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"Saga Hwaet Ic Hatte": The Riddles of the Aenigmata and the Exeter Book in Conversation

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“Saga Hwaet Ic Hatte”:
The Riddles of the *Aenigmata*
and the Exeter Book in
Conversation

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Introduction

Riddles, like books and poems, vary widely based on the literary choices and style of the author, and have the potential to be highly intertextual. However, the scholarship often focuses on riddle collections as static texts that stand apart from other collections and other types of literature, without giving the full scope of the riddles' interactions with other collections, books, or poems. By doing a close examination of the two collections of the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book riddles, I hope to shift this static focus towards one that recognizes riddle collections' rich series of interrelations as being worthy of interrogation. By approaching these riddles as coming from the same tradition, it is possible to tease out new information that would not otherwise be available to us, and to discover how culturally-relevant clues in the collections reveal the authors' awareness of their specific audiences' needs.

Riddles have a long and rich history, starting with the earliest ones found in a Sumerian schoolbook that still has the power to make modern audiences laugh 3,000 years later.¹ Riddles have been found in ancient texts from Egypt, Greece, India, and Persia, and can even be found in the Bible.² Teachers used riddles to educate their pupils in a tradition that started as early as late antiquity and continued up to the seventeenth century, because the riddle format was well-suited to the practice of reading, close analysis, and memorization used in early classrooms.³ It was not until the fourth or fifth century that the first major collection of riddles was written in Latin by

¹ An informal study, conducted by Scott Weems, was performed by first translating Ancient Greek jokes, translating them back into modern English, and having comedian Jim Gaffigan perform them at a stand-up comedy venue. While not all jokes were successful, a good number were, indicating that comedy has not changed as much as one might assume. An article in the Huffington Post gives examples of some Sumerian riddles, which are still funny, and are surprisingly similar to modern jokes, like the "Yo Mamma" type. Simon, Jacobs, and Weems, "Do the World's Oldest Jokes Still Hold Up?"; Rao, "Babylonian Yo Mamma Joke is 3500 Years Old."

² Crossley-Holland, *Exeter Book Riddles*, 8.

³ Whitman, "Medieval Riddling," 182. The shorter length of riddles compared to longer texts especially lent it as a format to rote memorization, while the use of everyday items was good for building a vocabulary when learning a new language.

Symphosius, whose collection of 100 three-line riddles dealing with everything from onions to one-eyed garlic sellers captured the imagination of the audience and started a lasting trend in how riddles were written.

Symphosius's riddle collection, called the *Aenigmata*, would influence the next 500 years of the riddle-genre. Beginning with Aldhelm in the seventh century, Symphosius inspired numerous writers from the early Anglo-Saxon church to write their own collections. Other authors like Eusebius and Tatwine in the eighth century also wrote collections closely aligned with the *Aenigmata* through their practice of giving voices to non-voiced subjects, like inanimate objects and animals, and writing relatively long collections, the shortest being Tatwine's forty riddles and the longest being Aldhelm's 100 riddles.⁴ It was not until the Exeter Book was written in the 900s that the riddling tradition was brought into the vernacular.

The *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book, although separated by 500 years, are on the same continuum, and need to be seen as such. In order to demonstrate the necessity of seeing the two collections as interconnected, this thesis will examine the texts with an increasingly narrower view, since the texts' connections resonate at all levels. Chapter One, "The Dating and Cultural Context of the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book Riddles," discusses the cultural and historical contexts of both collections, with a focus on grounding Symphosius and the *Aenigmata* in a specific time and place. The second chapter, "Cyclicity and Transformation in the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book Riddles," takes a closer look at the two collections by examining how the riddles' inner structures refer to and comment on the cultures from which they originated. The third and final chapter, "Shared Subjects, Lewdness, and Tongue-Twisters: A Closer Look at Three Groups of Riddles," focuses on three groups that are shared across the *Aenigmata* and

⁴ Tupper, *Riddles of the Exeter Book*, xxxi–xxxvii.

Exeter Book riddles, and the way in which the riddles' differences show how the authors anchor their texts in their cultures by using culturally-specific terms, literary forms, references, and languages.

While there are many elements of the riddles that are not addressed in this thesis, it is my hope that this model of approaching the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book riddles with an increasingly closer focus will not only provide a blueprint for approaching these riddles as related texts as every level, but will also shed some new light on two riddle collections that have managed to capture readers' attentions for over 1,000 years.

1: The Dating and Cultural Context of the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book Riddles

Symphosius's *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book riddles were both pioneering texts. The *Aenigmata* is the only complete collection of ancient riddles that survives today,⁵ while the Exeter Book riddles are the "oldest extant collection of vernacular riddles."⁶ The *Aenigmata* inspired a number of other riddle collections, which can be traced in large part by the similarities of individual riddles in collections spanning hundreds of years, a tradition in which the Exeter Book riddles took part.⁷ However, although the link between the works of Symphosius and the author of the Exeter Book has been mentioned in passing in numerous articles and books, very little has been done examining the two collections together in greater depth. The discourse on the riddles must shift towards a consideration of the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book riddles not as static elements, but as parts of a larger, interconnected riddling tradition.

By seeing these collections as part of a continuum, we can create a shift in the discourse that enables the discovery of new information by encouraging readers to see the riddles as being related. The current consensus among scholars is that Symphosius was writing in the fourth or fifth centuries, likely somewhere where the Roman Empire had a stronghold, though not necessarily in Rome. Roman influence on Symphosius's works is difficult to dispute because he claims to write for the Saturnalia, a Roman-pagan celebration, and his corpus of riddles is written entirely in Latin. It seems likely that Symphosius was pagan because he claims that he wrote the *Aenigmata* for the Saturnalia, a well-known pagan celebration, and occasionally refers to Roman gods and myths. Regardless of the degree to which Symphosius subscribed to pagan beliefs, it is

⁵ Ohl, *Enigmas of Symphosius*, 13.

⁶ Bitterli, *Say What I am Called*, 3. See also, Williamson, *A Feast of Creatures*.

⁷ See especially Tupper, *Riddles of the Exeter Book*; Ohl, *Enigmas of Symphosius*; Orchard, "Enigma Variations," 284.

clear that he and his writings were steeped in Roman religion and culture, and it is therefore likely that he was Roman.

That Symphosius was writing somewhere in the Roman Empire is helpful to filling in the blanks about his life, but this knowledge only takes us so far and does not help us locate where he wrote, since the Roman Empire was spread over a massive area at the time. One of the few theories dealing with Symphosius's location is posited by Erin Sebo, who suggests that he was North African, specifically from Carthage.⁸ Her short, yet comprehensive, article details the fact that some of Symphosius's riddles make assumptions regarding how people commonly look that match more with North African Carthaginians than European Romans. She cites Riddle 58 (Capilla [Hair]) and Riddle 8 (Nebula [Cloud]) as examples of Symphosius's references to African features, like black hair and skin, as not only common, but the norm.⁹ Out of the numerous territories held by the Roman Empire, North Africa is the best match to Symphosius's descriptions, and the fact that Carthage was Roman-controlled bolsters Sebo's argument. Symphosius's sophisticated use of Latin further suggests that if he was from North Africa, he was from somewhere like Carthage, since other parts of North Africa, most notably Egypt, spoke and wrote in Greek because of their former colony status dating back to antiquity.¹⁰ The evidence supporting Sebo's assertion of Symphosius's Carthaginian roots is strong, and may be the key to unlocking his geographical location.

⁸ Sebo, "Was Symphosius an African?," 323. Sebo cites Alexander Riese's 1869 *Anthologia latina sive poesis latinae supplementum* as the first place where such a proposal about Symphosius's location originated. Riese's idea placed Symphosius with a set of authors who contemporary scholars thought were too late to have been compatible with Symphosius's dates and thus discredited the entire idea of Symphosius being a North African Carthaginian.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ As with other former colonies, language is one of the ways in which the past continues to live on. Like former European colonies, especially in South America and Africa, where the language of the colonizers continues to be spoken even after the yoke of colonization had been cast off, Egypt for a long time continued to be widely Greek-speaking after it was no longer a Greek colony.

To further support Sebo’s claim that Symphosius was North African, let us compare the Fox riddles of both collections, Riddle 34 (Vulpes [Fox]) of the *Aenigmata*, and Riddle 15 of the Exeter Book, whose shared subject emphasizes the riddles’ differences, which offer a way of exposing how the authors’ differing emphases of the fox’s qualities are based on where they were writing. Since the variant in the Exeter Book seems to have been inspired by that of Symphosius, this illustrates the way that changes in riddles of similar subjects may reveal more information when seen through another lens, since differences in the descriptions of the foxes are more likely to have been intentional changes on the part of the author, instead of being details that remained as a byproduct of the original, Symphosian iteration. The fox, as described in the Exeter Book, is the typical Red Fox familiar to most North Americans and Europeans: red fur with a white swath on the neck and chest,



Figure 1 The Red Fox, as described in the Exeter Book, native to locations across the northern hemisphere

“[h]als is min hwit ond heafod fealo, / sidan swa some” (1-2b) [My throat is white and my head



Figure 2 The North African Fennec Fox described by Symphosius

fallow / as are my sides].¹¹

However, Symphosius gives an entirely different description. His fox says that it has “[e]xiguum corpus sed cor mihi corpore maius” (34.1) [A small body, but my heart is greater than my body]. Symphosius’s description indicates that the

size of the fox’s body is the identifier by which the reader will recognize it, instead of the color of its fur, as the author of the Exeter Book expects. Symphosius’s description simply does not

¹¹ Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

apply to the European fox. Instead, his description is far closer to that of the Fennec Fox, which is native to Northern Africa, and has brown fur, a small body, and large ears. The Fennec Fox's light tan fur is nowhere near as striking as the red fur of the North American fox, which could explain why Symphosius did not focus on its coloring, whereas its large ears, which by comparison make the fox's body look small, are notable, and are referred to by Symphosius. These divergent descriptions of what seem to be the same subject offer further support for Sebo's argument that Symphosius was from somewhere in North Africa, likely Carthage.

The fox riddles are an example of how the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book riddles' participation in a shared riddling tradition can be used to discover new information that would not otherwise have been apparent. With such a distinct lack of access to the sources in the case of the *Aenigmata*, the scholarship has to find new ways to examine what remains by holding it up to the lens of other texts, like the Exeter Book, that are closely related to it, so that we might use the information available to us in order to fill in some of the lacunae surrounding when and where Symphosius was writing. In order to embark on a wider exploration of how the lens of one collection may provide insight into another, the best place to begin is the Exeter Book riddles, which have been the subject of much more scholarship than the *Aenigmata*, with the result that more is known about where they were written, who wrote them, and what was happening at the time of their authorship.

To discuss the Exeter Book is to discuss the times in which it was written, most likely the tenth-century, and the place where it most likely was composed, Exeter, which at the time of the book's authorship was still in the process of recovering from the city's attack and capture by Vikings.¹² The eighth to tenth centuries saw a massive number of Viking raids in England, which

¹² Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, 21–32. While Conner argues that Exeter Cathedral eventually recovered from the Viking attacks, he also acknowledges that the process of repairing the cathedral was lengthy. Conner also makes the

tended to be conducted against churches and monasteries because their riches from tithes and donations made them attractive targets, while their general lack of protection made them easy to attack. Among the early skirmishes, Vikings raided important religious centers like Lindisfarne in 793, Bede's monastery at Jarrow in 796, and the monastery of Iona in 795, 802, and 806.¹³ During the period of raids, they attacked Exeter on multiple occasions, the two most serious of which resulted in the capture of the city by Vikings in 876¹⁴ and its destruction by Swegn in 1003.¹⁵

By 900, the Anglo-Saxons had gotten better at fighting back, and were able to better quell attacks by small bands of Viking raiders. It is to this period that Patrick Conner dates the creation of the script used in the Exeter Book, arguing that its creation stemmed from "efforts to derive a script to signify the return of serious intellectual endeavours to Wessex," a process that he claims began as early as the 890s and ended as late as 1050s.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the Viking raids, especially in the 800s and early 900s, had an unsurprisingly adverse effect on the creative desires of the inhabitants of Anglo-Saxon England, who turned their attention to protection against further attacks. In the aftermath of so many Viking incursions, the inhabitants of Exeter had to regroup from the loss of money and influence and rebuild, which put artistic and scholarly pursuits like bookmaking into the background. Viking raids and attacks created an undeniable environment of

case that the Exeter Book may have been written at Exeter Cathedral by comparing the scripts of the Exeter Book and other books from the scriptorium there (33–47). Further, Conner suggests a more exact date of the Exeter Book, from around 950–970 based on the script used and the historical context (Conner, 48–94). I use the more general dating of "10th century" because Conner's argument for the dating, while convincing, is relatively recent and has not yet been widely supported by other scholars.

¹³ Winroth, "The Raids of the Vikings," 25.

¹⁴ Hoskins and Harvey, *Two Thousand Years in Exeter*, 23.

¹⁵ Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, 30–31. Swegn's attack on Exeter may have been performed as retaliation against Aethelred, who had killed his sister in a show of Anglo-Saxon power. Knowing that Aethelred valued Exeter as an important center of learning, Swegn destroyed the city. Ker dates the script of the Exeter Book to around 975, which matches with Conner's proposed dating of the book (Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, 153).

¹⁶ Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, 53. Exeter was located in Wessex, which encompassed much of what is today Southern England.

instability and physical danger, which dissuaded the Anglo-Saxons from creating books, turned them towards battle, and left an indelible mark upon the psyche of the period.

Yet Viking attacks were not the only upheavals taking place in England at the time of the Exeter Book's creation. The Benedictine Revival was also under way in Exeter during the tenth century. The Revival was motivated for a number of reasons, among which were the beliefs that the Viking attacks were God's punishment for sinning or were a herald of the Second Coming,¹⁷ and the influence of similar reforms taking place on the continent. The Revival resulted in the establishment of Benedictine rule in place of more secular church practices. The two largest changes brought by the revival were a greater insistence upon celibacy within the religious ranks and an emphasis on a blend of hard work and prayer, well summed up by the Benedictine motto "ora et labora."¹⁸ At the same time that the Viking attacks were taking their toll on Anglo-Saxon religious centers, these centers were being overhauled in the course of the Benedictine Revival, encouraging those in religious communities to become more religiously inclined.

Reforms at Exeter took place under the abbot Sidemann, who directly influenced and oversaw Exeter from 968–977, establishing an ecclesiastical, Benedictine mission, and fostering improvements to the scriptorium and library.¹⁹ Conner makes the case that the Exeter Book was written in the middle of this period, suggesting a date of 950–970 based on the script used.²⁰ He further supports this date based on the formation of the book, which he argues is made up of

¹⁷ Winroth, "The Raids of the Vikings," 25.

¹⁸ Cubitt, "Images of St. Peter," 41–54. Cubitt says that "[s]exual abstinence seems to have been the essential quality that distinguished a monk from a clerk in the tenth century" (49), which contrasted greatly with the old order's "sexual license" (49). The Benedictine Revival also instituted a Liturgy of the Hours, in which the religious community would pray at regular intervals throughout the day, to be interspersed with work on the church's farm.

¹⁹ Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, 30–31. The Exeter Book was officially given to Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Leofric in 1072, the first time that it is mentioned. Although its provenance remains unclear, Conner believes that it was written at the scriptorium of Exeter Cathedral, citing the similarities in script between the Exeter Book and another book known to have come from the scriptorium there. See pp. 33–47.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 48–94.

three booklets that hint at having been written at different stages of the Benedictine Revival, as evidenced by their repetition of riddle subjects and differing levels of religious themes.²¹

According to Conner's argument, the riddles of the Exeter Book are mainly located in Booklet III, which he believes to be "a transitional booklet which demonstrates that the literary sensibilities of the community at Exeter underwent a radical change."²² Conner's dating convincingly places Booklet III in the midst of the Benedictine Reform, a period of turbulence that can only have been compounded by the Viking attacks that were besetting England.²³ In the context of such events, the influences of these dual upheavals on the riddles of the Exeter Book supporting its authorship in these turbulent times should be easy to find in the text of the riddles.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 148. As Mark Amodio pointed out in conversation, it is also possible that the author of the Exeter Book simply forgot that he had already written about a subject when repeating it. It seems possible that the author of the Exeter Book forgot what he had previously written because he was writing the text of the booklets over a long period of time. Nonetheless, the varying levels of religious themes across the booklets is compelling evidence suggesting that they may have been written in different periods.

²² *Ibid.*, 162. Although all of the riddles are in Conner's proposed Booklet III, he also believes the hypothesis that Booklet III was made up of two separate collections taken from two exemplars. By his argument, Collection A contains Riddle 1–59, while Riddles 30b, 60, and 61–95 fall into Collection B. Conner believes, which I also believe possible, that the adding of the more religious texts from Collection B could be argued to be a reflection of the growing religious sentiment permeating religious communities during the Benedictine Revival. For more information, see Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, 159–62.

²³ Conner's dating is relatively new and goes against the usual scholarly convention of dating the Exeter Book to the entire tenth century, as most scholars do. Nonetheless, some, like Brian McFadden and Marie Nelson agree that the Benedictine Revival played an instrumental part in the writing of the Exeter Book riddles, but there have been few studies that definitively line up the Revival with the Exeter Book's authorship. Yet even if Conner's close dating is off, it is hard to deny that the riddles were written in a period of religious upheaval, since there were other influences outside of the English Benedictine Revival shaping the religious politics of Anglo-Saxon England. For one, the Benedictine Revival in continental Europe took place prior to its advent in England, and so it may well have had an influence on Anglo-Saxon monastics. Also, the arrival of Vikings meant the introduction of new and different forms of religion. Vikings were pagan, and venerated Norse gods and partook in foreign celebrations. While it is likely that the Vikings were familiar with Christianity, since they were proficient travelers, it is possible that the majority of Anglo-Saxons were not familiar with Norse religion. Instead, they may have viewed it as strange or barbaric, a sentiment that cannot have been helped with the Vikings' propensity for attacking relatively defenseless churches. These views, which do not speak to a direct Benedictine influence on the Exeter Book, may have led to a greater schism between the two converging cultures and may have caused the Anglo-Saxons to turn to Christianity with greater fervor, especially in the face of attacks by those that they perceived as godless marauders. See especially McFadden, "Raiding, Reform, and Reaction"; Nelson, "Four Social Functions of the Exeter Book Riddles." On the arrival of Vikings in England, see Jesch, "Scandinavians and 'Cultural Paganism' in Late Anglo-Saxon England," 55–68. Though Jesch's focus is mainly eleventh-century England, Scandinavians and Norse religion were present in the tenth century as well.

One such element that may hint at the Exeter Book's authorship during the Benedictine Revival may be the perspective and world view that the riddles adopt. Conner argues that "[t]he tastes in poetry engendered by the Benedictine Revival were dictated by a point of view much more self-focussed than the earlier, less monastic elegies with their universal appeal."²⁴ This manifests in the Exeter Book in the form of the riddles' tendency to focus upon the subject's experiences, while also focusing on the next life. Riddle 12 (Ox) powerfully describes the ox's use as a container after its death, and Riddle 26 (Bible) describes how after "Mec feonda sum feore besnypede" [s]ome of my enemies deprived me of life" (26.1), it is created. The emphasis on the next life is a recurring theme of the Benedictine reform, which stressed that believers should act in a way that would give them access to heaven in the next life. This is also in line with the Christian philosophy of "contemptus mundi" [contempt of the world], one that stressed the importance of contemplating heaven instead of being involved in transitory earthly life.

Considerations of the next life may have also been a result of the physical dangers of the time. Instead of thinking about the ever-present threats posed by death, disease, and destruction, contemplation of the greener pastures of heaven must have been more palatable to the Anglo-Saxons. Though little scholarship has focused on this aspect of the Exeter Book riddles, the historical context suggests the possibility that the tendency to look to the next life was borne out of the changes of the Benedictine Revival and the desire to leave behind the trials and tribulations of the earthly plane.

Like belief in and contemplation of the next life, the Viking invasions and the martial culture of the Anglo-Saxons also left a distinct mark on the Exeter Book riddles. Brian McFadden suggests that the Exeter Book riddles have an extremely high occurrence of violent

²⁴ Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, 149.

themes compared to preceding riddle collections.²⁵ McFadden notes that in the ninety-five riddles of the Exeter Book, ten describe weapons or armor, thirty-three mention weapons, combat, or exile, two feature slaves, and two mention tribute of a sort.²⁶ The high occurrence of martial themes, comprising more than one-third of the collection, is higher than in collections written by other earlier Anglo-Saxon authors. This is evidenced by Tatwine's forty riddles, which feature seven instances of war, Eusebius's riddles which mention war ten times in sixty riddles, Boniface's riddles which mention war five times out of twenty riddles, and Aldhelm's collection, in which seventeen out of 100 riddles talk about war.²⁷ These collections by Tatwine, Boniface, and Aldhelm, called the Anglo-Latin riddles, were written by Anglo-Saxons at times *predating* the first Viking attacks. The sudden and striking appearance of so many riddles featuring martial themes in a context in which Vikings were attacking Anglo-Saxon England suggests that the numerous martial allusions in the Exeter Book betray a sense of anxiety about impending violence, and may reflect the realities of living in such a turbulent period. That such themes had not previously played a central role in the riddling tradition suggests that the violent themes reflect the violent times in which the Exeter Book was composed.

The riddle format may further reflect the anxieties of the turbulent period in which the Exeter Book was written. Riddles, unlike other forms of literature, pose a question which can then be answered and understood. In a period of such upheaval and change, it is possible that the riddles reflected the fears of the unknown other posed by the Vikings, and the general uncertainty of late tenth-century England.²⁸ The religious culture of the monastery was changing, and furthermore the Viking attacks were challenging the safety of the Anglo-Saxons, who also

²⁵ McFadden, "Raiding, Reform, and Reaction," 333.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 340–41.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Nelson, "Four Social Functions of the Exeter Book Riddles."

had to shoulder the daily fears of starvation or illness. In such circumstances, the use of riddles as a means of comforting the reader by confronting the uncertainty of daily life makes sense. By giving voice to the fears present in contemporary society, the Exeter Book riddles allowed the Anglo-Saxons to not only contain their fears, but to have power over them by providing ownership of them through the eventual understanding of the solution.²⁹ The Exeter Book riddles may also have provided a distraction from the daily difficulties of Anglo-Saxon life. Once we grasp the turbulent historical context of the Exeter Book's creation, it becomes possible to guess not only the extent to which the riddles show the author's sense of the times, but also how the author used the medium to challenge and comfort the reader.³⁰

Having considered the period in which the Exeter Book riddles were written, we now turn to a comparison with the *Aenigmata* in the hopes that further information about Symphosius's geographical location or dating can be gleaned. As has been noted previously, a study of the *Aenigmata* is hampered by the lack of access to the original manuscript, as well as the lack of scholarship on the riddles. Our knowledge of the Exeter Book's authorship provides a counterpoint against which our knowledge of the *Aenigmata* can be juxtaposed, so that we might pinpoint where the authors' geographical locations and historical contexts differ. This use of the Exeter Book to look at the *Aenigmata* provides the means of discovering clues that can anchor our understanding of Symphosius's authorship of his riddles to a narrower time and place.

Our discussion of the *Aenigmata* begins with Sebo, since her theory centering Symphosius in Carthage, as well as the evidence provided by the Fox riddles supporting her theory, have been briefly discussed above. Other evidence supporting Sebo's argument can be

²⁹ McFadden, "Raiding, Reform, and Reaction," 333.

³⁰ We are assuming that the author of the Exeter Book is also the scribe, since the presence of only one scribe, as evidenced by Ker, suggests that the book was written by one person who was working in Exeter Cathedral, which is in line with the book's Christian sensibilities.

found in Symphosius's statement that his riddles are written for a Saturnalia dinner party.

Symphosius writes that

Annua Saturni dum tempora festa redirent. . .
 cum streperet late madidae facundia linguae,
 tum verbosa cohors studio sermonis inepti. . .
 Ast ego, ne solus foede tacuisse viderer,
 qui nihil adtuleram mecum quod dicere possem,
 hos versus feci subito de carmine vocis (Symphosius, Praefatio, 3–15).

[When the annual festival time of Saturn returned. . .
 when soused tongues resounded widely with eloquence,
 at that time the verbose retinue trifles in the zeal of speech. . .
 But I, lest I alone should seem to have been silent in disgrace,
 who had brought nothing with me which I would be able to say,
 made these verses suddenly from the song of the voice.]

The Saturnalia, a hedonistic pagan celebration of the god Saturn, originated in Rome and was accordingly celebrated across the Roman Empire's numerous colonies.³¹ The Saturnalia was a multi-day holiday hailing the changing of the year and the winter solstice, and was celebrated by a general overturning of conventional social mores.³² This included nobles wearing garments connoting enslavement, masters dining with their slaves, the giving of gifts, and the allowance of things like gambling that were at other times illegal.³³ Sumptuous banquets like the one at which Symphosius claims to have been present were common during the Saturnalia, and were often followed by after-dinner jokes and riddle-telling.³⁴ While the Saturnalia was celebrated across

³¹ *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. "Saturnus, Saturnalia," accessed January 20, 2017, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606413.001.0001/acref-9780198606413-e-5721?rskey=EPuYMF&result=2>. Sources use the names Saturnus and Saturn interchangeably. For this thesis I will be using the name Saturn, since it is the more recognizable version.

³² Sebo, "In Scirpo Nodum," 189.

³³ Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion*, 146–50.

³⁴ New Pauly Online, s.v. "Saturnalia," accessed January 18, 2017, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/saturnalia-e1102380?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.brill-s-new-pauly&s.q=saturnalia.

Macrobius's *Saturnalia* is also set during the eponymous holiday, and centers on jokes and discussions told at a Saturnalia banquet. Scholars have suggested that Macrobius was North African as well, and his dating to the early fifth century makes him a potential contemporary of Symphosius, suggesting that the Saturnalia may have been a popular time period in which to center a text.

the Roman Empire, the cult of Saturn was especially important in Carthage.³⁵ Knowing that the Saturnalia was especially beloved in Carthage would further indicate that Symphosius's choice to set his riddles at such an event was motivated because of his location and cultural context, since he was in a part of the Roman Empire that considered the Saturnalia a worthy setting for a writer to place his work.

Now equipped with a sense of Symphosius's geographic location, other questions come to mind, including what was happening at the time that he was writing, and what influenced his riddles? Since we know that the events surrounding the authorship of the Exeter Book riddles influenced their creation, these questions may help gauge how the Exeter Book riddles' reflection of the troubles and fears facing the inhabitants of tenth-century Exeter can provide clues to the presence of similar pressures in the *Aenigmata*. If the period in which Symphosius was writing was marked by significant violence and turbulence, we should expect to see evidence of it in the text, as was evident in the Exeter Book riddles.

During the fourth and fifth centuries, the Roman Empire, of which Carthage was a part, experienced a slow but steady decline. By the fourth century, Rome had expanded to such an extent that remote administration was becoming increasingly difficult, while at the same time the empire was governed by a series of weak rulers. In 378, the Roman army was dealt a crushing defeat at the Battle of Adrianople, which further weakened Rome, made it harder to fend off foreign attacks, and demoralized the Roman populace.³⁶ The loss of so many soldiers was a

³⁵ Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage*, 209–11; Shaw, Rulers, Nomads, and Christians in Roman North Africa. Rives writes that “[i]n the extant inscriptions from Carthage, dedications to Saturn far outnumber those to any other deity” (209). Shaw also discusses the importance of the cult of Saturn, like his close connection to the market at Hassawana (I. 69). Saturn was also important in the Christian takeover of the area, as evidenced by the appropriation of the stones used in a temple of Saturn for the building of a Christian basilica (35–36).

³⁶ *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 13, 101. “Barely one-third of Valens’ army escaped the battle. A large number of viri illustres were killed . . . Modern scholars suggest that between fifteen and thirty thousand Roman soldiers died. Ammianus considered Adrianople to be the worst defeat suffered by Rome since Cannae [216 BC].”

serious blow to the army, and Rome withdrew its forces from far-flung territories like Britain and Spain as early as 413.³⁷ Rome's perilous situation was further hindered by the growing divide between the Eastern and Western halves of the empire under Theodosius in the late fourth century, which further exacerbated the difficulties of the Roman Empire. Political tensions were high at the period in which Symphosius was writing, as the once-great empire slowly lost more and more of its power.

North Africa, where Symphosius was likely from, was not immune to the precipitous decline of the empire, and succumbed to it in 439. The Vandals, a Germanic tribe, swept into Spain in 409 and North Africa in 429, captured Carthage in 439 after a lengthy siege, and established a kingdom there, from which they could easily attack Rome.³⁸ The late fourth to early fifth century was a tumultuous time for Rome, and was characterized by a weakening of the empire and attacks from invading forces. For those on the fringes of the empire, such as North Africa, the period was especially difficult, because they were living on the edge of a failing empire and were subject to attack and annexation by the "barbaric" Vandal invaders. Just as the tumultuous period in which the Exeter Book was written affected its creation, so too should Rome's political and social turmoil have left their mark on the *Aenigmata*, which was written at the same time that Rome was collapsing, and in which Carthage was invaded and captured by the Vandals.

³⁷ Ibid., 98.

³⁸ *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 13, 391; *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Vandal," accessed January 18, 2017, <http://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/74793#>. The Vandals were a "barbaric" tribe originally from Germania, and were first mentioned by Tacitus: "...Marsos Gambrivios Suebos Vandalios, adfirmant, eaque vera et antiqua nomina" (*Germania* 2.2) [...the Marsii, Gambrii, Suebi, Vandalii, they affirm, that each are true and ancient names]. By the fifth century they had become a strong tribe that swept through Europe, grabbing land as they went, and eventually sacking Rome in 455. Having become widely known for their taking over of so many territories, the Vandals are today synonymous with destruction and carnage.

Yet evidence exists that suggests the *Aenigmata* predates the Vandal invasion of 439. It is hard to deny that the *Aenigmata* was written in the context of the Roman decline, since it was a continuous fall spanning more than a century, but there is little in the collection to suggest that it was composed during a more immediate collapse precipitated by the Vandal invasion. Since textual evidence suggests that the Exeter Book was written in a period of strife caused by the Viking raids, as has been suggested by McFadden, similar elements relating to conflict in the *Aenigmata* may shed light on whether its riddles were also composed during a tumultuous time.

While McFadden's argument that the many examples of violence in the Exeter Book reveal an anxiety about warfare can be transposed to the *Aenigmata*, his theory—based on the number of times conflict is mentioned—does not work well with Symphosius's text, which features only eleven out of 100 instances of war-related themes.³⁹ Roughly one in ten of Symphosius's riddles features themes of conflict, while among the Exeter Book riddles this number rises to one in three. If Symphosius and the author of the Exeter Book were both living in climates of violence in their direct areas, they should have violent themes in proportion to one another.

The few instances of war-related themes in the *Aenigmata* are also less battle-fraught than in the Exeter Book. Symphosius's arrow (Riddle 65) flies through the air but does not explicitly pierce anything, and the chain (Riddle 5) binds, but is also bound in turn, unlike the sword of the Exeter Book (Riddle 20), which states that "oft ic oþrum scod" [often I injure others], and the shield (Riddle 5), which describes itself as "iserne wund / bille gebennad beadoweorca sæd" [wounded by iron / wounded by sword, sated by battle work]. The low instance of war-related themes and their relatively benign usage in Symphosius's *Aenigmata*

³⁹ McFadden, "Raiding, Reform, and Reaction," 340–41.

suggest that Symphosius was not living through a period of danger or violence, but was instead writing in the rather more stable period directly before the Vandal invasion.

Since the *Aenigmata* features far fewer examples of war-related themes, the period immediately preceding the fall of Carthage to the Vandals in 439 seems a more likely date for the composition of a text as experimental and bold as the *Aenigmata*. Carthage in the fourth century was doing quite well, and even reached what the *Cambridge Ancient History* calls “a high point of both population and prosperity.”⁴⁰ Unlike the period under the Vandals, whose rule was characterized as the harshest of all of the formerly Roman lands held by “barbarians” at the time, fourth-century Carthage was experiencing somewhat of a renaissance that better matches the kind of culture that one would expect to foster the creativity found in the *Aenigmata*.⁴¹ A pre-Vandal period in a culture experiencing such a boom would have been a much more fertile place for literary exploits like the *Aenigmata* to flourish, since cultures in periods of prosperity typically encourage creative pursuits because they have the money and leisure to do so. As we saw in tenth-century Exeter, periods of unrest and uncertainty, like the Viking attacks, do not encourage the writing of books. In a similar period of uncertainty, attack, and oppression, such as the one that the Romans and natives of Carthage lived through under the Vandals, it seems similarly unlikely for an author like Symphosius to have chosen to pick up the pen when he would have benefitted more from the use of the sword. The Vandals were also adherents of Arian Christianity, and their harsh treatment of the native Carthaginians suggests that they enforced their religion on the populace.⁴² That Symphosius had the freedom to write a text that centers upon a pagan holiday further suggests that he was writing in the pre-Vandal period.

⁴⁰ *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol 13, 405.

⁴¹ *Britannica Academic*, s.v. “Ancient Rome,” accessed January 18, 2017.
<http://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/106272#26712.toc>.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Symphosius's tone is also not compatible with that of an oppressive regime, especially when compared to the tone used in the Exeter Book. One of the hallmarks of the *Aenigmata*, which has been commented on by numerous scholars, is its generally cheerful and optimistic tone. The subjects do not dwell on their hardships as they do in the Exeter Book riddles, in which speakers frequently—and sometimes at length—mention their sufferings and tortures, but, on the rare occasions when they mention suffering, they mention it briefly and quickly move on. For example, in Riddle 5 (Catena [Chain]), the speaker mentions being bound but does so in a whimsical manner:

Nexa ligor ferro, multos habitura ligatos;
vincior ipsa prius, sed vincio vincta vicissim;
et solvi multos, nec sum tamen ipsa soluta.

[Bound by iron I am fastened, about to have many bound [men];
first I myself am bound, but being bound, I bind in turn;
and I freed many, nevertheless I myself am not freed.]

Symphosius does not allow the chain to lament its bound state, but turns it into a play on words, wherein it is bound and binds in turn. This successfully turns a potential lamentation into a light and witty wordplay. Binding also appears in the Exeter Book, but is used in a more negative way:

<p>mearc paþas walas træd bunden under beame wean on laste earfoða dæl sare on sidan.</p>	<p>Sipade widdor moras pæðde beag hæfde on healse weorc þrowade oft mec isern scōd (11b–16a)</p>
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<p>trod the march-steps, bound under a beam, suffered work part of hardships.</p>	<p>[I traveled wider, traversed the moors, I had a ring on my neck of woe in the track, The iron often harmed me</p>
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sorely on the sides.^{43]}

Here, the subject in the Exeter Book, an Ox, describes its binding in terms of its servitude to another, and the torments that it suffers in the process. The author of the Exeter Book has a tendency to dwell on hardships, a subject that Symphosius shies away from, which may very well be a reflection of his more settled environment. By comparing the brooding tone of the Exeter Book to the much lighter one of the *Aenigmata*, it becomes easier to see how the evidence, once again, does not support the claim that Symphosius was writing in a period of war or strife.

In fact, the differences in the authors' contexts may even have extended to their use of tenses. Symphosius and the author of the Exeter Book tend to use different tenses throughout their riddles, with Symphosius tending towards the present-tense, and the author of the Exeter Book veering more towards the past-tense. Symphosius's use of the present-tense could suggest a willingness to place himself in the now, as if it is comfortable for him to do so. In the entire *Aenigmata*, there are only five riddles out of 100 that exclusively use the past tense, the rest being either exclusively present-tense or a mix of present and past. Such a usage is compatible with a period of relative safety, and less so with the turbulent period around the time of the Vandal invasion. On the other hand, the Exeter Book riddles frequently employ the past tense, with twenty-nine out of ninety-five riddles being exclusively in the past tense.⁴⁴ It is possible that the author of the Exeter Book employed the past tense so often because the future delights of heaven were unknowable, and the present was fraught with too much tension, making the past a familiar and comfortable period in which to situate the riddles. The past tense also safely

⁴³ For this thesis, I chose to preserve the Exeter Book's use of a- and b-lines, which are read straight across.

⁴⁴ The number may be higher, but the fragmentary nature of some of the riddles, especially towards the end of the book, make it impossible to guess for certain.

distances the riddles from the dangers or unpleasantness of the present moment. The frequency of past-tense usage is in keeping with what we know about the period, which was fraught with conflict with the Vikings, as well as changes to the fabric of the church. The dangers of the period in which the Exeter Book was written permeated even the use of tenses used in the riddles; that Symphosius regularly employs the present tense in the *Aenigmata* suggests that he was not writing in a time of similar threats.

Finally, as was mentioned briefly above, it seems unlikely for Symphosius to have written under the Vandals, because of his claim that he was writing for the Saturnalia. In Vandal-held North Africa, where Roman paganism had previously been the primary religion, Christianity was the accepted, and enforced,⁴⁵ religion. The Vandals, who were “ardent Arian Christians,” forced their religious views on the Carthaginians when they moved into power, and persecuted non-Christian North Africans.⁴⁶ Carthage in pre-Vandal times was largely Christian, but that did not preclude the celebration of pagan holidays and cults, especially the culturally vital cult of Saturn. In fact, Symphosius was not the only fourth–fifth century author using the Saturnalia as his setting; Macrobius focuses his aptly-named *Saturnalia* on it as well. Yet judging from the violence with which the Vandals imposed their religion onto the Carthaginian populace, it seems unlikely that Symphosius’s setting of his riddles at a Saturnalia would have been accepted or well received by the ruling Vandals.

⁴⁵ Britannica Academic, s.v. “Ancient Rome,” accessed January 18, 2017, <http://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/106272#26712.toc>. The encyclopedia states that “Romans and barbarians [Vandals] coexisted but uneasily. Among the obstacles to reconciliation were differences in mores; social and political institutions . . . and above all religion: the Arianism of the Barbarians permitted the Roman Catholic bishops to retain their hold over their flocks. The only persecution, however, was under the Vandals, whose domination was harshest.”

⁴⁶ Britannica Academic, s.v. “Vandal,” accessed January 18, 2017, <http://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/74793#>.

The evidence from the Exeter Book also helps orient the creation of the *Aenigmata* in the pre-Vandal period. If we look to Conner's idea that the author of the Exeter Book changed the subjects and writing style of his riddles as the religious tone of the period changed, we should be able to track the types of changes that would have accompanied such a seismic shift in religion. The Exeter Book riddles show a shift in terms of subjects and writing style, as well as a focus on the self and the likeliness of looking towards the future that came as the result of the Benedictine Revival. If Symphosius had been writing during a similar period of religious change brought about by the Vandals' suppression of paganism, we would expect that such a shift would be observable in his *Aenigmata*. Had Symphosius written such a blatantly pagan text as a statement against the Christian Vandals' persecutions, the *Aenigmata* probably would not have survived long enough to have been copied. Therefore, Symphosius seems more likely to have adhered to the status quo, and we can assume he would have written a less overtly pagan text if he had been writing under the Vandals. This suggests that, while the proposed dates of the fourth–fifth centuries are not wrong, a cutoff date has to be established at around 429, the year that the Vandal siege of Carthage began.

As has been demonstrated, the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book should be read as related texts coming from the same tradition. Although the lack of scholarship on the *Aenigmata* is a roadblock to our understanding of Symphosius and the climate in which he was writing, comparing the *Aenigmata* with the known conditions of the Exeter Book's authorship helps build a greater understanding of the text, like its time period, cultural climate, and geographic location. The discovery of these elements of Symphosius's authorship that were not otherwise available to us were found by comparing the text against the Exeter Book, which proves that this work should continue to take place between these two texts, and also with the other riddle collections

that bear a direct influence from Symphosius, as it is entirely possible that information is present, waiting to be gleaned by looking through the lens of other texts' cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts.

2: Cyclicity and Transformation in the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book Riddles

Having used the Exeter Book to situate Symphosius in Carthage and having anchored the *Aenigmata* in the fourth- or fifth-century period predating the 429 Vandal siege of the city, we now turn to the collections themselves. The way that the collections as cohesive texts work in terms of their forms, formats, and reception by their audiences can sometimes be used to discover the context in which the text was written, and how the text itself is used to evoke the context. Just as the *Aenigmata* evokes its Saturnalian context and so reveals its relationship to Roman culture, so too might the Exeter Book contain information regarding when it was written, its usage, and how the riddles' structures were related to the cultures from which they came.

I begin with the *Aenigmata*, since Symphosius conveniently uses his prologue to announce both who his audience is and the occasion for which he is writing. Though it is possible that his audience and occasion are fabrications used to give his riddles a meaningful context, we will assume that Symphosius was telling the truth because the evidence presented in the previous chapter points to his having been in a culture that was still celebrating the Saturnalia. The *Aenigmata* is also a good place to start, since the author of the Exeter Book gives no description of the audience itself, nor the specific events at which the riddles were read, making the *Aenigmata* a stronger place to begin mapping how we ought to think about how the collections interacted with their readers.

Symphosius's *Aenigmata* is made up of 100 riddles, while the Exeter Book contains ninety-five, although it is possible that the significant amount of damage to the text towards the end of the book resulted in the loss of the final five riddles that would have brought the

collection to 100.⁴⁷ The occasional lack of separation between riddles in the Exeter Book has also caused some debate around the correct numbering of the riddles, since it can be difficult to tell where each begins and ends.⁴⁸ The answers to each riddle, which are appended as the title, prove that no two riddles in the *Aenigmata* share the same subject, whereas in the Exeter Book numerous subjects are repeated. The two collections are also separated by the ways in which the lines are organized, with Symphosius's riddles each being three hexametrical lines long. Instead of using meter, the Exeter Book riddles' lines are organized using alliteration, a typically Old English quality that is also present in texts like *Beowulf* and *The Dream of the Rood*. Unlike the *Aenigmata*, the Old English riddles also vary in length, with the longest being over 100 lines long, and the shortest being only one line. The *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book riddles both adhered to styles that were typical to the cultures from which they came, demonstrating how even texts from the same riddling tradition can be marked by cultural and temporal differences.

One of the major differences between the two texts is the presence or lack of answers in each riddle collection, which drastically changes the ways in which the reader relates to the text. All 100 of Symphosius's riddles have their answers appended as titles. To the reader of the *Aenigmata*, the answer is as available as the riddle itself. In contrast, the Exeter Book riddles do not supply any solutions, which to this day remain inconclusive. The Exeter Book's lack of answers may explain why some of the riddles are so long; it may have taken more than three lines to sufficiently describe or explain the subject enough that the reader stood a chance of guessing the answer correctly. Whereas Symphosius strove to condense complex subjects into

⁴⁷ Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called*, 3; Ohl, *Enigmas of Symphosius*, 16; Crossley-Holland, *Exeter Book Riddles*, 10. Bitterli notes that, along with the corrupted text that makes the final riddles difficult to decipher, the beginning and ending of the Exeter Book are missing leaves. It would not have been odd for the Exeter Book to have had 100 riddles, considering that Symphosius and Aldhelm, which were part of the same riddling tradition, also wrote collections that featured 100 riddles, especially since numerous riddles in the Exeter Book are inspired by those that appear in Symphosius's and Aldhelm's collections.

⁴⁸ For this thesis, I follow Krapp and Dobie's numbering system and riddle delineations.

only three lines, the author of the Exeter Book's longer riddles suggests a willingness to marvel at the subjects' similarities to other entities, which may have also helped the reader discover the answers.

Conversely, the *Aenigmata*, which gives the answers to each riddle, reads almost like a book of jokes for one to read to another person, instead of being a book for one wanting to solve the riddles themselves.⁴⁹ There is no mystery about what the answers are, because the *Aenigmata* supplies them to the reader even before giving the riddles. This removes much of the ambiguity that has continued to encourage scholars to keep questioning the subjects of the Exeter Book riddles, since there is no possibility that any of the answers will be incorrectly guessed and assumed to be correct. Answers to riddles from the Exeter Book that have been guessed with varying degrees of agreement from other scholars since the nineteenth century are still questioned simply because the lack of definitive answers leaves many roads of interpretation open. In contrast, the riddles of the *Aenigmata* have the comforting quality of ensuring that the supplied answer is the correct one.

The presence of the answers in the *Aenigmata* also frees the reader to focus on Symphosius's artistry. By providing the answers as titles, the need to find the solutions disappears, and places the readers' attention on Symphosius's compositional abilities, and, by extension, his intellect and wit. It is clear that Symphosius was meticulous in constructing his riddles, as evidenced by his abundant use of literary forms like alliteration, metaphor, and hexameter, as well as the careful thought required to condense the essence of a subject into only three lines. Symphosius's declaration in his preface that "hos versus feci subito" (15) [I made

⁴⁹ This sense is supported by Symphosius's claim that he wrote the riddles for a Saturnalia, "ne solus foede tacuisse viderer, / qui nihil adtuleram mecum quod dicere possem" (13-14) [lest I alone should seem to have been silent in disgrace, / who had brought nothing with me which I would be able to say].

these verses suddenly] further enhances the effect of the literary forms. Although likely a conceit by the author, the description of the text's quick composition makes the presence of literary forms seem to stem from Symphosius's innate abilities, making both Symphosius and the literariness of his text more impressive to the reader and more worthy of note. By providing the answers as Symphosius does in the *Aenigmata*, the reader's attention can be focused on aspects besides the simple solving of the riddles, and can instead be focused upon the author's intellect and his ability to write using numerous literary forms.

The Exeter Book riddles' lack of answers work in the opposite way, instead focusing the reader's attention on the solution's discovery. The riddles tantalizingly suggest a series of potential answers, while the goading dare to "say what I am called" that concludes so many riddles encourages the reader to rise to the challenge of finding the solution. The sense of discovery is much more urgent and central when reading the Exeter Book riddles because the answer is the only element preventing the reader's full understanding of the riddle. Unlike the *Aenigmata*, the Exeter Book riddles' lack of answers focuses the reader's attention onto the solution, instead of the literary qualities of the text. The format of the riddles without their answers in the Exeter Book encourages the reader to focus on and engage in the text by necessitating their discovery of the answers.

The authors' cultural contexts influenced choices of whether or not to provide solutions to their riddles in much the same way that the authors use the formats of their collections to interact with and comment upon the context in which their riddles were written. If we accept that Symphosius was from Romanized Carthage, it is possible to surmise that his audience was made up of noble Carthaginians at a Saturnalia feast, while our knowledge that the Exeter Book may have been written at Exeter Cathedral suggests that the Exeter Book author's audience was likely

a religious community. But who were these people? How were these texts received by their audiences?

Because Symphosius describes his setting, we begin with an examination of the *Aenigmata*. Symphosius gives a fair amount of information about his audience and the context for which his riddles were written, and gives a description of the Saturnalia dinner-party at which he situates himself. He describes his setting as being:

Annua Saturni dum tempora festa redirent
 perpetuo semper nobis sollemnia ludo,
 post epulas laetas, post dulcia pocula mensae,
 deliras inter vetulas puerosque loquaces,
 cum streperet late madidae facundia linguae,
 tum verbosa cohors studio sermonis inepti
 ...
 Nec mediocre fuit; magni certaminis instar,
 ponere diverse vel solvere quaeque vicissim.
 Ast ego, ne solus foede tacuisse viderer,
 qui nihil adtuleram mecum quod dicere possem,
 hos versus feci subito de carmine vocis.
 Insanos inter sanum non esse necesse est
 Da veniam, lector, quod non sapit ebria Musa. (Symphosius, Praefatio, 3–17)

[When the annual festival time of Saturn returned,
 always festive for us in perpetual play,
 after happy dinners, after the sweet draughts of dinner,
 among silly old ladies and talkative boys,
 when soused tongues resounded widely with eloquence,
 at that time the verbose retinue trifles in the zeal of speech,
 ...
 It was not mediocre, but was similar to a great contest,
 to place [them] variously or to solve each again in turn.
 But I, lest I alone should seem to have been silent in disgrace,
 who had brought nothing with me which I would be able to say,
 made these verses suddenly from the song of the voice.
 It is not necessary to be sober among the tipsy.
 Give forgiveness, reader, because a drunk muse is not sensible.]

According to Symphosius's description of the Saturnalia dinner, the dinner party was a large one made up of both genders and many age groups, and included copious amounts of drinking. As

stated above, Symphosius's claim that he "hos versus feci subito" [made these verses suddenly] belies the artistry apparent throughout his collection.⁵⁰ The declaration that the *Aenigmata* was written so that Symphosius's silence would not single him out as one "qui nihil adtuleram mecum quod dicere possem," [who had brought nothing with me which I would be able to say] also indicates that the *Aenigmata* was meant to be read aloud before an audience. The presence of the answers in the text supports this, since that way the reader might pose the riddles to others while having access to the correct solutions. The *Aenigmata*'s preface helps center our understanding of Symphosius's purported context and provides insight into how the audience and text may have interacted in such a setting.

The context of the *Aenigmata* further informs the ways in which the audience may have interacted with the text by creating a competition surrounding the unveiling of the answer. Telling Symphosius's riddles at a dinner party would have shown off the intelligence and wit of the reader, or, more specifically, Symphosius.⁵¹ As Roger Abrahams notes, a riddle's answer that does not make sense neither astonishes nor matters to the listeners, and it is likely that a riddle without an answer, especially in a refined setting like a Saturnalia dinner party, would have been too open to debate to be sufficiently impressive.⁵² Instead, by providing the answers with the text, Symphosius ensures that there is only one possible correct answer, leaving no room for debate in cases where multiple solutions are posited.

Simultaneously, the practice of giving prizes at dinner parties to the individual who provided the correct answer to a riddle suggests that the discovery of the solutions was

⁵⁰ Such modesty from Roman authors is common, and can be seen in Catullus 1.1 and Ovid 1.1 (*Amores*). The modesty was likely calculated and may have served as an explanation for any shortcomings that a reader might find, or may have been used to impress the reader with the natural poetic ability of the author in crafting such lines "suddenly."

⁵¹ Leary, *Symphosius, the Aenigmata*, 10.

⁵² Abrahams, "Literary Study of the Riddle," 180.

competitive between members of the dinner party.⁵³ After hearing the riddles, the listeners would strive to be the first to provide the correct answer in order to win the prize. This suggests that telling riddles was a competitive moment and a public display of individual intellect, with one person posing a riddle and proving his ingenuity in its composition, and the others having the opportunity to prove their intelligence by solving the riddle. Knowing the competitive context of riddling during the Saturnalia reveals how Symphosius's choice to provide the answers in the *Aenigmata* seems to have been rooted in a tradition that encouraged audience participation in a public display of wits.

Having unpacked how the *Aenigmata*'s Saturnalian context influenced Symphosius's choice of providing the answers to his riddles, we now can turn to the Exeter Book to discover how its author's choice to not provide the answers may have been influenced by the context in which he wrote. Andy Orchard argues that the riddles of the Exeter Book seem "perhaps intended less for the classroom than for the wine-hall," since the lack of answers and the use of vernacular indicate a certain roughness compared to the Anglo-Latin riddles of Aldhelm, Tatwine, and Eusebius.⁵⁴ I would add that the ever-changing length of the riddles adds to the roughness noted by Orchard by denying the predictability that Symphosius's heavily regulated lines provide.⁵⁵

⁵³ Leary, *Symphosius, the Aenigmata*, 10.

⁵⁴ Orchard, "Enigma Variations," 284. See also Whitman, "Medieval Riddling." Anglo-Latin riddles, as Aldhelm, Tatwine, and Eusebius wrote, were used for instruction in the classroom in a tradition starting as early as late antiquity and continuing up to the seventeenth century, because the riddle format was well-suited to the practice of reading, close analysis, and memorization used in early classrooms (Whitman, 182). The shortness of riddles compared to longer texts especially made the riddling format appropriate for rote memorization, while the use of everyday items was good for building a vocabulary when learning a new language. Aldhelm, a riddler himself as well as a teacher, wrote that teaching was used by those "Prima ingenioli rudimenta exercitare cupiens, ut venire possit deinceps ad praestantiorem operis materiam" [desiring to exercise the first rudiments of genius, so that it is next possible to come to more important material of work]" (Whitman, 181).

⁵⁵ The Anglo-Latin riddles, like the *Aenigmata*, also tend to be more predictable in the lengths of their riddles, although they do not adhere to numbers of lines as strictly as Symphosius does. Of the collections that make up this riddling tradition, the Exeter Book riddles offer the widest range of lengths, spanning riddles that are one line long to those that cover multiple pages.

Although the Exeter Book riddles' lack of answers, use of vernacular, varying lengths, and secular themes make the text seem more fit for a "wine-hall," this does not preclude them from being part of a religious community. Secular stories were sometimes told at communal meetings in religious communities, much to the chagrin of Church leaders, indicating that the non-religious themes of the Exeter Book may not have been out of place at Exeter.⁵⁶ The commonality of mead at meals also paints a picture of meal times as being fairly lively, which displaces modern stereotypes of the sober religious group.⁵⁷ Even the double-entendre of the Exeter Book riddles can be argued to have a place at a religious community, by presenting an outlet to discuss tensions surrounding sex and sexuality, subjects that would normally be considered taboo.⁵⁸ Orchard's argument, coupled with the evidence, suggests that the Exeter Book riddles may have been read in a communal setting within the religious community, in a context somewhat similar to the alcohol-fueled Saturnalia dinner that served as the backdrop of the *Aenigmata*, placing the two texts in similar circumstances.

Realizing this, it is possible to examine the audience's relationship to the answerless text of the Exeter Book as being an expression of Christian aesthetics. McFadden points out that the lack of answers encourages the audience to wonder what the solution might be.⁵⁹ This theory is tied to maxims like the one claiming that "God works in mysterious ways," an idea that

⁵⁶ See Bullough, "What has Ingeld to do with Lindisfarne?" Bullough focuses upon a section from Alcuin's letter to Bishop Speratus, in which he encourages the reading of Christian texts instead of pagan stories. The fact that Alcuin had to write on the subject on more than one occasion indicates that religious communities had a tendency to tell non-Christian stories.

⁵⁷ Mead is mentioned twice in the Exeter Book riddles, and is the subject of Riddle 27, while a Cup of Wine is also the subject of Riddle 11. The numerous depictions of alcohol consumption, as well as the descriptions of drunkenness in Riddles 27 and 12 (Ox) suggest that it was a fairly common state to be in, and was not one that was discussed with much shame.

⁵⁸ Smith, "Humor in Hiding," 83. Smith also argues that the double-entendre riddles provide a didactic moment within the community. By forcing the listeners to guess the lewd answer, the author of the Exeter Book allows for the innocent answer to be provided, thus encouraging the cleric to think in a more Christian way.

⁵⁹ McFadden, "Raiding, Reform, and Reaction," 336.

manifests itself in the fact that the reader must sometimes accept that they will not discover all of the riddles in the book. Even if an answer is discovered, there is no assurance that it is what the author of the Exeter Book intended as the correct answer, since the “correct” answers are never provided. Without the answers, the reader must accept that they cannot know everything. Given the Christian context, this enforced worldview suggests the enactment of a Christian aesthetic that focused on the reader’s performance of surrender to God through the acceptance of not knowing.

While the readers of the Exeter Book had to accept that they would not always be able to discover the solutions to the riddles, the lack of answers also creates a sense of competition, not between individuals, but between the readers and the text itself. Previously we saw how Symphosius was able to foster a competition between individuals by creating a dichotomy between the reader’s access to the answers and the listeners’ ignorance. However, in the Exeter Book riddles, the lack of answers suggests a relationship that pits the text against the reader. The text of the Exeter Book riddles continually challenges the reader to “answer what I am called,” “ask what I am called,” and “say what I am called.” The text literally provokes the reader, further incentivizing the group to discover the answer, and thus overcome the challenge. Because the evidence has suggested that the Exeter Book riddles were read in a communal setting, it seems possible that the entire religious community came together to find the solutions, which may have fostered a greater sense of camaraderie. The religious community in which the book was written was one in which teamwork was essential to the competent leadership of the church and the surrounding community. It seems possible that the Exeter Book riddles were an exercise in teamwork that can only have come about by omitting the solutions. Where the *Aenigmata* never explicitly provokes the listener, the direct challenges of the Exeter Book riddles encourage the

reader and listener to come together against the riddles in a man-versus-riddle dynamic. The opposing formats of the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book allow us to see the ways in which the authors create competitive relationships between reader, listener(s), and text in ways that relate to their known contexts.

Challenge may have been utilized in the Exeter Book riddles because it was a galvanizing tool that was familiar to the audience from other genres of Old English literature. The challenges issued by the Exeter Book's riddles are similar to the Anglo-Saxon *beot*, or boast/vow. The *beot* was an important moment in heroic culture and literature, since it signaled a moment for the hero to show bravery, willingness to fight and die, and ability, all usually in the context of a challenge.⁶⁰ Though the *beot* is usually a vow (i.e. "I will kill the enemy or die trying"), the test is implicitly present in the speaker's challenge against the difficult circumstances he faces. The riddles' explicit challenge to the reader evokes the *beot* by inciting the reader to overcome the circumstances of the veiled language, metaphors, and double-entendre employed in the riddle. The use of the *beot* is also appropriate thematically, since many of the Exeter Book riddles feature themes of war and alienation similar to the themes in which the *beot* is typically situated in Anglo-Saxon literature. The presence of language similar to that of the *beot* evokes the idea of competition within the Exeter Book riddles, while also linking the text to the Anglo-Saxon heroic tradition.

Knowing the context has thus far helped us see how the audience interacted with the text.

In order to perceive how the text interacted with the contexts for which the collections were

⁶⁰ One of the most famous *beots* in Anglo-Saxon literature is Beowulf's statement that he will fight the demon Grendel without bearing "sweord ... oþðe sidne scyld, / geolorand to guþe, ac ic mid grape sceal / fon wið feonde ond ymb feorh sacan, / lað wið laþum" (437a–440a) [a sword ... or large shield, or yellow shield to battle, but I with my grasp must fight, grapple against the fiend and fight regarding my life, enemy against enemy.] The idea that Beowulf can fight unarmed against Grendel, a monster who has eaten thirty men every night for the past twelve years, is absurd, making the *beot* all the more memorable to the reader when he accomplishes it and comes out on the other side.

written, we must further interrogate the structure and makeup of the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book riddles. Towards this end, an examination of the ordering of the riddles is necessary, as it reveals how both authors used riddle order to relate to their specific cultural contexts. It is Sebo who first made this discovery in relation to the *Aenigmata*, arguing that the pattern of the riddles, the underlying arrangement that allows for loosely related subjects to be placed in close proximity,⁶¹ was a conscious choice by Symphosius that intentionally expressed the mentality of the Saturnalia. Sebo demonstrates how elements of the riddles that seem unrelated and unimportant were in fact carefully chosen and ordered so that the riddles are interconnected by a series of subtly related parts that create a distinctly Saturnalian sentiment.

As was discussed in the preceding chapter, the Saturnalia was infamous for its overturning of social norms, performed by the upheaval of relationships and relaxing of laws.⁶² The Saturnalia was not only a celebration of societal change and plurality, but was also a celebration of the change wrought by the winter solstice and the changing of the year, which in turn were often translated into a celebration of the cyclicity of the seasons, stars, nature, and the fortunes of men.⁶³ As Symphosius himself makes clear in his preface, the Saturnalia was a time of merrymaking and fun, a time in which diverse groups could come together and carouse freely. Yet just as equally, the Saturnalia was a holiday meant to celebrate cyclicity and change, which Symphosius makes clear by interweaving his riddles so that they transition

⁶¹ I do not refer to the exact locations of subjects in both collections, like riddle sixteen in both the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book being a ship, and riddle seventeen being a dog, and so on, but rather a looser structure that creates linkages between riddles on numerous levels.

⁶² *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. “Saturnus, Saturnalia,” accessed January 20, 2017, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606413.001.0001/acref-9780198606413-e-5721?rskey=EPuYMF&result=2>; New Pauly Online, s.v. “Saturnalia,” accessed January 18, 2017, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/saturnalia-e1102380?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.brill-s-new-pauly&s.q=saturnalia; Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion*. Some writers claim that the Saturnalia was celebrated with human sacrifices as well, although these claims seem specious, at best.

⁶³ Sebo, “In Scirpo Nodum,” 188–89.

smoothly from one into another in a reflection of the smooth transition between the years and seasons.

To demonstrate the sometimes elusive connections between the riddles, which are linked using characteristics like etymology, theme, and word-similarity, to name a few,⁶⁴ we turn now to a close examination of a group of four riddles, Riddles 23–26. Riddle 23 (Musca [Fly]) discusses weather and wind, two things that are of vital importance to farming and crops, which are a major theme in Riddle 24 (Curculio [Weevil]). The Weevil states that it is “[n]on bonus agricolis, non frugibus utilis hospes” (24.1) [not good to farmers, not a useful guest to crops], which is also true of riddle 25 (Mus [Mouse]), and both the Weevil and Mouse use the word “sagina” [food], although it is used to opposite effects, since the Weevil states that it lives off of a great feast, while the Mouse states that it lives off of stolen food. The Weevil mentions a god’s name, Ceres, while the Crane of riddle 26 mentions the god Mars’s name, which creates a link between the two by their invocation of divinities. The Mouse’s name, “Mus,” is also very similar to “Musca” of riddle 23, and also rhymes with “Grus” [Crane] of riddle 26. Finally, the Mouse states that “exiguo sumptu furtiva vivo sagina” [I live on stolen food at slight cost] (25.2), which places it in the similar theme of farming and weather that are present in riddles 23 and 24.

Even a brief examination of a small section of the *Aenigmata* makes clear how Symphosius uses multiple levels of interconnections to link his riddles. The constant transformation of one subject into another through the use of numerous connections demonstrates Sebo’s idea of the Saturnalian mentality emphasizing cyclicity and change. This alignment is further enforced by the frequent use of first-person speech in the *Aenigmata*, which Sebo believes demonstrates a willingness to identify with other points of view.⁶⁵ Eighty-seven

⁶⁴ Leary, *Symphosius the Aenigmata*; Sebo, “In Scirpo Nodum,” 188–89.

⁶⁵ Sebo, “In Scirpo Nodum,” 190–91.

out of 100 of Symphosius's riddles use the first-person, suggesting that he was comfortable identifying with a wide range of subjects. While I agree with Sebo, I would further her argument by noting that first-person speech goes both ways in the riddles: by writing in such a style, Symphosius uses the first-person to show and look at the world through a changed perspective, which he then offers to the readers by shifting their perspective through reading an account that identifies the "I" as a purportedly "other" point of view. The use of the first-person in the *Aenigmata* changes Symphosius, the human speaker, into a variety of objects and creatures, and allows both him and the reader to take on those identities by seeing from their perspectives.

It is important to recall that Sebo's assertion that the use of the first-person in the *Aenigmata* shows a Saturnalian mentality refers specifically to riddles, a genre that is meant to be enigmatic. Acknowledging this, it seems entirely possible that the choice of writing the riddles of the *Aenigmata* in the first-person also served to better hide the true identity of the subjects. While this does not apply to an individual's reading of the riddles, since the answers are provided, the first-person speaker is a potent tool when the riddles are read aloud, as Symphosius suggests. Sebo acknowledges that writing in the first-person forces the reader to see the world from the point of view of the subject, which evokes a sense of sympathy from the reader.⁶⁶ Craig Williamson also notes that the use of metaphor, like an egg saying that "I was an orphan," predisposes the reader to perceive the inanimate subject as a human by giving it a voice and calling it by a human name.⁶⁷ This is a powerful tool of concealment, since any riddle using the first-person would, by giving a voice to the inanimate object or voiceless creature, make the reader assume volition and living qualities in the subjects of the riddles.⁶⁸ Thus, while it is still

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁶⁷ Williamson, *A Feast of Creatures*, 28.

⁶⁸ Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called*, 17.

possible that Symphosius employed first-person speech in the *Aenigmata* to convey the influence of the Saturnalia, it must also be taken with a grain of salt, since the first-person may have also been employed as a function of the riddle-genre.

While the Saturnalian mentality of change and plurality is ever-present in the structure of the *Aenigmata*, the genre of riddles lends itself to such concepts. Riddles function by presenting an altered version of a subject, which intentionally distorts the reader's perception of it and forces a discussion of the subject in a manner that diverges from the normal manner of speaking about it.⁶⁹ In such a way, an anchor can become a heroic warrior and a butter churn can become a symbol of sexual desire. It is only upon the subject's discovery that it reverts from the fictitious identity imposed by the riddle back to its original form in the reader's perception, since the knowledge of the answer no longer supports the suspension of belief that allows ordinary subjects to take on fantastic qualities, like a bellows becoming an immortal creature. Even the manner of posing a riddle by relating a subject's changed state and then altering it back to its original form through the solving of the riddle is itself cyclical. It is therefore unsurprising that Symphosius chose to imbue the *Aenigmata* with aspects of change and cyclicity as presented in the Saturnalian mentality, considering that riddles themselves are deeply coded with the very same concepts.

The natural cyclicity of the riddle genre is also closely tied to the transformation of the mundane into the marvelous that takes place in both the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book. The transformations make the riddles into stories that the reader wants to hear about, while also grounding the subjects in the real world, which make the fantastic accessible. This sense of change from mundane to wonderful is manifested in the transformation of pen and fingers into

⁶⁹ Hamnett, "Ambiguity, Classification, and Change," 383; Georges and Dundes, "Toward a Structural Definition of the Riddle," 114–16.

intrepid travelers (Riddle 51 in the Exeter Book), a snail into a struggling nomad (Riddle 18 in the *Aenigmata*), and a bridge into a miraculous oak in the middle of the water (Riddle 62 in the *Aenigmata*).

In all these transformations, there is a two-pronged change at play. The first, to divorce the known subject as much as possible from its reality, is part of the riddle function. This is most easily accomplished by conferring completely different qualities or an artificial greatness to the unknown subject. Because the subjects had to be known to the reader, who otherwise would not be able to guess the answer, the subjects were often common items that transcended class and status so that they would be more widely accessible. For this reason, many of the subjects were common items, which would be most easily transformed by lending them greater status or different abilities. From the perspective of the genre of riddles, it seems possible that changing essential elements of the subjects, like treating a common object as a rich or noble creation, was used to deceive the reader.

The second has more to do with cultural influences. Symphosius's interest in common subjects may have been a carry-over of the contemporary interest in encyclopedias in the style of Pliny and Cassiodorus, and may have been a reason why he was interested in the qualities and characterization of the mundane.⁷⁰ With this interest in the ordinary being relatively common in contemporary writing, Symphosius may have wanted to transform mundane subjects into fantastical ones so that his reader could gain a greater appreciation for them. In a similar vein, the Exeter Book riddles tend to transform ordinary objects into things that are heroic, beloved, and vital, which may be indicative of the Christian mentality of the author. As we saw earlier, the Exeter Book riddles encourage the reader to wonder what the answers to the riddles are by

⁷⁰ Whitman, "Medieval Riddling," 183.

forcing the acceptance that not everything can be understood. The sense of wonder is also manifested in the text's use of words of wonder, like "sellic" [strange] and "wunderlicu" [wonderful].⁷¹ St. Gregory also states that "when we look closely at the outer form of a thing, we are referred to its inner meaning; for the wonderful works of the visible world possess the marks of the creator; and though we are still not able to see him, we incline towards him if in these things which he has made we admire him" (Moralium, XXVI).⁷² It seems that the Christian conception of the importance of even the most mundane objects may have been a reason why the author of the Exeter Book enacted the transformation of the mundane into the miraculous. Cultural influences can be convincingly linked to the reason behind the authors' transformation of mundane subjects into interesting and even miraculous creations, since the transformation was a reflection of the Saturnalian mentality of change and the Christian conception of appreciating all parts of God's universe.

Sebo provides us with a way of looking at the *Aenigmata* that helps reveal the ways that the placement of the riddles are related to the innate characteristics of the Saturnalia. We will now adopt a similar approach and examine the Exeter Book with an eye towards puzzling out how the riddles' connections evoke the text's larger Christian monastic setting. Like the *Aenigmata*, the Exeter Book riddles have a tendency to discuss a variety of subjects that do not seem to be related, which may be why scholars have not done a close examination of the interconnections of the riddles. However, knowing that Symphosius uses the placement of his riddles to convey a sense of his context, a closer look at the Exeter Book and how the riddles relate to each other on deeper levels may reveal a similar relationship.

⁷¹ Ibid., 185.

⁷² Ibid., 183–84. Translation is his. "Nam si vigilanter exterior conspicimus, per ipsa eadem ad interior revocamus. Vestigial quippe creatoris nostril sunt mira opera visibilis creaturae. Ipsum namque adhuc videre non possumus; sed iam ad eius visionem tendimus, si eum in his quae fecit miramur."

In order to do this, we turn to a close interrogation of a segment of the Exeter Book by examining Riddles 16–19, which use a variety of methods to create links, similar to what we observed in the *Aenigmata*. Both Riddle 16 (Anchor) and 17, whose answer has not been determined, are linked by their self-identification as protectors and warriors. In making a likely reference to arrows, Riddle 17 also describes itself as having a “wombhord” [womb-hoard], which links linguistically with Riddle 18’s (Jug) statement that it has a “wide wombe” [wide womb]. Along with using the word “womb” both Riddles 17 and 18 are also constructed as instruments obligated to men.⁷³ Thematically, Riddles 16, 17, and 19 are also linked by references to war and fighting, and Riddles 17, 18, and 19 all mention being used to carry items. Riddle 19 (Ship) is further connected to the Jug of riddle 18 by its difficulty in speaking. The Jug states that “ne maeg word spreca, maeldan for monnum” (18.1a-2b) [I may not speak words, announce for men], while the Ship of Riddle 19 makes the riddle difficult for the reader to decipher, let alone speak aloud, by using runes (this will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 3), which link the riddles through their inability to speak or be spoken. This closer look affords us the necessary perspective to see the numerous interconnections between even a relatively small sample of the riddles. As in the *Aenigmata*, patterns of placement are discernable in the Exeter Book riddles, consisting of links using words and themes, which require attention and examination.

Since our brief look at the Exeter Book riddles have suggested that there is an intentional pattern of having individual riddles relate to their neighbors, a new question arises: why would a Christian author pattern his riddles in a way that evokes the celebration of a pagan holiday? The

⁷³ This is a group that Jennifer Neville calls the “implement riddles” which she describes as riddles whose subjects are either dependent upon men to use them (for example, a key serves no purpose unless wielded by a man who puts it into a lock) or make men dependent upon them (in an opposite example, a man cannot enter his own house unless he is helped by the key). See Neville, “Unexpected Treasure of the ‘Implement Trope.’”

Exeter Book's context in a religious center may explain why the author chose to use Symphosius's method of interweaving his riddles, since such a pattern could be used to encode a Christian mentality. Christian doctrine often describes a world in which all things are equal and important under God. By linking the diverse subjects, of varying high and low statuses, the interconnections may reveal the importance of all the subjects by showing how everything is connected on some level. For example, a worm on its own may not seem impressive, but when one considers the worm's role in loosening up soil and producing nutrients that make it possible for humans to produce food, its larger role can suddenly be seen and appreciated. Other structural patterns of the Exeter Book help us see various features of the collection. In the Exeter Book, we are shown how an onion (Riddle 25) and a bible (Riddle 26) both suffer throughout their preparation, demonstrating the worth that mundane objects have through their proximity to greater and holier objects. It seems possible that the Exeter Book's author chose to use Symphosius's pattern of interconnections to demonstrate an appropriately Christian worldview to his religious reader.

Like the *Aenigmata*, the Exeter Book also utilizes first-person speech in the riddles, although in a way that promotes a Christian, not Saturnalian, worldview. As we have seen from Sebo, the *Aenigmata*'s use of the first-person may have demonstrated a willingness to identify with his subjects through the Saturnalian lens of change. The same seems to be true of the fifty-one riddles of the Exeter Book that were written using purely first-person speech.⁷⁴ The use of the first-person and the author's willingness to identify with so many perspectives suggests the Christian belief that all things are equal as God's creations. A Christian reading the riddles from

⁷⁴ Some of the riddles are too corrupted to be sure if they are constructed in only first-person speech or incorporate other modes, but the evidence left to us suggests that there are around 51 riddles written only in the first-person.

the perspective of a jay, bookworm, or ship, might gain a better appreciation of the vital role they play in the greater context of the world through the privileging of their individual voices.

As for the remaining forty-four riddles of the Exeter Book that did not use first-person speech, the wide range of perspectives that are taken on seem to indicate the author's creativity in storytelling and a willingness to explore similar stories from new vantage points. Points of view in the Exeter Book range from the first-person speaking subject ("I am"), the first-person viewer ("I saw"), an unspecified speaker ("there is/they say"), and the first-person plural ("we do"). Instead of the simple "I am" form overwhelmingly found in the *Aenigmata*, the author of the Exeter Book provides a number of perspectives and, in the same way that Sebo frames the *Aenigmata*, seems to display a level of comfort with placing himself into numerous roles.

Another potential reason behind the author of the Exeter Book's use of so many points of view may be the author's tendency to repeat riddle subjects across the collection. Thirty-four of the ninety-five riddles share subjects (for example, there are at least three ox riddles), while the Exeter Book also occasionally borrows subjects from Symphosius and the Anglo-Latin authors. The repetition of subjects in the Exeter Book suggests the possibility that the constantly changing perspectives were used to make the repeated subjects feel fresh, preventing the repetition from becoming tiring.

The subjects that are repeated show the author's intelligence by offering the reader a new framework for thinking about the same thing. For example, the three Ox riddles of the Exeter Book demonstrate how using a variety of perspectives can make the repeated subject seem fresh and exciting. In Riddle 12, the ox's leather, used as a masturbatory tool, speaks from the first-person, whereas in Riddle 38 the ox lives but does not itself speak, unlike Riddle 72, in which the ox laments its pitiable condition as a beast of burden. Along with changes relating to the ox's

condition and the tone of the riddles, the change of speaker also significantly distinguishes one riddle from another, all of which keep the various iterations of the ox riddles separate and not obviously repetitive.

The use of interconnections in the repeated subjects is both a way to conceal the subject and to show the author's ingenuity. Interconnecting a subject that has been seen elsewhere to an entirely different subject predisposes the reader to think, assuming that they are familiar with other iterations of the riddle, that the subject is not what it is. For example, if the reader is aware that in the *Aenigmata*, the Fish and River riddle was closely linked to riddles about snow, a ship, and a chicken in an egg, they might not associate a riddle with the same subject in the Exeter Book if it is linked instead to riddles about water or a one-eyed garlic seller. The interconnections in repeated riddles can also show the author's ingenuity in being able to make so many different connections through the same subject. By repeating subjects, like the ox, the author is able to show its connections to a cup of wine, ten chickens, day/time, a bellows, a sword, and a spear, to name just a few. Using Symphosius's riddle interconnections may have been a way for the author of the Exeter Book to further deceive the reader while showing off his intelligence and wit.

Looking at the format and patterning of the riddles of the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book together makes it possible to make examinations and educated guesses as to the relationship between reader and text, as well as the author's considerations of the audience's needs. This manifested itself most clearly in the way that the reader received the provision or lack of answers in the riddles and the interlocking pattern that is a major feature of both texts. Close examinations of the texts proved an invaluable source and revealed a treasure trove of information in this chapter, and it is to this source that I turn in the next chapter.

Shared Subjects, Lewdness, and Tongue-Twisters: A Closer Look at Three Groups of Riddles

Part I: Common-Subject Riddles

As each chapter has moved closer and closer to the text of the riddles, with chapter one focusing on the riddles' contexts and chapter two devoted to the way that the riddles' inner structures' refer to the authors' cultures, this chapter will get the closest to the riddles by performing a textual examination of three major groups, beginning with the group of riddles sharing a common subject with riddles in the *Aenigmata*. Throughout the Exeter Book are a number of riddles that suggest that the author knew the riddles of Symphosius's *Aenigmata*. These riddles seem to have been largely passed from the *Aenigmata* through the Anglo-Latin riddling tradition, which may have been how the author of the Exeter Book became acquainted with them. The shared subjects are easiest to see in the more unusual subjects, like the Fish and River riddles, although riddles with more mundane subjects were also interpreted and extrapolated on in the Exeter Book. Because these riddles in the Exeter Book seem to share the same subjects as those found in the *Aenigmata*, it becomes possible to look at them side-by-side to better understand where the riddles' differences indicate moments where the authors wrote for audiences of their specific cultures. This helps us see how the riddles that share subjects in the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book demonstrate the adaptation of the genre of riddling to a new, Anglo-Saxon context.

Though the riddles' connections are often remarked upon by scholars, the work of close comparison has not yet been attempted, as the dearth of scholarship on the subject reveals. The lack of scholarship may be partly because of the difficulty in ascertaining which similarities

mark the riddles as having the same subjects. For example, the Fish and River riddles in the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book are almost definitely linked. Both riddles use the same metaphor of a house and guest, and employ similar imagery of silence, noise, and inextricability, making a strong case for their being related. Other riddles' subjects are more debatably linked, due in large part to the lack of answers in the Exeter Book, as is the case of the Fox riddles, which focus on the same subject, but are of different lengths and use different metaphors. However, their storylines follow similar patterns of a physical description followed by a depiction of the fox's cunning and wisdom, the only difference being the Exeter Book's extended example of its intellect, suggesting that not only are the subjects the same, but that the author of the Exeter Book was aware of the version presented in the *Aenigmata*.

The question of why the author of the Exeter Book chose to incorporate subjects that were originally from the *Aenigmata* is a thorny one. It is possible that the author of the Exeter Book wanted to use riddles that were already well-known to readers acquainted with the riddle-genre. By reworking them into a new form, the author may have desired to show his wit through his ability to refresh a subject that had been done before, while also creating a reference to a known riddle that would show his own awareness of other collections. Another reason may be our modern assumptions of the riddles' similarities, since those with more complicated subjects, like the One-Eyed Garlic Seller riddles, are easier to distinguish as having origins in the *Aenigmata*, whereas those with mundane subjects, like the Anchor or Fox riddles, may be harder to distinguish because the ways of thinking about them are more rigid across cultures.⁷⁵ Finally, if the author of the Exeter Book had read the *Aenigmata*, it is at least somewhat possible that he

⁷⁵ For example, descriptions of foxes as small, cunning creatures had not changed in the 500 years separating Symphosius and the author of the Exeter Book, and it has not changed in the 1000 years since the version found in the Exeter Book.

may have subconsciously incorporated subjects or elements from them, though the riddles' numerous similarities suggests that this was not the case. In short, there are numerous possible reasons why the author of the Exeter Book chose to incorporate subjects from the *Aenigmata* into his collection, and the interplay between the two collections may provide clues to guide our understanding of their relationship.

Although subjects seem to be shared across the collections, which seems to be true even though our knowledge of the Exeter Book riddles' answers is hampered by the lack of definitive answers, other points of similarity between the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book riddles can vary widely, and table 1.1 is provided as a guide to approaching the riddles.

Riddles from the <i>Aenigmata</i>	Riddles from the Exeter Book⁷⁶	Points of Similarity
Flumen et Piscis [Fish and River] (Riddle 12)	Fish and River (Riddle 85)	-Themes of immovability and dependence -Language
Tinea [Bookworm] (Riddle 16)	Bookworm (Riddle 47)	-Language Theme of stupidity -Point of View
Cepa [Onion] (Riddle 44)	Onion (Riddles 25 & 65)	-Mentions of attack and biting -Point of View
Ancora [Anchor] (Riddle 61)	Anchor (Riddle 16)	-Themes of Battle -Point of View
Uter [Bellows] (Riddle 73)	Bellows (Riddle 37)	-Themes of immortality -Language
Luscus Alium Vendens [One-Eyed Garlic Seller] (Riddle 94)	One-Eyed Garlic Seller (Riddle 86)	-Language -Point of View -Storyline -Use of numbers and body parts
Vulpes [Fox] (Riddle 34)	Fox (Riddle 15)	-Storyline

Table 1.1

⁷⁶ In lieu of intended titles, which are not given in the Exeter Book, I have provided the solutions that are generally agreed upon by modern scholars.

Along with sharing subjects, the list shows the many other ways that the riddles can be related to one another through elements like the type of language used to describe the subject, the story embedded within the riddle, and the speaker of the riddle. That the riddles show connections on so many levels suggests that even in the cases of riddles with more ordinary subjects, like the Fox and Onion riddles, the author of the Exeter Book had some knowledge of the original version found in the *Aenigmata*. While the table is able to provide some support for the argument that the author of the Exeter Book riddles was aware of Symphosius's work, it does not show the differences between the riddles, which can help demonstrate how the author of the Exeter Book repurposed Symphosius's subjects so that they would reflect Anglo-Saxon culture in a way that was relevant to his readers.

In order to demonstrate the riddles' differences and their cultural relevance, a closer examination of the riddles is necessary. We will first take a look at the Fish and River riddles, since they clearly share the same subject, which makes their differences stand out in greater relief, as the translations reveal:

Est domus in terris clara quae voce resultat.
 Ipsa domus resonat, tacitus sed non sonat hospes.
 Ambo tamen currunt hospes simul et domus una (*Aenigmata*, 12).

[There is a house in the earth which resounds with a clear voice.
 The house itself resounds, but the silent guest makes no sound.
 Nonetheless both the guest and the house run simultaneously as one.]

The version found in the Exeter Book reads:

Nis min sele swige,	ne ic sylfa hlud
ymb * * *;	unc dryhten scop
siþ aetsomne.	Ic eom swiftre þonne he,
þragum strengra;	he þreohtigra.
Hwilum ic me reste;	he sceal rinnan forð.
ic him in wunige	a þenden ic lifge;
gif wit unc gedaelað,	me bið deað witod (<i>Exeter Book</i> , 85).

[My hall is not silent,	nor is my self loud
near * * *	the lord shaped us
a journey together.	I am swifter than he,
stronger at times;	he more enduring.
Sometimes I rest;	he must run forth.
I always dwell in him	while I live;
if we separate ourselves,	death is ordained to me.]

Even a quick glance at the riddles reveals striking similarities, especially in the description of the silent fish's residence within a resonant house or hall, and the inextricability of the two. These connections, along with the specificity of the riddles' subjects, make a strong case that the version found in the Exeter Book had its roots in Symphosius's original iteration of the riddle.

Because the two riddles' points of connection are so clear, it is easy to overlook their differences. However, to do so would be to overlook half of the riddles' significance. Symphosius describes the fish and river by saying that "[e]st domus in terris" [there is a house in the earth], and "tacitus sed non sonat hospes" [but the silent guest makes no sound], which makes both the fish and river less agentive by not allowing them to speak. Along with having diminished agency, the *Aenigmata*'s fish and river, as both characters and as a riddle, do not create any tension, aside from the tension between knowing and not-knowing that is inherent in the riddle-format. Instead, the two are presented as being harmonious in every way. The *tacitus* fish perfectly complements the resounding river, and "currunt hospes simul et domus una" [the guest and the house run simultaneously as one]. Although the subject matter and philosophical ideas are memorable, the fish and river do not stand out as individual characters, but as parts of a symbiotic relationship that is captured by the metaphor of a house and guest.

While the Exeter Book's version of the Fish and River riddle is similar to that of the *Aenigmata*, the two differ in their approach to activity and harmony. The author of the Exeter Book makes the fish into the speaker, signaling a shift from the non-speaking third-person used

in the *Aenigmata*. This changes the tone of the overall riddle by making it more personal to the fish, and makes the fish more of an active figure in the story. Such a shift makes sense in the culture for which the riddle was written, since active characters were a hallmark of Anglo-Saxon literature.⁷⁷ Instead of simply being told about seeing a fish and river, the use of the first-person in the Exeter Book makes the relationship between the reader and the fish more intimate and more memorable by allowing the fish to tell its own story. The employment of the first-person was a subtle but ingenious change that altered the known landscape of the riddle and made it more memorable to readers by aligning the Exeter Book's Fish and River riddle with Anglo-Saxon literary aesthetics.

The alignment of the riddle with Anglo-Saxon tastes is further evidenced in the author's choice to weave a competition into the framework of his iteration. The fish creates a compelling narrative of opposition between itself and the river, which raises the overall intensity of the riddle. The fish states that it is "swiftr" [swifter] and "strengra" [stronger] than the river, but concedes that the river is in turn "preohtigra" [more enduring]. The use of comparative adjectives creates a dynamic of competition, eradicating Symphosius's original sentiment of harmony. Competition was more culturally relevant to the Anglo-Saxons, since competitions, like "neck riddles" and in some sense the *beot*, were both popular and highly valued in the warrior culture.⁷⁸ Where the *Aenigmata* constructs the fish and river as harmonious entities, the author of the Exeter Book rewrites the Fish and River riddle for an Anglo-Saxon audience by creating a competition between the two that better mimics the culture of warfare and rivalry.

⁷⁷ Although activity was also important in Roman literature, the prevalence of battle-scenes, recorded speech, the necessity of proving one's actions through the *beot*, and preoccupation with preserving one's deeds are elements of Anglo-Saxon literature that indicate the importance of activity within the culture.

⁷⁸ New Pauly Online, s.v. "Riddles," accessed December 27, 2016.

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.libproxy.vassar.edu/entries/brill-s-new-paully/riddles-e1018330?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.brill-s-new-paully&s.q=riddles. Neck riddles were a kind of competition in which one person would have to answer a riddle correctly, or else be killed.

Finally, the relationship between the fish and river is posed as not only competitive, but compulsory in the Exeter Book. The fish states that “he sceal rinnan forð” (Riddle 85.5b) [he (the river) must run forth], which makes the river’s running into a necessity, as opposed to the *Aenigmata*’s statement that “currunt hospes simul et domus una” (Riddle 12.3) [the house and guest run simultaneously as one.] The sense of urgency is then enhanced in the final two lines of the riddle when the fish states that “ic him in wunige a þenden ic lifge; / gif wit unc gedaelað, me bið deað witod” (Exeter Book 85.6a-7b) [I always dwell in him while I live / if we separate ourselves, death is ordained to me]. In making the relationship between the fish and river into a life or death situation, the author of the Exeter Book simultaneously raises the riddle’s intensity, which is intrinsically linked to the idea of activity. Urgency in one-on-one battles is a theme that occurs more frequently in Anglo-Saxon literature, as demonstrated by the urgency found in Beowulf’s fight against Grendel, Byrhtnoth and his men’s battles against the Vikings in *The Battle of Maldon*, and even Christ’s battle against his killers in *The Dream of the Rood*, than it does in Roman literature, which tends to focus on larger-scale conflicts.⁷⁹ In the Exeter Book’s version, the fish is not a figure that is neutral to its living spaces, as it is portrayed in the *Aenigmata*, but is rather acutely aware that its survival depends upon the river. Having the fish put forth such ideas from the first-person perspective makes this message much more urgent and the plight of the fish more sympathetic by providing the fish’s opinion and self-awareness, which in turn makes the riddle more memorable.

The author of the Exeter Book’s culturally-relevant alterations of riddles originally found in the *Aenigmata* can again be seen in the case of the Anchor riddles (Symph. 61, Ex. 16), which

⁷⁹ The Anglo-Saxons also seem to appreciate the hero’s placement in a state similar to that of the underdog, which raises the urgency of the situation by making it likely that the hero will fail. In our examples, Beowulf fights Grendel without any weapons, and earlier fends off giant sea-monsters in his *beot* to Unferth, and Byrhtnoth’s army is far smaller than that of the Vikings, while Christ is outnumbered by his killers.

are made heroic in ways that align more with what Anglo-Saxon literature valued. Like the Fish and River riddle of the Exeter Book, which altered the level of activity of the fish and created a sense of urgency and competition in line with Anglo-Saxon culture and aesthetics, the Anchor riddles demonstrate different approaches to the realities of warfare, which suggests the cultural differences of the two authors. As a result of their commonality, the Anchor riddles are not immediately obvious as riddles that share an origin, although their thematic similarities demonstrate that the version in the Exeter Book was likely inspired by the *Aenigmata*:

Mucro mihi geminus ferro coniungitur uno;
cum vento luctor, cum gurgite pugno profundo;
scrutor aquas medias, ipsas quoque mordeo terras. (*Aenigmata*, 61)

[My twin points are joined into one by iron.
I wrestle with the wind, I prostrate and battle with the abyss.
I probe the middle of the waters, I also bite the lands themselves.]

The version in the *Aenigmata* clearly presents the anchor as a fighting object, which is similar to how the Exeter Book presents it:

Oft ic sceal wiþ wæge winnan somod wið þām sæcce fremman, eorþan yþum þeaht; Ic beom strong þæs gewinnes gif me þæs tosæleð, ond mec slitende willað oþfergan Ic him þæt forstonde, ond mec stiþne wiþ fæste gehabban.	wiþ winde feohtan, þōnne ic secan gewite me biþ se eþel fremde. gif ic stille weorþe; hi beoð swiþran þōnne ic, sona flymað: þæt ic friþian sceal. gif min steort þolað stanas moton Frige hwæt ic hatte. (Exeter Book 16)
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[Often I must contend against waves, make battle against both, the ground covered by waters; I am strong of fight If I fail at that, and tearing me wanting to bear off I withstand them, and the stones may	and fight against the wind, when I go to seek the native home is alien to me. if I become still. they are stronger than I put me to flight soon, what I must protect. if my tail endures hold fast
--	--

against the stiff thing.

Ask what I am called.]

Like the version in the *Aenigmata*, the anchor found in the Exeter Book riddles is construed as an object made for fighting. Both riddles are further linked by their use of first-person speech, their mentions of fighting against the wind and waves, and the necessity of stone or land to fulfil their purposes. Though the Exeter Book's version of the anchor is less obviously similar to Symphosius's version than the Fish and River riddle, the similarities are clear enough that it seems likely that the author of the Exeter Book was familiar with the version presented in the *Aenigmata*. Even if the author did not know about the version in the *Aenigmata*, and was simply writing about the anchor's most notable qualities, the fact that they share the same subject means that it is still valuable to look at the riddles' differences to probe how the ideas of warfare present in each function as cultural markers. Examining how the riddles differ in depictions of warfare may demonstrate how the authors used cultural cues to better appeal to their audience in terms of the mood, language used to depict war, and the speaker, even if the only similarity is the riddles' subjects.

In the Exeter Book riddle, the anchor makes a series of statements about its prowess in battle, including what it fights (Line 2), its strengths (Line 4), and what happens if it fails in battle (Lines 5–7). However, an element of war that today is often overlooked is also depicted in line 3b, when the anchor states that “me biþ se eþel fremde” [the native home is alien to me]. Such a statement seems to be a break in the typically militaristic language that is employed, and shows a vulnerability in the warrior that is often not addressed in modern literature. However, depictions of the far-flung warrior are fairly common in Anglo-Saxon literature. Beowulf, a Geat who ends up among the Danes, is the most famous example, while others, like the speakers in *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *Wulf and Eadwacer*, and *Deor*, can be found in the Exeter Book

itself. The wandering or exiled warrior was a common trope in Anglo-Saxon literature, which exposed a very real element of war, which the Anchor riddle mentions in its depiction of the warrior-object. The idea of the anchor as sharing a relationship with the warrior trope is further enhanced by the anchor's use of the first-person, which is often employed by the wandering warrior, and by the anchor's lamenting tone, utilized by warriors to describe their war-weariness and distance from home. The shift in depicting the anchor as a warrior far from home is an appropriate adaptation for the Anglo-Saxon audience, and puts the riddle in conversation with the epic tales of wandering men by using similar themes, the first-person, and a lamenting tone.

The Anchor found in the *Aenigmata* is also very militaristic, but, like the version found in the Exeter Book, features a moment that stands out from typical depictions of war. In the final line, the anchor states that “scrutor aquas medias” (*Aenigmata* 61.3) [I probe the middle of the waters], which differs from modern ways of talking about war. However, if one thinks of the collection's context, it becomes possible to see how discovery was part of war. War, even in the modern day, is one of the few events that can compel and make travel possible over wide distances, a notion coherently captured by a US Navy recruitment slogan, “Join the Navy, see the world.” In a Roman-held area like Carthage, the relationship between war and exploration would have been even more prevalent. To the Romans, warfare allowed for not only the discovery and annexation of new lands, but also the identification of new peoples and cultures.⁸⁰ The Anchor in the *Aenigmata* presents a typically Roman and pre-modern notion of war as an occasion that allowed discovery to take place. Unlike the human warrior, Symphosius creates his anchor in the

⁸⁰ *Germania* and *Agricola* are good examples of the ways in which martial presence and conquering could result in new discoveries. The *Germania* is the first known ethnography of the area and people that Rome wanted to conquer, while the *Agricola* documents Gnaeus Julius Agricola's work in conquering the many peoples of Britain.

guise of a warrior of the waves, who probes the waters out of a similar sense of discovery and curiosity that was appropriate to pre-modern and Romanized culture.

While the analyses of the Fish and River and Anchor riddles have thus far focused on the riddles' differences, their similarities are also of vital importance in examining how the author of the Exeter Book created versions of Symphosius's riddles that were based more in Anglo-Saxon culture. This is best exemplified by the Bookworm Riddles (Aenig. 16, Ex. 47). The Bookworm Riddles are especially good ways to examine how Symphosius and the author of the Exeter Book perceived their craft through a similar lens, though using different language to convey their anxieties. The Latin version reads:

Littera me pavit, nec quid sit littera novi;
in libris vixi, nec sum studiosior inde;
exedi Musas, nec adhuc tamen ipsa profeci. (*Aenigmata* 16)

[Letters feared me, I did not know what letters were.
I lived in books, yet thenceforth I am not more studious.
I devoured the Muses, nonetheless I myself did not advance thence.]

The version featured in the Exeter Book has a fair number of similarities to the one in the *Aenigmata*, especially in its sense of destruction and power:

Moððe word fræt— wrætlicu wyrd þæt se wurm forswealg þeof in þystro, ond þæs strangan stapol. wihte þy gleawra	me þæt þuhte þa ic þæt wundor gefrægn, wera gied sumes, þrymfæstne cwide Stælgjest ne wæs þe he þam wordum swealg. (Exeter Book 47)
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[A moth ate words— wonderful event that the worm swallowed a thief in darkness, and the strong foundation. smarter by a whit	I thought that a when I learned of that wonder, the speech of some of men, a mighty speech The stealing guest was not with the words which he swallowed.]
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The Exeter Book's version plays upon the ideas of devouring what cannot otherwise be devoured, in the form of men's speech instead of the Muses, and the intelligence that should have, but did not follow, the act of devouring. Both authors craft the Bookworm as a creature whose eating habits are not only destructive, but are an act of power and aggression against the writing community to which these two authors belonged. This perhaps explains why Symphosius and the author of the Exeter Book both characterized the Bookworm as an insidious creature, who hides sneakily in books and eats the Muses in the *Aenigmata*, and is depicted as being no better than a *þeof in þystro* [thief in darkness] in the Exeter Book.

The Bookworm is depicted so pejoratively in these riddles because of the importance of writing as a means of preserving one's identity. In Roman culture, the *monumentum* is not only one's tomb, but one's body of writing.⁸¹ Both ideas are wrapped into each other, so that the destruction of an author's body of writing is akin to destroying their tomb, both of which compel the living to remember the dead. The subversive idea of the Bookworm's ability to erase a man's presence on earth simply by eating his words, as expressed in the *Aenigmata*, is one that must have been alarming to any pre-digital author. The sense of alarm towards the Bookworm even results in its conflation with divine power towards the end of the riddle when it declares that "exedi Musas" [I ate the Muses]. The earthly Bookworm is thus able to not only erase a man's *monumentum*, an already subversive feat, but is able to devour the divine Muses, a claim that no other creature can make. That such a lowly creature could wield these powers must surely have been alarming to Symphosius, who had to have been aware of the threat posed by the bookworm and subsequently characterized it in a negative manner using typically Roman conceptualizations

⁸¹ Catullus, *Student's Catullus*, ed. Daniel H. Garrison, 81. For example, Catullus 95 makes mention of a friend's monumenta "parva mei mihi sint cordi monumenta sodalis" (Catullus 95.9) [let the modest writings of my friend be dear to me]. Riddle 100 of the *Aenigmata* provides an example of the *monumentum* as a tomb, which is appropriate for the collection's subject matter.

of writing as one's monument and by endowing the bookworm with supernatural powers, separating it from other animals.

The threat posed to authors seems to have also been felt by the author of the Exeter Book. He poses the Bookworm as a "þeof in þystro" (Line 4a) [thief in darkness] that swallows men's speech. The use of the word "gied" [speech/song/riddle] instead of "word" [word] evokes a magical quality to the Bookworm similar to that presented in the *Aenigmata* by making it seem as if men's speech is being eaten from mid-air. Speech and writing were also of high importance in Anglo-Saxon culture, as exemplified by the warrior culture that valued the spoken *beot* and neck competition. Along with competitions, men were often judged by their ability to speak well, and for a long time, writing carried a divine quality, since it was "believed to be the medium for divine communication," further conferring a magical sense to the worm's ability to eat words.⁸² By eating the speech of men and being described as having magical qualities, the bookworm as presented in the Exeter Book shares numerous qualities with the one described in the *Aenigmata*, although the Exeter Book's version is based in different cultural reference points like the *beot* and the importance of the spoken word.

As we have seen, the riddles in the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book that seem to share subjects show how the genre of riddling was adapted to a later, Anglo-Saxon, context. This is not so surprising to modern readers, since we are used to old stories like *Romeo and Juliet* or *Lysistrata* being retold in modern cultural contexts,⁸³ but the appeal of adaptation to tenth-century readers is interesting to consider. In attempting a close comparison and reading of the

⁸² Hills, "Anglo-Saxon Attitudes," 20.

⁸³ Baz Luhrmann's 1996 *Romeo + Juliet* moved the young lovers from 16th-century Verona to 20th-century Verona Beach, while Spike Lee's 2015 *Chi-Raq* is a modern retelling of the *Lysistrata* set in 21st-century Chicago against the backdrop of gun and gang violence and the Black Lives Matter movement. Both films are prime examples of how so much of what we see in television and film, from *Simpsons'* parodies of Bible stories to books like Seth Graham Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* are adaptations of older stories translated into our modern context.

riddles of the Exeter Book that have close ties to the *Aenigmata*, it becomes possible to see how the authors wrote their collections for specific audiences and their cultures by using themes and concepts that would have been familiar to them, and opens a window into the workings of early forms of adaptation.

Part II: Double-Entendre Riddles

Examining the riddles of common origin in the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book has provided a blueprint of how to do a close-reading of the riddles. This blueprint will prove valuable in this section's evaluation of the double-entendre riddles, a well-known group within the Exeter Book that has long captured readers' attention. While the presence of double-entendre riddles in the *Aenigmata* has not been remarked upon by scholars, some of them contain veiled allusions to sex. By taking a look at the frank sexuality of the Exeter Book's double-entendre riddles, we are able to see the *Aenigmata* as it should be read, as a collection that is also marked by vivid, if somewhat cloaked, sexual undertones.

Part of the difficulty in assessing lewd elements of the *Aenigmata* is due to the nature of double-entendre, the purpose of which is to make readers question whether they are meant to take the lewd or innocent answer, while also demonstrating the author's wit through his ability to merge meanings. Double-entendre in Latin poetry was common,⁸⁴ as when Catullus uses the word "labella" to talk about his lover's lips, leaving it unclear just which lips he means.⁸⁵ Not all references to sex and sexuality in Latin literature were concealed in double-entendre, but the celebration of competition and wit that were so intrinsic to the Saturnalia and Latin literature

⁸⁴ The *Aenigmata* is closely linked to poetry through its use of meter, lines, alliteration, and metaphor, all of which are features commonly used in poetry, and which give the riddles a poetic flavor.

⁸⁵ Leary, *Symphosius, the Aenigmata*, 10; Catullus 95.

encouraged the use of concealment, which ensured that only those clever enough to understand the joke could appreciate it and look beyond the lewdness to discover the intended answer.⁸⁶ In contrast, the Exeter Book's discussion of ribald subjects is not concealed at all; when told about a stiff and splendid thing hanging by a man's thigh, as we are in Riddle 44, the first association is to something far less innocent than the key that many accept as the answer.⁸⁷ The fairly concealed nature of lewd and obscene subjects in the celebration of the Saturnalia and in Roman literature has long led readers to incorrectly assume that the *Aenigmata* is a relatively benign collection.

The authors' motivation to use double-entendre may lie in the different settings for which they were writing. Although the religious community for which the Exeter Book was written does not seem like a setting appropriate for double-entendre, some scholars have suggested that overt references to sex were included *because* of their monastic setting. By including elements of sexuality, the religious brother who guessed the lewd answer could be directed towards the innocent answer and instructed against thinking about sexual topics. Thus, including moments of sex and sexuality allowed for a didactic moment for the errant brother within the religious community, while also allowing a moment of release therein by opening discussion of a normally taboo subject.⁸⁸ It can then be argued that double-entendre in the Exeter Book played a vital role within the religious community, and was included as more than simple decoration or as a diversion.

⁸⁶ Latin Literature is characterized by intertextuality, etymological jokes, and word-similarities, showing that an appreciation of Latin literature was dependent upon one's wit and ability to understand the many veiled references.

⁸⁷ Knowing the "true" answer in the Exeter Book's double-entendre riddles is difficult. Although the religious setting would imply that the answer was not meant to be sexual, it could also be argued that the innocent answer was supplied as a cover for a more taboo, sexual solution. I believe that the innocent answers are the ones that the author meant to be taken as the correct ones, since the book was written in and for a setting that viewed sex as a taboo. I also believe that the author of the Exeter Book was using the sexual precedent set by Symphosius's *Aenigmata*, which use sexual language and metaphors, but provide completely innocent answers.

⁸⁸ Smith, "Humor in Hiding"; Magennis, "No Sex Please, We're Anglo-Saxons?"

Along with allowing for a discussion of sex, the inclusion of double-entendres in a religious setting may also have encouraged the monastic readers to wonder at the plurality of the world and of God's creations. The sexual, lewd, and obscene riddles offer a way of seeing the many facets of common objects and help the reader see the plurality of the world by showing the connections between the lewd and innocent answers. By showing how a key can be startlingly similar to the male genitalia, among a number of other examples, the author of the Exeter Book demonstrates how everything, whether sexual or not, is connected. The format of the double-entendre riddles enforces the sense of wonder that the Exeter Book conveys, since the revelation of the innocent answer compared to the lewd one is partially intended to surprise the reader and provoke their consideration of the ways in which the two types of answers overlap. The setting provides a possible reason behind the incongruous inclusion of the double-entendre riddles in the Exeter Book as being motivated by a desire to encourage the reader's consideration of the plurality of God's creations by showing the connections linking the lewd and innocent answers.

Finally, the author of the Exeter Book's use of double-entendre in transforming mundane subjects into sexual objects oftentimes served to mask the innocent solutions, whether done intentionally or not. By describing the Dough of Riddle 45 as "banlease" [boneless] and a "þrindende þing" [swollen thing] that is grasped and kneaded by a woman, and Riddle 62's Borer as a "heard" [hard] and "scearp" [sharp] thing that is thrust into and out of a space under the belly, the author of the Exeter Book steers the reader's perception of the object's identity away from its innocent answer. Because the Exeter Book did not include the answers, the sexual one remains a potential answer, even if it is considered too obvious, making it possible for both the innocent and lewd answers to exist simultaneously. This demonstrates that the double-

entendres of the Exeter Book riddles served not only an instructive purpose, but also a riddling purpose by concealing the innocent answer and instead providing an obvious and sexual solution.

Seeing how the setting may have influenced the author of the Exeter Book's choice to include such overt references to sex and obscenity in his riddles, it is possible to examine how Symphosius's setting influenced his choice to include double-entendre in the *Aenigmata*. The Saturnalian setting may provide a clue, since telling riddles at such a dinner was a celebration of wit performed through the handing of prizes to whoever proved themselves intelligent enough to correctly solve the riddle.⁸⁹ It is possible that Symphosius added subtle double-entendres in order to demonstrate his wit, while also giving those clever enough to see the sexual innuendo the pride of understanding and appreciating the joke. Concealment of the subject by use of double-entendre also worked as a tool of deception, since the reader had to actively work against the riddle, which steers the audience towards the seemingly sexual, but too obvious, answer.⁹⁰ The double-entendre riddles of Symphosius and the Exeter Book could be argued to work as opposites: Symphosius uses it in order to conceal his answers and to create a joke for those smart enough to catch it, which may be true of the author of the Exeter Book, although it also seems possible that he utilized double-entendre to make his riddles as sexual as possible so that a didactic moment could take place.

Though they may have functioned somewhat differently, the double-entendres of the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book were thematically and linguistically quite similar. Table 1.2 illustrates the ways that double-entendre is included by both Symphosius and the author of the Exeter Book.

⁸⁹ Leary, *Symphosius the Aenigmata*, 10.

⁹⁰ Smith, "Humor in Hiding," 86. Smith writes that "Solvers must resist the poser's desire that they expose their knowledge of sexuality." Though this was written in reference to the Exeter Book's setting in a religious community, the same could be said of Symphosius's audience's need to resist the sexual answer as being incorrect.

Double-Entendre in the <i>Aenigmata</i> ⁹¹	Double-Entendre in the Exeter Book
Riddle 3 (Anulus cum Gemma) [Ring with Gem] -“Anus” [ring] can be metaphor for the anus, described as being at the end of the body	Riddle 12 (Ox) -Welshgirl’s embrace -Possible allusion to masturbation with a leather dildo
Riddle 36 (Porcus) [Hog] -“Porcus” can be a shorthand for female genitalia	Riddle 20 (Sword) -Sword is refused sexual congress by its master -Makes a woman swell up and diminish her desires
Riddle 40 (Papaver) [Poppy] -Described as having a large head -Reference to sleep could be sexual	Riddle 25 (Onion) -Described as hard and shaggy and on a bed -Girl’s actions with the onion (joining, plundering, pressing, etc.)
Riddle 43 (Cucurbita) [Gourd] -Discusses object that hangs and swells -Last line may refer to dying, which was a metaphor for the orgasm	Riddle 42 (Cock and Hen) -Cock and Hen are seen playing “the marriage-game”
Riddle 51 (Mola) [Millstone] -“Molo” [to grind] can be taken sexually -Discusses how both stones lay and move together	Riddle 44 (Key) -Key described as a splendid and hard thing by a man’s thigh -Key fills key-hole
Riddle 54 (Amus) [Hook] -Hook described as flattering so that it may harm (love often compared to fighting) -Mention of death could be reference to orgasm	Riddle 45 (Dough) -Dough described as swelling and standing upright -Woman kneads and covers dough
Riddle 61 (Ancora) [Anchor] -Use of “iungo” [to join] could be sexual -Is described as a hard object probing the depths of water	Riddle 52 (Flail?) -Captives kept in closeness by a woman
Riddle 73 (Uter) [Bellows] -Mentions of death and lack of capability could be reference to orgasm and refractory period	Riddle 54 (Churn) -Description of churning as involving thrusting of stiff things and heaving, resulting in something swelling beneath a girl’s dress
Riddle 82 (Conditum) [Spiced Wine] -Verbs “iungo” and “misceo” [to mix] could be sexual -Description of something being made through joining	Riddle 61 (Helmet/Shirt) -Lord sticks his head into helmet’s bosom -States that something hairy will fill it up
Riddle 87 (Pistillus) [Pestle] -Use of “molo”	Riddle 62 (Borer)

⁹¹ Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*. Because of the veiled nature of double-entendre as presented in the *Aenigmata*, Adams’ book was instrumental to my discovery of lewd elements in the Latin riddles, especially allusions to body parts and sex acts.

-Described as having just one head	-Borer described as hard and sharp object that goes under the belly that vigorously enters a hole
Riddle 88 (Strigilis Aenea) [Bronze Strigil] -Described as red, curved, covered in “other drops,” and devoted to sweat -“Succumbs to a little work” as reference to orgasm	Riddle 80 (Horn) -Daughter of an earl lays her hand on the horn
	Riddle 91 (Key) -Key describes being thrust into a hole, but problematizes it by making it clear that it is a tool

Table 1.2

Table 1.2 demonstrates the number of ways in which double-entendres could manifest in the riddles. Whether the riddles were interpreted as containing references to sex was up to the reader, since one’s perception is central to how lewd a riddle may appear. Nonetheless, the list shows that there was a significant amount of overlap in how the riddles of the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book demonstrated double-entendre. The table also demonstrates that the *Aenigmata* features almost as many instances of sexuality as the Exeter Book, which proves that not only do the Latin riddles contain a significant amount of references to sex, but that these lewd elements in the *Aenigmata* deserve as much scholarly attention as is given to the double-entendre of the Exeter Book.

Because the Exeter Book’s version of double-entendre was so much more brazen and has been the focus of so much scholarship, we begin with an examination of these riddles in order to establish a framework for how one might use the Exeter Book to see the double-entendres of the *Aenigmata*. Riddle 25 (Onion) of the Exeter Book allows us to see how an innocent object can be complicated by overt references to sexuality. In the riddle, the onion describes itself as:

Ic eom wunderlicu wiht, neahbuendum nyt. burgsittendra Stapol min is steapheah;	wifum on hyhte, Nængum sceþþe nymþe bonan anum. stonde ic on bedde,
--	--

neoþan ruh nathwær. ful cyrtenu modwlonc meowle, ræseð mec on reodne, feged mec on fæsten. mines gemotes wif wundēnlocc —	Neþeð hwilum ceorles dohtor, þæt heo on mec gripeð, reafað min heafod, Feleþ sona seo þe mec nearwað, wæt bið þæt eage. (Exeter Book, 25)
---	---

[I am a wondrous creature, useful to near-dwellers. of the burg-sitters My post is steep-high; shaggy and below I know not of a churl ventures, proud-minded woman, she rushes me in the red-part, joins me in her confinement. my congress the lock-wound woman—	a joy to women, I am harmful to none unless to my slayer only. I stand on the bed, where. Sometimes the daughter very beautiful, she ventures to grip me, she plunders my head, Soon she feels she who presses me, wet is that eye.]
---	--

The onion is intentionally described in language that situates it closely to male genitalia. It is impossible to read such a riddle without one's cheeks turning red, and the sexual reference is overt enough to shock most readers. However, the language is also non-specific enough that the riddle could be argued to be innocent. The "eage" [eye] can be configured, not as slang for a woman's genitalia, but as a literal eye made wet by the bitterness of the onion, just as the "reodne" [red-part] could be argued to be a mouth instead of the female genitalia. While the sexuality of the riddle is fairly self-explanatory, the Exeter Book's lack of answers makes it possible for the reader to overlook the double-entendre in favor of a less subversive answer.

Riddle 25 is not the only riddle in the Exeter Book that takes the onion as its subject. Riddle 65 is also believed to discuss an onion, but omits the sexual language that characterizes Riddle 25. This may be because of Riddle 65's point of origin in the *Aenigmata*, which becomes clear when looking at the two versions next to one another. The onion of Riddle 65 states that:

Cwico wæs ic - ne cwæð ic wiht; Ær ic wæs - eft ic cwom;	cwele ic efne seþeah. æghwa mec reafað,
---	--

hafað mec on headre, biteð mec on bærlíc, Monnan ic ne bite sindan þara monige	min heafod scireþ, briceð mine wisan. nymþe he me bite: þe mec bitað. (Exeter Book 65)
---	---

[I was living – yet I didn't say a thing; yet I nevertheless die. I came back where I was before; had me in restraint, bites me on my bare body, I might not bite a man there are many of them	each plunders me, shaves my head, breaks my stalk. unless he bites me: who would bite me.]
---	--

Contrast this with Riddle 44 of the *Aenigmata*:

Mordeo mordentes, ultro non mordeo quemquam;
 sed sunt mordentem muti mordere parati;
 nemo timet morsum, dentes quia non habet ullos.

[I bite the biting ones, I do not bite anybody of my own accord;
 but many are prepared to bite the biter.
 No one fears my bite, because I do not have any teeth.]

Both Riddle 65 of the Exeter Book and Riddle 44 of the *Aenigmata* use similar language of biting and attacking the attacker, suggesting that they are related.

The presence of Riddle 65 and its origins in the *Aenigmata* provide potential reasons for why the author of the Exeter Book chose to make Riddle 25 so overtly sexual. By showing two versions of the same subject, the author was making a statement regarding his writing abilities. Rewriting a riddle originally found in the *Aenigmata* demonstrated the author of the Exeter Book's ability to refer to and re-imagine an established riddle in his own style and language.⁹²

Writing a second version of the onion riddle also provided an additional layer of obscurity to the riddle by transforming the subject into a completely different entity by masking it with sexuality.

⁹² This also created a new audience for an already established riddle, since the author of the Exeter Book was writing for an audience literate in Old English instead of Latin. The two audiences could overlap, especially in a religious community where Latin was necessary, but it was possible that those not so well-versed in Latin could now understand the content of Symphosius's original riddle because of the author of the Exeter Book's Old English adaptation.

Double-entendre is then used as an agent of change that demonstrates the author of the Exeter Book's ability to mask the subject's identity and change the discourse of the riddling tradition by offering two versions of the same subject, one being an adaptation of Symphosius's riddle, and the other being his own, entirely unique version.

As we have seen, although the double-entendre riddles of the Exeter Book seem subversive within the context of the religious community, the general stance on sex that they present is surprisingly positive. Riddle 25 describes the onion as a splendid and wonderful thing, while the actions of the woman with the onion are not censured as being unfitting for a woman or generally sinful. The double-entendre riddles of the Exeter Book paint a mainly positive image of sex and sexuality. No riddles make any commentary on sex being a shameful or sinful act, as we might expect, given religious attitudes towards sexuality.⁹³ However, this is not so surprising, since the riddles mainly deal with common subjects, and sex came under that purview. Perhaps the author of the Exeter Book saw sex as a part of the everyday that deserved to be included in a book that chronicled other aspects of daily life, and therefore did not make judgments on it.

By looking at the way in which the Exeter Book riddles use double-entendre to alter their subjects and problematize their potential solutions, it is possible to use this lens to look at how Symphosius used and portrayed lewdness in the *Aenigmata*. As discussed previously, double-entendre in the *Aenigmata* was veiled, although lewd points of reference become clear upon a closer examination. For example, Riddle 3 (Anulus cum Gemma) [Ring with Gem] can be argued to contain a double-entendre relating to a particular part of the body:

⁹³ Tanke, "Wonfeax wale." Tanke discusses the one exception in Riddle 12 of the Exeter Book, in which a Welsh slave-girl is described as being foolishly drunk while masturbating with what he believes to be a leather dildo. He argues that the girl is described pejoratively as foolish because of her enslaved status, the subversive nature of her drunkenness, and the fact that the sex act in which she is engaged is not procreative, unlike other accounts of sex in the Exeter Book.

Corporis extremi non magnum pondus adhaesi.
 Ingenitum dicas, ita pondere nemo gravatur;
 una tamen facies plures habitura figuras.

[I clung as no great weight of the end of the body.
 (You might call it natural, because no one is weighed down by the weight),
 nonetheless the one face is about to have many forms.]

At face value the riddle does not appear overtly lewd. However, the “anulus” of the title is a diminutive form of the word “anus,” which can mean either an anus or a ring.⁹⁴ The wordplay is continued in the opening lines of the riddle, which state that the subject is placed at the “corporis extremi” [end of the body], that nobody is weighed down by the subject’s weight because its presence is natural, and that it is about to have “plures figuras” [many forms], all of which are true of both potential subjects. Therefore, those listening to the riddle at a dinner party may have expected the lewd answer and thought they were getting it when they heard the first word of the title, only to realize the true subject when the entire title was read out.

These facets of the riddle indicate that Symphosius was playing with the two translations of “anus.” By inserting a level of obscenity into the riddle, Symphosius proves his ability to transform one into the other by changing the brilliant ring worthy of being shown publicly into an anus, a common object not appropriate for public display. Like the Exeter Book, Symphosius’s double-entendre riddles seem to have played with the audience’s expectations. Both authors condition their audiences to expect a sexual answer, which gives their riddles more weight when the innocent answer is discovered. As the use of sexuality in the title of Riddle 3 demonstrates, the answers in the *Aenigmata* are sometimes used to continue the audience’s expectation of the sexual answer until the final moment. However, by providing a definitive answer to each riddle, Symphosius takes away the audience’s ability to debate about the identity

⁹⁴ Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 114.

of the intended answers, altering the sense that the reader gets about the riddle. Instead of allowing the lewd and innocent answers to coexist, Symphosius instead creates an environment that encourages the reader's expectation of a sexual answer and causes wonder at his wit in successfully bamboozling the audience by providing the innocent solution. Looking at Riddle 3 provides a useful way of approaching the *Aenigmata* as a collection that introduced sexuality by toying with the audience's expectations.

Other double-entendre riddles of the *Aenigmata* provide hints to the correct answer, but use a layer of sexuality to throw a cloak of doubt onto the solution. We see this in Riddle 54 (Mola) [Millstone]:

Ambo sumus lapides, una sumus, ambo iacemus;
quam piger est unus, tantum non est piger alter:
hic manet immotus, non desinit ille moveri.

[We are both stones, we are one, we lay together,
one is not as slow as the other:
this one remains unmoved, that one does not cease to be moved.]

The very first words, “[a]mbo sumus lapides” [[w]e are both stones], state the subject of the riddle clearly.⁹⁵ However, Symphosius disguises the subject by describing the relationship between the two stones as sexual. The stones lay together, and the description of their actions while laying together, with one being “piger” [slow] and “immotus” [unmoved] and the other being “not as slow” and not ceasing to move, evokes the active-passive relationship that characterized Roman sexuality.⁹⁶ Because of the highly metaphorical nature of riddles, the

⁹⁵ Riddle 47 (Bookworm) of the Exeter Book does this as well by calling the bookworm a worm, along with a series of other epithets that mask the true subject.

⁹⁶ See Karras, “Active/Passive, Acts/Passions,” 1255-1256.

declaration that the two are stones seems to be simply one of many metaphors.⁹⁷ Those acquainted with Greek myth may also have thought that the statement was connected to the tale of Deucalion, who created mankind by throwing rocks behind his shoulders, which is enhanced by Symphosius's choice to endow the inanimate objects with a voice by using the first-person.⁹⁸ When the correct answer is revealed to the audience, the author's ability to deceive even while providing the answer is also revealed, inspiring laughter and consternation among listeners. As with Riddle 3, Riddle 54 again uses the audience's expectations, as well as their knowledge of sex and myth, to surprise and delight listeners with oblique references to sex, again establishing that the *Aenigmata* is a sexually playful text.

Like the Exeter Book riddles, the double-entendre riddles of the *Aenigmata* do not describe sex and sexuality in a pejorative manner. The presence of so much sexuality in both collections indicates that both authors saw sex as a part of life that deserved to be included in their riddles. Sex is also used by both authors as a method of surprising their respective audiences. Symphosius and the author of the Exeter Book use double-entendre to shock the audience and to demonstrate their ability to transform objects into sexual things and back again. Furthermore, the use of sexuality also conceals the true answer, which the authors do by encouraging the perception of the sexual answer, which the audience must actively resist in order to discover the intended, correct answer.

Looking at the Exeter Book and using that lens to examine sexuality in the *Aenigmata*, it becomes clear that both collections are nearly equal in terms of references to sex. The double-entendre also play a series of roles within each collection, from masking the intended answers, to

⁹⁷ Ohl, *Enigmas of Symphosius*, 9; Tupper, *Riddles of the Exeter Book*, xiv; Williamson, *A Feast of Creatures*, 3. Ohl points out that Aristotle was the first to make the link between riddles and metaphors, since riddles work by making analogies between subjects.

⁹⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book I, 384–417.

-serving as a means of differentiation, to capturing the reader’s attention. The *Aenigmata* uses sexuality in a way that is very similar to that of the better known double-entendre riddles of the Exeter Book. Although usually overlooked by scholars, the sexuality of the *Aenigmata* becomes apparent when one looks close enough, and, with the evidence provided by the equally sexual Exeter Book riddles, becomes impossible to ignore.

Part III: Linguistic Riddles

The final and most complicated grouping of riddles to parse through is the linguistic riddles.⁹⁹ While the *Aenigmata* and the Exeter Book are usually referred to as Latin and Old English collections, the former features elements of Greek, while the latter uses runes and Latin. Such usages are not entirely surprising, considering that the knowledge of multiple languages, especially among the educated and elite classes, to which Symphosius certainly and the author of the Exeter Book most likely belonged, was common. Yet even though knowledge of multiple languages was somewhat common at the time, the use of multiple languages within the texts complicates the possibility of solving the riddles by creating a barrier between the text and those who did not know all of the languages used in the riddles. Yet rather than making the linguistic riddles more foreign, the use of other languages in this group is deeply rooted in the riddling and literary cultures of the authors who wrote them.

We begin with a discussion of the runes of the Exeter Book because their presence is relatively easier to understand, in large part because the runes have been the focus of many scholars. The runes are able to capture our attention today partially because they stand out considerably from the rest of the riddles in how they look. Seven of the ninety-five riddles of the

⁹⁹ I call the riddles “linguistic riddles” because they rely heavily on knowledge of another language to solve.

Exeter Book use runes in some capacity, and two require the ability to see or read the words to make sense of them, as in Riddles 23 and 36, while one, Riddle 90, is written entirely in Latin.

The runes stand out easily from the Old English text, naturally drawing the eye towards them [Figure 1]. Along with their general look, the runes have also continued to intrigue readers

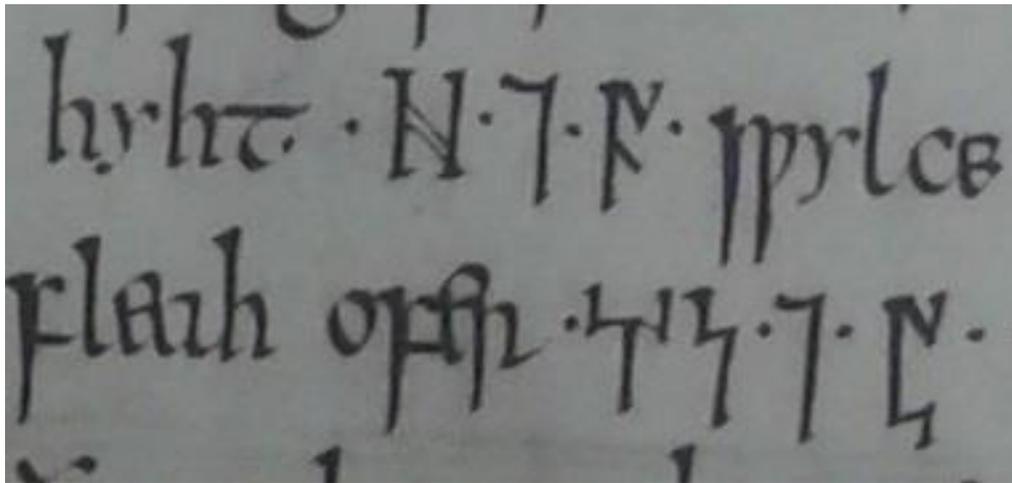


Figure 2 The runes, written in vertical lines with points in between to separate the letters, stand out from the insular script employed by the scribe. Image is mine.

because they
act as a
secondary
means of
concealment. If
one is not able
to read or
understand the

vital clues provided by the runes, there is no chance of solving the riddle, which remains true for the use of Greek in the *Aenigmata* and the use of Latin in the Exeter Book.

The runes are also able to capture the attention of scholars and readers because of the sheer difference between how runes function compared to most other mediums of writing. Runes are widely agreed to be an intermediate between “Common Scandinavian” and Proto-Germanic, meaning that it is older than English and the English alphabet, and therefore acts differently from the alphabet we know.¹⁰⁰ Runic letters can be read backwards as well as forwards, which is how they are read in Riddle 19 (Ship), and each letter has a word that acts as its name, like “Sol” for “S.” In addition, runic letters can also represent letter pairs that serve as longer words, like the

¹⁰⁰ Hoad, “Preliminaries: Before English,” 22–23. The runic alphabet is called “futhark” after the alphabet’s first six letters, however, for this thesis I will be referring to the runic alphabet as “runes.” To see more on writing systems, see Daniels and Bright, *World’s Writing Systems*, 3; Coulmas, *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Writing Systems*, 560.

use of “W” and “I” to indicate the word *wicg* [horse], as we see in Riddle 64 (Ship).¹⁰¹ Unlike Greek or Latin riddles, which can only be read one way, in the runic riddles, one must first figure out how the runes are meant to be read before deciphering them, and only then can one attempt to solve the riddle.¹⁰²

The linguistic riddles all use language as an additional barrier to discovering the subjects by limiting access to only those who knew the languages necessary to solve the riddles. More than any other category, the linguistic riddles are only able to be solved by those who are part of the rather small group capable of understanding or reading two or more languages. The reader is helped by the riddles’ tendency to be strongly anchored to the traditions of the cultures from which they came. However, this can only help so much, especially in riddles where vital clues are hidden behind unfamiliar tongues. Although it was not uncommon for elite readers to know multiple languages, Symphosius and the author of the Exeter Book made their linguistic riddles more difficult to solve by wrapping a different language into the already obscure format of the riddle. To decipher the hints, the solver has to, at varying points, translate the letter equivalents, figure out the usage of the letters, translate entire passages from one language into another, or pull out obscure words from memory, all of which are difficult tasks that reveal hints at best, rather than the entire solution.

As in other chapters, where it has proved useful to first establish a framework of how the subject in question works, a discussion of the linguistic riddles of the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book is aided by taking a look at the most widely discussed group of language-based riddles, the

¹⁰¹ DiNapoli, “Odd Characters.”

¹⁰² In the Greek riddles of the *Aenigmata*, the reader must also decide upon the usage of the word in question, whether it is a Greek word that sounds similar to a Latin word, or whether the Greek word is an allusion to a text that will aid the reader. The deciphering of meaning in the Greek riddles, however, is based more in semantics compared to the runes, which are difficult to even read.

runes. Riddle 19, about a ship, uses the runes in a manner that circumvents the audience's expectations, but also conforms to the construction of Old English poetry:

Ic on siþe seah	· ȝRƿ
ƿ· hygewloncne,	heafodbeorhtne,
swiftn e ofer sælwong	swiþe þrægan.
Hæfde him on hrycge	hildeþryþe—
· †ƿƿ·	Nægledne rad
· ƿXMF·	Widlast ferede
rynestrong on rade	rofne · ƿƿ
ƿƿƿƿ·	For wæs þy beorhtre,
swylcra siþfæt.	Saga hwæt ic hatte. (Exeter Book, 19)

[I saw on a journey	S R O
H heart-proud,	head-bright,
very swift over the fruitful-plain running.	
It had on its back	battle-power—
N O M	nailed riding
A G E W	the wide-tracks bearing
rune-strong on the road	brave C O
F O A H	for it was brighter,
the aforementioned fate-track. Say what it is called.]	

As the translation makes clear, the runes in this case are used as letters to spell out words, although at face value they offer no solution to how they are meant to be read. However, the translated versions of the runes as letters makes clear that they spell out words, albeit they are what we would consider backwards. For example, “ƿ XMF” translated into letters reads as “A G E W,” which, read backwards, spells “W E G A” which is the genitive plural, “of ways,” which demonstrates the numerous steps sometimes necessary to solving the runes alone. Therefore, the speaker of the riddle describes seeing a “hors” [horse] with a “mon” [man] on its back, who is carrying a “haofoc” [hawk] with it.

Although the runes were undoubtedly difficult to make out for some readers, the author nonetheless took care to incorporate the runes into the riddle's alliterative lines, which is a necessary component of Anglo-Saxon metrics, and becomes part of how the riddle obscures the

usage of the letters. In the first line, where the letter “S” is the guiding alliterative sound, the runes “SRO” are present, while the letter “H” of “hors” is postponed until the second line, where it alliterates with the words “hygewoloncne” and “heafodbeorhtne.” Similarly, “NOM” of the fifth line matches with the alliteration offered by the word “naegledne,” while in the eighth line, “FOAC” alliterates with “for.” It becomes clear that in some instances, in order to match the alliteration, the author had to separate words across multiple lines, which adds to the obfuscation of the words. Placing letters of the same word into different lines makes it difficult to tell if the letters are meant to be read together, or even in the same manner, i.e., backwards, forwards, or in groupings. Matching the runes with the prevailing alliterative pattern is a clever trick that allows the riddle to fit conventional Anglo-Saxon literary aesthetics, while also effectively obscuring the use of the runes and the essential hints they provide. In this way, the runes’ intended meanings are hidden by adhering to recognized patterns in Anglo-Saxon literature, making the reader feel comfortable in the writing style of alliteration while being confronted with the strangeness of the runes.

Riddle 62 offers more insight into how the runic riddles of the Exeter Book barred access to some readers by using a less-known mode of writing, while simultaneously limiting the solving of the runes to those immersed in Anglo-Saxon culture. The riddle, also about a ship, features runes that are deciphered by reading them in groups of two in order to guess the rest of the word:

Ic seah · ƿ · ond · l ·	ofer wong faran,
beran · Ɔ · M ·	Bæm wæs on sippe
hæbbendes hyht	· H · ond · F ·
swylce þrypa dæl.	· ƿ · ond · M ·
gefeah, · ƿ · ond · F ·	fleah ofer · ƿ ·
h · ond · Ɔ ·	sylfes þæs folces.
[I see W and I	going over the field

bearing B and E.	To both was in the journey
the joy of having	H and A
and such part of power.	Ð and E
rejoiced, F and AE	flew over EA
S and P	of the people themselves.]

As with Riddle 19, it is difficult to guess at first glance how the runes are meant to be read. Even once the method of reading the runes is known, they must be taken in groups, and deciphering the meaning of the letters is still difficult; what words are each rune-grouping meant to convey? Only those in touch with Anglo-Saxon culture can understand that “W and I” are meant to be “wicg” [horse], or that “EA S and P” are meant to be “easpor” [water-track].¹⁰³ In order to figure out not only how to read the runes, but also how to transform them into words that can be understood in the context of the riddle, one needs to understand how runes and Anglo-Saxon culture work, and what words are indicated by just a few letters. Like Riddle 19, the runes successfully create two levels that need to be deciphered: the way in which the runes are meant to be read, followed by the words that the rune-pairings are meant to convey, which only a person who is part of or intimately knowledgeable with Anglo-Saxon language and culture can guess. Only then can the riddle be read, understood, and solved in its entirety.

Runic riddles also prove much more difficult to solve than the Latin and Greek riddles of the Exeter Book and *Aenigmata* because of the challenge posed by the riddles’ orality, since reading the runes aloud could prove a difficult task. When reading the riddles of the Exeter Book aloud in the religious community’s hall, as we believe they were disseminated, the runes prove difficult to read, since their use as either letter or word is not immediately apparent and could

¹⁰³The way that the runes function are similar to how one solves a crossword puzzle by knowing a few letters and having access to culturally-relevant clues. The riddle with its runes spelled out reads as follows: “I see a horse (wicg) going over the field bearing a man (beorn). To both was in the journey the joy of having a hawk (hafoc) and such part of power. A thegn (Þegn) rejoiced, the hawk (faelca) flew over the water-track (easpor) of the people themselves.”

lead to confusion for reader and listener, which complicates our understanding of how the Exeter Book riddles were read. Along with the issue of whether to say the word that the rune represents or pronounce only the letter's sound, i.e., "Sol" versus "S," the reader of the riddle would also have to make clear that the words or letters are runes, possibly by guessing the correct use or even simply announcing that the words or letters are runes in the same way that people today introduce quotes into their speech, since the runic element is essential to knowing the multiple ways in which they can be read. In some cases, where the word is used, i.e. "Sol" instead of "S," it is easy to substitute, but in other riddles, like Riddle 62, where the words spelled by the runes have to be deciphered, it can be difficult to know what to say. As we have seen in Riddle 19, in some cases it is only in knowing that the letters are runes, and can therefore be read backwards or any which way, that it becomes possible to decipher and then solve the riddle. The runes effectively stop the person reading the riddles, whether aloud or silently, from fully conveying the necessary information encoded within the runes, adding an additional layer of difficulty to the riddles' deciphering that obscures the hints provided.

This is not to say that the Latin riddle of the Exeter Book or the Greek riddles of the *Aenigmata* are easy to solve. The Latin and Greek riddles assume that the reader knows enough of each language to be able to understand and decode the essential clues contained in the riddles. Riddle 90 (Loom?) of the Exeter Book, which is entirely in Latin, comes as a surprise to the reader, although its placement in a largely Christian text from a religious community means that it is not entirely unusual, since Latin was and remains the language of the Church:

Mirum videtur mihi -	lupus ab agno tenetur;
obcu[...]it agnus ***	et capit viscera lupi.
Dum starem et mirarem,	vidi gloriam magnam
duo lupi stantes	et tertium tribulantes -
quattuor pedes habebant;	cum septem oculis videbant. (Exeter Book, 90)

[It seemed strange to me -	a wolf being held by a lamb
the lamb * * *	and seized the guts of the wolf.
While I stood and watched,	I saw a great glory:
two wolves standing	and squeezing a third –
they had four feet;	with seven eyes they saw.]

Only a reader with knowledge of Latin would be able to understand the text of the riddle, and only a specific type of person, who was literate in Old English and Latin would have been able to solve the riddle. This was a very small population of people, mainly restricted to more educated members of the religious community and the wealthy.¹⁰⁴ Reading this riddle in front of a religious community like the one at Exeter likely would have produced mixed results, as not everybody in the community knew Latin, and therefore only a specific kind of person, one trained in multiple languages and immersed in the culture of the Anglo-Saxons, could solve it.

As with the runic riddles, Riddle 90 (Loom?), although written in Latin, follows standard riddling conventions found in the Old English corpus. The opening line, “[m]irum videtur mihi” [[i]t seemed strange to me] is a direct parallel to the statement that “Ic eom wunderlicu wiht” [I am a wondrous creature], which occurs nine times, while “Is þes middangeard missenlicum wisum gewlitegad” [the middle-yard is beautifully made / in many ways] occurs twice, along with similar phrasings of the same idea that are spread throughout the Exeter Book riddles. The Latin riddle also shows a propensity to count body parts, which characterizes the Old English riddles, with at least 10 of the riddles of the Exeter Book having such descriptions. Finally, the theme itself, of guts and conflict, is a typically Anglo-Saxon one. Although the language of

¹⁰⁴ For more on literacy in Anglo-Saxon religious communities, see Kelly, “Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word.” Although the wealthy and those in religious communities had greater access to education, and therefore to literacy, rates of literacy were low even in those groups, and many relied on scribes and clerks to write documents.

Riddle 90 is meant to restrict the riddle to only those who know Latin well enough, the themes and phrasings of the riddle are purely Anglo-Saxon.

The Greek riddles of the *Aenigmata* similarly use language to make the solving of the clue or riddle more difficult, while remaining within the broader Latin riddling culture. The tenuous push and pull between Greek language and Latin culture is mainly possible through the riddles' sparing use of Greek, with Riddle 27 (Cornix) [Crow] saying merely that:

Vivo novem vitas, si me non Graecia fallit;
atraque sum semper nullo compulsa dolore;
et non irascens ultro convitia dico.

[I live nine lives, if Greece does not deceive me;
and I am always black compelled by no grief;
and not angered I voice a clamor on both sides.]

And the reading of Riddle 42 (Beta) [Beet]:

Tota vocor Graece, sed non sum tota Latine;
pauperibus semper proponor namque tabernis;
in terra nascor, lymphia labor, unguor olivo.

[I am called whole in Greek, but I am not whole in Latin.
For I am always displayed in poor taverns.
I am born in the earth, I am washed in the water, I am anointed with olive.]

Finally, Riddle 84 (Malum) [Apple] reads as:

Nomen ovis Graece, contentio magna dearum,
fraus iuvenis iunctae, multarum cura sororum,
excidium Troiae, dum bella cruenta peregi.

[The name of sheep in Greek, a great contention of goddesses,
fraud of wreathed boys, the care of many sisters,
the destruction of Troy, while I finished gory wars.]

Although in the three riddles the Greek is alluded to rather than directly used, as in Riddle 84 when "malum" [apple] is called "Nomen ovis Graece" [the name of sheep in Greek] rather than

writing the Greek μῆλον [sheep], the reference to Greek is used to hint at essential clues, while main elements of the riddles continue to adhere to Roman cultural and literary norms.

In the case of Riddle 27, many things can be said to be black and loud, and it is only the first line relating to the idea of Greece that breaks the code. Modern readers might assume the animal to be a cat because of the allusion to the animal's "novem vitas" [nine lives], and it is only the reference to Greece that indicates that it might not be so simple. A fragment from *The Precepts of Chiron* is attributed to Hesiod, which states that "a chattering crow lives out nine generations of men."¹⁰⁵ The riddle presents itself as being either a Greek word that has a corresponding Latin meaning that serves as the subject, or as being an allusion to a Greek text that allows for the solving of the riddle.

Only those readers who were well-versed in Greek literature could figure out the subtle allusion to Hesiod. This is very typical of Latin literature, which values intertextuality as a way of highlighting the author's education and of emphasizing the importance and worth of their text. The use of allusion could also be argued to be Saturnalian, since the dinner party at which the riddles were told was a place where jokes and wit were celebrated, making such a setting the perfect time to create so subtle an allusion. While many educated Romans were well-versed in Greek as well as Latin, the language, followed by the ability to figure out the animal from the allusion, created two barriers to solving the riddles in a way that Roman readers would have recognized. Symphosius uses the Greek to complicate the riddle while simultaneously using typically Roman and/or Saturnalian allusion in an all too familiar way.

Riddle 42 (Beta) [Beet] also hinges in part on the Greek component. In this case, the hint that the subject is whole in Greek but not in Latin, is the thing that will separate the specificity of

¹⁰⁵"Hesiod Fragments," *Theoi*, accessed April 2, 2017, <http://www.theoi.com/Text/HesiodMiscellany.html>.

the subject from any number of ground-growing foods commonly consumed by the lower classes. In this case, the knowledge of both alphabets is necessary. *Beta* in Latin means beet, as the title reveals, while *beta* in Greek is the second letter of the alphabet. The corresponding letter in the Latin alphabet is not called “beta,” but “be,” a clever play on words in the riddle.¹⁰⁶ The use of the alphabet to break the code of the riddle limits its potential to be solved to only those who know the alphabet of both languages. While the cultural elements, like the provenance and use of the subject, are helpful hints in discovering the answer, the definitive element provided by the Greek is only helpful to those few who had a grasp of both the Latin and Greek alphabets. In this riddle, the reader required the knowledge of both the Greek *and* Latin alphabets, which likely barred access to numerous readers.

Finally, Riddle 84 (Malum) “Apple” performs Greekness in the most difficult, and Roman of ways. In this case, the riddle requires the reader to pull a single, seemingly random, word from out of the entire Greek vocabulary. This is no small task, considering that Greek has a wider vocabulary than Latin. However, the reader, at least one who knew enough Greek, was aided by the numerous allusions to the judgment of Paris, the “contentio magna dearum” [great contention of goddesses] that led to “excidium Troiae” [the destruction of Troy]. The myth surrounding the Trojan War was arguably the most famous and familiar to the Greco-Romans, and readers would have easily picked up on the hints. While the Trojan War was also very well known to Greek readers, the use of allusion is very Roman, and the style of the allusion makes it possible for the reader to figure out the solution. In this case, a grasp of the Greek language is not necessary. The riddle’s use of the deep roots of the Trojan War myth in Roman culture is sufficient to discover the answer.

¹⁰⁶ Leary, *Symphosius the Aenigmata*, 138–41.

The linguistic riddles of the *Aenigmata* and Exeter Book largely close off access to all but those who had enough literacy and language competency to understand, decode, and solve the riddles. The use of multiple languages in the collections act as additional barriers to solving individual riddles. In order to solve the riddles, the reader had to figure out how the linguistic elements were meant to be read or understood, decipher that element, and then tackle the riddle as a whole. However, while the use of other languages made access to the ultimate answer more difficult, Symphosius and the author of the Exeter Book simultaneously rooted key elements of these riddles in the cultures from which they originated. The foreignness and inability to understand the linguistic riddles finds itself at a tension with the authors' use of well-known and familiar elements, which, while making the riddles inaccessible, also paradoxically make them accessible in a cultural sense.

Latin and OE Riddle Translations

The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book:

My translation of the riddles of the Exeter Book are based off of the Old English edition of the text provided by Craig Williamson. I chose to use Krapp and Dobbie's numberings from volume 3 of the *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* from 1936 which focused exclusively on the Exeter Book, since I feel that their choices for when each riddle should begin and end takes the most consideration of the original text. This is an important issue, since the riddles were not always well demarcated, making it at times difficult to tell how many riddles exist in the collection. Finally, for the portion on the Exeter Book, I am indebted to Professor Mark Amodio's help and patience in going through the riddles with me over the course of many months in order to smooth out my translations, and for enlightening me on elements of Anglo-Saxon culture.

Riddle #1 (Storm)

<p>Which of men is so clever that he might guess, when I rose strong, groaning powerfully, faring over the earth, ransacking buildings? gray over the roofs, the slaughter-death of men. the power-brisk groves, covered by a wave, driven in the journey, I have on my back of the earth-dwellers, together in the waters. or how I am called</p>	<p>and so mind-crafty what drove me on my journey at times fierce, at times with misery burning the folk-halls, The smoke rises there is clamor in the earth, When I shake the forest, I fell the trees; by my high powers sent widely: what previously covered the people flesh and spirits Say what covers me, he who bears the load.</p>
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Riddle #2 (Storm)

<p>Sometimes I depart, under the heap of waves the ground of the spear-men (sea). the foam rolled, the whale-mere roars, the streams beat the shore, on the steep strand with seaweed and wave, covered by ocean-power, the wide sea-grounds. may escape before he allows me in each of my journeys. who draws me</p>	<p>as no man would think, to seek the earth, The sea is stirred, * * * loudly rages; at times thrown with stone and sand, when I, contending, stirring the earth, From the sound-cover none he who is a guide to me Say, wise man, from the embrace of the sea</p>
---	--

when the streams
from the gentle waves

Riddle #3 (Storm)

Sometimes my lord
when he sends me
of the season-field,
restrains me in darkneses
with violence in confinement
the earth on its back.
from that misery
the home-seats of men:
the house-steads of men;
steep over the stewards.
the air over the land
until I from my confinement
even as he shows me
laid me
in bond and in clasp,
from that power
Sometimes I must stir
rousing the streams,
to the shore:
against the cliffs.
the hill over the deep;
blended with the waves,
so that they meet
the high ridges.
the noise of sea-spirits (sailors);
awaits still
the crash of waves,
crowds on the cliffs.
cruel battle
in that grim hour
so that it must become
the spirit conquered,
on the backs of the waves.
shown to men
strong in the stiff-way.
Sometimes I rush through
black water-vessels (clouds),
full of water-streams,
to glide together again.
of calls over the cities,
when the sharp thing comes
edge against edge.

become still again
which previously covered me.

confines me fast,
under the wide lap
and drives me while lingering,
with not a little of powers
where the flock sits hard
Nor do I have a back-way
but I stir
shaking the horn-halls,
quaking the walls,
It seems still
and the water silent,
spring up,
who first guided me into the band
at the beginning,
so that I might not escape
which showed me the ways.
the waves from above
and press the flint-gray flood
the foamy waves struggle
Dark arises
dark in its own tracks,
another goes forth,
near to the marsh-lands
There is a loud wood,
the steep stone-cliffs
the struggle of the stream,
when the high press
There the ship is expecting
if the sea bears it
full of spirits
deprived of power,
riding foamy
There will be some of terror
of those which I must hasten
Who can calm that?
so that they ride on my back
widely scattered
sometimes I allow them
It is the greatest of sounds,
and the loudest of noises,
a cloud against another,
A dark creature

eager over the folk
 bright of flame,
 dark over the afflicted
 fighting it goes,
 is allowed to fall
 water from the womb.
 a terrible troop of horsemen,
 great mind-fear
 terror in the cities
 shoots gliding
 A fool does not fear
 yet it is destroyed,
 in straightness
 from the clamor
 the departing arrows.
 of those who the weapons
 I bring about the beginning
 when the cloud-column
 presses through the heap
 over the burning breast.
 the high troop-press,
 under the cover of air
 and load on my back
 the lord of mine with might
 So I, a powerful servant,
 sometimes under the earth,
 descend beneath the deep waves,
 I stir the streams,
 rousing the going-clouds,
 swift and fierce.
 or who rouses me
 or who contains me

sweats fire,
 and carries its noise,
 with much clamor
 a black humming
 liquid from the bosom,
 Contending it goes
 terror rises,
 to the race of men,
 when a black phantom
 with sharp weapons.
 the death-spears;
 if the true Lord
 through rains from above
 lets arrows fly,
 Few survived that
 of the rainy-spirit strikes.
 of the frontline,
 goes
 with great power
 It burst loudly
 when it bends again
 near the land
 what I must have
 strengthens me.
 fight at times
 sometimes I must
 sometimes above the waves,
 sometimes rising up
 carrying them widely
 Say what I am called,
 when I might not rest
 when I am still.

Riddle #4 (Bell?)

I must continually work
 bound by rings,
 leaving my bed,
 that my lord gave me
 Often the sleep-weary
 went to approach me;
 grimheartedly.
 sometimes bursts
 though it is a good thing
 to the dizzy-minded man,
 where the creature knows

for the thegn of mine,
 eagerly obeying
 I announce with noise
 a neck-bond.
 man or maiden
 I, winter-cold, answer
 The warm limb
 the bound ring,
 to my thegn
 that I myself,
 and with my words

may he in success

tell my story.

Riddle #5 (Shield)

I am a lone-dweller,
wounded by sword,
weary from edges.
fighting dangerous ones -
that help of war-struggle
before I amid men
but the leavings of the hammer
hard-edge terribly-sharp
bite me in the cities;
the foe meeting.
the leech-kin [doctors]
of whom with herbs [worts]
but the wounds from swords
through death-blows

wounded by iron,
sated by battle-work,
Often I see war,
I do not expect solace,
comes to me
perish entirely;
shall strike me,
handiwork of smiths,
I alone must await
Never might I find
in the people-place
can heal wounds,
become increased
daily and nightly.

Riddle #6 (Sun)

Christ truly set me
in combat.
countless kin
I afflict them with violence
when my lord
Sometimes I gladden
sometimes I comfort
very far away.
as they of others do
over the deep tumult

the ruler of victories,
Often I burn the living
close to earth,
as I do not touch them,
orders me to fight.
the minds of many;
who I previously contended with
However they feel it
when I again higher
improve their life-condition.

Riddle #7 (Swan)

My garment is silent
or when I inhabit my home
Sometimes my trappings
over the dwellings of men
and when the strength of clouds
over the folk.
resound loudly
sing with clearness
to water and earth,

when I tread on the ground
or stir up the water.
raise me
and the high air,
bears me widely
My trappings
and sound melodiously
when I am close
as a travelling spirit.

Riddle #8 (Nightingale)

I speak through my mouth
 I sing with modulations of my voice, frequently,
 I hold my song
 The old evening-scop,
 with bliss in cities;
 I cry out with my voice,
 in the homes.
 who so clearly
 narrative song,
 many welcome things

with many voices
 I change my head-tune
 I cry out loudly,
 I do not hide my voice.
 I bring to the ears
 when I sing out
 they sit still listening
 Say what I am called,
 loudly imitates
 I announce to men
 with my voice.

Riddle #9 (Cuckoo)

In those days
 abandoned me for dead;
 life within me.
 began to cover
 held and protected me,
 as kindly
 until I under her bosom
 became unlike,
 The woman of peace
 until I grew,
 wider paths.
 sons and daughters,

my father and mother
 nor was there life for me yet,
 Then a very faithful kinswoman
 me alone in her soft clothes,
 covered me in a protecting garment,
 as to her own children,
 as my fate was
 an increased guest.
 afterwards fed me
 and might build
 She had less of her dear
 than she so did.

Riddle #10 (Barnacle Goose)

My beak was in confinement,
 the water flowed under me,
 in the mountain-streams,
 covered above by waves,
 sailing in wood
 I had a life alive
 of the sea and wood
 some of my garments
 When living
 wind of the waves;
 over the seal-bath.

and I beneath the water,
 sunk very deep
 and in the water I grew
 close to the ones
 with my body.
 when I came from the embrace
 in black garments;
 were white.
 the breeze carries me up,
 afterwards it widely bears me
 Say what I am called.

Riddle #11 (Cup of Wine)

My garment is gray;
 red and bright
 I deceive the dumb

bright ornaments
 I have on my garments.
 and I urge the foolish

towards unwise endeavors;
 for more useful journeys.
 that she so maddened,
 in deed perverse,
 each of my dark natures.
 the high one who afterwards
 if they did not previously

I restrain others
 I did not know at all,
 was deprived of mind,
 they praise
 Woe to them of that custom
 brings the dearest of hordes,
 cease their folly.

Riddle #12 (Ox)

I go on foot,
 green fields,
 If my life escapes,
 the swarthy Welshmen,
 Sometimes I give
 from my bosom.
 treads on me with her feet;
 brought from afar
 the foolishly drunk maid
 wets me in the water,
 fairly by the fire,
 shoved in my embrace,
 sweeping me through the dark.
 I who, living,
 and after death

I tear the earth
 while I bear a spirit.
 I bind fast
 sometimes better men.
 drinks to bold men
 Sometimes a very-proud girl
 sometimes the dark-haired Welshgirl
 lifts and presses me,
 in dark nights,
 sometimes she warms me
 her wanton hands
 turns me sufficiently,
 Say what I am called
 plunder the land
 serves the troops.

Riddle #13 (Ten Chickens)

I saw them treading the turf -
 six brothers
 they had living souls.
 clear and visible
 of each of the ones.
 not in a journey more sorely,
 deprived of their garments,
 of the guardian of the heavens,
 the gray blades [of grass].
 those who came forth before
 lying in the tracks,

they were ten in all
 and with their sisters –
 The skins hung
 on the wall of the hall
 Nor was to any of them worse,
 though as they must,
 awakened by the might
 tearing with their mouths
 The garments are renewed
 they abandon their ornaments
 they go treading the land.

Riddle #14 (Horn)

I was a weapon of a warrior;
 covers me
 twisted with wire-knots;
 Sometimes I summon

now the proud young home-dweller
 with gold and silver
 sometimes men kiss me.
 happy comrades

to battle with my voice;
 me over the marsh;
 carries me over the floods
 Sometimes one of maidens
 ring-adorned;
 on boards, hard,
 Sometimes I hang
 beautiful on the wall,
 noble war-ornament.
 are carried on horses,
 the winds from the bosom of one,
 Sometimes I summon
 proudly to wine;
 I rescue [things]
 putting the fiend-enemies to flight.

sometimes a horse bears
 sometimes a sea-horse [ship]
 with bright treasures.
 fills my bosom,
 Sometimes I must lie
 headless, plundered.
 decorated with ornaments,
 where the men drink,
 Sometimes the folk-men
 when I must swallow
 richly decorated.
 men with my voice
 sometimes from terrible ones must
 stolen from me with my voice,
 Ask what I am called.

Riddle #15 (Fox)

My throat is white
 as are my sides.
 I bear battle-weapons.
 hair such as on my cheeks.
 over my eyes.
 in the green grass.
 if one finds
 slaughter-grim warrior
 bold amid my children,
 with my young family.
 to my doors,
 therefore I must carry them
 fearful minded,
 If he afterwards to me
 bears his breast-
 fierce in the room-
 but I must boldly
 through the steep hill
 I may easily save
 if I am allowed
 in the secret way
 dear and familiar.
 to dread
 If the malignant enemy
 behind me,
 in the hostile-path
 after I reach
 and through

and my head fallow
 I am fast in pace,
 On my back stands
 Two ears tower
 I step on my toes
 I am appointed grief
 me hidden
 where I rest at home,
 and I wait there
 When the guest might come
 to him is death appointed;
 from home, my offspring,
 save them by flight.
 becomes all-
 I do not dare to await him
 I do not tell that tale;
 work with my forepaws
 make a road.
 the life of the precious ones [children]
 to lead my kin-city [family]
 through the hill-hole
 After that I do not need
 the war of the slaughter-whelp at all.
 seeks me in the narrow path
 he will not fail
 of the battle-meeting,
 the summit through hills
 violence touching the war piles

the hated-struggle

with those whom I fled long ago.

Riddle #16 (Anchor)

<p>Often I must contend against waves, and fight against the wind, make battle against both, the ground covered by waters; I am strong of fight If I fail at that, and tearing me wanting to bear off I withstand them, and the stones may against the stiff thing.</p>	<p>when I go to seek the native home is alien to me. if I become still. they are stronger than I put me to flight soon, what I must protect. if my tail endures hold fast Ask what I am called.</p>
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Riddle #17 (??)

<p>I am the hand-protector an enclosure fast with wire, with noble treasures. I spit spear-terrors. when I am filled. how the battle-piles Sometimes I begin brown battle-weapons, the terrible deadly spears. the beautiful womb-ward, men shall recall</p>	<p>for my hoard, filled inside Often in day times Success is to them more My master sees that, fly from my belly. to swallow the dark with bitter points, My insides are good, I am dear to the proud; what comes through my mouth.</p>
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Riddle #18 (Jug)

<p>I am a wondrous creature, announce for men, a wide womb I was in a ship</p>	<p>I may not speak words though I have a mouth, * * * with more of my kin.</p>
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Riddle #19 (Ship)

<p>I saw on a journey H heart-proud, very swift over the fruitful-plain It had on its back N O M A G E W rune-strong on the road F O A H</p>	<p>S R O head-bright, running. battle-power – nailed riding the wide-tracks bearing brave C O for it was brighter,</p>
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the aforementioned fate-track.

Say what it is called.

Riddle #20 (Sword)

I am a wondrous creature,
 dear to my lord,
 My burney is variegated,
 near the death-gem
 who sometimes directs
 to warfare.
 through the clear day,
 gold over the yards.
 soul-bearers with war-weapons.
 with treasure and with silver
 does not deprive me of word-praise,
 of mine before the crowd
 holds me in confinement
 shake again
 valiant in battle.
 terrible at [the hands of] his friend.
 cursed among weapons.
 that a child avenges me
 if a fiercer one
 the kin-dwelling will not
 for my offspring
 unless I, lordless,
 from the holder
 Henceforth I am appointed
 perform in battle
 in thanks to my lord,
 of man-treasure [children].
 not have sexual congress,
 the hopeful sport still
 in bonds;
 the wealth of heroes
 Often I, foolish in ornaments,
 diminish her wants;
 flogs me with her hands,
 sings not well of me.
 for this contest

shaped in fighting,
 adorned fairly.
 such bright wire lays
 which my ruler gave,
 my wandering self
 When I bear treasure
 the handwork of smiths,
 Often I lay low
 A king dresses me
 and honors me in the hall
 tells the manner
 where they drink mead,
 sometimes he lets me
 road-weary in the room
 Often I injure others
 I am stained widely
 I do not need to expect distress
 on the life of a killer,
 attacks me in war;
 become enlarged
 whom I afterwards birthed
 might turn
 who gave me rings.
 if I obey my master,
 as I did before
 what I must endure
 I with a bride might
 but he refuses me
 who laid me once
 therefore I must enjoy
 in [my] bachelorhood.
 make a woman swollen
 she speaks badly of me
 abuses me with words,
 I do not care
 * * *

Riddle #21 (Plow)

My beak is downwards;
 and I dig by the ground,
 guides me;

I go low
 as young the hoary enemy of the forest
 and my lord

goes crookedly,
 presses forward in the field
 sows in my swath.
 brought from the grove,
 carried on a wagon -
 In relation to me the going is
 and my clear swath
 Driven through my back,
 hangs under;
 firm and forward.
 what I tear with my teeth,
 hindermost

the guardian at my tail,
 carries me and pushes,
 I sniff forth
 bound by cunning
 I have many of wonders.
 green on one side,
 is dark in the other side.
 a cunning-dart
 another on my head,
 It falls on the side
 if he serves me well
 that is my lord.

Riddle #22 (Wagon of Stars)

60 men
 To the wave-shore
 they had eleven
 on proud steeds,
 Nor may the young warriors
 as they intended,
 the tumult of waves too terrible,
 the streams too strong.
 on a wagon
 loaded under the pole;
 them off horses and ears,
 over the bay of water
 so none of oxen drew it,
 nor a riding-horse,
 nor did it wade by the ground
 nor did it stir up the sea
 nor did it turn backwards;
 men over the streams
 from the high bank
 on the other shore
 from the waves

came together
 riding horses;
 warlike men
 four white horses.
 pass over the sea
 but the water was too deep,
 the banks too high,
 The men began to ascend then
 and their horses together
 then a horse bore
 with proud spears,
 the wagon to land –
 nor the might of slaves,
 nor did it swim in the flood,
 under the men,
 nor did it fly on the air,
 yet it brought
 and with their high white horses
 so that they stepped up
 the brave men
 and their horses sound.

Riddle #23 (Bow (Boga))

“Agob” is my name
 I am a splendid creature
 When I am bent
 goes from my bosom,
 so that I sweep
 Afterwards the ruler,
 lets my limbs go,

turned around again.
 shaped in battle.
 and a poisonous arrow
 I am all-ready
 the life-destruction far away.
 who shaped me in that woe,
 I am longer than before

until I spit it,
 poison that I
 Nor is that easily passed away
 What I might
 If what flies from my belly
 they might purchase
 a cup of danger-fast
 Unbound I do not want
 unless skillfully bound.

stained with ruin,
 entirely swallowed before.
 to any of men
 say near there,
 touches him,
 the evil-drink with strength
 life for himself.
 to obey any
 Say what I am called.

Riddle #24 (Jay)

I am a wonderful creature,
 sometimes I bark like a dog,
 sometimes I honk like a goose,
 Sometimes I imitate
 the speech of the war-bird;
 utters from my mouth,
 where I cheerfully sit.
 like A C and R A D
 H A E G L and I S.
 as the six letters

I vary my voice,
 sometimes I bleat like a goat,
 sometimes I yell like a hawk.
 the ashy eagle,
 sometimes the voice of the kite
 sometimes the song of the gull,
 They name me G I E F U
 O S supports me
 Now I am called
 clearly signify.

Riddle #25 (Onion)

I am a wondrous creature,
 useful to near-dwellers.
 of the burg-sitters
 My post is steep-high
 shaggy and below I know not where.
 of a churl ventures,
 proud-minded woman,
 she rushes me in the red-part,
 joins me in her confinement.
 my congress
 the lock-wound woman -

a joy to women,
 I am harmful to none
 unless to my slayer only.
 I stand on the bed,
 Sometimes the daughter
 very beautiful,
 she ventures to grip me,
 she plunders my head,
 Soon she feels
 she who presses me,
 wet is that eye.

Riddle #26 (Bible)

Some of my enemies
 taking away my world-strength,
 dipped me in water,
 set me in the sun,
 of the hairs which I had.
 of a knife cut me,
 fingers folded me,

deprived me of life,
 afterwards wets,
 did thence afterwards,
 where I lost much
 Afterwards the hard edge
 grinding off the impurities;
 and the joy of a bird

sprinkling over with useful drops
 over the brown margins,
 with part of a stream,
 traveling afterwards.
 me afterwards with protecting boards,
 geared me with gold.
 glitter thenceforth,
 Now may the ornaments
 and the wondrous treasure
 the protector of the noble-folks -
 if the children of men
 they will be more secure
 more valiant in their hearts
 and wiser in spirit.
 dearer and more familiar,
 kinder and more faithful,
 honor and prosperity with favors,
 surround them with delights,
 with embraces of love.
 useful to men;
 salvation to heroes

Riddle #27 (Mead)

I am valuable to men,
 brought from the groves
 from peaks and from valleys.
 a feather in the air,
 under the cover of a roof.
 bathe me in a tub.
 and the swinger;
 a man to the earth,
 Soon he finds that,
 and he contends
 that he must seek
 if he does not previously
 Strength robbed,
 numbed of might -
 feet nor hands.
 who so binds men
 with the foolish after blows

Riddle #28 (Yew Horn?)

Part of the earth is
 with the hardest

abundantly made traces
 I swallowed the tree-dye,
 the dark-tracks step on me
 The hero covers
 stretched with hide
 The wonderful work of smiths
 surrounding me with wire.
 and the red dye
 widely famous [declare]
 not at all the pain of fools.
 wanted to use me
 and more battle-fast [secure in victory],
 and more heart-happy
 They will have more allies
 more just and better,
 who will increase their
 and their generosity,
 and hold them fast
 Answer what I am called
 my name is famous,
 and myself holy.

found widely
 and from mountain-hills,
 By day they carry me
 they carry me with skill
 The hero afterwards
 Now I am the binder
 immediately I throw
 sometimes an old churl.
 he who grapples against me
 with my violence,
 the earth with his back
 desist of folly.
 strong in language
 nor did he have control over his mind,
 Answer what I am called,
 on the earth
 by the light of day.

pleasantly adorned
 and the sharpest

and with the grimmest
 carved, polished,
 bound, wound,
 ornamented, equipped,
 to the doors of men.
 for living things;
 there where the living were
 enjoys their desires
 and when after death
 to declare variously.
 wise-fast men,

of the treasures of men –
 turned, dried,
 whitened, weakened,
 led from afar
 Gladness is within
 stays, grows
 a long while before
 and speaks not at all,
 begins to judge,
 It is great to be thinking,
 what the creature is.

Riddle #29 (Moon and Sun)

I saw a
 bringing its spoils
 illuminated sky-cup
 [bringing] the plunder to its home
 He wished to build
 Setting it with skill
 Then came a wonderful creature
 she is well-known
 she recovered then the spoils,
 the exile against his desire -
 going in feuds,
 Dust scattered to the heavens;
 night went forth.
 afterwards knew

wonderful creature
 between its horns,
 decorated with skill,
 from the war-trek.
 a room in his residence
 if he it so might.
 over the roof of the wall
 to all earth-dwellers;
 and drove it home
 they went west thence
 hurried forth.
 dew fell to the ground
 Not any of men
 the track of those creatures.

Riddle #30a (Tree/wood)

I am troubled by flame,
 wound with glory,
 eager of the way forth,
 the blooming grove,
 Very often the retainers
 so that the men and women
 When I raise myself,
 many with humility,
 increase the up-coming

I fly with the wind,
 joined to the weather,
 occupied with fire,
 burning ember.
 send me after hands
 may kiss me proudly.
 and they bow to me
 there I must
 of blessedness for men.

Riddle #30b

is the same as 30a, but with fragments missing and one or two textual differences that yield the same translation

Riddle #31 (Bagpipe)

The middle-yard is
 in many ways,
 I saw a strange thing
 the creature was nowhere
 she had a
 Its beak was
 feet and hands
 yet it may not fly
 Yet eager-going
 chosen with craft,
 often and frequently
 she sits at the feast,
 when it might show
 to men in the place.
 what the men
 Brave, eager of judgement,
 yet for her splendid laughter
 a joyful song-gift.
 how the creature might
 through its foot below.
 it has on its neck
 bare, proud with rings,
 kinsmen with might.
 for the wise song-bearer

beautifully made
 decorated with ornaments.
 singing in the hall;
 in the midst of men
 wonderful form.
 turned downward,
 were like a bird's
 nor go much.
 it begins to perform,
 abundantly turns
 in the company of earls,
 waits for the time
 its skill
 Nor does the creature partake of
 have for their bliss.
 it remains dumb;
 is on its foot,
 It seems splendid to me
 play with words
 Decorated with ornaments,
 when it guards the horde,
 its own brothers –
 It is great to be thinking
 what the creature is.

Riddle #32 (Ship)

The middle-yard is
 in many ways,
 In treks I saw
 grinding against the earth,
 The wonderful creature
 shoulders nor arms;
 move, well-made merchandise,
 going over the fields.
 the mouth was in the middle.
 it carries food-wealth,
 it carries food,
 a tribute each of years
 mighty and high.
 wise and keen of words,

beautifully made
 decorated with ornaments.
 a strange art turning
 faring yelling as it goes.
 had no sight nor hands,
 it must on a single foot
 going much
 It had many ribs;
 Useful to mankind,
 it endures for the folkship
 and yields for men
 of which men enjoy,
 Explain if you know,
 what the creature is.

Riddle #33 (Iceberg)

A creature came splendidly
 beautifully from its throat
 resounding loudly -
 fearsome in its yard.
 it was hate-grim,
 fierce of battle-works.
 by hard-plundering.
 The skill-crafty one said
 “my mother is the dearest
 of women
 greatly increased grows up;
 to men in the folk,
 must stand joyfully

sailing after the waves
 calling to land,
 laughter was terrible,
 The edges were sharp
 slow to battle,
 It dug into shield-waves
 Bound by hate-runes!
 about its own creation:
 of the kin
 my daughter is what
 as that is known to the ancients,
 that she on the earth
 in each of lands.”

Riddle #34 Rake

I saw a creature
 that feeds the cattle.
 its nose is useful to itself,
 ravages bravely
 hunts beyond the walls,
 It always finds them
 it allows them the beautiful ones
 stand still
 shining brightly,

in the cities of men
 It had many of teeth,
 it goes downwards
 and pulls towards home,
 searching for plants.
 when it is not fast;
 firm in the plants,
 in the proper plain,
 blowing, and growing.

Riddle #35 (Mail Coat)

The wet plain,
 bore me from
 Nor do I know, built
 from hairs through the high-craft,
 there is no wound weft in me,
 nor through the crash of crowds
 nor does the whirring
 nor must the weaver's rod
 Worms do not weave me
 when the yellow precious-web
 Yet a man wishes to call
 for heroes
 Say in true statements
 wisdom-fast in words,

wonderfully chilly,
 its insides first.
 from wool fleeces,
 my mind-thought:
 nor do I have a warp,
 does the thread roar for me,
 shuttle glide through me,
 from anywhere strike me.
 with the craft of words,
 is decorated with ornaments.
 me widely over the earth
 a joyful garment.
 bright with artful-thought,
 what this garment might be.

Riddle #36 (Ship)

I saw a creature

going on the waves,

she was splendid
she had four
and eight

MONN*HWM*WIIF*M*X*L*KF*WF*HORS*QXXS*

it had two wings
and six heads.
It went on the flood-ways,
but there was
of horse and of man,
and also the form of woman.
to say it,
how the creature

decorated with wonders:
feet under its belly

upon its back;
and twelve eyes
Say what she might have been.
nor was that a bird alone,
a likeness of each one:
of dog and of bird,
You know, if you are able
what we truly know –
wisely goes.

Riddle #37 (Bellows)

I saw the creature -
largely puffed out.
a very strong man,
when what filled it
It does not always die
its inside to another,
recompense in its bosom;
He creates a son;

its womb was at the back
A thegn was following,
and it had suffered much
flew through its eye.
when it must give
but it comes to him again
the breath is raised up.
he is a father to himself.

Riddle #38 (Young Ox)

I saw the creature
greedy for youth-pleasure.
four life-sustaining
shoot brightly;
A man said,
“the creature, if it lives,
if he bursts,

of male-kind
It let its gift
wells
murmur in its pleasure.
he who said it to me:
will break the hill;
will bind the living.”

Riddle #39 (Day/Time/??)

Books say
amid mankind
clear and evident.
more great
She wishes to seek
bearing life;
Nor was there ever
but she must homeless
always turn-

that the creature may be
in many times
It has special power
than men know.
each one individually
then it goes afterwards on its way.
another night there,
in the track of exile
nor can she be more wretched.

Nor does she have feet nor hands,
 nor does she have eyes
 nor does she have a mouth,
 nor does she have senses,
 that she is the most wretched
 of those which
 Nor does it have a soul nor a life,
 suffer treks widely
 Nor does it have blood nor bone;
 across the middle-yard
 Never did it touch the heavens,
 but she must live
 by the counsel of the glory-king.
 how its life-course
 crooked in the destiny of words.
 thing to relate.
 of those things which
 Nor did it have any limbs,
 If you might straight away
 in true words,

nor did she ever touch the ground,
 either of two,
 nor did she speak with men,
 but the scriptures say
 of all creatures
 after its kind were born.
 but it must
 along the wonderful-world.
 yet it became to many men
 as a solace.
 nor may it touch hell,
 for a long time
 It is long to tell
 goes afterwards –
 That is a splendid
 True is each thing
 about the creature is told with words.
 it lives nevertheless.
 say the solution
 say what she is called.

Riddle #40 (Creation)

Eternal is the creator,
 the earth on supports
 Powerful is the ruler
 ruler of all;
 the earth and heavens
 He made me wonderfully
 when he previously
 he ordered me to dwell
 so that I should not sleep
 and suddenly
 my eyes are
 This middle yard
 stirs with his
 As I with all the words
 should encircle this universe
 I am so timid
 a swiftly going ghost
 and I am everywhere bolder
 when it swollen with anger
 nor may a sign-bearer
 any over the earth
 who holds and wields
 I am in odor

who now controls
 and governs the world.
 and king in the right,
 he holds and wields
 as he wanders about it from outside.
 in the beginning
 established the universe;
 for a long time guarding
 ever afterwards,
 sleep overcomes me,
 closed in haste.
 the mighty ruler
 mastery everywhere.
 of the ruler
 from outside.
 that boldly may
 terrify me,
 than a boar
 stands at bay;
 overpower me
 except for the one god,
 this high heaven.
 much stronger

than incense

* * *

grows beautiful;
 Though the lily may be
 bright in blossom
 also the odor of nard
 with my sweetness
 and I am fouler
 that here stinks
 All that I tell
 as my dear father
 so that I rule then
 in thick and in thin,
 of each of things
 I am higher than heaven;
 to behold dearly
 Also I examine
 The evil foul-pits
 I am much older
 or the middle-yard
 and I was brought forth
 famous to men
 I am more beautiful
 yet men cover it
 I am more inferior
 or this seaweed
 I am everywhere
 and more extensive
 The hand may seize me
 easily grasp me
 I am harder and colder
 the savage hoar-frost,
 I am hotter
 bright light,
 Yet I am sweeter
 than bee-bread
 also I am more hostile
 which stands here
 I may devour
 and eat as much as
 and I may live
 though I of eating may not
 I may fly more bravely
 or eagle or hawk
 there is no zephyr,
 that may as bravely

or a rose may be
 in the turf of earth
 I am more delicate than it.
 dear to mankind,
 I am better than her;
 I overcome with necessity
 everywhere always,
 than this dark fen
 evilly of filth.
 under the expanse of heaven
 taught me at the start,
 with the most justice
 I hold the likeness
 everywhere.
 the high-king orders me
 his secret things.
 all things under earth
 of wrathful spirits.
 than the world
 might become,
 young yesterday,
 through the womb of my mother.
 than decorated gold;
 with wires outside;
 than the foul wood
 that lies cast away here.
 broader than earth
 than the green field.
 and three fingers
 from outside.
 than the hard frost,
 when it comes to earth;
 than Vulcan's
 and up-going flame.
 on the palate
 mixed with honey;
 than wormwood might be
 dark in the forest.
 more mightily
 the old giant;
 always happy
 be ever for life.
 than the pernex
 ever might;
 the swift wind,
 go anywhere;

the snail is swifter than me,
 and a swamp-frog
 the son of dung
 what we named
 I am much heavier
 or an unlittle
 I am much lighter
 which goes here on the water
 I am harder than flint
 from this strong
 I am much softer
 which waves here in the
 I am broader everywhere
 and more extensive
 I easily embrace
 woven wonderfully
 There is not under me
 creature more powerful
 I am highest
 of which our
 who alone may
 with power
 I am greater and stronger
 which surveys the
 black in form,
 also I am lesser
 than the hand-worm
 men with skill,
 Nor do I have on my head
 delicately wound,
 nor may I enjoy
 but the lord
 Now wonderfully grown
 what may shine
 very wondrously,
 I am greater and fatter
 bellowing barrow-pig,
 lived happily
 so that he

a rain-worm faster,
 is nimbler in a journey;
 is faster in going
 the weevil in words.
 than the gray stone
 lump of lead;
 than the smallest worm
 with dry feet.
 which drives this fire
 hard steel;
 than the softest neck-feather
 wind and in the air.
 than the earth
 than the green plain;
 all from without
 with great skill.
 any other
 in worldly-life
 of all creations
 ruler made,
 prosper with eternal might
 so that I must not exceed my bounds.
 than the great whale
 bottom of the spear-wave [ocean]
 I am mightier than he;
 in my power
 he that the children of men,
 dig out with a knife.
 white locks
 but I am widely bald;
 eyelids or eyebrows
 deprived me of them all.
 on my head
 on my shoulders
 wound locks.
 than the fattened swine,
 which in the beech-wood
 rooting the dark soil
 * * *

Riddle #41 (Water?)

* * *

that is mother
 of the best,
 of the dearest,

renewed;
 of many races,
 of the darkest,
 of the children of men

over the surface of the earth
 Nor may we here on earth
 unless we enjoy
 That is for each
 for wise-fast men,

might have joy.
 live at all
 what the children do.
 of people to think,
 what the creature may be.

Riddle #42 (Cock and Hen)

I saw two
 openly playing
 outside;
 proud under the garments,
 the fullness of a maiden.
 in the hall
 what books taught me
 both together.
 two others
 one in a line,
 as two Hs.
 by craft of the key
 which rune-men
 kept riddling,
 with cunning bonds.
 to men at wine
 creatures

wonderful creatures
 the marriage-game
 the fair-haired one received,
 if its work succeeds,
 I may say to warriors
 through rune-staves
 of the names of the creatures
 There must be N
 and AE brightly,
 two As,
 So I the hord-gates
 unlock the bond
 mind-fast
 covered by the hearts
 Now it is known
 how the two filthy-minded
 are called by us.

Riddle #43 (Body and Soul)

I know a noble one
 a guest in the yards
 may not harm
 nor age make ill.
 serves him honorably
 the fate-journey,
 they will find him ordained
 a countless number of offspring,
 obeys his lord
 the master on the journey,
 of his other brother.
 when they both depart
 from the bosom
 mother and sister.
 announce with fitting words
 or the servant

dear to men
 whom grim hunger
 nor heat thirst,
 If the servant
 he who must possess
 they who are healthy at home
 with wisdom and joy,
 sorrow, if the servant
 badly,
 nor will the brother be afraid
 The brother who injures them both
 eager to depart
 of one kinswoman,
 Let the man who desires
 how the stranger is called,
 who I here speak of.

Riddle #44 (Key/Dagger)

A splendid thing hangs
under the master's cloak;
It is stiff and hard;
When the servant
over his knee,
the known hole
that he before

by the thigh of a man
a hole is in front.
it has a good hardness.
heaves his own garment
will to greet
with his hanging head
often filled up equally long.

Riddle #45 (Dough)

I discovered I know not what
swelling and sticking up,
A heart-proud woman
with her hands;
covered the swollen thing

growing in the corner,
raising its cover.
grasped it boneless
the daughter of a lord
with her garment.

Riddle #46 (Lot and his Daughters)

A man sat at wine
and his two sons
beloved sisters
noble first-borns.
of the nobles
uncle and nephew.
of earls and ladies

with his two wives
and his two daughters,
and their two sons,
The father was there within
with each,
All were five
sitting inside.

Riddle #47 (Bookworm?)

A moth ate words -
wonderful event
that the worm swallowed
a thief in darkness,
and the strong foundation.
smarter by a whit

I thought that a
when I learned of that wonder,
the speech of some of men,
a mighty speech
The stealing guest was not
with the words which he swallowed.

Riddle #48 (Paten/Chalice)

I learned of a ring
bright without a tongue,
cry well with its voice
The treasure for men
"heal me,
Men may understand
the red gold, the incantation,
their safety to god,

singing for men,
although it did not loudly
with strong words.
becoming silent said:
helper of spirits."
the rune of
may entrust wisely
as the ring said.

Riddle #49 (??)

I know of an earth-fast one,
deaf and dumb
through the hand of a servant
Sometimes in homes
black and dark-beaked (dark faced),
his palate
which the lords
kings and queens.
do not want to name
and for their benefits
dark ignorant thing,

standing alone
who often swallows by day
useful gifts.
the dark servant,
sends another into
dearer than gold,
often want,
I that kin now yet
who does such for his use
what the dumb thing here
previously devoured.

Riddle #50 (Fire)

A warrior in the earth
with use for men,
brightly produced,
to his enemy.
often covers him.
serves him gently,
women and men
feed him fairly;
with life in blisses.
he who

is brought forth with wonders
by two dumb ones
which a foe bears as injury
A very strong woman
He obeys him well,
if they serve him
with the right measure,
he will exalt them with benefits
The grim one repays
allows him to become proud.

Riddle #51 (Pen and Fingers)

I saw four
travelling together;
their footprints very black.
stronger than birds;
dove under the waves.
the striving man,
them over the plated gold

wonderful creatures
their tracks were dark,
The journey was fast
they flew in the air
He worked unstill
who marks the ways for
four in all.

Riddle #52 (Flail/Whip/?)

I saw the captives
under the roof of the hall
who were held
fettered
Of which the other was
dark-colored Welshwoman,
in the treks of both

brought into the hall
I heard two
in confinement in bonds
fast together.
near to a
she controls them
in bonds of fastness.

Riddle #53 (Battering Ram)

I saw in the woods
 with bright branches;
 a growing tree.
 fed it fairly
 in other days
 wounded deeply,
 bound over of wounds,
 with dark trappings.
 through the might of its head
 battle-guests.
 the horde together;
 quick and unwearied,
 the first sudden-danger

a towering beam,
 the tree was in joy,
 The water and earth
 until it became wise
 in a state of awesomeness
 dumb in bonds,
 adorned in front
 Now it clears the path
 for other
 Often they violently plundered
 the latter was
 if the companion in danger
 may venture.

Riddle #54 (Churn)

A boy came going
 standing in the corner;
 lusty bachelor,
 garment up with his hands,
 girdle standing there
 worked his desire:
 The thegn hastened;
 a good servant;
 at each of times
 weary of the work.
 under her girdle
 love with their minds

to where he knew she is
 he stepped from afar
 heaved his own
 he thrust under her
 I know not what of stiff things,
 both shook.
 he was useful at times
 yet he tired
 strong earlier than her,
 There began to grow
 what good men often
 and buy with wealth.

Riddle #55 (??)

I saw in the hall,
 carried on the floor
 a rare forest tree,
 skillfully bound treasure,
 and a token of a rood
 up to the heavens on a ladder,
 the city of hell-people.
 the lineage of that tree
 there was maple and oak
 and the fallow holly -
 all useful to the lord;
 a wolf's-head-tree.

where heroes drank,
 a thing of four kinds:
 and wound gold,
 and a share of silver,
 of him who raised himself
 before he conquered
 I may say easily
 before the earls:
 and the hard yew,
 together they are
 it had one name,
 That often received

the weapon from his lord,
a gold-hilted sword.
of this my riddle
saying with words

treasure in the hall,
Now show the answer
who should reward
how the tree is called.

Riddle #56 (Web and Loom)

I was in there
striving creature
a turning beam
deeper wounds.
a woe to the creature,
bound by skills.
was fixed;
jumping in the air,
The tree was near
hung round with leaves.
of the arrows
carried in the hall

where I saw one
wounded by wood,
receiving battle wounds,
Darts were
and the wood was fast
The other of its feet
the other dragged laboriously,
sometimes on land nearby.
where it stood brightly
I saw the remnant
where the heroes drank,
to my lord.

Riddle #57 (Swallows)

This breeze bears
over the hillsides
dark, dark-coated.
of songs liberal,
they tread the woody headlands,
of the children of men.

small creatures
they are very black
They bear to crowds
crying loudly;
sometimes the home-steads
Name them yourself.

Riddle #58 (Well-Sweep)

I knew a one-footed creature
in the field.
nor did it ride much,
through the bright day,
the nailed-board ship;
to its lord
It has a heavy tail,
a long tongue,
a part of iron;
It doesn't swallow liquid,
nor does it crave for food;
water in the air.
about gifts of the lord;
its master.
in the name,

a brave creature working
It did not travel far,
nor may it fly
nor does a ship carry it,
nevertheless it is useful
at many times.
a little head,
not any teeth,
it travels over an earth-hole.
nor does it eat a thing,
yet it often carries
It boasts of no life,
yet it obeys
There are three correct runes
of which Rad is first.

Riddle #59 (Chalice)

I saw in the hall
 a golden ring
 wise in spirits.
 bade peace
 to the saving-God.
 word to the company,
 of righteous men.
 to their memory
 and in the sight of his eyes,
 the sign
 and the wound of the lord,
 of the ring said.
 seek the royal city
 in the unfulfilled prayer
 the city of the heavens.
 how the wounds
 speak to warriors
 was turned and moved

men looking at
 wise in minds,
 He who turned the ring
 with his own soul
 The ring says afterwards a
 named the savior
 Speechless it brought
 the name of his lord
 if one knew how to perceive
 of the noblest gold
 do as the wounds
 Nor may the spirit
 of god
 of any men
 Explain he who wants
 of the splendid ring
 when it in the hall
 in the hands of prouder ones.

Riddle #60 (Reed Pen/Rune Staff)

I was by the shore
 at the bank;
 my place of origin.
 of the kin of men
 my dwelling place
 but at each of dawns
 played about me in watery embrace.
 that I before or after
 over the mead-bench
 mixing words.
 curious in the mind
 how the point of a sword
 the intention of an earl,
 deliberately afflicted me,
 boldly announce
 for us both alone,
 may not more widely announce

near the sea-wall
 dwelling fast in
 Few were
 that beheld
 there in solitude,
 the brown waves
 I little expected
 ever should
 speak mouthless,
 That part is a wonder,
 to those who such cannot know,
 and the right hand,
 and the point together,
 so that I should among you
 the message
 so it to more of people,
 our speeches.

Riddle #61 (Helmet/Shirt)

Often a beautiful maid
 the woman locked me in a chest;

locked me fast
 sometimes she took me out

in her hands
 the loyal lord,
 Afterwards he stuck
 upwards from below
 If the courage
 something hairy I know not what
 me adorned.

and gave me to my lord
 as she was ordered.
 his head in my bosom,
 joined in confinement.
 availed the receiver,
 should fill
 Answer what I mean.

Riddle #62 (Borer)

I am hard and sharp,
 bold of going-forth,
 I go under the belly
 clear the right way.
 he who urges me on
 a hero in a garment:
 me hot out of the hole,
 in the danger I know not where,
 urges me vigorously.

strong of departure,
 reputable to my master;
 and for myself I
 The man is in haste
 in the rear,
 sometimes he pulls
 sometimes he goes back
 the southern man
 Say what I am called.

Riddle #63 (Beaker)

Often I shall say
 succeeding fairly
 glad with gold,
 Sometimes a good servant
 in the chamber

in hall-joy,
 when I am brought forth,
 to where the men drink.
 kisses my mouth
 where we both are,

* * * Fragmented * * *

Riddle #64 (Ship)

I saw W and I
 bearing B and E.
 the joy of having
 and likewise a share of power.
 rejoiced, F and AE
 S and P

going over the field
 Both were in the journey
 H and A
 P and E
 flew over EA
 of the people themselves.

Riddle #65 (Onion)

I was living – yet I didn't say a thing; yet I nevertheless die.
 I came back where I was before; each plunders me,
 had me in restraint, shaves my head,
 bites me on my bare body, breaks my stalk.
 I might not bite a man unless he bites me:
 there are many of them who would bite me.

Riddle #66 (Creation)

I am greater
 less than the hand-worm,
 swifter than the sun.
 in my embrace
 the green fields.
 I descend beneath hell,
 home of glory,
 over the native land of angels;
 all the middle-yard
 amply with myself.

than the middle-yard,
 lighter than the moon,
 Seas and waters are all
 and the bosom of the earth,
 I touch the ground,
 I rise above the heavens,
 I reach widely
 I fill the earth
 and sea-streams
 Say what I am called.

Riddle #67 (Bible)

I in the thing have discovered
 a wonderful creature,

the people-king
 of charms

* * *

* * *

* * *

* * *

feet nor

It is a wonder to me that * * *

it has no mouth,

* * *

* * *

* * *

teacher of the people.

* * * older

variously,

the regions of earth.

adorned with gold,

with treasure and silver.

anyone of the wise-fast,

becomes a

Before now long * * *

may life live

while men inhabit

I often saw that

where men drank,

Say he who can,

what the creature could be.

Riddle #68 (Iceberg/Lighthouse)

I saw a creature
 she was wonderful

going on the way,
 decorated with wonders.

Riddle #69 (Ice)

Wonder became on the way:

water changed to bone.

Riddle #70 (Lyre)

The creature is wonderful
 It sings through its sides;

to they who do not know its ways.
 the neck is curved,

worked with skills;
sharp on its shoulders.
which is so
should stand
high and bright-cheeked

it has two shoulders
Its fate
wonderful
by the way
as a use to men.

Riddle #71 (Sword)

I am property of a powerful one,
Stiff and steep-cheeked,
there of bright roots;
of fire and file,
adorned with wire.
because of my grip,
when I must destroy
adorned with rings.

wrapped in red.
the place was once
now I am the remnant of wraths,
confined fast,
At times he weeps
he who carries gold,
* * *
* * *

* * *

* * *

Riddle #72 (Ox)

I was little

* * *

* * *

* * *

* * *

* * *

fed me * * *
dear brothers,
abundantly gave me drink
through a hole.
until I was older
to a dark herdsman;
trod the march-steps,
bound under a beam,
suffering work
a portion of hardships.
sorely on the sides;
never informing against
if the pricks of a goad

my sister
often I pull four
of whom each separately
in day-times
I flourished in desire
and relinquished that
I traveled wider,
traversed the moors,
I had a ring on my neck
of woe in the track,
The iron often harmed me
I was silent,
any of men,
were painful.

Riddle #73 (Spear)

I grew in a field,
ground and heaven-cloud,
old in years,
of that kind

I lived where they fed me
until they turned me,
who were fierce to me,
which I previously beheld living,

they changed my ways,
 they brought about that I must
 sometimes bow
 Now I am busy in the
 * * * part,
 until after judgment
 * * *

and to crime-going
 * * * dark,

and slender of necks,
 * * *
 shines bright on me
 polishes me fairly
 in bondage of craft.
 that I some of bold ones
 under the brain-house
 sometimes I openly
 the fortress
 Bold of journeying,
 from the houses.
 my ways,

Riddle #74 (Ship's Figurehead)

I was a young woman,
 and a unique warrior
 I flew with birds
 dove under the waves
 and stepped on earth -

Riddle #75 (Urine)

I saw the swift one
 D N L H

Riddle #76 (Chicken?)

I saw a lady

Riddle #77 (Oyster)

The sea fed me,

they carried me from my home,
 against my fate
 to the will of the slayer.
 hand of my lord.
 if bravery helps him,
 * * *
 performing,

* * *
 I gird the shoulder

yellow of sides
 when the sun of battle
 and * * *
 and carries me in battle
 It is widely known
 with craft of a thief
 * * *
 break forward
 where it had peace before.
 he eager thence turns
 The warrior who knows
 may make known what I am called.

a fair-haired queen,
 at one time;
 and swam in the flood,
 dead amid the fish
 I had a mind while living.

going on the track

sitting alone.

the sea-guard covered me,

and the waves covered me,
 feetless;
 mouth against the flood.
 wants to eat my flesh;
 after he tears off
 with the point of a sword
 he eats me uncooked

Riddle #78 (Lamprey?)

Often I * * *

* * *

and * * *

* * *

* * *

* * *

* * *

through skill * * *

Riddle #79 (??)

I am the property

Riddle #80 (Horn)

I am the shoulder-companion
 companion of a warrior,
 companion of a king.
 woman lays
 daughter of an earl,
 In my bosom I have
 Sometimes I ride
 at the end of a troop -
 Often I give to singers
 after song.
 and myself dusky.

Riddle #81 (Weathercock)

I am puff-breasted,
 I have a head
 eyes and ears and
 back and hard beak,
 and two sides,
 a dwelling place over men.
 where he moves me

resting on the earth,
 I often opened my
 Now one of men
 he cares not for skin
 the skin of my side
 * * * after
 * * *

the floods

* * *

as I to him * * *

nor did he sit at home

I killed in the sea

concealed by waves.

and pleasure of a nobleman.

of a nobleman,
 beloved by my lord,
 Sometimes the fair-haired
 her hand on me,
 though she might be nobility.
 what grows in the grove.
 on proud horses
 my tongue is hard.
 some of word-rewards
 Good is my custom
 Say what I am called.

swollen-necked,
 and a low tail
 one foot,
 tall neck
 a pole in the middle,
 I suffer torment,
 he who moves wood,

and streams beat me
 the hard hail,
 * * *
 on the pierced belly;
 * * *

standing there,
 and hoar-frost cover me
 and snow falls
 and I that * * *
 my misery.

Riddle #82 (Crab? Harrow?)

A creature is
 * * * [g]oing
 * * *
 * * * skin nor flesh;
 * * *
 each of occasions must

* * *
 It swallows sand
 on feet * * *
 * * *.

Riddle #83 (Gold)

My origin was old
 dwelled in cities,
 * * * of men
 purified with flame.
 possesses me,
 from the sorrow of men.
 who at first destroyed
 the entire dwelling place;
 but I sometimes
 widely through the plains.
 the unlittle
 but I must conceal
 the secret power
 my journey.

* * *
 after the guardian of the fire
 wound round with life,
 Now the hostile brother of earth
 who was first for me
 I very readily remembered
 my ancestors
 I may not do evil to him,
 establish captivity
 I have many of wounds,
 power of the middle-yard,
 from each of men
 of the dear craft
 Say what I am called.

Riddle #84 (Water)

One creature is on the earth
 wild and fierce;
 grimly roars,
 It is mother of many
 Going fairly
 its grasp is low.
 to others its appearance and ways
 how diverse is its
 ancient creation;
 beginning and end,
 famous son of the creator
 and that highest

borne from wonders,
 it has a strong course,
 and travels by ground.
 famous creatures.
 it ever hastens;
 Not any may know
 with words
 power of its kin,
 the father watched over all,
 as one son,
 through * * *
 * * *

* * *

* * *

* * *

* * * any of them

* * * afterwards may not

* * * other kin

* * *

lovely and winsome

The mother will be
supported by wonders,

adorned with treasure,

The might will be enlarged,
its appearance will be adornedThe pleasant glorious gem near to
will be yearning for purity
she will be dear to the happy,
free, generous.most voracious and greediest -
of that which is

and which the children of men

As that wonder weaves

though clever in minds

a man clever of mind

The earth is harder,

it is more ready in gifts,

it adorns the world,

extinguishes crime;

often it surrounds one

adorned by wonders

so that the men over

so that many may

It is bestrewed by stones,

* * *

* * *

touches the earth,

* * *

often is in arts

* * *

though * * *

* * * might move,

* * *

the word-hoard revealed

* * *

how various ones might be

dear craft * * *

when they cast away * * *

* * *

* * *

of earth * * *

than before was

* * *.

increased in might,

loaded with sustenance

dear to heroes.

might manifested;

with glorious services.

the proud,

and bountiful, increased in craft;

useful to the poor,

Strongest and most powerful,

treads the ground-bed

under the air growing

saw with their eyes.

the strength of children of the world

* * *

crowd of wonders.

older than men,

dearer than gems;

increases with fruits,

* * *

with a covering from the outside,

throughout the people,

earth are amazed,

* * *.

by storms * * *

* * * a timbered wall

* * *

in death it does not feel,

belly wounded,

to men * * *

revealed with words,

great of the * * *

Riddle #85 (Fish and River)

My hall is not silent,
near * * *

a journey together.

stronger at times;

Sometimes I rest;

I always dwell in him

if we separate ourselves,

nor is my self loud

the lord shaped us

I am swifter than he,

he more enduring.

he must run forth.

while I live;

death is ordained to me.

Riddle #86 (One-Eyed Garlic Seller)

A creature came going

many in assembly,

it had one eye

and two feet,

a back and stomach

arms and shoulders,

and two sides.

where men sat,

wise in mind;

and two ears

twelve hundred heads,

and two hands,

one neck

Say what it is called.

Riddle #87 (Bellows)

I saw a wonderful creature;

swollen with power.

power-strong and hand-strong;

great to me;

with tooth of heaven

he would blow in its eye;

wavered willingly.

prone

it had a great belly,

A thegn attends it,

I thought the goodly warrior

he grabbed it soon,

* * *

she might bark,

Yet she wanted

* * *

Riddle #88 (Inkhorn)

Fragmentary

but I stood upright

and my brother -

The dwelling-place was worthier

higher in ornaments.

protection of wood-beams

they shielded us against storms.

Now our kinsmen

us two famous,

snatching up dwelling places.

mankind over earth.

dark and wonderful;

at the end of the board.

but I must guard the

where I * * *

both were hard.

when we stood there,

Full often the forest covered us,

in the dark nights,

The creator shaped us.

must come after

younger brothers

I am lone of

My inside is black,

I stand on wood

Nor is my brother here,

place at the end of

the board brotherless,
 nor does my brother know
 in the properties of men
 who before dwelled high
 We were united
 never did either of us
 as we might not both succeed
 now a monster tears
 injures me by the belly;
 At the track he finds
 * * *

standing fast;
 where he must dwell
 of the regions of earth,
 by my half.
 to make strife;
 announce his courage,
 in that battle.
 me inside,
 I may not escape.
 success he who * * *
 of benefit to the soul.

Riddle #89 (??)
 Too Fragmented

Riddle #90 (Web? Loom? *IN LATIN*)

It seemed strange to me -
 the lamb * * *
 While I stood and watched,
 two wolves standing
 they had four feet;

a wolf being held by a lamb
 and seized the guts of the wolf.
 I saw a great glory:
 and squeezing a third –
 with seven eyes they saw.

Riddle #91 (Key)

My head is
 wounded by pointed tools,
 Often I swallow
 when I must push
 hard against hardness,
 shoving forth
 the mind-TREASURE of my lord
 Sometimes I draw
 keeper of the hoard,
 to receive the remnant
 driven away from life

beaten by a hammer,
 polished by a file.
 what thrusts against me,
 girded with rings,
 a hole behind –
 so that it protects
 at midnight.
 backwards the beak
 when my lord desires
 of them who he ordered
 by deadly power for his desires.

Riddle #92 (Beech/Book)

I was a boast of the brown,
 a noble living creature and
 a place of joy of men
 gold in the yards.
 battle-weapon of a warrior,
 * * *

a beam in the woods,
 fruit of the earth,
 and the message of women,
 Now I am a joyful
 * * *

* * *

Riddle #93 (Inkhorn)

My lord

* * *

* * *

high and joy

* * *

* * *

* * *

wise in number of days
 sometimes he must
 up in his home;
 in the deep valleys
 strong in the step,
 frozen hard,
 the hoary frost from his hair.
 until the younger brother
 seat of wisdom
 Afterwards brown iron
 in the inward parts;
 blood from the breast,
 did bite me hard.
 nor did I weep for the wound,
 my misery on the life
 but I endured
 that bit the board.
 wood and water,
 what falls on me
 I know not what dark thing;
 Now the fiend holds my
 he who previously bore widely
 often it goes surrounded
 it steps on the stiff board

* * *

sun

* * *

* * *

Riddle #94 (Creation?)

* * *

Higher than heaven

* * *

* * *

by his desires

* * *

* * *

ascend the steep hill
 sometimes he turned back
 seeking the troop
 he dug stony plains
 sometimes he shook
 I rode with the eager
 claimed my
 and drove me from the dwelling place.
 wounded me
 blood did not come out
 although the strong-edged steel
 Nor did I mourn the time
 nor may I avenge
 of a warrior,
 all the wretched things
 Now I swallow black
 * * * I enclose
 from above where I stand,
 I have one foot.
 hoard ravaging
 a companion of a wolf;
 from my womb,

* * *

when the day-candle

* * *

looks from eyes

* * *

gladder than the sun,

* * *

More penetrating than salt,
 Dearer than all this light,

* * *

lighter than * * *

Riddle #95 (Book)

I am noble
 and I often rest
 known to the folk.
 and previously foreign
 joy of ravaging,
 wealth in the burgs
 Now wiser men
 my presence:
 wisdom to many;
 earth speak words there.
 of land dwellers,
 intently,
 my tracks from each

and known to earls,
 with the powerful and with the despised
 It travels widely,
 it stands with friends
 if I must have
 or bright goods.
 especially love
 I must announce
 nor do I over
 Although now the children of old,
 seek my tracks
 I sometimes hide
 of men.

RIDDLES OF SYMPHOSIUS

My translation of Symphosius' *Aenigmata* was done using T.J. Leary's 2014 edition of the Latin text, although I diverged from Leary in line three of Riddle 84 (Malum) [Apple], and deferred to Ohl's text. I chose to follow Leary's edition, which is based in large part off of Shackleton Bailey's 1982 edition, because it had a helpful commentary that contained references to recent scholarship on the *Aenigmata*. I am also indebted to Professor Curtis Dozier for helping me sort through my many ideas while writing, and for raising so many questions about the small details of Symphosius's most obscure passages.

Praefatio

These too Symphosius played about silly song.
 Thus do you, Sextus, teach; thus do I go crazy with you as [my] teacher.
 When the annual festival time of Saturn returned,
 always festive for us in perpetual play,
 after happy dinners, after the sweet draughts of dinner,
 among silly old ladies and talkative boys,
 when soused tongues resounded widely with eloquence,
 at that time the verbose retinue trifles in the zeal of speech,
 meditates for a long time here and there I do not know what jokes
 with great buffoonery; but many trifles are spoken.
 It was not mediocre, but was similar to a great contest,
 to place [them] variously or to solve each again in turn.

But I, lest I alone should seem to have been silent in disgrace,
 who had brought nothing with me which I would be able to say,
 made these verses suddenly from the song of the voice.
 It is not necessary to be sober among the tipsy.
 Give forgiveness, reader, because a drunk muse is not sensible.

Riddle #1 Graphium (Stylus)

Flat on the top but I am not flat on the bottom
 I am turned many ways by the hand; I am engaged in diverse tasks
 one part withdraws whatever the other part made.

Riddle #2 Harundo (Reed)

Sweet mistress of a god, neighbor of a deep riverbank,
 singing sweetly for the Muses; perfused with black color,
 I am the tongue's messenger, marked by the teacher's fingers.

Riddle #3 Anulus cum Gemma (Ring with Gem)

I clung as no great weight of the end of the body.
 (You might call it natural, because no one is weighed down by the weight),
 nonetheless the one face is about to have many forms.

Riddle #4 Clavis (Key)

I bring great good deeds from little strength.
 I open closed houses, but again I close the open.
 I guard the house for my master, but on the other hand I am guarded by him.

Riddle #5 Catena (Chain)

Bound by iron I am fastened, about to have many bound [men];
 first I myself am bound, but being bound, I bind in turn;
 and I freed many, nevertheless I myself am not freed.

Riddle #6 Tegula (Roof-Tile)

Earth provided me a body, fire provided me strength;
 I am born from the earth, my house is always on high;
 and the moisture that drenches me, soon deserts me.

Riddle #7 Fumus (Smoke)

Tears are mine, but I do not have cause for grief.
 There is a path to the sky, but heavy air blocks me;

and he who begat me is not born himself without me [there].

Riddle #8 Nebula (Cloud)

I am night in appearance [face], but I am not black in color,
Nonetheless in the middle of the day I bring shadow with me;
the stars do not give light to me nor Cynthia [the moon] a beam.

Riddle #9 Pluvia (Rain)

From high I come falling in long downfall;
from the heavens I fell passing through mid-air;
but the bosom rescued me, which at the same time re-sent me.

Riddle #10 Glacies (Ice)

I was once water, which I believe I will be soon.
Now connected by the hard chains of rigid heaven
while trampled I am not able to endure, nor to be held nude.

Riddle #11 Nix (Snow)

Delicate dust of water falling with a little weight
melting in the sun, flowing in the heat, dry in the cold,
making rivers, I first occupy entire lands

Riddle #12 Flumen et Piscis (Fish and River)

There is a house in the earth which resounds with a clear voice.
The house itself resounds, but the silent guest makes no sound.
Nonetheless both the guest and the house run both as one.

Riddle #13 Navis (Ship)

Long fast daughter of the beautiful forest I am borne,
surrounded all at once by an innumerable crowd of comrades.
I run many paths, leaving no traces.

Riddle #14 Pullus in Ovo (Chicken in Egg)

I will relate to you the wondrous beginnings of my life:
I was not yet born, nor was I then in the belly of my mother;
now with the offspring being born, no one saw me born.

Riddle #15 Vipera (Viper)

I am not able to be born, if I do not kill my mother.
 I killed my mother, but the same conclusion awaits me.
 My death will suffer what my birth created.

Riddle #16 Tinea (Bookworm)

Letters feared me, I did not know what letters were.
 I lived in books, yet thenceforth I am not more studious.
 I devoured the Muses, yet I still have not benefitted.

Riddle #17 Aranea (Spider)

Pallas taught me to know the work of weaving.
 My looms demand no spoke nor do my threads demand a loom
 I have no hands, nonetheless everything is done with my feet.

Riddle #18 Coclea (Snail)

I carry my house with me, always prepared to migrate,
 and in [going to a different] land I am not a miserable exile,
 but my counsel is born from heaven itself.

Riddle #19 Rana (Frog)

I am vocal resounding in the middle of the waves
 and always when I will sing no [man] praises my song;
 but my voice resounds with praise as if it praises itself.

Riddle #20 Testudo (Tortoise)

Slow, with slow step, endowed with a handsome back;
 indeed learned with zeal, but surrendered to savage fate,
 I spoke nothing, living, who thus in death presently sings.

Riddle #21 Talpa (Mole)

My face, blind, is obscured by black shadows;
 night is itself the day and not any sun is discerned by me;
 I prefer to be covered by earth: thus also no one will see me.

Riddle #22 Formica (Ant)

I am prudent of life, not lazy with respect to hard work,
 bearing on my own shoulders prizes for a secure winter,
 I do not bear great things at the same time, but I heap up much in turn.

Riddle #23 Musca (Fly)

I am bad, I admit; indeed what ugly thing does my throat fear?
 I was avoiding the cold, who now am returning in summer,
 but soon I am removed scared by a deceitful wind.

Riddle #24 Curculio (Weevil)

Not good to farmers, not a useful guest to crops,
 not great in form, not called by the appropriate name,
 not pleasing to Ceres; but I live off a good feast.

Riddle #25 Mus (Mouse)

My house is small but the door is always open.
 I live on stolen food at slight cost.
 The name that belongs to me, a consul of Rome also held.

Riddle #26 Grus (Crane)

I am a letter of the sky written out in flying feather
 waging gory war in the turning point of feathered Mars,
 I do not fear battles provided that the enemy is not taller.

Riddle #27 Cornix (Crow)

I live nine lives, if Greece does not deceive me;
 and I am always black compelled by no grief;
 and not angered I voice a clamor on both sides.

Riddle #28 Vespertilio (Bat)

Night gives me a name from the first time of night.
 I do not have feathers, although I have wings of flying;
 but I return in darkness and do not go out during the day.

Riddle #29 Eriacus (Hedgehog)

A house filled with spines, but a guest of a small body;
 when the uninjured back is fastened with sharp points
 the defenseless tenant supports armed crops.

Riddle #30 Peduculus (Louse)

All have a new [method] of capturing wild beasts,
 so that if what you capture, you should refuse to bear it to yourself,

and what you do not capture, nonetheless you may carry it back with you.

Riddle #31 Phoenix (Phoenix)

Life is death to me; I die if I will have began to be born.
But the fate of death is before the beginning of light.
Thus I alone call the ghosts themselves my parents.

Riddle #32 Taurus (Bull)

I was an adulterer of a king, but I followed wooden limbs.
And I am a Cilician mountain, but I am a mountain in name alone.
And I am carried in the skies and I walk upon the earth itself.

Riddle #33 Lupus (Wolf)

I am he who mutilates sheep with insane teeth,
seeking bloody spoils and gory food.
With great madness I am able to remove the voice also.

Riddle #34 Vulpes (Fox)

A small body but my heart is greater than my body,
I am cunning in deceit, expert in my keen perception,
and I am a wise beast, if a beast is called wise in any way.

Riddle #35 Capra (She-Goat)

Nourishing nurse of Jove, dressed in long hair,
traversing over the steep hills with difficult pace,
I respond to the guardian of the flock with tremulous speech.

Riddle #36 Porcus (Hog)

Born in the fertile womb of a bristly mother,
I expect green food from high above,
having power in the name if the first letter perishes.

Riddle #37 Mula (Mule)

Dissimilar from my mother, different in form from my father,
of mixed origin, I am not fit for propagating offspring,
I am born from others, but another is not born from me.

Riddle #38 Tigris (Tigress)

I am named from a river, or the river is named from me.
And I am joined to the wind, I who am faster than the wind itself;
and the wind gives sons to me and I do not seek a spouse.

Riddle #39 Centaurus (Centaur)

Conspicuous by four feet and by two hands,
I am dissimilar from myself, because I am one and not one.
And I am carried and I walk, because my two bodies bear me.

Riddle #40 Papaver (Poppy)

My head is large, my limbs within are small;
I have one foot alone but the one foot is the longest.
And sleep loves me, and I do not sleep with my own sleep.

Riddle #41 Malva (Mallow)

A goose's feet are similar to me, I do not want to deny.
There are not only two, but more that you discern in a row;
And nonetheless I bear all those themselves supine.

Riddle #42 Beta (Beet)

I am called whole in Greek, but I am not whole in Latin.
For I am always displayed in poor taverns.
I am born in the earth, I am washed in the water, I am anointed with olive.

Riddle #43 Cucurbita (Gourd)

I hang, while I am born; again, while I hang, I swell.
Hanging I am shaken by breezes and I am nourished by the streams.
If I am not hanging, already I will not be [alive].

Riddle #44 Ceba (Onion)

I bite the biting ones, I do not bite anybody of my own accord;
but many are prepared to bite the biter.
No one fears my bite, because I do not have any teeth.

Riddle #45 Rosa (Rose)

I am the prize of the land, perfused with beautiful color;
and surrounded, lest I am maltreated, I am defended by sharp weapons.
Oh happy, if I am able to live with a long fate!

Riddle #46 Viola (Violet)

Indeed I am not great, but I have the greatest virtue;
 my spirit is great, although my body is small;
 nor does my sprout have harm and blushes not with blame.

Riddle #47 Tus (Incense)

Sweet smell of a pasture, I am fatigued by flame and smoke,
 and this pleases the gods, that I am sent into the middle of the flames,
 nor is punishment given to me, but thanks is had for what is given.

Riddle #48 Murra (Myrrh)

From tears and for tears my origin began.
 From eyes I flowed, but now I am born from a tree,
 happy honor of the leaf, but a sad image of grief.

Riddle #49 Ebur (Ivory)

I am a great tooth related to Eastern people;
 now I retreated partially into many bodies;
 my strength does not remain, but the grace of beauty remained.

Riddle #50 Fenum (Hay)

I was a blade of earth was once from green grass,
 but cut by the hard metal of soft iron.
 I am pressed down by my own mass, enclosed under a tall roof.

Riddle #51 Mola (Millstone)

We are both stones, we are one, we lay together,
 one is not as slow as the other:
 this one remains unmoved, that one does not cease to be moved.

Riddle #52 Farina (Flour)

I was among stones which were crushing me and were being pressed;
 nonetheless scarcely did I escape clashed together in all my marrow.
 And now my form is smaller but my abundance more.

Riddle #53 Vitis (Vine)

I do not want to be joined by a yoke, though it pleases me to be married.
 I do not want a man in the bedroom: through me my offspring is born.

I do not want to suffer a grave: I know to submerge myself in the earth.

Riddle #54 Amus (Hook)

A small body on the bend of the curved point
I surround the deceptive baits in the middle of water.
I flatter, so that I may harm; I send out food for death.

Riddle #55 Acula (Needle)

Long but thin, brought forth from thin metal,
I lead soft chains accompanied by light iron;
and I restore the form to the harmed and a binding to the loosened.

Riddle #56 Caliga (Boot)

A long time ago I was greater, while life was remaining;
but now dead, lacerated, bound, plucked out
I am surrendered to the earth, but I am not hidden in a tomb.

Riddle #57 Clavus Caligaris (Hob-Nail)

I go on my head, I who hang from a single foot.
With the top I touch the ground, I sign with the mark of my head;
but many comrades have suffered the same event.

Riddle #58 Capillus (Hair)

No one is able to split me, many are able to cut me.
But I am many-colored, at some time or other I will be white.
I prefer to remain black: I will fear less my final fate.

Riddle #59 Pila (Ball)

I am not surrounded by hair and I am not adorned with hair,
for my hair is within which no one sees.
And hands send me out and I am returned into the air by hands.

Riddle #60 Serra (Saw)

I am filled in my whole body with innumerable teeth.
I eat the leaf-dressed progeny with a sharp bite;
nonetheless I bite in vain, because I spit out the booty of my teeth.

Riddle #61 Ancora (Anchor)

My twin points are joined into one by iron.
I wrestle with the wind, I battle with the deep abyss.
I probe the middle of the waters, I also bite the lands themselves.

Riddle #62 Pons (Bridge)

A grove stands in the waters, a forest stands in the deep abyss,
and an immovable oak remains in the middle of the water.
Nonetheless the earth sends what provides the service for the earth.

Riddle #63 Spongia (Sponge)

I am not heavy myself, but the weight of water sticks to me.
All my guts swell diffused in open caverns.
Water hides within, but it does not pour willingly.

Riddle #64 Tridens (Trident)

My teeth are three, which one row contains;
and moreover there is one tooth alone in the bottom part.
And the divinity holds me, the wind fears me, the seas attend to me.

Riddle #65 Sagitta (Arrow)

Enclosed by grave iron, circled by light feathers,
I hurry through the middle of the air in a winged course,
and sent, departing, I return with none sending me.

Riddle #66 Flagellum (Whip)

On sheeps' backs I frighten the entire livestock,
producing compliance with the remembered law of grief.
I do not want to be despised, but on the contrary I do not want to harm.

Riddle #67 Lanterna (Lantern)

Fit with hollow horns, translucent with a smooth circle,
having light within like a divine star,
I do not lose the look of days in the middle of the nights.

Riddle #68 Specular (Window-Pane)

I am seen through inwardly and I do not enclose the sight of the eye,
transmitting passing sights within my limbs;
winter does not cross through me, but nonetheless the sun appears inside me.

Riddle #69 Speculum (Mirror)

None is fixed for me, no form is alien to me.
 Lightning is within flashing with radiant light
 which shows nothing, except for what it has seen before.

Riddle #70 Clepsydra (Water-Clock)

The good law of speaking, I am also the hard law of being silent,
 law of the eager tongue, an end of speaking-without-end,
 myself flowing, while words flow, so that the tongue may rest.

Riddle #71 Puteus (Well)

Immersed far from earth in the soil I pour forth water
 not unless I am able to proceed in dug-through veins,
 and I am dragged upward led by another's work.

Riddle #72 Tubus (Pipe)

The earth covers the trunk, the waters hide in the soil;
 there is a small cavity which does not have any banks,
 it is borne in the middle of wood which was bearing wood.

Riddle #73 Uter (Bellows)

I do not die immediately, while my breath leaves;
 for it returns continuously, although it also withdraws often:
 and now my breath is great, now I have no capabilities.

Riddle #74 Lapis (Stone)

**I am Deucalion safe from the cruel wave,
 related to the earth but harder than that by far.
 If a letter yields: I will have the name of a flying thing also. [LINGUISTIC KIND OF]**

Riddle #75 Calx (Lime)

I evaded flames, I escaped the torments of fire.
 The cure itself fights opposite to my fate:
 I burn from waters, I am set afire from the middle of the waves.

Riddle #76 Silex (Flint)

Fire is always within, but it is rarely discerned;
 for it lurks within, but it surrenders to blows alone;

it does not need wood so that it may live, nor does it need water in order to die.

Riddle #77 Rotae (Wheels)

Four equal sisters run by skill
thus as if wrestling, when they all have one [shared] labor;
and they are equally near and they are not able to touch each other.

Riddle #78 Scalae (Stairs)

We are they who climb to the heavens, seeking the heights,
who one row holds in concordant architecture,
so that at the same time clinging [together], we are escorted on our own [power] to the breezes.

Riddle #79 Scopa (Broom)

Great parent of the world, fastened by a tenacious noose,
bound to the level earth, pressed down by two hands
I am led everywhere following, and everything follows me also.

Riddle #80 Tintinnabulum (Bell)

Stiff with curved brass I am compiled in an open circle.
Within is the mobile image of a rattling tongue.
I do not resound laying down, moving I often resound also.

Riddle #81 Lagena (Earthenware Jar)

My mother was Tellus, my father is Prometheus himself;
and my earlobes may lead me garlanded around a hollow belly.
When I fell miserably, my mother mangled me.

Riddle #82 Conditum (Spiced Wine)

We were three once we who are joined in one name;
there is one from three, and three are mixed in one;
each is good on its own: what holds them all together is better.

Riddle #83 Vinum in Acetum Conversum (Wine Turned to Vinegar)

Nothing has been removed, nothing is enlarged from without;
Nonetheless I do not find whatever I myself left previously.
What I was, I am not; I began, what I was not, to be.

Riddle #84 Malum (Apple)

The name of sheep in Greek, a great contention of goddesses,
 fraud of wreathed boys, the care of many sisters,
 the destruction of Troy, while I finished gory wars.

Riddle #85 Perna (Ham)

I lead a noble line from the clan of great Cato.
 I have one sister, although more there are thought to be more.
 A face from smoke, my good taste is born from the sea.

Riddle #86 Malleus (Hammer)

I do not claim strength from all my body,
 but I refuse to fight no one in a battle of the head:
 my head is great, and the whole weight is in that.

Riddle #87 Pistillus (Pestle)

I grind all at the same time with great strength of courage.
 I have one neck, but the form of two heads.
 For feet I have a head: for the rest of my body is not there.

Riddle #88 Strigilis Aenea (Bronze Strigil)

Red, curved, spacious, wet with other drops,
 pretending the color of gold with false lights,
 devoted to sweat, I succumb to a little work.

Riddle #89 Balneum (Bath-House)

Throughout all the rooms the safe fire enters;
 a great fever is in the middle which none fears.
 The house is not naked, but the nude guests convene there.

Riddle #90 Tessera (Die)

I am always devoted to a vow, not certain of what will happen.
 I am thrown into two-headed chances in various whirling
 I am not wicked in sadness, nor happy in favorable conditions.

Riddle #91 Pecunia (Money)

I was earth first, hiding in the hiding places of the earth;
 now flames gave another value and another name,
 now I am not called the earth, although earth is obtained from me.

Riddle #92 Mulier Quae Geminos Pariebat (Mother Who Bore Twins)

I sustained more than one body ought.

I had three souls, all of which I was keeping within:
two left, but the third nearly died.

Riddle #93 Miles Podagricus (Gouty Soldier)

Once a mighty warrior, to be feared in savage arms,

I had five feet, which no one ever denied.

Now I have scarcely two; plenty made me helpless.

Riddle #94 Luscus Alium Vendens (One-Eyed Garlic Seller)

It is right to discern now what scarcely it is right for you to believe:

one eye within, but many thousand heads.

Who sells what he has, from where will he obtain what he does not have?

Riddle #95 Funambulus (Funambulist)

Between light-bringing heaven and lying-still earth

the traveler traverses through the middle of the air with learned art.

But the path is narrow, and is not sufficient for feet themselves.

Riddle #96

Gap in text [ADD CITATION WHY GAP]

Riddle #97 Umbra (Shadow)

I fear of no snares from lurking fraud;

for a god attributed this gift of form to us,

that no one moves me, unless he is moved first.

Riddle #98 Echo (Echo)

A modest virgin too well I watch over the law of modesty;

I am not brash in speech, I am not heedless of tongue;

I do not want to speak of my own will, but I give a response to the one speaking.

Riddle #99 Somnus (Sleep)

I exhibit various forms when I come of my own will.

I shape vain fears with no discrimination of truth.

But no one sees me, except for he who closes his eyes.

Riddle #100 Monumentum (Tombstone)

I am abandoned after death having the name of a man.

The empty name remains, but sweet life fled.

Nonetheless life is left over at death after the time of life.

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