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### **Saints Revisited: English and Irish saints in Icelandic manuscripts**

At the Eighth Viking Congress in Århus in 1977 Christine E. Fell gave a paper entitled 'Anglo-Saxon saints in Old Norse sources and vice-versa'. Hers was the first survey of the literary evidence of English saints in Icelandic manuscripts and it is still of considerable value. She pointed out that although most of these saints would have become known in Iceland in the eleventh century, it is from the fourteenth century that most of the relevant literature dates. In the decades since Fell's article appeared, research into the cult of saints in Iceland has advanced significantly, not least through Margaret Cormack's groundbreaking work. The cultural milieu of fourteenth-century Iceland and its literary production has also attracted increasing interest as scholars have devoted more attention to the rewriting and recycling of material that characterises the period.

In my paper I intend to take a fresh look at the fourteenth-century Icelandic material on English and Irish saints, drawing on poetry as well as the prose texts surveyed by Fell and paying special attention to female saints (Walburga, Sunnifa and Ursula). I will endeavour to explain why this material held such interest for Icelanders in the fourteenth century by looking at the manuscript context in which these texts are found and discussing their relationship with other texts traditionally seen to belong to a different genre, such as *Breta sögur*. I shall then contrast this material with the evidence of a new influx of English and Irish saints in the late medieval period which manifested itself in prayers and artefacts rather than literature.