both island and un-land:

> Is þæs hiw gelic hreofum stane.
> swylce worie bi wædes ofre,
> sondbeorgum ymbselad, særyica mæst.
> swa þæt wenaþ wægliþende
> þæt hy on ealond sum eagum wliten,
> ond þonne gehydaþ heahstefn scipu
>
> to þam unlonde oncyrrapum,
> setlaþ sæmearas sundes æt ende,
> ond þonne in þæt eglond up gewitaþ
>
> collenferþe; ceolas stondaþ

bi stape fæste, streame biwunden.

ðonne gewiciað werigferðe,

farodlacende, frecnes ne wenað,

on þam ealonde æled weccað,

heahfyr ælað facnes cræftig

þæt him þa ferend on fæste wuniaþ,

wic weardiað wedres on luste,

ðonne semninga on sealtne wæg

mid þa noþe niþer gewiteþ

garsecges gæst, grund geseceð,

ond þonne in deaðsele drence bifæsteð

scipu mid scealcum. (lines 8–31a)[76]

(Its appearance is like a rough stone such as floats (or crumbles) by the water's edge surrounded by sand dunes, mostly seaweed, so that seafarers believe that their eyes are looking at an island; and then they tie the high-prowed ships to that false land by anchor ropes, settle their sea-steeds at the water's edge, and then go up onto that island brave-hearted, their ships stand fast by the shore, surrounded by streams. Then the weary seafarers encamp, not expecting harm; they kindle a fire on that island, build a high blaze, worn out and longing for rest. When the one skilled in treachery feels that the sailors are securely settled upon him, have made a camp and are longing for clear

weather, then suddenly into the salt sea the ocean spirit dives down with his victims, seeks the depths, and in the death-hall drowns ships with their crews.)

The Exeter Book dates from c. 1000, so the poem as written is much later than the casket, but it is based on the Greek Physiologus, which was popular throughout the Middle Ages. Isidore, in his Etymologies, also compared the whale (Latin cetus) to another type of land, a mountain, so it is especially appropriate that the whale that made the casket died cast up on to a hill.[77] It is itself a beorg, a double for the many other hills or mountains or tombs about which it speaks. The whale (the unlond) to which seafarers are drawn, becomes a mirror for the land of Britain to which people are drawn from multiple shores, an island that was itself, as we have seen, not without treachery and death.

The Franks Casket draws our attention to doublings or, in some cases, parallels, both materially and visually. As both subject and object the casket itself is everywhere present in the different riddles and narratives that literally emerge from it and that metaphorically circle around it. The casket speaks a number of different stories. It tells stories of life and death, danger and redemption, defence and victory, exile and return, civilisation and wilderness, treasure and its loss, and evil and heroism, land, the conquerors and the conquered, containers and containment, about what the casket is and does. These stories create pairings and doublings, and speak of double natures (births, deaths, becomings, destructions, the threat of violence, the twins, the island and the unlond). In so doing they help to reveal the double nature of the casket itself. The inscription on the front of the casket tells us that it was once a living creature, that it is made from living bone. Bone and ivory were valued throughout the Middle Ages for their lifelike glow, a sort of material memory of their former life, and the more bone and ivory objects were touched and held, the more

they were interacted with, the more lifelike they became.[78] Over time, parts of these objects would become polished and worn away by touch; their surfaces changed and aged. In their lifelikeness bone things, like speaking things, could be uncanny, seeming to hover in the space between the living and the dead, not one, but yet not quite the other. As a material bone already had an agency originally separate from, though now vital to the thing itself, as the story of Pygmalion from Ovid's Metamorphoses makes clear. The doubled stories of life, death and transformation that the casket tells both reflect the casket's nature and destabilise our reading of it, making us ask questions about the relationship between the human and the non-human, the animate and the inanimate, the inner and the outer, to contain and to consume (the twins suckling the wolf, the wine drunk from the prince's skull, the bread of Bethlehem, the whale—'Gasric', the king of terror), to inhabit and to lay claim to. In the story of Jonah and the whale, the whale is a vessel, a shelter for Jonah and a means to salvation, but in the Physiologus tradition the whale, as we have seen, was associated with trickery, deceit and terror. In Ælfric's Colloquy, the fisherman states that he would not like to hunt a whale because it might just as easily kill him as him it. The Colloquy, a dialogue between a teacher and his pupils, each of whom takes on the personae of various workers, was written by Ælfric, abbot of Eynsham, in Latin around the year 1000, and glossed in Old English at a later date. The Old English gloss on the fisherman and the whale reads:

> [Teacher:] Wilt þu fon sumne hwæl?
>
> [Pupil:] Nic.
>
> [Teacher:] Forwhi?
>
> [Pupil:] Forþam plyhtlic þingc hit ys gefon hwæl gebeorhlicre ys me faran to ea mid scype mynum þænne faran mid manegum scypum on huntunge hranes.

[Teacher:] Forhwi swa?

[Pupil:] Forþam leofre ys me gefon fisc þæne ic mæg ofslean þonne fisc þe na þæt an me ac eac swylce mine geferan mid anum slege he mæg besencean oþþe gecwylman.

[Teacher:] Ond þeah mænige gefoþ hwælas ond ætberstaþ frecnysse ond micelne sceat þanon begytaþ

[Pupil:] Soþ þu segst ac ic ne geþristge for modes mines nytenyssæ.[79]

([Teacher:] Would you like to catch a whale?

[Pupil:] No.

[Teacher:] Why?

[Pupil:] Because a dangerous thing it is to catch a whale. It is safer for me to go into the river with my ship than to go into the sea with many ships to hunt whales.

[Teacher:] Why is that?

[Pupil:] Because it is preferable to me to catch fish than it would be for me to slay that fish, which could not only me but also my companions drown and kill with one blow.

[Teacher:] Nevertheless, many catch whales and escape from danger, and get much money from that.

[Pupil:] You tell the truth, but I would not dare to because of my heart's cowardice.)

The fisherman in the Colloquy has very practical fears about encountering an animal of the whale's size and power on the open seas. The whale could, as the Franks Casket tells us, beat up the sea or be lifted up by it, threatening destruction to anything in its path; however, the whale could also be a much more evil and

menacing being. In the lines from the Exeter Book poem, The Whale, quoted above the whale drowns its victims in a death-hall, but later in that same poem it threatens to entrap and consume those it encounters. It becomes the devil himself, and its jaws become the gates of hell.

> Þonne se fæcna in þam fæstenne
> gebroht hafað, bealwes cræftig,
> æt þam edwylme þa þe him on cleofiað,
> gyltum gehrodene, ond ær georne his
> in hira lifdagum larum hyrdon,
> þonne he þa grimman goman bihlemmeð
> æfter feorhcwale fæste togædre,
> helle hlinduru; nagon hwyrft ne swice,
> utsiþ æfre, þa þær in cumað,
> þon ma þe þa fiscas faraðlacende
> of þæs hwæles fenge hweorfan motan. (lines 71–80)[80]
>
> (When that evil one has led into that fastness, with evil craft into that fiery whirlpool, those who cleave to him, stained with guilt, those who had eagerly followed his teachings during their lives, then he after their death, those grim jaws snaps fast together, the gates of hell; they are unable to leave nor escape, to depart ever, those who enter there, any more than the swimming fish can escape that whale's grasp)

The jaws of the whale snap shut, like the gates of hell, or like the lid of a box. It, the whale, had a double nature, and the stories that this transformed whale speaks riddle on that double nature. It is both invader and vanquished enemy, a dangerous exile on a foreign shore.

Conclusion

The materiality of the casket, then, both helps to create and presents us with a doubling for the stories it tells or contains. It bridges the casket's ontology and its narrative content. The Franks Casket is a thing, a gathering, a postcolonial coming together or col-lection of peoples, stories, languages, and words that rewrites, respeaks or translates, the past into the present and distant lands into here in a new location. Rome, Jerusalem, Scandinavia, Germania are and are not Anglo-Saxon places, just as the whale is and is not a land. The casket brings these peoples and their stories to England. It speaks of loss of dwelling and of dwelling in and on. It speaks of the judgment of rulers and of those who are judged, of the conquerors and the conquered. It speaks of the fragility of a kingdom that was only just solidifying its power. It speaks of the impossible third space, that space of liminal anxiety that is neither one place nor the other, but that unites the abandoned homeland with the new world of the coloniser and the colonised.

List of figures

[1] The casket is named for Augustus Franks who obtained all but the panel now in Florence (fig. 3) from the Parisian collector Jean-Baptiste Barrois.

[2] See further Leslie Webster, The Franks Casket (London: British Museum Press, 2010); Leslie Webster, 'Stylistic Aspects of the Franks Casket', in The Vikings, ed. Robert T. Farrell (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 1982), 20–32; Leslie Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 227–46; Ian N. Wood, 'Ripon, Francia and the Franks Casket in the Early Middle Ages', Northern History 26 (1990), 1–19; Carol Neuman de Vegvar, 'Reading the Franks Casket: Contexts and Audience', in Intertexts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Paul E. Szarmach, ed. Virginia Blanton and Helene Scheck (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medeival and Renaissance Studies, 2007), 141–59; Richard Abels, 'What has Weland to do with Christ? The Franks Casket and the Acculturation of Christianity in Early Anglo-Saxon England', Speculum 84.3 (2009), 549–81; James Paz, 'Talking with "Things" in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture', unpublished PhD thesis, King's College London, 2013, ch. 3.

[3] Vicki Szabo suggests that he size, thickness and density of the panels indicates that the bone likely came from the mandible of a sperm whale. See Vicki Ellen Szabo, Monstrous Fishes and the Mead-Dark Sea: Whaling in the Medieval North Atlantic (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 55, n. 79.

[4] While its original function remains obscure, it was used as a sewing box during the nineteenth century.

[5] The term itself was not used until the late ninth century. At the time the casket was made the Anglo-Saxons referred to themselves variously as the Angles, the Saxons, the Angles and Saxons, the Jutes and the people of the land of the Angles.

[6] See below pp. 00, 00.

[7] See Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994); for the self and its double see also Jean Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulation, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 95.

[8] Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams, 'Introduction: A Return to Wonder', in Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures, ed. Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–21, at 7.

[9] The terms are Heidegger's, and will be explored in more detail below. On Heidegger's use of these terms see especially the essays in, Martin Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: HarperCollins, 1971).

[10] Gildas, Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and Other Works, ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom (London: Phillimore, 1978), 89–97.

[11] Bede, *Bede's* Ecclesiastical History of the English People, ed. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 50.

[12] See Wolf Liebeschuetz, 'The Debate about the Ethnogenesis of Germanic Tribes', in From Rome to Constantinople: Studies in Honour of Avril Cameron, ed. Hagit Amirav and Bas ter Haar Romeny (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 341–56, at 352–3; James Gerrard, The Ruin of Roman Britain: an Archaeological Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 180. On the Anglo-Saxons see Bede, *Bede's* Ecclesiastical History of the English People, 1.x15, v.9; Barbara Yorke, 'Politics and Ethnic Identity: A Case Study of Anglo-Saxon Practice', in Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain, ed. William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrell (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2000), 69–90.

[13] Nicholas Howe, Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 143–4.

[14] Gildas, Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and Other Works; Bede, Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, bk 1.

[15] On this topic see Fabienne L. Michelet, Creation, Migration and Conquest: Imaginary Geography and Sense of Space (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). In addition to the Genesis and Exodus poems, Michelet's discussion includes Beowulf, The Battle of Brunanburh, Andreas, Elene, Widsith, and Guthlac A, poems written perhaps centuries apart and by different authors.

[16] Howe, Migration and Mythmaking.

[17] Winfried Rudolf, 'The Spiritual Islescape of the Anglo-Saxons', in The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages, ed. Sebastian I. Sobecki (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2011), 31–57, at 31.

[18] See the essays in Sobecki, The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages.

[19] Howe, Migration and Mythmaking, 111.

[20] Michelet, Migration and Conquest, 17.

[21] Bede, *Bede'*s Ecclesiastical History of the English People, 17.

[22] Heidegger, 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', in Poetry, Language, Thought, 150–2.

[23] Michelet, Creation and Migration, viii.

[24] Widia is identified as Weland's son in the Old English poem Waldere, and also appears spelled as Wudga in Widsith.

[25] This is the only text incised rather than carved in relief on the casket.

[26] The meaning of the name was taken up by Bede in his commentary on Luke 2:1–20.

[27] All transcriptions and translations of the Casket's inscriptions are based on Webster, The Franks Casket.

[28] Gaby Waxenberger, 'The Cryptic Runes on the Auzon Franks Casket', in More than Words, English Lexicography and Lexicology Past and Present. Essays Presented to Hans Sauer on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday, Part 1, ed. Renate Bauer and Ulrike Krischke (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 161–70.

[29] In an uncanny intersection of myth and history, rings are very important to the casket. Weland was given a ring by his wife when she left him, and Nitthad gave it to his daughter when he captured Weland. That act was one of Weland's motivations for his harsh revenge on Nitthad and his family. The casket itself fell apart in the nineteenth century when a son of the family who owned it stripped it of its silver fittings in order to buy a ring. See further Webster, The Franks Casket, 25.

[30] Alruna was a swan-maiden, and the double-headed creatures above and beneath her may signify her hybrid nature or ability to transform from one state to another.

[31] John McKinnell, 'The Context of Völundarkviða', in The Poetic Edda: Essays on Old Norse Mythology, ed. Paul Acker and Carolyne Larrington (London: Routledge, 2002), 198–212, at 200. The earliest surviving manuscript version of Völundarkviða is thirteenth century. McKinnell argues further that the Völundarkviða was composed in Yorkshire, even though it is written in Old Norse (ibid, 200).

[32] The emperor Kjarr was a Norse mythological figure believed to have been modelled on the Roman emperors. He was king of the Valir. The name Valir means 'foreigner' or 'stranger', and was used to refer to Romance or Celtic speaking peoples of the old Roman Empire.

[33] See further Maria Sachiko Cecire, 'Ban Welondes: Wayland the Smith in Popular Culture', in Anglo-Saxon Culture and the Modern Imagination, ed. David Clark and Nicholas Perkins (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), 201–17.

[34] Beowulf, lines 450–5; Waldere, lines 2–4.

[35] Line 22b: 'Wada Hælsingum'.

[36] Bernard J. Muir, ed., The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry: an Edition of Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501 (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1994), 2 vols, vol. 1, 245–6. All translations of Old English poetry are my own unless otherwise stated.

[37] Muir, ed., The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry, vol. 1, 283.

[38] He is the first king to be called king of the Anglo-Saxons. See, e.g. Simon Keynes and Michaeol Lapidge, eds., Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and other Contemporary Sources (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 66–7.

[39] Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine, eds, The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the *Old English Version of Boethius's De C*onsolatione Philosophiae, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), vol.1, 283. In these lines Alfred substitutes Weland for the Fabricius of the Latin original.

[40] On Alfred's use of cræft see Nicole Guenther Discenza, 'Power, Skill and Virtue in the Old English Boethius', Anglo-Saxon England 26 (1997), 81–108; Nicole Guenther Dicenza, *The King*'s English: Strategies of Translation in the Old English Boethius (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), 87–122.

[41] See Webster, The Franks Casket, 14 for details of the verse's encryption.

[42] Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'Three New Cryptic Runes on the Franks Casket', Notes and Queries n.s. 58.2 (2011), 181–3, at 181–2. The second transliteration and translation above are Bredehoft's.

[43] Although Alaric Hall suggests that the figure in the barrow rather than the figure on the mound is Hos, noting that the line can be translated as either in or on the barrow. Alaric Hall, 'The Images and Structure of The Wife's Lament', in Leeds Studies in English ns 33 (2002), 1–29, at 2–3.

[44] Bredehoft, 'Three New Cryptic Runes on the Franks Casket', 182.

[45] David A. Hinton, Gold and Gilt, Pots and Pins: Possessions and People in Medieval Britain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 100.

[46] Webster, The Franks Casket, 38.

[47] Karkov, The Art of Anglo-Saxon England, 137–45.

[48] Bede, *Bede's* Ecclesiastical History of the English People, iii.2, ii.1; Uppinder Mehan and David Townsend, '"Nation" and the Gaze of the Other in Eighth-Century Northumbria', Comparative Literature 53.1 (2001), 1–26.

[49] The Anglo-Saxons believed themselves to be the chosen people, and their migration to England a type of Exodus. They're understanding of how they might descend from the Jews of the Old Testament, however, was problematic. See Nicholas Howe, Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Bede, On Genesis: Bede, ed. and trans. Calvin Kendall (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2008); Catherine E. Karkov, Reading the Mother Tongue, forthcoming).

[50] See Karkov, The Art of Anglo-Saxon England, fig. 34.

[51] See Nicholas Howe, 'Rome Capital of Anglo-Saxon England' Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies 34.1 (2004), 147–72.

[52] See Tim Eaton, Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain (Stroud: Sutton Publishing 2000); Eric Cambridge, 'The Architecture of the Augustine Mission', in St Augustine and the Conversion of England, ed. Richard

Gameson (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 202–36; Karkov, Art of Anglo-Saxon England, 13–19, 41–68.

[53] See for example, Leslie Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket'; James Lang, 'The Imagery of the Franks Casket: Another Approach', in ibid., 247–55; Carol Neuman de Vegvar, 'The Traveling Twins: Romulus and Remus in Anglo-Saxon England', in ibid., 256–67 (though this paper does note the duality of the Romulus and Remus panel); Neuman de Vegvar, 'Reading the Franks Casket: Context and Audiences'.

[54] Webster, The Franks Casket, 37–8.

[55] Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, ed. and trans. G. A. Williamson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959), bks. vi and vii.

[56] See further Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason and James Rives, Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), chs. 6, 7.

[57] The sack of the temple took place in 70 CE but Titus did not become emperor until 79. It is possible that the designer of the Casket, if s/he knew the historical chronology, may have conflated the two events, just as s/he conflated separate episodes from the story of Weland the Smith on the Casket's front panel.

[58] Turning this part of the inscription upside down could be a way of making us work for meaning, but Christian content is not generally turned upside down as to do so would normally signal defeat or death.

[59] Gildas, The Ruin of Britain and Other Documents, 18.

[60] Gildas, The Ruin of Britain and Other Documents, 27.

[61] Bede, *Bede's, E*cclesiastical History of the English People, ed and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 28–9..

[62] Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, v.16.

[63] Bede, Bede: on the Temple, trans. Seán Connolly, with an intro. By Jennifer O'Reilly. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995, 20.

[64] Jennifer O'Reilly in Bede, Bede: on the Temple, xxxviii.

[65] O'Reilly in Bede, Bede: on the Temple, xxxviii; see also Henry Mayr-Harting, The Venerable Bede, the Rule of St Benedict, and Social Class. Jarrow Lecture, 1976.

[66] Antonina Harbus, Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), 28–33, 37–40; see also Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English* People, i.8.

[67] Attempts to silence the Britons and claim their land are a feature of Anglo-Saxon poems such as Guthlac A, in which Welsh speaking demons inhabit the land which Guthlac claims, and Andreas, in which fen-dwelling Britons become the models for the poems cannibals. See Lindy Brady, 'The Spatial Ambiguity of Guthlac A', forthcoming; Lindy Brady, 'Echoes of Britons on a Fenland Frontier in the Old English Andreas', Review of English Studies 61, no. 252 (2010), 669–89.

[68] Martin Heidegger, Parmenides, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 85.

[69] Loraine Daston, ed., Things that Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 14. See also Daniel Tiffany, 'Lyric Substance: On Riddles, Materialism, and Poetic Obscurity', Critical Inquiry 28.1 (2001), 72–98.

[70] For a discussion of the runic poem on the Ruthwell Cross see Catherine E. Karkov, The Art of Anglo-Saxon England (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), 140–42; Catherine E. Karkov, 'The Arts of Writing: Voice, Image, Object', in The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature, ed. Clare A. Lees (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 73–98, at 85–91; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, 'Who Then Read the Ruthwell Poem in the Eighth Century', in Aedificia Nova: Studies in Honor of

Rosemary Cramp, ed. Catherine E. Karkov and Helen Damico (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008), 43–75.

[71] See the philosophical discussion of Adam's naming of the animals in Georg Whilhelm Friedrich Hegel, System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit, ed. and trans. H. S. Harris and T. M. Knox (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1979), 221; Maurice Blanchot, 'Literature and the Right to Death', in The Gaze of Orpheus and other Literary Essays, ed. P. Adams Sitney (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1981), 21–62, at 42; Peter Schwenger, The Tears of Things: Melancholy and Physical Objects (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 21, 53.

[72] See above p. 00.

[73] The casket's insistence on here might support the suggestion that it was originally a reliquary. Peter Brown has noted that the emphasis on 'hic est locus' ('here is the place') is very much a feature of the cult of relics throughout Christendom. See Peter Brown, The Cult of the Saints and its Function in Latin Christianity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 86.

[74] Heidegger, 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', 143–59.

[75] See e.g. Bruno Latour, 'Why has Critique Run out of Steam? From Maters of Fact to Matters of Concern', Critical Inquiry 30 (2004), 225–48.

[76] Muir, The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry, vol. 1, 272–3.

[77] Isidore, Etymologiae, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), 12.6.8.

[78] See, for example, the very tactile attitudes towards and approaches to the material surveyed in Anthony Cutler, The Hand of the Master: Craftsmanship, Ivory, and Society in Byzantium (9th–11th Centuries) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[79] G. N. Garmonsway, ed., Colloquy (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1939), 29–30.

[80] Muir, The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry, vol. 1, 274.