

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

BY

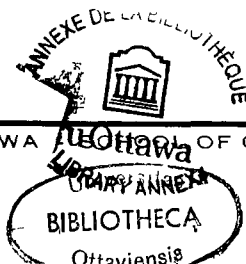
Flight Lieutenant

Paul E. Morin, D.F.M.

Thesis presented to the Faculty  
of Arts, University of Ottawa,  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy.

September 1965

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA  OF GRADUATE STUDIES



UMI Number: DC53717

### INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



---

UMI Microform DC53717  
Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC  
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against  
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

---

ProQuest LLC  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Name: Paul-Emile Morin.

Born: Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, August 6,  
1914.

Teacher's Certificates: Elementary and  
Secondary, Laval-des-Rapides Normal  
School, Montreal, 1932 and 1933.

Bsc. Ed.: June 22, 1946, Fordham University,  
New York City, New York, U.S.A.

M.A.: May, 1964, University of Ottawa,  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank Dr. Alphonsus Patrick Campbell, Professor of English at the University of Ottawa, under whose direction this thesis has been carried out; Mrs. Marguerite Crevier in charge of the Inter-Library Loan Department of the Central Library of the University of Ottawa; and all those who have assisted in this study. I owe lasting gratitude to my wife for her patience, understanding, and assistance, and to one whose patronage and encouragement have been responsible for the completion of this work.

## CONTENTS

| CHAPTER                                                                                                                      | PAGE |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| INTRODUCTION.....                                                                                                            | 1    |
| I. ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE.....                                                                             | 4    |
| 1. Definition of Literature, Beauty,<br>Poetic Diction, Poetic Technique,<br>Style, Poetic Convention, and<br>Tradition..... | 4    |
| Definition of literature.....                                                                                                | 5    |
| Definition of beauty.....                                                                                                    | 5    |
| Definition of prose.....                                                                                                     | 6    |
| Definition of poetic diction.....                                                                                            | 6    |
| Definition of poetic technique.....                                                                                          | 7    |
| Definition of style.....                                                                                                     | 8    |
| Definition of convention.....                                                                                                | 9    |
| Definition of tradition.....                                                                                                 | 9    |
| 2. Anglo-Saxon Style and Diction.....                                                                                        | 10   |
| Definition of logical sense.....                                                                                             | 10   |
| Anglo-Saxon poetry in the 1920's.....                                                                                        | 11   |
| Destruction of Anglo-Saxon libraries.....                                                                                    | 12   |
| Difficulty in grasping the precise<br>meaning of Anglo-Saxon words.....                                                      | 14   |
| Research in Anglo-Saxon since 1925.....                                                                                      | 15   |
| Baum and <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                                | 16   |
| <u>Beowulf</u> and the Old Testament.....                                                                                    | 17   |
| 3. The Oral-Formulaic Theory.....                                                                                            | 23   |
| II. ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY..                                                                           | 44   |
| 1. Importance of Anglo-Saxon Semantics.....                                                                                  | 44   |
| Definition of semantics.....                                                                                                 | 44   |
| The Anglo-Saxon word <u>wineleas</u> .....                                                                                   | 46   |
| The <u>comitatus</u> spirit.....                                                                                             | 46   |
| The word <u>daegwoma</u> .....                                                                                               | 47   |
| The word <u>widewe</u> .....                                                                                                 | 48   |
| The word <u>lencten</u> .....                                                                                                | 49   |
| The words <u>cealdheort</u> and <u>brūnecg</u> .....                                                                         | 50   |
| The brownbill.....                                                                                                           | 51   |

## CONTENTS

v

| CHAPTER                                                                                                                                                                                                     | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| II. ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY                                                                                                                                                            |      |
| 1. Importance of Anglo-Saxon Semantics.                                                                                                                                                                     |      |
| Brown and steel tempering.....                                                                                                                                                                              | 52   |
| The <u>wala</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                       | 54   |
| The words: <u>dream</u> , <u>bliss</u> , <u>gefea</u> , <u>myrgo</u> , <u>dry-</u><br><u>man</u> , <u>blissian</u> , <u>wynsum</u> , <u>blīce</u> ,<br><u>gleow</u> , <u>glaed</u> , <u>glaedness</u> ..... | 56   |
| The word <u>swegeldream</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                           | 59   |
| Colour in Anglo-Saxon poetry.....                                                                                                                                                                           | 60   |
| Colour; modern mode of perception.....                                                                                                                                                                      | 62   |
| Colour; Anglo-Saxon mode of perception....                                                                                                                                                                  | 63   |
| Colours and the <u>Lindisfarne Gospels</u> .....                                                                                                                                                            | 64   |
| Colour words used by Anglo-Saxon poets;<br><u>graeg</u> , <u>hasu</u> , <u>hār</u> , <u>fealu</u> , <u>hiw</u> ,<br><u>salo</u> , <u>brūn</u> .....                                                         | 63   |
| Brightness words: <u>bēorht</u> , <u>hador</u> , <u>lēoht</u> ,<br><u>lēoma</u> , <u>scīma</u> , <u>scīr</u> , <u>sunne</u> ,<br><u>scýne</u> , <u>torht</u> .....                                          | 64   |
| Darkness words: <u>blaec</u> , <u>deorc</u> , <u>dimm</u> , <u>heol-</u><br><u>stor</u> , <u>mirce</u> , <u>sceadu</u> , <u>scuwa</u> ,<br><u>sweart</u> , <u>deostru</u> , <u>wann</u> , <u>earp</u> ....  | 64   |
| Definition of colour.....                                                                                                                                                                                   | 66   |
| Colour and hue in modern perception.....                                                                                                                                                                    | 67   |
| White and black in Anglo-Saxon.....                                                                                                                                                                         | 68   |
| Roman writers and Anglo-Saxon poets.....                                                                                                                                                                    | 68   |
| Black and dark.....                                                                                                                                                                                         | 70   |
| Hue-blindness and colour-blindness.....                                                                                                                                                                     | 71   |
| Colours and their frequency of appearance<br>in Anglo-Saxon poetry.....                                                                                                                                     | 72   |
| <u>Hwit</u> as a colour.....                                                                                                                                                                                | 72   |
| <u>Blāc</u> as a colour.....                                                                                                                                                                                | 73   |
| <u>Fāmīg</u> as a colour.....                                                                                                                                                                               | 74   |
| <u>Blāt</u> as a colour.....                                                                                                                                                                                | 74   |
| Colour words in the black category.....                                                                                                                                                                     | 75   |
| <u>Blaec</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                          | 75   |
| <u>Sweart</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                         | 76   |
| <u>Wann</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                           | 77   |
| <u>Salo</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                           | 77   |
| Colour words in the grey group.....                                                                                                                                                                         | 78   |
| <u>Hār</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                            | 79   |
| <u>Hasu</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                           | 80   |
| <u>Blondenfeax</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                    | 81   |
| <u>Gamolfeax</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                      | 81   |
| <u>Brūn</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                           | 82   |
| The <u>Phoenix</u> and <u>sum brūn</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                | 83   |

## CONTENTS

vi

| CHAPTER                                                | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------|
| II. ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY       |      |
| 1. Importance of Anglo-Saxon Semantics.                |      |
| The <u>read</u> group.....                             | 85   |
| The <u>geolo</u> group.....                            | 86   |
| Yellowish green and the sea.....                       | 87   |
| <u>Fealo</u> and its compounds.....                    | 87   |
| The <u>gold</u> group.....                             | 88   |
| The <u>grēne</u> group.....                            | 89   |
| The dictionary and the historical sense...             | 90   |
| 2. Influence of Latin and Christianity Upon            |      |
| Anglo-Saxon.....                                       | 92   |
| Malone and the rôle of Latin in Anglo-Saxon            | 94   |
| Latin borrowings in Anglo-Saxon.....                   | 94   |
| Abstract ideas rendered by native                      |      |
| Anglo-Saxon compounds.....                             | 95   |
| Analogical transference of ideas.....                  | 96   |
| Anglo-Saxon borrowing and Old German                   |      |
| literature.....                                        | 97   |
| Virgil and Anglo-Saxon England.....                    | 98   |
| Virgil and Anglo-Saxon centers of                      |      |
| learning.....                                          | 100  |
| Authors known to Anglo-Saxons.....                     | 100  |
| Virgilian phrases and moral teaching.....              | 101  |
| Virgil and Anglo-Saxon literary ec-                    |      |
| clesiastics.....                                       | 102  |
| Virgil and Anglo-Saxon kings.....                      | 103  |
| Virgilian technique of Anglo-Saxon works..             | 103  |
| Anglo-Saxon idioms - renderings of Latin..             | 104  |
| Latin and Anglo-Saxon inflexions.....                  | 105  |
| Influence of Christianity.....                         | 106  |
| The Church of Rome and Anglo-Saxons.....               | 108  |
| Christianity and Anglo-Saxon religious                 |      |
| vocabulary.....                                        | 109  |
| <u>Hæðen</u> , <u>crīsten</u> , <u>crīstnian</u> ..... | 112  |
| <u>Marian maessan</u> .....                            | 113  |
| Anglo-Saxon words for God.....                         | 113  |
| <u>Middangeard</u> or <u>woruld</u> .....              | 114  |
| <u>Maegen</u> .....                                    | 114  |
| Anglo-Saxons and the final things.....                 | 116  |
| Definition of non-religious poetry.....                | 116  |
| The <u>Seafarer</u> , death, spring, and               |      |
| judgement.....                                         | 116  |
| Anglo-Saxons and hagiography.....                      | 117  |

## CONTENTS

vii

| CHAPTER                                                                                                                          | PAGE |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| II. ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY                                                                                 |      |
| 2. Influence of Latin and Christianity Upon Anglo-Saxon.                                                                         |      |
| Influence of Christianity.                                                                                                       |      |
| Anglo-Saxon and Biblical quotations.....                                                                                         | 119  |
| Anglo-Saxon writers and Latin texts.....                                                                                         | 120  |
| St. Augustine of Hippo and Anglo-Saxon....                                                                                       | 121  |
| III. MOOD, NATURE, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE IN ANGLO-SAXON POETRY.....                                                          | 126  |
| 1. Mood in Anglo-Saxon Poetry.....                                                                                               | 126  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> ; lines 1251-78.....                                                                                              | 127  |
| Expressions contributing to express mood..                                                                                       | 129  |
| Overtones.....                                                                                                                   | 130  |
| Mood as a third dimension from contextual use of diction.....                                                                    | 131  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> ; line 1405 - <u>ofer myrcan mōr</u> .....                                                                        | 131  |
| Contextual emotional connotation.....                                                                                            | 133  |
| Definition of objective emotional colouring.....                                                                                 | 133  |
| Definition of subjective emotional colouring.....                                                                                | 134  |
| Barren land a frightening sight.....                                                                                             | 135  |
| Mood developed through the method of in-direction and suggestions.....                                                           | 135  |
| <u>Judith</u> ; lines 250-96.....                                                                                                | 136  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> ; lines 2232-70.....                                                                                              | 138  |
| 2. Nature in Anglo-Saxon Poetry.....                                                                                             | 141  |
| Certain aspects of nature not widely developed.....                                                                              | 143  |
| Sunsets in Anglo-Saxon poetry.....                                                                                               | 143  |
| <u>Mona</u> and the word star.....                                                                                               | 144  |
| The scent of flowers.....                                                                                                        | 144  |
| The lily and the rose.....                                                                                                       | 144  |
| Fruits.....                                                                                                                      | 145  |
| Spring and summer.....                                                                                                           | 145  |
| Odours.....                                                                                                                      | 146  |
| Vegetation in general.....                                                                                                       | 146  |
| Aspects of nature given wide treatment....                                                                                       | 147  |
| Understanding of the workings of nature...                                                                                       | 148  |
| Winter, trees, storms, the sea, the wind, hail, frost, snow, ice, rain, mist, moors and fens, the sun, eclipses, night, etc..... | 147  |

## CONTENTS

viii

| CHAPTER                                                                                                 | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| III. MOOD, NATURE, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE IN<br>ANGLO-SAXON POETRY                                   |      |
| 2. Nature in Anglo-Saxon Poetry.....                                                                    |      |
| Realistic or physical view of nature.....                                                               | 149  |
| Anglo-Saxons glorified in success.....                                                                  | 150  |
| Ice and <u>The Rune Poem</u> .....                                                                      | 150  |
| Reaction to nature - result of <u>a priori</u><br>experience.....                                       | 151  |
| Interpretation of nature and the spirit<br>of the age.....                                              | 151  |
| Anglo-Saxon literature seen in the<br>Christian writers' frame of<br>mind.....                          | 152  |
| Anglo-Saxon literature and Christian<br>rationalism.....                                                | 154  |
| The sea in Anglo-Saxon literature.....                                                                  | 154  |
| Three influences underlying Anglo-Saxon<br>poetry.....                                                  | 156  |
| The Anglo-Saxon spirit of idealization....                                                              | 156  |
| Woman and love.....                                                                                     | 157  |
| Warfare.....                                                                                            | 158  |
| The <u>comitatus</u> spirit.....                                                                        | 158  |
| Drinking mead.....                                                                                      | 159  |
| Etiquette in Anglo-Saxon life.....                                                                      | 159  |
| 3. The Spirit of the Anglo-Saxon Age.....                                                               | 160  |
| Men responsible for the spreading of<br>Christianity.....                                               | 162  |
| The golden age of the conversions.....                                                                  | 163  |
| Monastery schools.....                                                                                  | 164  |
| Scriptoria.....                                                                                         | 164  |
| Aristocrats making history.....                                                                         | 164  |
| Sutton Hoo.....                                                                                         | 165  |
| The Sutton Hoo sword.....                                                                               | 166  |
| The Sutton Hoo shield.....                                                                              | 167  |
| The Sutton Hoo whetstone, the royal<br>standard, the bronze bowl, the<br>hanging-bowl, the harp.....    | 167  |
| The Sutton Hoo silver objects.....                                                                      | 168  |
| The Sutton Hoo helmet.....                                                                              | 168  |
| The Sutton Hoo harness, purse-lid with gold<br>frame, Frankish gold coins,<br>and two gold billets..... | 168  |
| The Sutton Hoo solid gold belt-buckle.....                                                              | 169  |
| The Sutton Hoo vessels, drinking horns,<br>buckets, and cauldrons.....                                  | 169  |

## CONTENTS

ix

| CHAPTER                                                                                           | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| III. MOOD, NATURE, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE IN<br>ANGLO-SAXON POETRY                             |      |
| 3. The Spirit of the Anglo-Saxon Age.                                                             |      |
| The Sutton Hoo four thousand garnets.....                                                         | 169  |
| Sutton Hoo and Anglo-Saxon civilization.....                                                      | 170  |
| Other centers of learning: the royal courts                                                       | 170  |
| IV. SOME ANGLO-SAXON STYLISTIC AND SYNTACTICAL<br>CHARACTERISTICS.....                            | 174  |
| 1. Rhetorical Patterns.....                                                                       | 175  |
| Definition of verse patterns.....                                                                 | 175  |
| Origin of verse patterns.....                                                                     | 176  |
| Understanding of verse patterns: a medium<br>for the comprehension of Anglo-<br>Saxon poetry..... | 176  |
| The envelope pattern.....                                                                         | 177  |
| The envelope pattern: origin of terminology                                                       | 177  |
| The envelope pattern built on a chiasmus...                                                       | 178  |
| The double envelope pattern.....                                                                  | 180  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> ; lines 853-917.....                                                               | 180  |
| The parallel pattern.....                                                                         | 181  |
| The parallel pattern and the psalmist.....                                                        | 181  |
| The parallel pattern and the anaphora.....                                                        | 182  |
| The parallel pattern and the balance group<br>with <u>hwilum</u> .....                            | 182  |
| With <u>eala</u> , <u>oder</u> , and <u>sum</u> .....                                             | 183  |
| The parallel pattern and the antithesis....                                                       | 183  |
| The incremental pattern.....                                                                      | 183  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> ; lines 702-36.....                                                                | 183  |
| The rhythmical pattern.....                                                                       | 184  |
| 2. Intensity and Conciseness of the Anglo-Saxon<br>Line.....                                      | 185  |
| <u>Judith</u> ; lines 159-66.....                                                                 | 186  |
| Hippolyte Taine and Anglo-Saxon poetry.....                                                       | 186  |
| 3. The Scarcity of Articles and Pronouns.....                                                     | 188  |
| Taine and Tolman.....                                                                             | 188  |
| The result of alliteration and meter.....                                                         | 189  |
| Anglo-Saxon poets were boxed in.....                                                              | 189  |
| 4. The Repetition Technique.....                                                                  | 190  |
| Used by Milton.....                                                                               | 190  |

## CONTENTS

x

| CHAPTER                                                                                         | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| IV. SOME ANGLO-SAXON STYLISTIC AND SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS....                              |      |
| 4. The Repetition Technique.                                                                    |      |
| The parataxis.....                                                                              | 191  |
| Leisurely return to thoughts.....                                                               | 191  |
| Daniel; lines 224 and 409.....                                                                  | 192  |
| Beowulf; line 1606.....                                                                         | 192  |
| Beowulf; lines 2451-60.....                                                                     | 193  |
| 5. Climax, the Transition, and the Pronoun....                                                  | 193  |
| Climax in Anglo-Saxon poetry.....                                                               | 193  |
| The abrupt transition.....                                                                      | 193  |
| Shakespeare and the abrupt transition.....                                                      | 194  |
| The pronoun used before mentioning the<br>person or thing for which it<br>stands.....           | 194  |
| 6. The Roundabout Approach.....                                                                 | 195  |
| The circumambient structure .....                                                               | 196  |
| The structure of Beowulf is complementary... ..                                                 | 195  |
| Klaeber and the circuitous route.....                                                           | 195  |
| Beowulf; lines 745-815.....                                                                     | 196  |
| Abstraction, formalism, and symbolism.....                                                      | 197  |
| 7. Word Order in Sentence Structure.....                                                        | 198  |
| A subordinate clause at the beginning of a<br>statement.....                                    | 198  |
| Coordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns,<br>adverbs at the beginning of a<br>sentence..... | 198  |
| Beowulf; lines 293 and 1269.                                                                    |      |
| The common order structure.....                                                                 | 198  |
| The subordinate clause form.....                                                                | 199  |
| The demonstrative order.....                                                                    | 200  |
| Editors mistake subordinate propositions<br>for principal sentences.....                        | 201  |
| Anglo-Saxon texts and punctuation.....                                                          | 202  |
| The rôle of stress in <u>pa</u> sentences.....                                                  | 202  |
| Ambiguity arising out of faulty stress.....                                                     | 203  |
| Apparent paratactic construction.....                                                           | 203  |
| The paratactic structure not a weakness of<br>the language.....                                 | 204  |
| The paratactic sentence introduced by <u>wolde</u>                                              | 204  |
| Beowulf; lines 1292-93.....                                                                     | 205  |
| Wende and the paratactic sentence.....                                                          | 205  |

## CONTENTS

xi

| CHAPTER                                                        | PAGE |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| IV. SOME ANGLO-SAXON STYLISTIC AND SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS |      |
| 7. Word Order in Sentence Structure.....                       |      |
| The paratactic sentence introduced by                          |      |
| <u>cwaed</u> .....                                             | 205  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> : lines 90-92.....                              | 205  |
| The verb at the beginning of the clause...                     | 205  |
| Another paratactic sentence; the defining                      |      |
| clause.....                                                    | 206  |
| Subordinate clauses paratactic in                              |      |
| appearance.....                                                | 206  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> and the use of subordinate prop-                |      |
| ositions for the handling of                                   |      |
| transitions.....                                               | 206  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> : lines 194-99, 229-34, 3134-38....             | 206  |
| Subordinate constructions judged para-                         |      |
| taxis.....                                                     | 206  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> : lines 424-27, 2070-73, 3066-69...             | 206  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> erroneously called the grand clas-              |      |
| sic of paratactic style.....                                   | 207  |
| The asyndetic coordination.....                                | 208  |
| The subjectless principal sentence in                          |      |
| <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                           | 208  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> : lines 1310-11, 1810-12, 1223,                 |      |
| 2703-05, 1943-45.....                                          | 208  |
| Asyndetic construction with more than                          |      |
| two clauses.....                                               | 208  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> : lines 415-19, 622-25, 881-84,                 |      |
| 2280-82, 2369-72.....                                          | 208  |
| Principal propositions exhibiting the                          |      |
| conjunctive order.....                                         | 209  |
| Other forms with <u>swylce</u> , <u>sona</u> , <u>swa</u> ,    |      |
| <u>pa git</u> , <u>forðam</u> , <u>nu</u> , <u>oft</u> , and   |      |
| <u>symle</u> .....                                             | 209  |
| After the negatives <u>nalas</u> , <u>naefre</u> , and         |      |
| <u>no by aer</u> .....                                         | 209  |
| After the exclamatory <u>hwaet</u> .....                       | 210  |
| Conjunctive order introduced after a pro-                      |      |
| noun-subject with rhetorical                                   |      |
| stress.....                                                    | 210  |
| 8. Anglo-Saxon Metrics and Alliteration.....                   | 210  |
| Anglo-Saxon poetic style not ordinary.....                     | 210  |
| The Anglo-Saxon verse, the tool of experts                     | 211  |
| Knowledge implied in the use of the Anglo-                     |      |
| Saxon line.....                                                | 211  |

## CONTENTS

xii

| CHAPTER                                                                                                | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| IV. SOME ANGLO-SAXON STYLISTIC AND SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS                                         |      |
| 8. Anglo-Saxon Metrics and Alliteration.                                                               |      |
| Alliteration; a demanding task.....                                                                    | 212  |
| Happy alliterative combinations: not the<br>result of chance.....                                      | 213  |
| The demands of alliteration; rigid.....                                                                | 214  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> ; a finely regulated and richly<br>rhythmic achievement.....                            | 214  |
| V. THE VERB IN <u>BEOWULF</u> .....                                                                    | 217  |
| There are at least 810 verbs in <u>Beowulf</u> ...                                                     | 218  |
| General characteristics of Anglo-Saxon<br>verbs.....                                                   | 219  |
| The use of affixes to verbs.....                                                                       | 219  |
| Verbs of motion in Anglo-Saxon.....                                                                    | 219  |
| <u>Fēolan</u> in <u>Beowulf</u> ; lines 1281 and 2225....                                              | 219  |
| Verbs of rest with idea of motion.....                                                                 | 219  |
| <u>Sceawian</u> occurs nineteen times.....                                                             | 220  |
| Verbs creating a state of mind; <u>hatian</u> ,<br><u>lufian</u> , <u>unnan</u> , <u>eahtian</u> ..... | 220  |
| Unusual regimen of <u>dēman</u> , <u>bodian</u> , <u>derian</u> ,<br>and <u>ōleccan</u> .....          | 220  |
| The instrumental function of the genitive<br>case attending certain verbs..                            | 220  |
| A singular verb with a plural subject.....                                                             | 220  |
| Lack of control in the interchange of<br>cases.....                                                    | 220  |
| Violation of the <u>consecutio temporum</u> .....                                                      | 221  |
| A compound subject and a singular verb....                                                             | 221  |
| A plural subject with a singular verb.....                                                             | 221  |
| A change in the compound verb without a<br>change in the subject.....                                  | 221  |
| Apparent incongruities that are not;<br>seventy-five cases in <u>Beowulf</u> .                         | 221  |
| The subjectless verb.....                                                                              | 221  |
| Editions of <u>Beowulf</u> with a wrong emenda-<br>tion of <u>brand</u> in line 1020....               | 222  |
| Anglo-Saxon ellipses.....                                                                              | 222  |
| Not solecisms.....                                                                                     | 222  |
| Omission of subject.....                                                                               | 223  |
| Ellipsis found after a formal speech.....                                                              | 223  |
| No subject used with <u>heht</u> .....                                                                 | 223  |

## CONTENTS

xiii

## CHAPTER

PAGE

V. THE VERB IN BEOWULF

|                                                                                                                                                                                  |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Subjectless verbs in so called digressions                                                                                                                                       | 223 |
| <u>Beowulf</u> : lines 115-25 and 916-20.....                                                                                                                                    | 223 |
| The end-position of the verb.....                                                                                                                                                | 224 |
| Time relationship in the use of verbs.....                                                                                                                                       | 224 |
| <u>Bēon</u> , <u>sculan</u> , and <u>willan</u> .....                                                                                                                            | 224 |
| Preterit of intransitive verbs formed with<br><u>habban</u> , and the perfect of<br>intransitive verbs with <u>wesan</u> ..                                                      | 225 |
| The old passive voice: <u>hattan</u> , <u>bēon</u> , <u>wesan</u><br><u>weorpan</u> .....                                                                                        | 225 |
| The prothesis of the negative adverb <u>ne</u><br>with <u>eom</u> , <u>eart</u> and <u>is</u> .....                                                                              | 225 |
| The present tense form employed to express:<br>actual present time, future<br>time, for the universal, time-<br>less, gnomic present, to ex-<br>press the Latin <u>iam</u> ..... | 225 |
| The present tense form to indicate the<br>preterit after verbs of saying,<br>thinking, knowing, seeing, in<br>subordinate clauses.....                                           | 226 |
| The subjunctive mood instead of the present                                                                                                                                      | 226 |
| The historical present rarely used.....                                                                                                                                          | 226 |
| <u>Wolde</u> , <u>cwæð</u> , <u>wende</u> replaced by a hendiadys                                                                                                                | 227 |
| Definition of a hendiadys.....                                                                                                                                                   | 227 |
| <u>Woldon</u> and <u>wendon</u> and <u>wiston</u> and <u>ne wendon</u> .                                                                                                         | 227 |
| A verb taking its meaning from another verb                                                                                                                                      | 227 |
| <u>Beowulf</u> : lines 2816 and 2814.....                                                                                                                                        | 228 |
| Meaning of a verb reinforced in contact with<br>another closely related.....                                                                                                     | 228 |
| <u>Weallan</u> and <u>brinnan</u> , <u>beornan</u> .....                                                                                                                         | 228 |
| A metaphor in the subject gives way to<br>another in the verb.....                                                                                                               | 228 |
| <u>Beowulf</u> : lines 1523 and 1121-24.....                                                                                                                                     | 229 |
| A noun used with a vigorous verb: <u>hreo</u> and<br><u>fordrīfan</u> , <u>swogað windas</u> .....                                                                               | 229 |
| Verbs formed by union of nouns with other<br>words.....                                                                                                                          | 229 |
| <u>Regolian</u> and <u>onhōhsnian</u> .....                                                                                                                                      | 229 |
| The respect for authority and the trans-<br>formation of verbs of causing<br>into verbs of ordering.....                                                                         | 230 |
| <u>Hātan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                               | 230 |
| <u>Beowulf</u> : lines 198, 1035, 2190.....                                                                                                                                      | 231 |

## CONTENTS

xiv

| CHAPTER                                                                                                                              | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| V. THE VERB IN <u>BEOWULF</u>                                                                                                        |      |
| Verbs of compelling or forcing: <u>niedan</u> ,<br><u>gepreatian</u> , <u>prēagan</u> , <u>praestan</u> ,<br>and <u>laetan</u> ..... | 231  |
| The rôle of the verb in Anglo-Saxon<br>metrics.....                                                                                  | 232  |
| <u>Wesan</u> : four hundred and forty-one occur-<br>rences in <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                   | 232  |
| Not every verb in <u>Beowulf</u> select in the<br>poetic sense.....                                                                  | 232  |
| The Anglo-Saxon verb in poetry generally<br>pregnant with meaning, as-<br>sociations, and allusions.....                             | 233  |
| <u>Beowulf</u> : lines 1903-13.....                                                                                                  | 233  |
| Meaning lost in a literal translation.....                                                                                           | 234  |
| Translation of poetry into other languages<br>is never adequate.....                                                                 | 234  |
| Much lost in the translation of a work....                                                                                           | 235  |
| In some cases the translation of a poem<br>may become another poem.....                                                              | 236  |
| Not fondness for epithets.....                                                                                                       | 237  |
| <u>Gewitan</u> : <u>Beowulf</u> : line 1903.....                                                                                     | 237  |
| <u>Gewitan</u> usually followed by a verb of<br>motion.....                                                                          | 240  |
| <u>Drēfan</u> - line 1904 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                    | 240  |
| The etymological origin of <u>drēfan</u> .....                                                                                       | 242  |
| The denotation and connotation of <u>drēfan</u> ..                                                                                   | 244  |
| <u>Ofgifan</u> - line 1904 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                   | 245  |
| The etymology of <u>ofgifan</u> .....                                                                                                | 246  |
| <u>Forsacan</u> .....                                                                                                                | 246  |
| <u>Faestan</u> - line 1906 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                   | 247  |
| <u>ƿunian</u> - line 1906 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                    | 247  |
| <u>Getwaefan</u> - line 1908 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                 | 248  |
| <u>Faran</u> - line 1908 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                     | 248  |
| Veneration of the Anglo-Saxon poet for<br>the sea; not a myth.....                                                                   | 249  |
| <u>Flēotan</u> - line 1909 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                   | 251  |
| <u>Geþrīngan</u> and <u>standan</u> - lines 1912-13 of<br><u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                       | 253  |
| Contextual relation of <u>geþrang</u> .....                                                                                          | 254  |
| The verbal adjective <u>lyftgeswenced</u> , the<br>noun <u>lyft</u> , and the verb <u>swencan</u>                                    | 256  |
| The etymology of <u>swencan</u> .....                                                                                                | 257  |
| The exegesis of Anglo-Saxon excerpts of<br>poetry not a good thing.....                                                              | 259  |

## CONTENTS

xv

## CHAPTER

PAGE

V. THE VERB IN BEOWULF

|                                                                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <u>The Whale</u> : lines 44-47.....                                               | 260 |
| <u>The verb beoēnian</u> .....                                                    | 260 |
| <u>The etymology of beoēnian</u> .....                                            | 260 |
| <u>Heolophelme bepeaht</u> in line 45 of <u>The Whale</u>                         | 261 |
| <u>The verb secan</u> in line 45 of <u>The Whale</u> ....                         | 262 |
| <u>Action words in The Phoenix</u> .....                                          | 264 |
| <u>Lixan</u> - line 33 of <u>The Phoenix</u> .....                                | 264 |
| <u>Dreosan</u> - line 34 of <u>The Phoenix</u> .....                              | 265 |
| <u>Standan</u> - line 36 of <u>The Phoenix</u> .....                              | 265 |
| <u>Bibeodan</u> - line 36 of <u>The Phoenix</u> .....                             | 266 |
| <u>Brosnian</u> - line 38 of <u>The Phoenix</u> .....                             | 266 |
| <u>Gehangian</u> - line 38 of <u>The Phoenix</u> .....                            | 267 |
| <u>Onspringan</u> - line 63 of <u>The Phoenix</u> .....                           | 267 |
| <u>Leccan</u> - line 64 of <u>The Phoenix</u> .....                               | 267 |
| <u>Brecan</u> - line 67 of <u>The Phoenix</u> .....                               | 267 |
| <u>Gelaedan</u> - line 244 of <u>The Phoenix</u> .....                            | 268 |
| <u>Deccan</u> - line 249 of <u>The Phoenix</u> .....                              | 268 |
| <u>Christ</u> : lines 850-64, a passage full of<br>well-known allusions.....      | 269 |
| <u>Liðan</u> - line 851 of <u>Christ</u> .....                                    | 269 |
| <u>Lacan</u> - line 854 of <u>Christ</u> .....                                    | 270 |
| <u>Geliðan</u> - line 857 of <u>Christ</u> .....                                  | 270 |
| <u>Oncnawan</u> - line 861 of <u>Christ</u> .....                                 | 270 |
| <u>Variety of meanings applied to Anglo-Saxon<br/>words</u> .....                 | 272 |
| <u>Anglo-Saxon poet's art difficult</u> .....                                     | 272 |
| <u>Struggle facing the Anglo-Saxon student</u> ...                                | 272 |
| <u>Anglo-Saxon vocabulary not poor</u> .....                                      | 272 |
| <u>The verb scacan or sceacan</u> .....                                           | 273 |
| <u>Scacan occurs eight times in Beowulf</u> .....                                 | 273 |
| <u>Sigan</u> - line 1251 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                  | 275 |
| <u>Sigon þā tō slāepe</u> - line 1251 of <u>Beowulf</u> .                         | 276 |
| <u>A word connected etymologically to two<br/>verbs having the same root</u> .... | 277 |
| <u>Blawan and blowan</u> .....                                                    | 277 |
| <u>Gesecean</u> - line 692 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                | 278 |
| <u>Forniman</u> - line 695 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                | 278 |
| <u>Angyldan</u> - line 1251 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                               | 278 |
| <u>Swingan</u> - line 2264 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                | 279 |
| <u>Dual capacity of swingan: denotation and<br/>connotation</u> .....             | 279 |
| <u>Bitan</u> - a colourful verb in line 1523 of<br><u>Beowulf</u> .....           | 279 |
| <u>Secan or secean</u> - line 2820 of <u>Beowulf</u> ....                         | 280 |

## CONTENTS

xvi

| CHAPTER                                                                                                                                                                                       | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| V. THE VERB IN <u>BEOWULF</u>                                                                                                                                                                 |      |
| <u>Oflaetan</u> - line 1183 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                                                                           | 280  |
| <u>Geferian</u> - line 2844 of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                                                                           | 280  |
| A wide selection of meanings found in the<br>verb <u>scriðan</u> .....                                                                                                                        | 280  |
| <u>Hātan</u> used thirty times in <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                                                                        | 282  |
| <u>Gehātan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                          | 282  |
| <u>Þencan</u> occurs eleven times in <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                                                                     | 282  |
| <u>Slean</u> and <u>geslean</u> .....                                                                                                                                                         | 282  |
| <u>Unan</u> and <u>geunnan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                          | 283  |
| <u>Wendan</u> and <u>windan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                         | 283  |
| <u>Gewendan</u> and <u>gewindan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                     | 283  |
| <u>Cyðan</u> and <u>gecyðan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                         | 283  |
| Other interesting verbs.....                                                                                                                                                                  | 283  |
| <u>Nēosan</u> is used twelve times in <u>Beowulf</u> ....                                                                                                                                     | 283  |
| <u>Hyðan</u> and <u>gehyðan</u> in lines 2766 and 3059<br>of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                                                                                             | 284  |
| <u>Geweorþan</u> ; an impersonal verb.....                                                                                                                                                    | 284  |
| <u>Drifan</u> applied to ships at sea is used<br>transitively and intransitively                                                                                                              | 285  |
| Other verbs related to the sea in <u>Beowulf</u><br>are; <u>beran</u> , line 48; <u>aetberan</u> ,<br>line 519; <u>weallan</u> , lines 515<br>and 2599; and <u>winnan</u> , line<br>1132..... | 285  |
| <u>Rīdan</u> is another verb applied to the sea<br>with various meanings, as in<br>lines 1893, 1883, of <u>Beowulf</u> ..                                                                     | 285  |
| <u>Rīdan</u> and six important substantive com-<br>pounds related to the sea.....                                                                                                             | 285  |
| <u>Brimrād</u> , <u>hronrād</u> , <u>hwēolrād</u> , <u>seglrād</u> ,<br><u>streamrād</u> , <u>swonrād</u> , <u>wigrād</u> ....                                                                | 286  |
| Latin equivalents of <u>rīdan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                       | 286  |
| <u>Cringan</u> and <u>gecringan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                     | 287  |
| <u>Gewitan</u> , <u>hweorfan</u> , and <u>ofgyfan</u> .....                                                                                                                                   | 287  |
| <u>Flet ofgeafon</u> - line 61 of <u>The Wanderer</u> ...                                                                                                                                     | 287  |
| <u>Sworcan</u> : a colourful verb with many ap-<br>plications.....                                                                                                                            | 287  |
| <u>Folgian</u> : a verb originating from the<br><u>comitatus</u> spirit.....                                                                                                                  | 288  |
| Verbs originating from Christianity.....                                                                                                                                                      | 288  |
| <u>Halgian</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                          | 288  |
| <u>Syngian</u> and <u>gesyngian</u> .....                                                                                                                                                     | 289  |
| <u>Tweogan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                          | 289  |
| <u>Onscunian</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                        | 289  |

## CONTENTS

xvii

## CHAPTER

PAGE

V. THE VERB IN BEOWULF

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <u>Forlaedan</u> , <u>forlaeran</u> , <u>fortyhtan</u> , <u>spanan</u> ,<br><u>scyccan</u> , and <u>beswican</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 289 |
| <u>Treowan</u> and <u>getreowan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 290 |
| <u>Gecyrnan</u> and <u>acyrran</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 290 |
| <u>Deowan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 290 |
| <u>Onsecgan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 290 |
| <u>Biddan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 290 |
| <u>Cleopian</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 290 |
| <u>Halsian</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 290 |
| <u>Cigan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 290 |
| <u>Andettan</u> ; a compound of <u>ond</u> and <u>hatan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 290 |
| <u>Aerendian</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 290 |
| <u>Gegyrnan</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 290 |
| Other Anglo-Saxon verbs of worship: <u>herian</u> ,<br><u>weorðian</u> , <u>wuldrian</u> , <u>maersian</u> ,<br><u>bletsian</u> and <u>gebletsian</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 291 |
| Verbs derived from Christianity but not<br>directly connected with it....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 291 |
| <u>Regolian</u> .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 291 |
| <u>Tieman</u> used to express to categories of<br>meanings.....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 292 |
| CONCLUSION.....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 295 |
| Original plan of the thesis.....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 295 |
| Material left out: treatment of the<br>metaphor, epithets, the ken-<br>ning, compounds, rhetorical<br>understatements or litotes,<br>the antithesis, episodes or<br>digressions, the expression<br>of purpose, the personifica-<br>tion, the anticipation, the<br>contrast, the parallel, re-<br>petitions, the dialectical<br>form, the formula, the ap-<br>positive, the pattern, the<br>parenthetic exclamation,<br>Biblical allusions, the riddle,<br>the proverb, gnomic passages,<br>the conceit, the irony, the<br>theme, the runes, the apo-<br>siopesis, the variation, and<br>the direct discourse..... | 296 |

## CONTENTS

xviii

## CHAPTER

PAGE

## CONCLUSION

|                                                                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Other material left out includes a chapter on the heroic epic nature of <u>Beowulf</u> ..... | 303 |
| The elegiac mood in Anglo-Saxon literature.....                                              | 304 |
| Studies and research in the area of diction of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                          | 305 |
| Certain Beowulfian theses on the diction of <u>Beowulf</u> .....                             | 306 |
| The problem of translating <u>Beowulf</u> .....                                              | 307 |
| The understanding of action words in <u>Beowulf</u> is dependent upon other knowledge.....   | 308 |
| The verb in <u>Beowulf</u> ; the foundation of the poetic diction of the poem....            | 308 |
| The verb acquires importance from contextual elements.....                                   | 308 |
| Views expressed reinforced by Brodeur's statement about the verb in <u>Beowulf</u> .....     | 309 |
| The poet of <u>Beowulf</u> used carefully chosen verbs.....                                  | 309 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY.....                                                                            | 310 |

## ABSTRACT

ABBREVIATIONS

comp. : compiler  
ed. : editor  
N.S. : New Series  
rev. : revisor  
trans. : translator  
selec. : selector

CE : College English.

EA : Études Anglaises.

E and S : Essays and Studies.

EETS : Early English Text Society.

ES : English Studies.

JEGP : Journal of English and Germanic  
Philology.

MLN : Modern Language Notes.

MLR : Modern Language Review.

MLQ : Modern Language Quarterly.

MP : Modern Philology.

NQ : Notes and Queries.

PMLA : Publications of the Modern Lan-  
guage Association of America.

RES : Review of English Studies.

PQ : Philological Quarterly.

SAQ : The South Atlantic Quarterly.

## INTRODUCTION

To discover what particular contribution the poet has made in a poem to one of the elements of the poetic diction, to determine the nature of it, to show how and to what extent it was achieved, to establish the rôle it plays, to indicate what relation it has to other elements of the diction, to analyze this in terms of the effects on the work, is a demanding task. The endeavour, however, becomes more exacting when the literary piece involved is one of unusual magnitude; it becomes even more challenging, to the linguist in particular, when the poem is the epic Beowulf written by an outstanding poet in a tongue that has lost continuity with modern times.

The fact that Beowulf was composed in the intricate alliterative verse of Anglo-Saxon poetry, in a poetic language far removed from that of prose, exhibiting a poetic technique, conventions, a vocabulary, shades of meanings now archaic to modern criticism, appearing in the golden age of heroic civilization which reflects manners and ideals so remote from contemporary customs as to remain misunderstood by the great majority of readers, the understanding endures for a lifetime.

## INTRODUCTION

W. W. Lawrence took ten years to write Beowulf and Epic Tradition after teaching the poem, investigating it, and writing about it for twenty-five years; Arthur G. Brodeur gave birth to The Art of Beowulf after forty years of study of the poem; and Fr. Klaeber worked all his life at his edition of Beowulf.

Thus, in a paper of the nature of this thesis, the Beowulfian novice is limited in scope and must be satisfied, at best, to open a small breach in the subject, examine one segment, focus his attention on one aspect, single out one ~~feature~~ of it, and channel the efforts of his research towards some contribution, no matter how small, to the overall scholarship in the field. In so doing, the understanding of the art of poetry in a period of Anglo-Saxon England that has had no parallel in the history of the British Isles may be made easier.

The present study makes no attempt to arrive at any speculation, or at the discovery of some kind of mathematical device permitting the working of a formula for the counting of instances. It keeps away from statistics as such; this has been done by others more inclined and gifted for that sort of approach and research. It is not aimed at discovering something outstanding, this belongs to the realm of Beowulfian experts; far rather, it takes a straightforward look at a poem, the epic Beowulf, as a poem, to show

## INTRODUCTION

the importance of the meaning and understanding of what has been noticed in the course of reading and studying Beowulf.

The emphasis of this survey will be in particular on the contribution made by the verb to the poetic diction of Beowulf. The verb will be investigated, specimens will be selected for special analysis, and examples will be examined to illustrate certain passages in the poem which in the past have been weakly translated or mistranslated by men insufficiently acquainted or inadequately knowledgeable in the Anglo-Saxon language, or not taking sufficiently into account the etymological complexities of the language, lacking in understanding of the connotative, thematic, contextual overtones of their meanings and the moods they convey and, as a result, by-passing, overlooking and losing the subtleties of the Beowulfian verb and its contribution to the enrichment of the diction of the poem.

The poetic function of the verb in Beowulf can best be understood through a complete knowledge of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique; this will be discussed in Chapter I. The importance of Anglo-Saxon semantics and the influence of Latin Christianity on Anglo-Saxon literature will be considered and commented upon in Chapter II, as their affinity to the verb is of primary importance.

## INTRODUCTION

Mood and nature in Anglo-Saxon poetry and the spirit of the age will be examined in Chapter III for their effect on Anglo-Saxon literature. Some Anglo-Saxon stylistic characteristics will be investigated in Chapter IV. A detailed analysis of verbs in Beowulf, including an examination of verbs in other poems, will be made in Chapter V, together with an elucidation of general verbal features common to Anglo-Saxon poetry. Chapter V will be followed by a general conclusion.

## CHAPTER I

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

## 1. Definition of Literature, Beauty, Poetic Diction, Poetic Technique, Style, Poetic Convention, and Tradition.

The particular concern of this thesis lies in an investigation of the contribution by the poet of Beowulf to a certain aspect of the poetic diction of the poem. It has long been recognized that the poetic technique of an age, its style, conventions, attitude towards nature, and the zeitgeist or spirit of the age - social, religious, and heroic, exercise a marked influence on writers of the time and affect their choice of poetic diction. It follows that a study of the poetic diction of Beowulf must begin by an enquiry into the exigencies of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique, their coeval meaning and interpretation, the Anglo-Saxon language, its meaning and outside influences which were brought to bear upon it, and the period in which the poem was produced, that is, Anglo-Saxon England. Before an attempt can be made at showing what that contribution is, poetic diction and related terms must be defined.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

5

Poetic diction per se belongs to the field of literature. For the purpose of the poem under study, Beowulf, literature is defined as "a new thing of beauty made of words which expresses a man's significant reaction to reality."<sup>1</sup> Literature belongs to the field of fine arts; thus, Beowulf is a work of art or a fine artifact. Its form is the artistic ideal or the exemplary cause of the poem, and existed in the artist's conscious substance before it was externalized.<sup>2</sup>

Beowulf has beauty, that is, it has "the brightness and splendour of a form unmistakably discernible," or shining forth, "in the proportioned parts of a matter."<sup>3</sup> By matter is meant the words used in the writing of Beowulf. These are referred to as the diction, that is, "the choice of words in a literary work,"<sup>4</sup> or as Aristotle described it, "language embellished."<sup>5</sup> An apt selection of words is

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul J. Marcotte, The God Within (Ottawa, 1964), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Maritain, Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry (Washington, 1960), pp. 111-45.  
Marcotte, God Within, pp. 25-44, and 63-72.

<sup>3</sup> Marcotte, God Within, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz, A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms (New York, 1964), p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> S. H. Butcher, trans. Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art (New York, 1951), p. 23.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

6

in either prose or poetry, but a marked difference exists between the two. "When the meaning is expressed by means of the meanings of words we have prose. When the meaning is expressed by means of this plus words' embellishments - rhythm, 'harmony' and song - we have verse,"<sup>6</sup> in other words, the music of language, that is, the sound of words and metrical rhythm necessary to enable the writer to externalize his poetic intuition. When this takes place, the language employed is called poetic diction.

Poetic diction, "the medium of imitation"<sup>7</sup> in poetry, is the use of imaginative and expressive words, appropriate phrases, synonyms,<sup>8</sup> unusual words, figures of language,<sup>9</sup> archaisms, foreign words, allied to rhythm, alliteration, metrical devices, in short, the language and the order and pattern in which it is used to achieve a desired effect,<sup>10</sup> that is, the effect caused or demanded by

---

<sup>6</sup> Paul J. Marcotte, Notes Towards an Understanding of Aristotle's Poetics (Ottawa, 1963), p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> Butcher, Aristotle's Poetics, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Bernard Groom, The Diction of Poetry from Spenser to Bridges (Toronto, 1955), p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Beckson and Ganz, Reader's Guide, p. 159.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph T. Shipley, Dictionary of World Literature (Paterson, 1962), p. 99.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

7

the artistic ideal when externalized.

The Oxford Dictionary defines technique as the manner of artistic execution in relation to details, or the mechanical or formal part of an art, especially of the fine arts, or an artistic skill or ability.<sup>11</sup> In the light of this definition and of the meaning of poetic diction given in the paragraph immediately preceding, poetic technique is defined as the harmonious combination of a poet's efficient manner, process, or knowledge of word selection in the causing or rendering of poetic diction, and the skill of his manipulation of word order, the ability of handling his sentences, his choice of felicitous rhetorical devices, his adroit use of variety and poetic license, and his skilful preference for a suitable line and stanza form. One must remember that a poet's approach is guided by the genre of writing to which his poem belongs; in the case of the composition of Beowulf, to the epic and its narrative character.

What is style? Like so many other terms, at the present time, style has been put to serve a variety of meanings, each definition being dictated by the writer's

---

<sup>11</sup> James A. H. Murray, ed. A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles (Oxford, 1888), Vol. IX, Part II, p. 136.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

8

background and inclination. Several current books on literary terms, while adopting different approaches in their attempts to arrive at a definition of the term, agree on one point - style is a mode of expression.<sup>12</sup> This definition is accepted for the purpose of this study. The Oxford Dictionary defines style, the manner of expression characteristic of a particular writer, or a writer's mode of expression;<sup>13</sup> the Winston Dictionary calls it, a characteristic manner of writing, a suitable or appropriate diction, or a mode of expression or execution in any art;<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature, revised and enlarged by C. Hugh Holman (New York, 1960), p. 474, define style: "the arrangement of words in a manner which at once best expresses the individuality of the author and the idea and intent in his mind... adaptation of one's language to one's ideas ... a combination of two elements: the idea to be expressed, and the individuality of the author...." Shipley's Dictionary of World Literature: "Critics of the Platonic school regard style as a quality that some expression has but that other expression has not; critics of the Aristotelian school regard it as a quality inherent in all expression," p. 397. Beckson and Ganz, A Reader's Guide: "...style is an immutable quality found in some writers and lacking in others ... the perfect matching of the means with their end ... verbal pattern that precisely expresses the meaning he wishes to convey.... The total of the qualities which characterize an individual writer's style ... constitutes his literary personality and reflects his psychological one," p. 204.

<sup>13</sup> Murray, A New English Dictionary, Vol. IX, Part I, pp. 1205-07.

<sup>14</sup> William Dodge Lewis, Henry Seidel Canby, and Thomas Kite Brown, Jr., eds., The Executive's Desk Book (Chicago, 1937), p. 986.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

9

Dean Swift described it "proper words in proper places, make the true definition of a style;"<sup>15</sup> and Samuel Johnson, "manner of writing with regard to language."<sup>16</sup> Looking back at the definition of poetic technique it is noticed that when the elements contained in it are put together they make up what is called style. Consequently, for the purpose of this paper, poetic technique and style will be used interchangeably as synonyms.

Convention in literature is a device used by the writer to enable him to externalize his artistic ideal. For the purpose of this study, it is defined as a peculiarity of idea or theme and treatment of it, of language including style, or word pattern, of figures of speech, of genre, of verse and stanza structure, of imagery, and of treatment of nature, character, and stage setting. A literary convention originates in a particular period by reason of its repeated use by the writers of the time, and its general recognition and acceptance by reader or audience as the means of expression of those writers. A set of literary conventions characteristic of the writers of a period is called tradition.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed. (London, 1755), p. 25M, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 25M, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Thrall, Hibbard, and Holman, Handbook to Literature, pp. 109, and 487.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

10

## 2. Anglo-Saxon Style and Diction.

Words evolve losing or changing their meaning with time, or adopting new ones. When literature is involved, particularly poetry, the logical sense, that is, the exact meaning intended by the writer and conveyed through the words used, may be even more difficult to grasp if the work was written centuries ago. As the Elizabethan student is well aware of it, the reader will probably welcome copious notes and a detailed glossary to facilitate his understanding and interpretation of the work he reads. The case of the Oxford professor of the Lusiadas of Camões arriving in Lisbon and not being able to make himself understood in the Portuguese classical language of the sixteenth century is a case in point.

The students of English and of Portuguese work with living languages, and their difficulties are few in comparison to those waylaying the student of Anglo-Saxon, a language that has had no continuity with the present. Throughout the ages Greek and Latin were given foremost places on the curriculum of English Universities and schools while Anglo-Saxon was not. In the last fifty years only has an interest in Anglo-Saxon, as a language, been revived, and since, it has gained in importance. Writing on the situa-

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

11

tion of Anglo-Saxon poetry in the 1920's, Kemp Malone was well aware of the status quo. He stated:

In looking over the field of OE poetry the first and strongest impression that one gets is negative: so little has been done ... we have no concordance and no dictionary of OE poetry; indeed, the only published concordance of an individual OE monument is Cook's concordance to Beowulf. In the absence of fundamental reference works such as these, our labors are terribly handicapped; any superstructure we build up necessarily rests on insecure foundations. I am glad to announce that Messrs. Howard and Ehrensperger are now at work on a full concordance of OE poetry. This enterprise ... ought to have the support of all lovers of OE studies. As for the dictionary, this task must wait until the concordance is made, for a concordance is, in the nature of the case, a necessary preliminary to the preparation of a sound dictionary of OE poetry.<sup>18</sup>

Malone went on to mention what had been done in the fields of Anglo-Saxon poetic style, folklore elements of the heroic tradition, and historical studies. His concluding remarks were more encouraging: "I should like to lay stress on the continued vitality of OE poetry, as reflected in the studies of many a scholar of today. At no time since OE

---

<sup>18</sup> Kemp Malone, "Studies in Old English Poetry, 1920-1930," Philological Quarterly, X (1931), p. 401.

scholarship began has our oldest poetry been so widely read and so fruitfully pondered."<sup>19</sup>

Since that time, scholars have turned to Anglo-Saxon producing a few valuable works and scores of articles which have contributed to an understanding and an appreciation of Anglo-Saxon writings, and have helped to establish the importance of a literature reflecting a period of great intellectual development. But the relatively few Anglo-Saxon works extant, while apparently representative of the quality of writings produced in that period, are not compatible with the number of records once available; many more existed.

Remembering the destruction carried out by the Vikings in the eighth and ninth centuries at Lindisfarne, Jarrow, Monkwearmouth and York, the plundering of more than six hundred monasteries in the sixteenth century, and the vandalism perpetrated in the period from 1536 to 1550 following the Dissolution by Henry VIII, a simple reckoning will show that many manuscripts were lost, while others were sold to do menial service to grocers and soapsellers, or cut in strips for book-binding. The contents of the rich stores of those treasure-houses of learning were in

---

<sup>19</sup> Malone, "Studies in Old English Poetry," p. 403.

great part destroyed. Even Bishop John Bale, who had been an ardent supporter of the suppression of the monasteries, was appalled at the wilful and ruthless destruction and could not repress his indignation to the King's Antiquary, John Leland, in his preface to "New Year's Gift to Henry VIII," in 1549.<sup>20</sup> No wonder, then, that Anglo-Saxon extant writings form but a small corpus of literary works. This had the unfortunate effect of limiting the range of Anglo-Saxon studies to a comparatively few works, and taking into account linguistic, semantic, and the other difficulties outlined earlier, Anglo-Saxon has become a highly difficult,

---

<sup>20</sup> Clarence Griffin Child, Beowulf and the Finnes-Burgh Fragment (Boston, 1904), quotes Bishop John Bale as saying: "Never had we been offended for the loss of our libraries, being so many in number and in so desolate places for the more part, if the chief monuments and most notable works of our excellent writers had been reserved. If there had been in every shire of England but one solemn library to the preservation of those noble works and preferment of good learnings in our posterity, it had been yet somewhat. But, to destroy all without consideration, a great number of them which purchased those superstitious mansions reserved of those library books ... some to scour their candlesticks, and some to rub their boots. Some they sold to the grocers and soap-sellers, and some over sea to the bookbinders, not in small number, but at times whole ships full, to the wondering of the foreign nations. Yea, the universities of this realm are not all clear in this detestable fact. But cursed is ... (he) which seeketh to be fed with such ungodly gains and so deeply shameth his natural country. I know a merchant ... that bought the contents of two noble libraries for forty shillings' price, .... This stuff hath he occupied in the stead of gray paper ... more than ... these ten years, and ... hath ... enough for as many years to come.... neither the Britains under the Romans and Saxons, nor yet the English people under the Danes and Normans, had ever such damage of their learned monuments as we have seen in our time," pp. iii-iv.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

14

restricted, and specialized field.

H. C. Wyld put the finger on the problem in an important and valuable article on the diction of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Writing about the wealth and variety of words and phrases belonging to the traditional stock-in-trade of the Anglo-Saxon poet, that is, a vocabulary, poetic diction and technique capable of developing genuine emotion and at the same time producing delight in the mind of the listener or reader, he expresses the opinion that it is difficult today

to reach back through the centuries and grasp the precise shade of meaning which each of these apparent synonyms once expressed, to recapture the mood or emotion which they called up, or to be fully alive to the grace or glamour with which, for our forefathers, this or that word may have lighted up a line. It may be possible in many cases to discover the remote origin of words by the light of etymology. But even when this is reliable for one particular purpose, it may be but a misleading guide to the poetical and emotional value of a word in the mouth of a poet.<sup>21</sup>

The same can be said of many literary works which do not go back to Anglo-Saxon days and are much closer to the twentieth century. In the light of the last sentence quoted above, it is unnecessary to create and to multiply difficulties where they do not exist. That it is difficult

---

<sup>21</sup> Henry Cecil Wyld, "Diction and Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association, XI (1925), p. 55.

to know for certain what Anglo-Saxon poets meant in particular passages of certain poems is normal; what they expressed in much of what they wrote is known. Wyld's statement, therefore, needs not be taken at its face value. Wyld's findings, like those of other scholars, throw considerable light on certain aspects of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction, and help to explain and understand what Anglo-Saxon poets wrote. As a matter of fact, Wyld's elucidation of much Anglo-Saxon material prompted him to observe that:

we can only go about our business of interpretation patiently and humbly, and hope to learn, by constant and sympathetic study of our old poetry, gradually to group poetic associations round these ancient words till they become for us the symbols of particular moods and emotions.<sup>22</sup>

Since Wyld's article appeared in 1925, extensive ground has been covered through specialized research, and giant strides made in every aspect of Anglo-Saxon studies. These developments represent valuable contributions of great benefit to the students genuinely interested in the study of Anglo-Saxon, and are "the gateway to the appreciation of an extensive and interesting literature, ... to

---

<sup>22</sup> Wyld, "Diction and Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry" p. 57.

the correct interpretation of important historical sources, and to an understanding of the later history of the English language."<sup>23</sup> Any one considering to make objective judgments on any feature of Anglo-Saxon letters should take cognizance of what has been achieved in the field. Failure to be guided by these logical achievements will lead the critic astray. A case in point is Paull F. Baum's essay on the poet of Beowulf.<sup>24</sup>

In his article, of the calibre of those written forty years ago when the true value of Anglo-Saxon letters was still unknown, Baum brings back in a few pages the outdated, long refuted, and no longer valid opinions of the German romantic school of the last century. In addition, he makes literature scientific writing and the result of a mathematical process when he states, "knowing so little about whom the poet addressed, we cannot easily estimate the responses he expected.... It would help a good deal if we knew whether he wrote to please himself, to satisfy an inner need, or for recitation to a listening audience capable of following with pleasure and understanding...."<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, Changing Currents in Anglo-Saxon Studies, Cambridge University Press Monograph (Cambridge, 1958), p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Paull F. Baum, "The Beowulf Poet," Philological Quarterly, XXXIX (1960), pp. 389-99.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 354.

In his opinion, Anglo-Saxon scholars are unable to evaluate the style of Beowulf, which he terms "cryptic" and "intricate;" he considers the poem to be existing in a "literary vacuum without historical perspective," the author to be unknown, and the manuscript to have little to offer.<sup>26</sup>

The questions raised by Baum and the obstacles he has encountered have been answered and clarified, in most cases, more than adequately. The views that he expresses that the poet of Beowulf "shows some knowledge of the Old Testament ... but none of the New," that the "Sermon on the Mount" and St. Paul's Epistles "have not touched him," that "the doctrines and dogmas of the Church - sin and redemption, revelation, a future life - have left little mark on his poem; at least he found no place for them," that no miracles are performed "for obvious reasons,"<sup>27</sup> are charges which have no foundation in reality. Baum's appraisal of Beowulf indicates that he has not understood the poem, that is, he has not grasped the logical sense. It should be remembered that a poet does not know what to write until he has written it, and his choice of what he writes is dictated by the nature and exigencies of his poetic intuition which, in

---

<sup>26</sup> Baum, "The Beowulf Poet," p. 354.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 357-58, footnote.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

18

literature, is externalized through the medium of words and by means of the poet's craft.

It is inadmissible that a critic should censure a poet for what he has not written, since an essential part of a critic's work is to explain what the poet has written and why he wrote as he did. A case in point, the reason why the poet of Beowulf did not go beyond the Old Testament in his allusions is found in the meaning of eald riht - old law, of line 2331 of Beowulf. The moral laws of the Old Testament were binding on Christians of Anglo-Saxon times, as they are today, and were equated with the natural law, which was prior to the promulgation of the Mosaic law.<sup>28</sup> It follows that Cain, to whom Grendel was brought into resemblance, came under the natural law, and sinned against the same law.

This applies also to the fallen angels. Adam and Eve, Abraham and Abel were saved by faith; Cain could have been also. As figures of pre-Mosaic Old Testament they were subordinated to pagan or natural law. They were not Jews, so to speak, but the ancestors of mankind in the eyes of

---

<sup>28</sup> Morton W. Bloomfield, "Patristics and Old English Literature: Notes on Some Poems," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, ed. Stanley B. Greenfield (University of Oregon, 1963), pp. 39-40.

Jews and Christians alike and, as such, they opened the doors of salvation to the ancestors of the pagan Germanic and Celtic peoples. For indeed, if righteous souls were

saved before Sinai, then good pagans like Beowulf could be saved. If bad men were damned before Sinai, then Grendel and his ilk could be damned without inconsistency.

All this is argued ... by Origen in his commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, especially on Chapter VII in discussing passages like 'Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law' (verse 7) and 'For without the law sin was dead' (verse 8). Origen points out that there was sin in the period from Adam to Moses and that Paul was not referring merely to the Old Law but to natural law in Chapters IV and VII.<sup>29</sup>

This explains why the poet of Beowulf could avail himself of Patristic thinking and blend pagan and Old Testament elements. Confining his figures of the Old Testament to pre-Mosaic personages there was nothing wrong in his procedure. Ealde riht refers not to the Old Testament, that is, to the Sinaitic Law, but to the natural law which was in the hearts of the pagans, "including the pre-Mosaic 'pagan' of the Old Testament." This should clarify and dispose of the problem of the blending of biblical and pagan elements in the poem, and answer Baum's accusation adequately.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Bloomfield, "Patristics and Old English Literature," pp. 40-41.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

By the same token it explains why the poet left out any reference to the New Testament and to the Church. Finally, several of the answers to Baum's difficulties are given in Brodeur's gigantic work, The Art of Beowulf, and are summed up in one general appraisal of Beowulf:

the work of a great artist, a work carefully planned and organized, excellent in form and structure, and composed with a sense of style unique in the poet's age ... composed in writing, and the author as trained in the art of the scop and educated as a clerk. In him the best of pagan antiquity and of the Christian culture of his time had fused; and we have in his work an achievement unequalled in English poetry before Chaucer.<sup>31</sup>

The discovery in 1939 of a royal treasure in the remains of an Anglo-Saxon ship burial in East Anglia on the Sutton Hoo estate near Woodbridge in Suffolk, England, is perhaps the most convincing answer to all the many questions raised by honest doubters about the origin, nature, and quality of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and the civilization that produced it. The tremendous importance of Sutton Hoo to Beowulf will be mentioned later. It will suffice to point here, that the period of Sutton Hoo, about 650-670, was a time of expanding Anglo-Saxon intellectuality, of mounting

---

<sup>31</sup> Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, The Art of Beowulf (Berkeley, 1960), p. viii.

interest in learning with the arrival in England in 668 of the great scholars Theodor of Tarsus and Hadrian, and of wide activities in the field of art collecting by Benedict Biscop who gave rigid instructions on his death bed in 690 that the libraries he had assembled should be kept diligently, and not be spoiled by neglect or broken up and dispersed.<sup>32</sup>

The founding of schools at Canterbury and York, institutions which became educational centers for Western Europe, were followed by others at Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, Hexham, Glastonbury, Bradford-on-Avon, Sherborne, Nursling, Frome and Malmesbury, and became among the best of the Continent.<sup>33</sup> Later, these centers of learning produced men of letters of the calibre of Aldhelm, Cuthbert, Bede, Egbert, Boniface, Mildred of Worcester, Daniel of Winchester, Torhtelm of Leicester, Pecthelm of Whithorn, Alcuin, and others. Their work testifies to the widespread and high degree of intellectual attainment achieved in Anglo-Saxon England of the eighth century.<sup>34</sup>

The way of life of these men is a tribute to the

---

<sup>32</sup> Peter Hunter Blair, An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 313-14.

<sup>33</sup> H. V. Routh, God, Man, And Epic Poetry (Cambridge, 1927), Vol. II, p. 84.

Blair, Anglo-Saxon England, p. 144.

Anglo-Saxon civilization which produced it, to East Anglia which saw it flourished, and to Sutton Hoo which yielded the richest treasure find of Anglo-Saxon England. This unmatched civilization proves undeniably the "richness of culture and range of contacts the Anglo-Saxons maintained "with northern and southern Europe and the Mediterranean."<sup>35</sup> It can be stated also that it was a civilization that saw Anglo-Saxon poetic style take roots and culminate in Beowulf in the following century. In the words of Bessinger:

it can be argued that in some respects Old English poetic style at the time of Sutton Hoo and for a while afterwards was marvelously inventive, ingeniously original and experimental, and that it looked forward, not backward, to a development.... After all, the period of Sutton Hoo was Caedmon's period; the discovery that one could sing Christian songs in alliterating stress-metres must have seemed to many, as it did to Caedmon and Bede, marvellous if not miraculous. ... the period which could foster such a successful experiment was not intellectually dull.<sup>36</sup>

---

R. H. Hodgkin, A History of the Anglo-Saxons (Oxford, 1959), Vol. I, pp. 323-26.

<sup>34</sup> Blair, Anglo-Saxon England, pp. 142-47.

<sup>35</sup> J. B. Bessinger, "Beowulf and the Harp at Sutton Hoo," University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol. XXVII (1957-58), p. 151.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 152.

## 3. The Oral-Formulaic Theory.

The theory advanced by Francis P. Magoun, Jr., that the language of Beowulf is formulaic, that is, that the writer or singer of this epic poem composed his work orally from language patterns, such as phrases, expressions and words already in existence and used by scopos before him,<sup>37</sup> must be rejected. To endorse Magoun's views would be tantamount to making the writer of Beowulf an unlettered scop when, in fact, he was not, and would defeat the purpose of this thesis. Far rather, the poet of Beowulf was a scholar and, as one critic puts it, Beowulf was composed or written pen in hand. It has been widely recognized that he had a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament, and was well versed in Patristic writings, Greek, and Latin classics. This view is endorsed by many outstanding Beowulfian scholars who have dealt with the diction of Beowulf and with some other aspects of the poem. To name a few are Fr. Klaeber,<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Francis P. Magoun, Jr., "Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry," Speculum, XLIII (July, 1953), 446-67. Earlier, in 1949, Magoun had stated that the poet of Beowulf had made use at random of epithetic compound names, not using "the terms significantly ... or ... very sensibly," pp. 20-24 of Philologia: The Malone Anniversary Studies (Baltimore, 1949).

<sup>38</sup> Fr. Klaeber, Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg, ed., 3rd ed. (Boston, 1950), pp. ix-lxviii. All references to lines in Beowulf quoted in this thesis are from Klaeber's unless indicated to the contrary.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

24

A. G. Brodeur,<sup>39</sup> W. J. Sedgefield,<sup>40</sup> R. W. Chambers,<sup>41</sup> C. L. Wrenn,<sup>42</sup> William W. Lawrence,<sup>43</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien,<sup>44</sup> Kemp Malone,<sup>45</sup> Dorothy Whitelock,<sup>46</sup> and Adrien Bonjour.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, The Art of Beowulf (Berkeley, 1960), pp. 1-87.

<sup>40</sup> W. J. Sedgefield, ed. Beowulf, 3rd ed. (Manchester, 1935), pp. ix-xxxv.

<sup>41</sup> R. W. Chambers, Man's Unconquerable Mind (London, 1939), pp. 53-87.

....., Beowulf an Introduction to the Study of the Poem with a Discussion of the Stories of Offa and Finn, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 98-128, 507-48.

<sup>42</sup> C. L. Wrenn, ed., Beowulf with the Finnesburg Fragment, revised and enlarged (London, 1958, pp. 36, 40-41, 61-67, 76, 80-84.

<sup>43</sup> William Witherle Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition (New York, 1963), pp. vii-xiv, 3-30, 34-35, 244-291. Bringing his sights to bear on the subject, Lawrence writes in the first paragraph of the introduction to his book, "we must agree to judge Beowulf, the first great poem in a vulgar tongue in the 'Gothick' period, not as the improvisation of an untutored minstrel, but as a well-considered work of art, composed according to strict rules by a well-trained poet," p. 3. It is interesting to note that this was written already in 1928 in the printing of the book.

<sup>44</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, "Beowulf the Monsters and the Critics," The Proceedings of the British Academy, XXII (London, 1936), pp. 245-95.

<sup>45</sup> Kemp Malone, "Beowulf," English Studies, XXIX (1948), pp. 161-72.

<sup>46</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, The Audience of Beowulf (Oxford, 1951), pp. 3, 4-5, 7, 9, 34-47, 64, 76-83, and 98-105. ...., Changing Currents, pp. 9-10.

<sup>47</sup> Adrien Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers 1940-1960 with Additional Comments (Faculté des Lettres Neuchâtel, 1962), pp. 147-49, and 151-89.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

25

More recently, the inaugural lecture delivered by Godfrid Storms in December 1957 at Nijmegen<sup>48</sup> was reviewed by Kemp Malone. The singer theory supported by Storms in his address was opposed by Malone in the review which he made of it. He stated:

Here Dr. Storms has gone sadly astray. The Beowulf poet was no minstrel, strumming a harp and composing verse as he strummed. He was a sophisticated literary artist, who gave careful thought to what he was doing and did not rest content until he had found the right word for what he had in mind. The use of traditional diction is one thing; improvisation is something else again. The two need not go together and in Beowulf they most emphatically do not.<sup>49</sup>

In his inaugural lecture as professor of English at the University of Durham, G. V. Smithers spoke of the greatness of the poem Beowulf as a masterpiece and the beginning of English literature. He observed that the

peculiar quality of Beowulf is a profuse splendour. The lavish scale, which accommodates leisurely episodes that may bear on but usually do not belong to ... its essential form; the

---

<sup>48</sup> Godfrid Storms, Compounded Names of Peoples in Beowulf (Utrecht-Nijmegen, 1957), pp. 22, and 5-8.

<sup>49</sup> Kemp Malone, "Review of Godfrid Storms' Inaugural Lecture," English Studies, A Journal of English Letters and Philology, XLI (1960), p. 5.

'circumambient' structure and the allusive style, designed to play on associations rather than to convey information; the elaboration of the settings; the richness of the texture, in which a mass of subsidiary strands are interwoven, and some of them easily missed - with the literary history of the story-pattern and of early Germanic heroic poem....<sup>50</sup>

This is certainly not the echo of an extempore work, that is, of an oral and improvised composition.

In his articles, Bonjour disproves and rejects the theory that the Beowulf poet was an unlettered singer, and his work, the result of oral-formulaic composition.<sup>51</sup> Bonjour's views stem from the very heart of his opponents' findings. His approach was an investigation of the heroic poetry of the Middle Ages carried out in the light of H. M. Chadwick's book on heroic poetry,<sup>52</sup> Sir Cecil's excellent work on the same topic,<sup>53</sup> that of J. Rychner's expounding

---

<sup>50</sup> G. M. Smithers, The Making of Beowulf (Durham, 1961), p. 23.

<sup>51</sup> Adrien Bonjour, "Comments: A Post-Script on Beowulf and the Singer Theory," "Poésie héroïque du moyen âge et critique littéraire," and "Comments: quelques considérations sur Beowulf et la théorie formulatoire," Twelve Beowulf Papers, pp. 147-49, 151-64, and 165-72.

<sup>52</sup> H. M. Chadwick, The Heroic Age (Cambridge, 1912).

<sup>53</sup> C. M. Bowra, Heroic Poetry, 2nd printing (London, 1961), pp. 30-31, 42-43, 246-47, and 253.

his findings on the art of epic writing of authors of chansons de geste and on mediaeval narrative verse-chronicles of heroic exploits,<sup>54</sup> Magoun's article,<sup>55</sup> and the survey made in Yugoslavia by Milman Parry and Albert Bates Lord.<sup>56</sup>

Bonjour points out that "J. Magoun ne cache pas que son article est essentiellement une tentative d'appliquer au domaine de la poésie anglo-saxonne les méthodes de Parry et de Lord."<sup>57</sup> Making use of Rychner's findings, Bonjour points to flaws in the views advanced in favour of the oral-formulaic theory. The jongleur, that is, the mediaeval entertainer, introduced his subject by way of a prologue in which the <sup>h</sup>anson was announced, and the merits of it praised, the didactic element in the prologue predominating always. The French epic Roland has no such prologue, nor have Anglo-Saxon poems.

---

<sup>54</sup> Jean Rychner, La Chanson de Geste, Essai sur l'Art épique des jongleurs (Genève, 1955), Société de publications romanes et françaises, LIII.

<sup>55</sup> Magoun, "Oral-Formulaic Character."

<sup>56</sup> This survey is represented by the Parry Collection of South-Slavic Texts comprising some 12,500 specimens of oral epic style called by Parry and Lord in Yugoslavia, between 1933 and 1935, mostly among unlettered Muslim singers. The collection is in the Harvard College Library, and the University Press of Harvard has already published part of the texts in the original with an English translation in Serbocroatian called Heroic Songs.

<sup>57</sup> Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 152: Magoun does not conceal the fact that his article is essentially an experiment or endeavour to apply the methods of Parry and Lord to the field of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

The fact that the oral song of the jongleur was meant for oral transmission is reflected, according to Rychner, in the poor type of manuscript of quality inferior to later ones, Beowulf for example. Bowra is of the opinion that "the handsome manuscript of Beowulf suggests that some rich man wished it to be preserved in his library."<sup>58</sup>

The chanson de geste, according to Rychner, lacks outline delineation; Bonjour calls it "absence de contours nets et précis."<sup>59</sup> This leads Rychner to the conclusion that it is

extrêmement difficile de croire à une composition orale de la Chanson de Roland; dans ce cas, à supposer qu'il y ait eu des chants épiques sur Roncevaux antérieurs à la chanson d'Oxford, leur mise par écrit a dû être très créatrice, coïncider, en fait, avec un acte de création poétique.<sup>60</sup>

According to Bonjour, the same applies to Beowulf, a poem

---

<sup>58</sup> Bowra, Heroic Poetry, p. 42.

<sup>59</sup> Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Tapers, p. 155: absence of clear and precise contours.

<sup>60</sup> Rychner, La Chanson de Geste, p. 36: it is extremely difficult to believe in an oral composition of the Chanson de Roland: if this is so, supposing that there had been epic songs about Roncevaux prior to the chanson of Oxford, their being put in writing must have been very creative, in fact, coincide with an act of poetic creation.

which is three hundred years earlier than Roland.<sup>61</sup> Rychner does not hesitate to show that Roland is unique from the point of view of unity and dramatic cohesion, whereas the chanson de geste proper contains episodes deprived of coherence, has parts of unequal lengths thrown and held together without logical sequence and balance, and contains contradictions evident in the light of written examples. Because of the oral nature of the songs, the incoherence was possible and was allowed, the audience paying no attention to it.<sup>62</sup>

Rychner argues later that music was subordinated to the words in the chanson de geste, the music being more of the nature of an accompaniment than a song. Bonjour believes that it may have been **used very** effectively to mark a change of beat or tempo in the passage from one section to another. This could explain "l'authenticité des fameuses sections numérotées du manuscrit de Beowulf."<sup>63</sup>

Commenting on Rychner's treatment of motifs and

---

<sup>61</sup> Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Tapers, p. 155.

<sup>62</sup> Rychner, La Chanson de Geste, pp. 41-47.

<sup>63</sup> Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Tapers, p. 157: the authenticity of the famous numbered sections of the Beowulf manuscript.

formulas, a section in which he discusses Magoun's oral-formulaic theory, Bonjour lays stress on the fine character or feature of the improvised recitation or song. The chanson is not something put together haphazardly, but it is the result of tradition and style, of chosen formulas from a common stock without which oral heroic poets could not exist.<sup>64</sup>

Magoun and Rychner recall Parry's definition of a formula - a group of words employed regularly in the same metrical conditions to express a certain essential idea.<sup>65</sup> By way of illustration, Rychner sets up a list or table of the most popular motifs of the chanson de geste, and Bonjour elaborates on the formula with a compound, taken from Beowulf, expressing the idea king, the first element of the compound varying in accordance with the alliteration wanted:

|                        |   |                     |          |
|------------------------|---|---------------------|----------|
| <u>eorðcyninges</u>    | - | king of the land,   | l. 1155; |
| <u>heahcyninges</u>    | - | great king,         | l. 1039; |
| <u>peodcyninges</u>    | - | king of the people, | l. 2694; |
| <u>saecyninga</u>      | - | sea kings,          | l. 2382; |
| <u>wyruldcyning(a)</u> | - | earthly kings,      | l. 5180. |

It is significant that the formula is repeated more often

---

<sup>64</sup> Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Tapers, p. 159.

<sup>65</sup> Magoun, "Oral-Formulaic Theory," p. 449.

in Roland than it is in Beowulf,<sup>66</sup> and one must remember that the Anglo-Saxon epic is an eighth century composition, whereas Roland belongs to the early twelfth century.

The discovery of the formula for Magoun, who follows Parry closely, and the paramount rôle it plays in the chanson de geste has become the norm, ipso facto, for determining whether a text belongs to the oral or the literary tradition. He argues that with

the discovery of the dominant rôle of the formula in the composition of oral poetry and of the non-existence of metrical formulas in the poetry of lettered authors, we have suddenly acquired a touchstone with which it is now possible to determine to which of the two great categories of poetry a recorded text belongs - to the oral or to the lettered tradition.<sup>67</sup>

Magoun arrives at this position on Parry's assumption that if a work has a proportion of oral formulas it belongs to the oral-formulaic, that is, the singer tradition, the author being unlettered.<sup>68</sup>

That a work should belong to a given tradition be-

---

<sup>66</sup> Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 160.

<sup>67</sup> Magoun, "Oral-Formulaic Character," pp. 446-51.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 446-47.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

32

cause it contains certain predominant elements associating it with that tradition, or because it was composed within the realm of a certain poetic diction, is nothing unusual. Conventions, clichés, formulas, stock phrases and words, a given poetic diction, are characteristics of all literary schools and periods, which serve as landmarks to identify writings and distinguish one school from another. To use the presence of the formula in a work as the only basis for determining whether the poet, its author, was lettered or unlettered, must be rejected. To accept such a view would be to admit that Beowulf and Roland were the products of unlettered singers. Such a theory will lead the critic astray. Storms, for example, was puzzled by his findings, and in his concluding observation stated:

We have discussed fifteen compounds, occurring in all twenty-nine times, and in each case we have seen that their use is justified, not only as far as sense and metre is concerned, but also as to poetic connotation and artistic significance. If we bear in mind that Beowulf was composed extempore, and Magoun's analysis of the making of pre-literary, oral verse is fully convincing, then the author's unfailing choice of the right word at a moment's notice cannot but excite our admiration.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Storms, Compounded Names of Peoples in Beowulf, p. 22.

Tagoun's theory, if endorsed, does away with much of the literary research about works produced in certain periods, and relegates to the fancy of the imagination the outstanding findings of critics who have discovered, in the writings analyzed, fine nuances and subtleties of vocabulary rich in allusions, rhetorical and syntactical accomplishments, and a masterly poetic diction and technique. On the other hand, one must guard against another extreme in dealing with oral poetry, namely, that it is impossible for the author who composes orally to produce a polished work of art. This is highly improbable, but it is possible. Bowra presents the situation well when he states that heroic poetry has been misunderstood and misjudged in the past "because it works by rules different from those which apply to poets who write books.... the 'Fisher Criticism' of the Homeric poems, Beowulf, and Roland suffers from the serious defect that its standards belong to a reading, not to a listening, public and that it takes no account of the special circumstances of oral composition."<sup>70</sup>

It is significant that Rychner recognizes the superficiality of the jongleur's art, for the technique he

---

<sup>70</sup> Bowra, Heroic Poetry, p. 299.

employed and the conditions under which he worked were not favourable. Rychner argues that;

Le métier de jongleur, le chant public, interdisent absolument la recherche patiente d'une expression singulière et originale. Le jongleur n'en a pas le loisir. S'il compose oralement, il ne peut se relire; il lui est impossible en récitant, en improvisant, de chercher longuement l'expression qui conviendrait le mieux.... En aurait-il d'ailleurs le loisir, que sa recherche passerait sans doute au-dessus de son public; auquel la récitation ne laisserait pas le temps d'apprécier toutes ces finesses. En réalité donc, le jongleur va traiter son thème de façon presque entièrement traditionnelle, grâce à des motifs, stéréotypés ..., toujours les mêmes, ... rendus de façon analogue par les mêmes formules.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Rychner, La Chanson de Geste, pp. 126-27: The business of the jongleur, the juggler of singing rhymes, leaves out categorically any patient search for an original and uncommon expression. The jongleur cannot afford it. If his composition is oral, he cannot reread it; it is impossible for him while reciting, while improvising, to hold on until he has found an expression which would characterize a given narrative or mood better.... Had he the possibility to do so, it would escape his audience, to whom the recitation would not provide the time to appreciate all those nuances. In fact, the jongleur treats his subject almost completely in the traditional way, thanks to stereotyped motifs..., always the same, ...according to established formulas.

Parry corroborates Rychner's views that the singer cannot weigh his work or memorize every verse, but must be satisfied with the words as they come to him, being helped in his choice by a stock of traditional groups of words and expressions from which he draws; even if he should commit his works to paper, they remain poor stereotyped specimens of chansons de geste, because the written examples fare poorly with the impromptu original versions.<sup>72</sup> This confirms the belief that "la chanson de geste n'est pas dans le manuscrit que nous ouvrons, nous n'en tenons là qu'un reflet; elle était ailleurs, dans le cercle ou centre duquel chantait le jongleur, soumise à des conditions très particulières."<sup>73</sup> Rychner argues that we cannot apply to the product of an art that depends largely on clichés and motifs, norms which are applied to the criticism of written literature, which is the product of meditated efforts and repeated corrections of the written words.<sup>74</sup> Why not?

Rychner does not state clearly what he means. If

---

<sup>72</sup> Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 161.

<sup>73</sup> Rychner, La Chanson de Geste, p. 155: the chanson de geste is not in the manuscript which we open, we open, we have there but a glimpse of it only; it was elsewhere in the centre of the milieu in which the jongleur sang, the song being subject to some very particular conditions.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

36

he has in mind a genre of writing, or a mode of composition and transmission, no objection is made; but his position must be rejected if, by criticism, he means the discovery of the nature and function of the work in question in relation to literature; in other words, whether the work is or is not literature. Regardless of the mode of its composition, literature, undeniably, is literature whether it be produced orally, as a song, or transmitted to paper where it is worked and reworked until it conforms to what the writer wants. The difference admissible, if any, in Rychner's argument, between two given literary works, a chanson de geste composed orally, that is, extempore, and a written work, that is, composed pen in hand, resides in the craft. This is the variation or difference Rychner noted existed between the chansons de geste, the Iliad, Beowulf, and Roland. The astonishment and admiration of Storms at the diction of Beowulf has already been mentioned.<sup>75</sup> One concession is possible; if Rychner's assumption is correct, in presuming that the chanson de geste has lost through transmission, then there is a way in which the norms which he speaks of cannot be applied here.

Upon examination of the Iliad and the Roland, Bowra and Rychner were struck by the salient features of the

---

<sup>75</sup> Vide page 32 of this paper.

quality of the craft. They saw in these works, as did Abercrombie,<sup>76</sup> and Tillyard,<sup>77</sup> superior literary craftsmanship, particularly when seen side by side with the works of the jongleurs. This paper agrees with them, and places Beowulf in the same category of chefs-d'oeuvre. This view is endorsed by Klaeber,<sup>78</sup> Brodeur,<sup>79</sup> Bonjour,<sup>80</sup> and Malone,<sup>81</sup> who, while admitting far greater achievements of craft in the epics mentioned than in the chansons de geste, recognize in those chefs-d'oeuvre a strong flavour of the improvised technique of the jongleur's song, the formula.<sup>82</sup> In other words, the Iliad, Beowulf, and Roland were composed, pen in hand, in the oral tradition of the chanson de geste, or its equivalent depending on the country of origin and the time of composition. As such, they are an improvement over the song, and are products of a transition period from oral to written works, or they may be considered having been written in a period when the oral-formulaic character was a popular convention, or they may have

---

<sup>76</sup> Lascelles Abercrombie, The Epic (London, no date), pp. 65-69.

<sup>77</sup> E. M. W. Tillyard, The English Epic and Its Background (London, 1954), pp. 120-21.

<sup>78</sup> Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. lxxiii-lxiv, and lxxviii.

<sup>79</sup> Brodeur, The Art of Beowulf, p. viii.

<sup>80</sup> Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 162.

<sup>81</sup> Malone, "Beowulf," English Studies, pp. 161-63.

<sup>82</sup> Vide page 30 of this paper.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

38

composed in a period when the oral formula was revived. In the opinion of this paper, Beowulf belongs to the so called transition period.

C. S. Lewis defines oral poetry, as that which "reaches its audience through the medium of recitation; a manuscript in the background would not alter its oral character."<sup>83</sup> The poet writing, as opposed to the jongleur singing in the singer tradition, uses devices of poetic diction peculiar to and associated with the oral-formulaic technique of the jongleur. This is represented by the presence in his work of stylized phrases, expressions, stock words, and repetitions. Lewis points out that the most manifest peculiarity of an oral technique is its repeated

use of stock words, phrase, or even whole lines..... these are not a second-best on which the poets fall back when inspiration fails them; they are as frequent in the great passages as in the low ones. In 103 lines of the parting between Hector and Andromache (justly regarded as one of the peaks of European poetry) phrases, or whole lines, which occur again and again in Homer are twenty-eight times employed (Il. vi, 390-493). Roughly speaking, a quarter of the whole passage is 'stock'. In Beowulf's

---

<sup>83</sup> C. S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost (London, 1960), p. 18.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

39

last speech to Wiglaf (Beow.  
2794-2820) 'stock' expressions  
occur six times in twenty-eight  
lines - again, they are about a  
quarter of the whole.<sup>84</sup>

The poet writing in the oral tradition, particularly at the time when the jongleur was gradually losing ground to the writer, was probably influenced by the jongleur's tradition. The critic viewing his works must interpret the formulas in them as representing a characteristic of the works which may be said as belonging to the oral-formulaic tradition. This is exemplified in the works of Cynewulf. The critic knowing that he composed with pen in hand is drawn to the conclusion that the presence of the oral formula, in his writings, is characteristic of the formulaic tradition; Bonjour confirms that Elene contains fourteen verses of oral formulas.<sup>85</sup> Cynewulf took time to work out his signature in a rather complicated fashion; consequently, it seems logical to believe that others, such as the authors of Beowulf, Judith, Guthlac, The Phoenix, The Wanderer, The Seafarer, were capable of pondering compositions of greater or equal literary art using the tool of the oral singer, the formula; in other words, they were writing in the tradition of the jongleurs.

---

<sup>84</sup> Lewis, Preface to Paradise Lost, p. 18.

<sup>85</sup> Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 162.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

40

Magoun seems to overlook that the use of a large number of oral formulas in a poem does not necessarily make that work the product of oral composition. Bonjour comes to the point when he states that it is

justement le caractère exceptionnel du Roland qui ressort de l'étude de M. Rychner; pour cette chanson 'certes, il est permis de parler du chef-d'oeuvre qui est en même temps principe et fin, de minute sacrée de la création poétique, bref, de la traiter en oeuvre d'art créée consciemment.' M. Rychner, nous l'avons vu, est trop prudent pour exclure une composition orale du Roland, mais il trouve néanmoins extrêmement difficile d'y croire.<sup>86</sup>

This is exactly it; for Rychner, Storms also, the appearance of the oral formula in a work makes it the result of oral composition, but both are not convinced at all that such is the case. Bowra opines for a transition period, and his position brings the following remark from Bonjour:

Sir Maurice va plus loin encore.  
Voici ce qu'il écrit à propos du

---

<sup>86</sup> Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, pp. 162-163: it is precisely the exceptional character of the Roland that stands out from Mr. Rychner's study: regarding this chanson de geste 'indeed, one is allowed to talk about a masterpiece which is, at the same time, the beginning and the end of a sacred minute of poetic creation, in short, to treat it as a work of art created consciously!' We have seen that Mr. Rychner is too prudent to exclude the Roland from oral composition, but, nevertheless, he finds it extremely hard to believe in it.

Cid et du Roland: 'Tous deux, pour autant que l'on puisse en juger, ont été composés par écrit. Il est certain que leurs auteurs savaient lire, et bien que ces poèmes fussent destinés sans doute à la récitation, il n'est pas question d'une composition purement orale.' Quant au Beowulf, 'il n'y a aucune raison de croire qu'il n'ait pas été écrit au moment de la composition.' Enfin il admet aussi qu'avec l'introduction de l'écriture, un poète a pu composer en y mettant beaucoup plus de soin et de temps, tout en conservant dans une certaine mesure l'habitude des formules traditionnelles. Si bien que 'la différence entre la poésie orale improvisée et la poésie semi-littéraire (stade intermédiaire!) n'est pas une différence d'espèce mais de degré.'<sup>87</sup>

In the two kinds of compositions discussed, the oral and the written, the poet uses language in much the same way and for the same reason, which is, to externalize a poetic intuition. Thus, it is believed that the crux, that is, the essential part of the matter, in so far as

---

<sup>87</sup> Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 163: Sir Maurice goes further still. Here is what he writes about the Cid and the Roland: 'Both, in as much as one may judge, were composed in writing. It is certain that their authors knew how to read, and although those poems were no doubt intended for oral recitation, there is no question of a purely oral composition.' As to Beowulf, 'there is no reason to believe that it was not written down at the moment of composition.' Finally, he admits also that with the introduction of writing, a poet could have composed with much more care and time, keeping, at the same time, the habit of traditional formulas to a certain extent. So much so that 'the difference between oral poetry improvised and semi-literary (intermediary stage!) is not one of a kind but of degree.'

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

42

this thesis is concerned, resides in a degree of intensity of the poetry, and not in one of kind. In other words, the poet of Beowulf was an accomplished writer who performed the unique task of moulding Germanic alliterative oral elements of recitation, that is, the formula of the oral tradition, with the new style and diction of Anglo-Saxon poetry emerging in heroic contemporary times. The linguistic technique of the poem thus created embraces many of the elements which are dealt with in this paper; the overall emphasis, however, being placed on the connotation of the words selected by the poet of Beowulf to convey his artistic ideal.

It is most significant that the experiment carried out by Baugh, in which he examined Middle English romances in the light of the oral-formulaic theory, proved that the romances are replete with oral formulas and themes, comparable to those found in Homer's poems and to chansons de geste, that is, mediaeval narrative verse-chronicles of heroic exploits.<sup>88</sup> No one will doubt that the romances were composed pen in hand, and were not improvised or made orally. If this truth were not known, Magoun's theory would apply, mutatis mutandis, to the romances as well, and the results would make romances the product of improvised composition.

---

<sup>88</sup> Albert C. Baugh, "Improvisation in the Middle English Romance," Proc. Am. Phil. Soc., CIII (1959), p. 418.

## ANGLO-SAXON POETIC DICTION AND TECHNIQUE

43

Since the final objective of this thesis rests in an attempt to show the contribution of the verbs to the poetic diction of *Beowulf*, that is, that the poet's choice of the verbs was judicious, discriminating, felicitous, and added value to the diction, it was felt necessary to reject the improvised theory of composition in favour of the written.

Chapter I has considered Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique generally, has taken position in defining certain terms usually associated with it, and has rejected the view that makes *Beowulf* the product of an oral composition. These points are considered necessary building blocks or steps in arriving at determining the function of the verb in *Beowulf*. Chapter II will investigate the importance of semantics in Anglo-Saxon, and the influence of Latin and Christianity on Anglo-Saxon literature.

## CHAPTER II

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY

## 1. Importance of Anglo-Saxon Semantics.

A knowledge of generalities regarding Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique is a prerequisite for an understanding of Anglo-Saxon literary works; likewise, another equally valuable and indispensable asset is a thorough conception of Anglo-Saxon semantics, and the influence of Latin Christianity on the vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon.

Semantics, as opposed to phonetics, may be defined as the meaning of words, that is, the relationship between name and sense, and their historical sense, that is, the mental content, concept or idea represented. It should be immediately added that etymology, that is, the science which treats of the origin, history, and development of words as such, although different in nature from semantics, goes hand in hand with it, since the first step in arriving at the meaning of a word is often by way of its etymology.

Semantics must be taken seriously into consideration in learning any language, and it must be even more so

when studying Anglo-Saxon literature. The reason for this is because scholarship on the subject is limited, the language is removed from modern English, is different from it in many respects, offers many difficulties in the clarification of some of its vocabulary, and lexicography is restricted. As a result, the work of the student and the scholar is impeded and rendered difficult. There is also the usual danger that while the literal translation of a word from Anglo-Saxon into modern English is known, the historical meaning is not, and a wrong interpretation of the passage to which that word belongs may result. Even modern English is not free from that danger. An example will illustrate the case.

The expression - to get cold feet - means in modern English - to be afraid, to withdraw from difficulty, or to lose one's nerve. One hundred years ago a German writer of Plattdeutsch, Fritz Reuter, used the words in his novel Ut mine Stromtid - My Years of Roving, to describe a player who said he was getting cold feet as an excuse for leaving the game at which he was losing. In the language of several European countries, Portugal included, the historical sense of - to get cold feet - or - to have cold feet - means to get influenza, or simply, to get a cold or to have or catch a cold. In time, readers of the novel Ut mine

Stromtid not familiar with the correct meaning, associated the expression with being afraid or lacking perseverance, thus removing the associative value and fine allusion intended by Reuter,<sup>89</sup> and coining, at the same time, an expression with an entirely new meaning.

In a similar way, the meaning of the Anglo-Saxon word wineleas - friendless or forsaken by friends, used in Beowulf line 2615, can be fully understood only when interpreted in the light of the meaning of wine - friend. Wine is used in preference to freond - friend, when the sense desired is that which is implied in the habits of mind and action associated with relations between lord and thane, that is, the comitatus spirit, including such ideas for the lord as power, prowess, prestige, protector, provider, ring giver, generosity, security, consideration, and for the thane or retainer, loyalty, devotion, courage, fame, reputation for bravery, exulting, boasting, feasting, and above all, for both - the joy of belonging and fellowship.

The comitatus spirit having passed out of fashion, its memory having disappeared, the wealth of associations and meanings, that is, the historical sense, inherent in the lord-retainer relations having been lost, the word

---

<sup>89</sup> J. F. L. Raschen, "Slang: to get cold feet," MLN, XXVIII (June, 1912), pp. 198-99.

wineleas has come down to modern English with a meaning that is completely changed and can no longer convey the rich sentiments once so well expressed by the Anglo-Saxon wineleas - forsaken person in The Wanderer and Deor. To translate wineleas by friendless or forsaken, merely in the sense in which it is used today, is to miss completely the historical meaning it once had in Anglo-Saxon semantics. Furthermore, if the word wineleas is used in reference to lord, the sentiments it will evince will have slightly different nuances from those attached to the same word when applied in relation to retainer, just as the death of a man will bring sentiments of bereavement, the nature of which, mutatis mutandis, will be alike in two persons, yet, different not only in a degree of intensity of the feelings, because one is a mother and the other a brother, but also contrasted in the mode of experiencing depending on the relations between the three.

Another timely example is the word daegwoma or daegrēdwoma - dawn, from daeg - day, grēd or grāēd, from grāēdan: to cry, call out, and woma - sound or noise, used in Exodus line 344.<sup>90</sup> Modern English describes dawn, among

---

<sup>90</sup> George Philip Krapp, The Junius Manuscript (New York, 1931), p. 100. Unless indicated to the contrary, all Anglo-Saxon poetic records referred to, Beowulf excepted, are from The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, edited by Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, Columbia University Press.

other expressions, the coming of dawn, the breaking of dawn; in Anglo-Saxon, the rush of breaking day, or the noise of day. Rush is from Latin aurorae strepitus, translated into Anglo-Saxon by þþpaet eāstan cwom ofer deōp gelad<sup>91</sup>daegrēd-woma, wedertācen wearm - until there came from the east over the deep way the rush of dawn, a warm weather-token.<sup>91</sup>

The true meaning of many Anglo-Saxon words is discovered by investigating their origin. For example, the word widow comes from Latin viduus - widower, meaning bereft or or deprived of, the Gothic form is widuwo, the Old Saxon - widowa, the Old High German - wituwa, and the Anglo-Saxon widewe.<sup>92</sup> The word foul is related to Latin puteo - I smell bad, and to Greek, I make to rot, the Gothic from fūls, the Old Icelandic - full, the Old High German - fūl, and the Anglo-Saxon fūl.<sup>93</sup>

The discovery of the origin of many other Anglo-Saxon words becomes a revealing and interesting study. A few cases will serve as illustrations. The Anglo-Saxon word lencten is translated by springtime or simply spring, the

---

<sup>91</sup> Joseph Bosworth, An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, ed. and enlarged by T. Northcote Toller (Oxford, 1954), p. 193.

<sup>92</sup> Joseph Wright and Elizabeth Mary Wright, Old English Grammar (London, 1908), p. 19.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

word having originated from the season called lent, that is, the forty week days preceding Easter Sunday and beginning with Ash Wednesday. As it happens, it is the period of time which coincides with the end of winter and the beginning of the season known today as spring. It is so called because nature is rising or springing into being or existence in relation to the verb spring, that is, to bound, leap, jump up, start up or forth as the time when young shoots spring or rise out of the ground.<sup>94</sup> The word spring was recorded as a substantive for the first time in 1530 in the expression - spring of the year.<sup>95</sup>

The word lencten had a different meaning for the Anglo-Saxons, and it was not known to them as spring in the sense that it is today. Bosworth gives several examples: "paes sylfan lentenes hē fōr tō Rōme - in the course of the same spring he went to Rome, Chr.1048; ...sunnan glāem on lenctenne līfes tācen wecep - the sun's gleam in spring wakes signs of life, Exon.59b ... bone lencten wāeron him on Cent - during the spring they were in Kent, Chr.1009 ... nis nān blōdlaestīd swā gōd swā on foreweardne lencten - there is no time for letting blood so good as in the early

<sup>94</sup> Walter W. Skeat, An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language (Oxford, 1961), p. 591.

<sup>95</sup> Murray, New English Dictionary, Vol. IX, Part I, p. 688.

spring, L.M. I, 72."<sup>96</sup> In order to give the word a modern equivalent, lencten was translated by spring in all the examples cited, but it was lent to the Anglo-Saxons, not spring. The following exemplify: lencten-ād1 - a fever, typhus fever, tertian fever; lencten-bryce - a breach of Lenten fast; lencten-daeg - a day in Lent; lencten-eorpe - land ploughed in the spring; lencten-faesten - the fast of Lent; lencten-līc - vernal, lenten; lencten-sufel - food for the spring or for Lent; lencten-wicu - a week in Lent.<sup>97</sup>

An interesting word is cealdheort meaning cruel, from ceald - cold and heort - heart. He who was cruel was described by the Anglo-Saxons as having a cold heart. By far one of the most intriguing words in Anglo-Saxon, Middle and modern English has been the word brown when used to describe weapons, helmets, and coats of mail. For lack of understanding and explanation, brown was believed by many to be used in a figurative sense. Examples of this are found in Beowulf, line 2578: brūn - brown, meaning sword, and line 2615: brūnfāgne helm - brown brilliant (hued) helmet;<sup>98</sup> in The Battle of Maldon, line 163: bruneccg -

<sup>96</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 628.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 628.

<sup>98</sup> Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 97, and 98.

with brown (gleaming) blade;<sup>99</sup> in Judith, line 317: brūne helmas - brown (shining) helmet;<sup>100</sup> in the ballad "Gil Brenton", line 22: my bonny brown sword;<sup>101</sup> and in Sir Ferumbras: "Wyp ys swerd of style brown;"<sup>102</sup> King Arthur's sword is referred to as "Brounsteele" in Arthur, lines 95-97: "Arthour was chafed & wexed wrothe. / He hente Brounsteele and to Frolo gothe; / Brounsteele was heuy & also kene."<sup>103</sup> Later, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, swords were referred to as brown bills. Dr. Samuel Johnson describes the word in his Dictionary:

brownbill; The ancient weapon of the English foot; why it is called brown, I have not discovered; but we now say brown musket from it.

And brownbills, levied in the city,  
Made bills to pass the grand committee.  
Hudibras.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> E. V. Gordon, ed., The Battle of Maldon (London, 1960), pp. 53, and 68.

<sup>100</sup> B. J. Timmer, ed., Judith (London, 1961), pp. 33, and 39.

<sup>101</sup> Francis James Child, ed., The English and Scottish Popular Ballads (New York, 1962), Vol. I, p. 70, Variation B.

<sup>102</sup> Sir Ferumbras, EETS, ES, XXXIV.

<sup>103</sup> Arthur, EETS, Vol. II.

<sup>104</sup> Samuel Johnson, Dictionary, p. No.XIX, 3.

Shakespeare refers to brown bills in King Lear, IV, vi, 92 and in Henry VI, Part II, IV, 13.<sup>105</sup>

Strangely as it may seem, the swords, helmets, and bills referred to as brown by Anglo-Saxons were really so, at least for anyone familiar with the tempering of steel. No one, it seems, had discovered the reason why the colour brown was used to describe weapons until W. S. Walker clarified what had become a mystery for modern readers.<sup>106</sup> The answer to the problem turned out to be simple and logical. In his opinion "If blacksmiths had undertaken to annotate Beowulf, they could have assured philologists that brūn in descriptions of metal meant 'brown,' just as it does elsewhere in Old English."<sup>107</sup> The name is acquired from the colour steel takes in the tempering process. Because of its simplicity this technical knowledge probably escaped lexicographers whose eyes caught the bright, shining, or glistening appearance of the sword rather than the

---

<sup>105</sup> William Shakespeare, eds. The University Society (New York, 1901)

<sup>106</sup> Warren S. Walker, "The Brunecg Sword," MLN, LXVII (December, 1952), pp. 516-20.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 518.

brownness of it which is a product of the forge and continues to exist as long as the weapon is used.

Steel is hardened and tempered according to the use which is to be made of it. The ancient blacksmith and armourer had none of the modern equipment found in mills today for processing steel, particularly for measuring the temperature during the heat treatment of a blade to serve as a sword. Experience had taught him that a sword had reached its ideal stage in the forge when tempering to a point had turned the metal to brown. If the metal should be allowed longer time, the colour would turn to purple, and the weapon would become brittle and would be unable to sustain a sharp blow without breaking. Obviously, it had to be hard enough to do its work in the hand of thethane, and at the same time adequately 'soft' to receive dents from blows, which could be removed after the battle through retempering and, naturally, rebrowning.

Modern technique shows that during the tempering process, steel undergoes gradual colour changes. As its temperature rises, it becomes pale yellow at 220 degrees Centigrade, straw at 230, golden yellow at 243, brown at 255, brown dappled with purple at 265, purple at 277, bright blue at 288, pale blue at 297, dark blue at 316, red in the dark at 400, red in indirect sunlight at 525,

red in sunlight at 580, and when the temperature is 700° Centigrade, steel becomes dark red.<sup>108</sup> Carpenters' cutting tools, butchers' knives, and bushmen's axes are tempered between 230 and 265 degrees Centigrade, or as Weland, the famous smith of Germanic legend whose name is mentioned in Beowulf, line 455, would say, at colours ranging from straw to purple brown.<sup>109</sup> There was no 'in between,' so to speak, for swords; any armourer skilled in the tempering of steel, and he had to be if he wanted to continue in the employ of the same lord or thane!, could produce swords that would be a credit to his technical ability, better called craftsmanship, would bring fame on him, honour to the warrior his master in whose hands it would be wielded, and spread terror among the enemies of his lord, his foe recognizing and fearing the micel brunecg - the great sword.

Cruces, similar to the brunecg - (brown) sword, come to light every now and again, and contribute to Anglo-Saxon semantics. For example, before the Sutton Hoo discoveries, no one, including the great Beowulfian scholar Klaeber, knew the exact meaning, purpose and function of the wala - raised comb of iron, D-shaped in cross section, which

---

<sup>108</sup> J. M. Camp and C. B. Francis, The Making and Shaping of Steel (Pittsburgh, 1925), p. 692.

<sup>109</sup> George Ede, The Management of Steel (London, 1901), p. 110.

Denison Bullens, Steel and Its Heat Treatment

runs over the helmet from back to front. The wala is mentioned in line 1031 of Beowulf. This knowledge came to light following the discovery of the Sutton Hoo helmet, and supplied a clear explanation of the words wirum bewunden - wound about (inlaid) with (silver) wires, appearing in the same line with wala.<sup>110</sup>

The importance of Anglo-Saxon semantics is emphasized by B. Lindheim as a vehicle for knowing the language and thought of Anglo-Saxon writers, and the nature, extent, and origin of their culture.<sup>111</sup> His article is of particular interest to this paper because it illustrates by way of thirteen Anglo-Saxon words the amazing variety, in terms of modern terminology, of relationships between name and sense attached to the concept of joy in Anglo-Saxon.<sup>112</sup>

Building up on Lindheim's work, the following words are expanded fully to their known English possible meanings and etymology, in order to show how difficult it is to determine, in translation, the correct choice, and how care-

---

(New York, 1916), p. 368.

W. Mattieu Williams, The Chemistry of Iron and Steel Making (London, 1890), p. 197.

<sup>110</sup> Herbert Maryon, "The Sutton Hoo Helmet," Antiquity, XXI (1947), pp. 137-44.

<sup>111</sup> Bogislav von Lindheim, "Problems of Old English Semantics," English Studies Today (Edinburgh, 1962), 3rd Series, pp. 67-77.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., pp. 70-71.

fully the text must be read and interpreted before that choice can be made. The words are:

dream -

- 1) joy, pleasure, gladness, mirth, rejoicing, rapture, ecstasy, frenzy, from Latin júbilum, laetitia, gaudium, delirium;
- 2) what causes mirth, an instrument of music, music, rapturous music, harmony, melody, song, from Latin organum, from Greek mousike (tekhne), giving música, concentus, harmónia, from Greek harmonia, harmein, giving modulatio, modus, melódia, from Greek meloidia, melos, aeidein, giving cantus.

bliss or bliðs -

- 1) bliss, joy, gladness, exultation, pleasure, from Latin laetitia, gaudium, exultatio, beátitas.
- 2) friendship, kindness, benevolence, grace, from Latin cómitas, benígnitas, benevoléncia, grátia.

gefeæ -

joy, gladness, glory, favour, from Latin gaudium.

myrgð or mirigþ -

pleasure, joy, delight, sweetness of sound.

wynn -

- 1) delight, pleasure;
- 2) a delight, that which causes pleasure;
- 3) the best of a class, the pride of its kind;
- 4) the name of the W rune **W**.

Two verbs:

dryman - and blissian -

to rejoice, exult, be glad or merry, from Latin laetari, gaudere, exultare, ovare.

Two adjectives:

wynsum -

- 1) winsome, agreeable, pleasant;
- 2) joyous.

bliðe -

- 1) joyful, glad, merry, cheerful, pleasant, blithe, from Latin laetus, hilaris;
- 2) gentle, kind, friendly, clement, mild, sweet, from Latin mansuetus, benignus, comis, clemens, mitis, suavis;

- 3) quiet, calm, peaceful, from Latin tranquillus, plácidus.

The list is made complete with:

gamen -

game, joy, pleasure, mirth, sport, pastime, from Latin jocus, oblectamentum, gaudium, júbilum, laetitia, ludus.

gleow -

glee, joy, music, musical accompaniment of a song, mirth, jesting, sport, from Latin gaudium, música, facétiae, mimus, ludibrium.

glaed -

as a noun:

gladness, joy;

as an adjective:

glad, cheerful, joyous, bright.

glaedness -

gladness, joy, cheerfulness.<sup>113</sup>

As can now be verified, the choice of a word transmitting exactly the meaning of what the writer had in mind is difficult and can only be arrived at from a thorough knowledge of Anglo-Saxon, particularly, when thirteen Anglo-Saxon words have a total of eighty-seven possible modern English equivalents. In most cases, however, final interpretation rests with the passage in which the word appears, that is to say, the meaning of a word is ultimately deter-

---

<sup>113</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 210, 110, 390, 689-90, 1285, 217, 110, 1286, 111, 360, 481, and 479.

<sup>114</sup> Félix Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé Latin-français illustré (Paris, 1936), pages corresponding to the Latin words mentioned.

mined by the context in which it is used.

Anglo-Saxon writers were punctiliously precise in their choice of words, and did not pile on, as some critics would have it, one synonym on top of another for the sake of words. Synonyms were often developed from other Anglo-Saxon dialects. Words in the West Saxon dialect, for example, would acquire new meanings, and vice versa, when they became associated with synonymous words in the Anglian, Mercian, or Northumbrian dialects that had already developed semantically in some other direction, and had taken on new meanings analogically. Another form of semantic borrowing was from synonyms belonging to a foreign language, such as, Greek and Latin, to which the Anglo-Saxons were strongly exposed in the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>115</sup>

It is without saying that Anglo-Saxon poets were hampered at times by alliteration, but they were not generally guided by it solely. Taking the concept of joy as an example, it is logical to believe that alliteration may have been responsible for the large variety of terms to choose from, including, in addition to the list already drawn, the many compounds made from the base words, such as

---

<sup>115</sup> Samuel Kroesch, "Semantic Borrowing in Old English," Studies in English Philology, A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber, ed. Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud (Minneapolis, 1929), p. 50.

swegeldream - music. It is more likely that the principle of idealization or perfection accounted for meticulousness and exactness in wanting to render the thought, and resulted in the diversity and variation of the fine distinctions existing in Anglo-Saxon vocabulary.

The reader of Anglo-Saxon is constantly slowed down in his efforts, first to discover the correct meaning, and then, the precise sense in which it is used in the sentence, as one may infer from the terms used for the concept of joy. It should always be remembered that lexicons give but the meaning of words, the sense being arrived at or derived from the context in which the words appear. Even lexicographers are not free from oversights. Bosworth defines swegeldream - heavenly joy;<sup>116</sup> this is not so, the correct meaning being - music.<sup>117</sup> The exact meaning of swegeldream was pointed out much earlier by Friedr. Kluge by way of etymology. Swegl or swegel - sky, heavens, ether; the sun; music?,<sup>118</sup> in the compound swegeldream - music, is a word completely different. Its cognate is Gothic swiglon - to play the flute, swiglja - flute player,

---

<sup>116</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 947.

<sup>117</sup> John R. Clark Hall, A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, 4th ed. with a Supplement by Herbert D. Meritt (Cambridge, 1960), p. 330.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 330.

and Old High German swegala - flute.<sup>119</sup>

Another striking aspect of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, which illustrates the importance of semantics in the study of Anglo-Saxon literature, is the use made of colour words in Anglo-Saxon poetry, and the terminology that describes them. The word - colour - is used in a generic sense, in this section, and refers to the nature of colour vision which comprises four distinct sensations. The first is concerned with hue, the other three, with 'colour' proper; when the latter sense is intended, the word colour is placed in quotes, meaning that it is used in opposition to hue.

There is a marked contrast in Anglo-Saxon poetry between the small number of colour words and the great number and variety of terms expressing light and darkness. When the two latter groups of words are taken out, there is little colour left. The total number of passages in Anglo-Saxon poetry in which brightness is mentioned has been estimated to exceed 800, darkness 450, thus giving an average of one word suggesting light or darkness in every 24 lines in a total exceeding slightly 30,000 lines of Anglo-Saxon poetry extant.<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup> Friedr. Kluge, "Anglo-Saxon Etymologies," An English Miscellany Presented to Dr. Furnivall in Honour of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday (Oxford, 1901), pp. 199-200.

It has been said that the sense of colour in Anglo-Saxon poets is feeble, and their descriptions lack in vividness and richness of colour.<sup>121</sup> This is misleading to anyone familiar with the famous colour passage in lines 291-313 of The Phoenix.<sup>122</sup> Even Moorman, who misjudged the colour sense of the earliest Anglo-Saxon poets and termed it "obtuse," recognised the fine "discrimination" and "spendour" of The Phoenix passage.<sup>123</sup> Simply because the Anglo-Saxons expressed their perception of colours in terms of brightness and darkness, thus giving the erroneous impression of being more receptive to light and dark than succeeding generations were, it does not follow logically that they were less sensitive to colours; on the contrary, they were just as sensitive. Mead actually puts his finger on the problem without realizing it when he notices that in Anglo-Saxon poetry

the appeal to the senses is common enough, but some of the best passages of Beowulf or The Battle of Maldon, though almost Homeric in

---

<sup>120</sup> William E. Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," PMLA, XIV (1899), pp. 174-75.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., pp. 203, and 206.

<sup>122</sup> Krapp and Dobbie, The Exeter Book, p. 102.

<sup>123</sup> Frederick W. Moorman, The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry from Beowulf to Shakespeare (Strasbourg, 1905), p. 43.

life and vividness, are well-nigh destitute of color. Yet they have a vigor of conception and a depth of feeling that amply compensate for the lack of superficial glitter. A brilliant instance occurs in Beow., 1896-1913, where the voyage of Beowulf is described, yet there is not a word of color in it, unless we count the phrase fleat famig-heals.... The Old English mind was evidently fixed upon something else.<sup>124</sup>

The mode of perception and of apprehension of external objects and sensitiveness to them being the same in every normal human being, it would seem that the apparent limitations of contemporary terminology to translate precisely the colour words used by Anglo-Saxon poets indicates that the present generation lacks knowledge of what the Anglo-Saxons actually meant by the terms they used, or that the modern way of describing colours is more practical and precise. Opinion in favour of the more modern method is expressed by Lerner in these terms:

The modern method makes precision easier - by splitting up the sensation into its component parts and reserving our vocabulary for hue, the most diverse and perhaps the most important of these, we obtain an exact terminology that makes possible the scientific study of colour

---

<sup>124</sup> Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," p. 173.

vision. Yet at the same time we have moved further from experience. Anglo-Saxon colour words probably describe more truly what are actually the commonest colour sensations, simply because they were not concerned with their analysis and classification.<sup>125</sup>

The Anglo-Saxon poet's method of description of things in nature, by way of degrees of lightness and shades of darkness, is less clear and far more confusing to the modern reader who is familiar with the more practical analytical way of breaking colours into their three qualities, namely, hue or tone, value of luminosity, and chroma, also called purity or intensity. The following Anglo-Saxon terminology will illustrate how difficult it is, in terms of modern English, to form an image of what is precisely meant by the colour words the poets use.

The words used by Anglo-Saxon poets to describe colours are: graeg - grey; hasu - dusky (grey); hār - old (grey); fealu - fallow which can range from green through yellow to a reddish brown, but the essential quality of fealu is a peculiar brightness which almost approaches obscure hue; hiw - hue, but not in terms of modern terminology no equivalent has been found to render the word exactly;

---

<sup>125</sup> L. D. Lerner, "Colour Words in AngloSaxon," MLR, XLIV (1951), p. 248.

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 64

salu or salo - sallow; brūn - brown which may shade through various degrees of duskiness into black or red. Words depicting brightness are: beorht - bright; hādor - clear or bright; lēoht - light of day (not heavy); lēoma - gleam or glare; scīma - light or brightness (twilight or gloom); scīr - bright or clear (resplendent or translucent); sunne or sunna - sun; scýne or scīnnes - radiance or brightness; torht - clearness or brightness (radiant); Words describing darkness are: blaec - black; deorc - obscure; dim - dark or obscure; heolstor - dark or shadowy; mirce - murky; niht - darkness; sceadu - shady or darkness; scuwa or scua - shadow or darkness; sweart - dark; ðeostru or pēostre or pýstre - darkness; wann - wan; and earp - dusky.<sup>126</sup>

In view of the foregoing, it should not be assumed that because Anglo-Saxon poets showed a marked preference in their poetry for references to the brightness and the darkness of the things they saw in nature, they did not know colours. Anyone familiar with the rich and striking multi-coloured illuminations of The Lindisfarne Gospels written on purple parchments in letters of gold, with page-size portraits of the evangelists painted in the most inviting colours; the dark red leather binding made of African

126

Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," pp. 174-76.

goat skin of The Stonyhurst Gospels; the zoomorphic coloured patterns on some of the designs of The Lindisfarne Gospels and the Sutton Hoo jewellery; the cloisonné technique of the garnet-encrusted gold jewels, and the spectacular pieces of inset chequers of blue, white, and red mosaic glass also found at Sutton Hoo, is satisfied to accept these examples as many convincing indications that Anglo-Saxon craftsmen, and by extension poets, knew about the colours of the spectrum.

Volume II of The Lindisfarne Gospels contains a highly revealing and instructive section concerning colours, tints and shades used in the Lindisfarne scriptorium, how pigments were obtained, ingredients used, tints made, and colours applied.<sup>127</sup> There is hardly any doubt that the average educated Anglo-Saxon knew his colour scheme as well as any. Remembering that the writing and decoration of The Lindisfarne Gospels were begun before the year 721, and were likely finished by the end of the same century, it is amazing and a credit to the advanced technique of Anglo-Saxon colour making that the work has survived so astonishingly well. It is equally significant that Aelfric, the great Anglo-Saxon homilist, who was born about 955, and

---

<sup>127</sup> Sir Thomas Kendrick, Codex Lindisfarnensis, British Museum Codex Cottonianus Nero D. IV (Lausanne, 1961), Vol. II, pp. 109-26, and 263-76.

died sometime after 1005, treated colours in one of his vocabularies; this is called Nomina Colorum.<sup>128</sup> How is it, then, that Anglo-Saxon poets who probably knew the component parts of the spectrum chose to represent their perception of colours by emphasizing light and darkness in their works? The answer may be in the complex operation of colour sensation.

Colour may be defined as the sensation produced on the eye by rays of decomposed light, or the effect of light of different wave-lengths on the retina, or the quality in virtue of which objects present different appearances to the eye in respect of the kind of light reflected from their surfaces or, finally, the effect pro-

---

128

Mentioned by William Mead in "Color in Old English Poetry," p. 170. The first modern edition of the Nomina Colorum was by:

Thomas Wright, ed., A Volume of Vocabularies (London, 1857-73), Vols. I and II. The second edition was by:

R. P. Wülker, 2nd ed., Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies (London, 1884), Vols. I and II, Latin-English. These two editions are mentioned in:

Charles Gross, ed., The Sources and Literature of English History from the Earliest Times to about 1485, 2nd edition contains various Latin-English vocabularies and glossaries from the 8th century onward. One of these, (this is the one containing the Nomina Colorum, vol. i, pp. 304-36 (not pp. 104-67), was compiled by Abbot Aelfric about the end of the 10th century,) and is referred to by Mead in his article.

duced by a ray of light of a particular wave-length.<sup>129</sup>  
 Perceiving colour involves four sensations: wave-length accounts for hue, that is, a variation, modification, or quality of a particular colour. When white is added, a colour becomes or is made pale or intense, and is said to have degrees of lightness. When black is added, a colour becomes or is made dark or intense, and is described as having shades of darkness. Finally, the amount of light falling from colour, or given up by colour in the sense of emanation, is brightness.<sup>130</sup>

Modern perception of colour is mostly concerned with hue, so much so, that the other qualities have to be described by adverbs placed before them, with the result that hue and 'colour' are assumed to be the same; they are not. Surely, a light olive green differs much from a dark olive green. The modern emphasis on hue has been to the detriment of the perception of the other elements of colour sensation. As Lerner so rightly points out, the modern eye fails:

---

<sup>129</sup> These various definitions have been inspired from:  
 Murray, New English Dictionary, Vol. IV, p. 636.  
 Robert Edward Brennan, Thomistic Psychology  
 (New York, 1942), pp. 14, 16-17, and 118.  
 Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language, ed. W. T. Harris (Springfield, 1928), p. 440.  
 A. S. Hornby, E. V. Gatenby, H. Wakefield, ed.  
The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (London, 1963), p. 183.

to realize the great similarity between a very pale yellow and a very pale green, hues which would be very different if more intense; and, more important, we tend not to notice that different hues of a similar brightness may give very similar sensations. A piece of green corduroy, well rubbed and caught by the sun at the right angle, will be almost indistinguishable from a similar piece of yellow, orange or even red material. (They are all, in fact, fealu). In this fact may lie the clue to the understanding of Anglo-Saxon colour words.<sup>131</sup>

White, a surface that causes to be produced upon the eye a proportional combination of all the visible rays, that is, light rays, of the spectrum without absorption, and black, a surface absorbing all light, are not colours scientifically speaking, but Anglo-Saxon poets considered them colours in the same manner as modern popular convention does. Consequently, in this paper, when black and white are mentioned in connection with Anglo-Saxon works, they are understood as colours in accordance with the vernacular convention.

It is perhaps significant that Anglo-Saxon poets had much in common with Roman writers in their description of colour sensations. Cicero, Virgil, Plautus, Ovid,

---

<sup>130</sup> Lerner, "Colour Words in Anglo-Saxon," p. 246.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

Horace, Tacitus, Cornelius Nepos, Seneca, Plinius Secundus, Firmicus Maternus, Pompeius Festus, Quintilian, Albius Tibullus, Gellius, Lucretius, and others,<sup>132</sup> unlike modern writers, had the tendency to describe the other complex sensations of colour in preference to hue. Four Latin words will illustrate.

Fulvus is defined by Gellius as jaunâtre, fauve, d'or,<sup>133</sup> or brown with a touch of gold.<sup>134</sup> Fuscus - noir, sombre, is defined by Cicero as púrpura paene fusca - pourpre presque noir, and by Virgil as basané (brunir, noircir),<sup>135</sup> a dark murky hue.<sup>136</sup> Rúbidus - rouge brun, is defined by Plautus and Pompeius Festus as rúbidus panis - (de couleur) pain brun,<sup>137</sup> something between red and black.<sup>138</sup> Finally, spadix - rouge brun, is defined by Virgil as spadix équus - (couleur) cheval bai-brun,<sup>139</sup> chesnut colour;<sup>140</sup> and Firmicus defines spadicarius as teinturier

<sup>132</sup> Félix Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré Latin-Français (Paris, 1934), pp. 1703-19.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 694.

<sup>134</sup> Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, eds. A Latin Dictionary (Oxford, 1951), p. 791.

<sup>135</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire Latin-Français, p. 698.

<sup>136</sup> Lewis and Short, Latin Dictionary, p. 798.

<sup>137</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire Latin-Français, p. 1371.

<sup>138</sup> Lewis and Short, Latin Dictionary, p. 1493.

<sup>139</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire Latin-Français, p. 1461.

<sup>140</sup> Lewis and Short, Latin Dictionary, p. 1602.

en rouge brun.<sup>141</sup> Latin rufus is another term for red, that is, russet, and it is used by Gellius as rougeâtre, roux, and by Plautus as rouge (de cheveux), roux, rousseau.<sup>142</sup>

It is evident that Anglo-Saxon colour-word terminology has certain points of resemblance with the vocabulary of Latin authors. For example, grey may be a simple graeg, or hasu - dusky grey, as applied to the dove, the eagle, and leaves of plants, or hār - hoary old grey; fealu - fallow may go from yellow to red or brown; brūn - from dark to black or red; fāmig may be used for hwīt - white, as in fāmigheals - foamy necked, as applied to a ship at sea in line 1909 of Beowulf; blaec - black, as in black sea-roads; salu - sallow, as applied to the raven and the eagle; read - red for gold, a shining sword-edge, and a patch of fading colour on stone.<sup>143</sup>

To many modern readers, the Anglo-Saxon poets do not establish clear enough a distinction between black and dark. This may be so from the modern way of looking at colours, but they were understood in Anglo-Saxon times. It must be

---

<sup>141</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire Latin-Français, p. 1461.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 1372.

<sup>143</sup> Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," pp. 176-98.  
Lerner, "Colour Words in Anglo-Saxon," pp.

remembered that the Anglo-Saxon poets were not generally using hue words and, therefore, were not contrasting black with red, yellow with blue, as it is done today. In the case of dark and black, although the sensation perceived is almost the same, the words are not usually interchangeable.

The difficulty of interpretation of Anglo-Saxon descriptions of colour sensations in terms of shades of light and degrees of darkness rests, it would seem, in that the present generation is limited with a vocabulary that describes hues only. Consequently, it may be indirectly exposed to preconceptions resulting from modern colour-word terminology, so precise and fine, as to be able to establish unmistakable distinctions between rosé, claret, burgundy, plum, and garnet. Is it not a case of hue-blindness for one group - the Anglo-Saxon poets, versus colour-blindness for the twentieth century? It seems very much so. One thing is certain. The marked influence of Christianity and Latin on Anglo-Saxon vocabulary has long been established. To what degree, however, from a point of view of language and mode of description, is Latin influence noticeable in the use of colour words by Anglo-Saxon poets, remains an interesting topic for a thesis in Anglo-Saxon.

To round off this survey of Anglo-Saxon colour

words, in terms of colour vision, a summary will be given of colours and their frequency of appearance in Anglo-Saxon poetry.<sup>144</sup> Of the primary colours, four only are mentioned, and the most frequently used are green, followed by red and yellow; blue turns up once only, while orange, indigo and violet are not mentioned at all. The others appearing more often are fealu - fallow, brūn - brown, and hwīt - white.<sup>145</sup> Terms expressing light and darkness have been shown to be far more numerous than hue-terminology, and they indicate clearly the common interest of the Anglo-Saxon poets in the more complex 'colour' sensations, and their preference for 'colour' vocabulary. Anglo-Saxon colour words may be collected under seven headings: white, black, grey, brown, red, yellow, and green.

The following colours are identified under white. Hwīt appears thirty-one times to describe brightness or light, as in line 298 of The Phoenix;<sup>146</sup> or to bring out the shining effect or glitter known to have light, a roof, a helmet, a gem, or silver, as in line 1448 of Beowulf; or

---

<sup>144</sup> In "Color in Old English Poetry" to which reference has already been made, William Mead has contributed an invaluable piece of research work with a classified inventory, including references to individual works, of all colour words mentioned in Anglo-Saxon poetry. The above resumé has its foundation in this work.

<sup>145</sup> Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," pp. 171-72.

<sup>146</sup> Krapp & Dobbie, The Exeter Book, p. 102.

to describe the colour of objects between white and shining, as the clothing of the elect, in lines 447 and 454 of Christ; or to refer to angels resplendent in the shining light of heaven, as in lines 603 of Genesis, and line 290 of The Judgment Day II.

Blāc is described by Bosworth as bright and shining, and bleak, pale, palid, livid, as in death, with attention being called to the difference existing between the meaning of blāc, and se blāca - the black; blāc - shone, is also the preterit of blīcan - to shine, glitter, sparkle, twinkle, and to shine by exposure, as the bones.<sup>147</sup> It is employed twenty-eight times with emphasis on brightness rather than whiteness. Blāc fits also the description of fire, as in line 245 of Daniel; of fire-light, in line 1517 of Beowulf; of red flame, in line 808 of Christ; of lightning, in line 380 of Daniel; the light of stars, in stanza four of line 8 of The Meters of Boethius.

It is revealing that blāc refers also to the shiny bright spots on the tail of the bird, in line 296 of The Phoenix; to shiny clothing and armour, in line 212 of Exodus; and to the fair-faced (pale cheeks) maid, in line

---

<sup>147</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 106, and 109-10.

128 of Judith. In addition there are the compounds flōdblāc - pale as water, as in line 498 of Exodus; heoroblāc (hrēas - heoro - blāc) - battle-pale, mortally wounded, as in line 2488 of Beowulf; wigblāc - splendid (shining) with warlike equipment,<sup>148</sup> or bravely caparisoned,<sup>149</sup> as in line 204 of Exodus. There are instances of the use of the verb blācian - to grow pale, as in line 121 of Exodus, the etymology of blācian being traced to Latin verbs pallere and pallescere.<sup>150</sup>

Another word suggesting white, fāmīg or fāēmīg - foamy, appears nine times, as in line 19 of Riddle 3. Compounds, like fāmī(g)heals, are used three times to describe a foamy-necked ship, as in line 497 of Andreas; and fāmīg-bosma - with foamy bosom, as in line 494 of Exodus; fāmīgode - comes from famgian, the Latin cognate being spumare -<sup>151</sup> to foam, as in line 482 of Exodus: flōd flāmīgōde - the flood foamed; and fāmīgbord - with foaming banks (of a stream), as in line 26 of stanza 26 of The Meters of Boethius; the last mentioned four compounds occur once each.

Finally, blāt is another word used for livid, pale,

<sup>148</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 1220.

<sup>149</sup> Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 408.

<sup>150</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 106.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 270.

wan, or ghastly, from blātian or blātan - to be livid, pale, as in line 771 of Christ, and lines 1088 and 1279 of Andreas and blātende nið - livid hatred, in line 981 of Genesis.<sup>152</sup>

Black, as a group, offers difficulties when it comes to differentiate it from terms that belong to darkness, such as scealu - shady, dim - obscure, deorc - obscure, mirc - murky, scua - shadowy. Mead saw the problem when he wrote "Just as the words of the white group pass by insensible stages into meanings that suggest light, so the words of the black group shade insensibly into those suggesting a mere absence of light."<sup>153</sup> The words in the black category will be limited to blaec - black, sweart - swarthy from sweartian - to make or become black, wann - wan, salo - sallow, earp - dusky, sweorc - cloudy.

Black is rarely used as such. In line 1262 of An-dreas it refers to the blaece brimrade - black sea-road, from Latin maris cursus - the sea road, and to the hrefn blaca - the black raven, in line 1801 of Beowulf; to blace naedran - black snakes, in line 472 of Solomon and Saturn; to swapu swibe blacu - pathway very black, in line 3 of Riddle 51; to blace swelge - black abyss, in line 18 of Riddle

<sup>152</sup> Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," pp. 176-81.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

88; and to evil spirits, as in blāce - black (their beauty marred referring to angels), in line 71 of Christ and Satan; blācan feond - black fiends, in line 195 of Christ and Satan; blāc bealowes gast - black evil spirits, in line 718 of Christ and Satan, line 27 of Salomon and Saturn, and line 896 of Christ.

Sweart - black or swarthy occurs eighty-four times; it is the most frequently used in this group. It applies to sweartan helle - black hell, in line 312 of Genesis; to sweartne grund - black abyss, in Psalm 142, verse 7 of The Paris Psalter; to sweartum sawlum - black souls, in line 1606 of Christ; to sweartre niht - black nights, in line 872 of Christ; to sweartan hrefn - black raven, in line 61 of The Battle of Brunanburh;<sup>154</sup> to sweart lastas - black tracks, in line 2 of Riddle 51; to sweartan mistas, in line 391 of Genesis; and to sweart waeter - black water, in line 1300 of Genesis.

Sweart appears also nine times with lēg, līg, lieg or lȳg - flame, and describes the pitchy or smoky appearance of it. Milton may have had this in mind, in line 64 of Paradise Lost, Book I, where he describes the flames of the great furnace as having "No light, but rather darkness

---

<sup>154</sup> Marjorie Anderson and Blanche Colton Williams, eds., Old English Handbook (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), p. 255.

visible."<sup>155</sup> Læg or līg occurs also in līg ealle forswearlg - flame swallowed all, in line 1122 of Beowulf; in læg-draca - dragon vomiting flames, in lines 2333 and 3040 of Beowulf; in līgfȳr - fire flame, line 77 of Exodus; and in se swearta līg - the dark flame, line 966 of Christ.

Wann - dark or dusky is another term appearing often. It is used thirty-seven times and fits the description of se wonna hraefn - the wan or dark raven, in line 3024 of Beowulf; of wanre niht - wan or murky night, in line 702 of Beowulf; of wann under wolcnum - wan, gloomy or pitchy night, under the sky, in line 55 of Dream of the Rood; and of se wonna leg - the wan flame, in line 713 of Christ and Satan.

Salo - dark or yellowish dark is used for the raven, as salwigpad - dark plumage, in line 37 of The Fortunes of Men; for the earn - eagle, as salowigpada - darkcoated plumage, in line 211 of Judith, and salowigpadan, in line 61 of The Battle of Brunanburh;<sup>156</sup> for the hraefn - raven, as salwigfeðera - of dusky plumage, in line 1448 of Genesis; and for salopade - dark coated in line 3 of Riddle 57.

In addition to wann and salo, blæc and sweart there

---

<sup>155</sup> Hellen Darbishire, ed. The Poetical Works of John Milton (Oxford, 1952), Vol. I, p. 7.

<sup>156</sup> Anderson and Williams, Old English Handbook, p. 255.

occurs the combination sweart ond saloneb - swarthy and dark brown, in line 35 of The Fight at Finnsburg. The list of terms in the black category is made complete with earp - dark or dusky, in eorp werod - dark army or multitude, as in line 194 of Exodus; and earpan gesceafta - the dark creatures, as in line 42 of Riddle 3.<sup>157</sup>

The next group is concerned with various terms denoting grey. Grey, much more than white and black, besets the reader with difficulties when it comes to determine the exact meaning of the colour, and to give it an equivalent in modern terminology. The white and black colours cease to create problems when the degree of lightness of the white becomes heavy, or the shade of darkness of the black becomes light, the problems being transferred over to the grey colour. The difficulty, however, seems to be in knowing when a colour ceases to be white or black and becomes grey. The object described will always help, but it remains a serious obstacle for the reader, student, or translator of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Grey proper is used seven times and twice in compounds. As græg - grey, it appears in aescholt ufan græg-

---

<sup>157</sup>

Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," pp. 181-89.

the ashwood (spear) grey above, in line 330 of Beowulf; in grāegmael - grey coloured (referring to coat of mail), in lines 334 and 2682 of Beowulf; in grāega mæw - the grey sea-gull, in line 371 of Andreas; in wulf sē grāega - the grey wolf, in line 150 of Maxims I; in grāegan sweorde - the grey sword, in line 2866 of Genesis; in grāege dēor wulf - the grey animal, the wolf, in line 64 of The Battle of Brunanburh;<sup>158</sup> and in sāe grāege glāeshlūtor - the sea, grey and as clear as glass, in lines 7-8 of stanza 5 of The Meters of Boethius; it also describes the grey bark on spears, frost, and curling smoke. The compounds refer to flintgrāegne flōd - flood grey-like flint, in line 19 of Riddle 3; and to flōdgrāeg - grey flood, in line 31 of Maxims II. Grāeg is applied also to grāeghiwe or grāeghæwe - of a grey hue or colour; to grāeghama - a corselet or coat of mail; and to grāeggos - grey (wild) goose.

Hār - old grey or hoary, appears twenty-seven times and refers to a sword in Welandes geworc hēarne - the grey work of Weland, in lines 2-4 of Waldere I; to armour in hāre byrnan - old grey byrnie, in lines 327 of Judith, 17 of Waldere II, and 2153 of Beowulf; to stone in hārne stān - hoary stone, in line 2744 of Beowulf; to cliffe hārum - grey

---

<sup>158</sup> Anderson and William, Old English Handbook, p. 255.

cliff, in line 13 of stanza 5 of The Meters of Boethius; to sē hāra wulf - the grey wolf, in line 82 of The Wanderer; to forst hāre - grey frost, in lines 1257-58 of Andreas; to hār hilderinc - a grey warrior, in lines 1306 and 3135 of Beowulf; and in line 38 of The Battle of Brunanburh.<sup>159</sup> Hār is used as a compound in three passages; as old age in Hrōðgar saet eald ond unhār - Hrothgar sat old and grey, in lines 356-57 of Beowulf; to describe an old wall in ruins rāeghār - grey with lichen, in line 10 of Ruin; and to refer to a feaxhār cwēne - a grey-haired (fair-haired) woman, in line 1 of Riddle 74.

Hasu, haso, or heasu - ashen or dusky grey is used ten times including three compounds. It describes bone haswan earn - the grey eagle, in line 4 of Riddle 24; rēcas stīgað haswe ofer hrōfum - smoke rises up grey over the roofs, in lines 6-7 of Riddle I; haswe culufan - a livid (grey) dove, in line 1451 of Genesis; haswe blēde - grey foliage, in line 9 of Riddle 13; and haswe herestrāeta - grey (dirty) highways, in line 284 of Exodus. The compounds are hasufag - grey coloured, as in mīn hasufag - my grey railment, in line 1 of Riddle 11; hasupād - grey-coated, as in bone hasupādan - the grey-coated one (the eagle), in line 62 of The Battle of Brunanburh;<sup>160</sup> and haswigfeðre - grey-

<sup>159</sup> Anderson & William, Old English Handbook, p.254.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 255

feathered, in line 153 of The Phoenix.

One other term is included in the grey group; this is blondenfeax or blandenfeax - having mixed hair or grizzly hair or being grizzly-haired, from geblandan - to blend, mix, mingle, trouble, disturb, corrupt,<sup>161</sup> and feax - head of hair. It is used seven times, as in lines 1594-95 of Beowulf: blondenfeaxe, gomele ymb gōdne ongeador spræcon - the grizzly-haired (meaning Hrothgar), the old, about the good warrior together spoke; and again in Beowulf, in lines 1791, 1873, and 2962; in Genesis, lines 2343 (referring to Sara), and 2602; and in beorn blandenfex - the grey-haired warrior (man), in line 45 of The Battle of Brunanburh.<sup>162</sup>

Another term for grey is gamolfeax - hoary locks or grey-haired, from gamol - old or aged, and feax - hair. It appears three times, as in pā waes on sālum since brytta, gamolfeax ond gūðrof - then was rejoiced the distributor of treasure grey-haired and brave in battle (war-famed), in lines 607-09 of Beowulf; and in yldo him on fareð, onsyn blacað, gomelfeax gnornað - old age overtakes him, his face turns pale (from blācian), grey-haired he laments, in lines 91-92 of The Seafarer. Gamolferhð - aged, advanced in age,

<sup>161</sup> Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 51.

<sup>162</sup> Anderson and William, Old English Handbook, p. 254.

grey by age, appears three times, as in gamolferhð goldes brytta - the aged dispenser of gold, in line 2868 of Genesis; in this passage, there is no literal reference to grey, but it is certainly implied.<sup>163</sup>

The mere mention of brown immediately brings to mind a problem similar to that encountered with grey. At what point does a colour stop being brown or begin to assume that name? In almost every case, the reader must take his cue from the context in which the word appears, pay particular attention to the object to which it applies, and form a picture in his mind. The same applies to modern poetry, but in the case of colours the images are already there. An interesting study would be to investigate if the Anglo-Saxon poet when describing colours expects a greater effort from the imagination of the reader than does a modern poet.

Brun - brown, appears eleven times, and five times in compounds. Several examples were given on pages 50 and 51 in the section discussing a plausible explanation for the use of brown for describing swords. Brown may go from dark to red. In this group when brown is applied to moving metal objects giving off much luminosity, the poet emphasizes the the metallic lustre of it, the flashing or glittering effect

---

<sup>163</sup>

Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," pp. 189-93.

the object has, as in brū<sup>n</sup>ag - a shining brown, from fāgian - to change in colour, vary, be variegated,<sup>164</sup> as in the compound brūnfāgne helm - a brown shining helmet, in line 2615 of Beowulf. Other compounds occur in niht - brūnwann oferbraed - the dusky (brown-like) night overspread, in lines 1305-06; and sealobrūn or salubrūn - dark rusty or dull brownish black, in hraēfen wandrode sweart ond sealobrūn - the hovering raven swarthy and dark brown, in lines 34-35 of The Fight at Finnsburg. Other usages are brūne lēode - the dark (brown) complexioned nation, as in line 70 of Exodus; brune yða - brown waters (dirty waves of the flood), in line 519 of Andreas; and most interesting because of its Latin background is the description of the shining effect of the 'brown' feathers of the tail of the bird, in line 296 of The Phoenix: sum brūn - somewhat (part) brown. The Latin original reads: fulvo distenta metallo -<sup>165</sup> tawny heavy (fully laden) metal-like; the word fulvo was translated on page 69, as French jaunâtre, fauve, d'or, and English brown with a touch of gold, that is, the yellow metal called gold. The translation of French fauve is:

1. a. (a) Fawn-coloured, fulvous;  
tawny (hair, etc.); (of deer) fallow.  
Orpington fauve - buff Orpington.

<sup>164</sup> Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 11.

<sup>165</sup> N. F. Blake, ed. The Phoenix (Manchester, 1964), p. 91, line 131.

Ciel fauve, lurid sky. (b) Odeur  
 fauve, musky smell. L'odeur fau-  
 ve de son corps, the musk of her  
 body.  
 2. s.m. (a) Fawn (colour). (b)  
 Le fauve, les (bêtes) fauves, deer.  
 (c) Les (grands) fauves, (fulvous)  
 wild beasts (lions, tigers, etc.)<sup>166</sup>

Fulvous, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is given as reddish-yellow, dull yellowish-brown or tawny, the etymological root being Latin fulvus - reddish-yellow, plus -ous.<sup>167</sup> It should not be surprising then if difficulty is experienced in knowing exactly the meaning of fulvous. The Latin Phoenix - Carmen de ave phoenice describes the colours of the bird's tail as being cauda porrigitur fulvo distenta metallo - the tail spread (with) heavy metal-like brown or tawny, in cujus maculis purpura - in which purple spots, mista rubet - (is) mixed red.<sup>168</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Phoenix uses three words to produce the effect desired: brūn - brownish, basu - purple, and blācum - bright. The word splottum - spots, blots, or patches, which follows blācum, is apparently used in the sense of splashes, as the Latin mista could suggest. It would seem logical to argue that

---

<sup>166</sup> J. E. Mansion, ed. Harrap's Standard French and English Dictionary (London, 1945), Part One, p. 359.

<sup>167</sup> Murray, New English Dictionary, Vol. VII, p. 597.

<sup>168</sup> Blake, The Phoenix, p. 91, lines 131-32.

the Anglo-Saxon poet used blācum - bright, shining, glittering, or flashing, in order to emphasize the shining brightness of the overall effect which, in fact, splashes of yellowish brown and purple on the feathers of a bird exposed to sunlight would produce.

Rēad - red is mentioned twenty times as such, and appears three times in compounds.<sup>169</sup> The terminology for blōd - blood is much greater, the more common terms are: blōddrync - bloodshed; blōden, blōdig, or blōdgeotende - bloody; blōdfag - blood-stained; blōdgyte - bloodshed; blōd-lēas - bloodless; drēorig - gory; heoldfor - bloody; heol-frig - bloody; and swätig - bloody; and a few others.

Rēad is used to describe the blood on the cross, in sio rēade rod - the red rood, in line 1101 of Christ; and ecgum rēōdan - red swords of Isaac's sacrifice, in line 413 of Exodus. Fire and flames are described as rece ond rēade lēge - smoke and red flame, in line 44 of Genesis, and lig ...rēad rēðe glēd - red fire fierce and glowing, in lines 44-46 of The Fortunes of Men. Roses are referred to as rosena rēade - red roses, in line 288 of The Judgment Day II. The Red Sea is said to have rēade strēamas - red waters, in line 296 of Exodus. Rēad is applied to dress ornaments, in

---

169

Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," pp. 195-97.

hyrste beorhte, rēade ond scire on rēafte minum - bright decorations, red and gleaming on my garment, in lines 1-2 of Riddle 11. It describes reddish yellow metal, in gere-node rēadum golde - adorned with reddish gold, in line 338 of Judith. In the Middle Ages gold was often referred to as red probably because it was darker than modern gold from a higher percentage of copper alloy.

Geolu or geolo - yellow occurs only four times, and fealu, feale, fealwa, fealwes, fealewes, fealuwes, or fealo - fallow, yellow, tawny, yellowish brown, or yellowish green and their compounds are used nineteen times.<sup>170</sup> Usually, when yellow is the more noticeable shade, the object is described as being fealu. Geolu - yellow is found in geolo godwebb - fine yellow web, in line 10 of Riddle 35; twice in Beowulf, in paet ic sweord bere opðe sīdne scyld, geolorand to gūpe - that I bear a sword or large shield, a yellow buckler (the shield being the colour of the linden-wood) to battle, of lines 437-38, and in geolwe linden - yellow linden (shield made of linden-wood), of line 2610. Fealu - fallow is used preferably to describe the green sea water, as in fealone stream - the fallow stream, in line 1538 of Andreas; on fealone flōd - on the

<sup>170</sup> Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," pp. 195-97.

the fallow flood, in line 36 of The Battle of Brunanburh;<sup>171</sup>  
fealewe wāegas - the fallow waves or billows, in line 1589  
 of Andreas; and ofer fealone flōd - over the fallow flood,  
 in line 1950 of Beowulf.

Can the sea be really yellowish green? A low partial overcast of thin cloud texture will allow a certain amount of sunlight through and, indeed, give that impression. The shadows cast by the clouds over the sea make the water appear of different colour. With fog and rain among the most prevalent atmospheric conditions of England, Scotland, and Ireland, any one sailing into Belfast harbour or into any other seaport of the British Isles and Eire after sunrise, in early morning or late afternoon, is likely to experience such a phenomena. Pilots flying over the sea and about the seashore know that.

The compounds made with fealo are fealohilte swurd - the yellow (golden) hilted sword, in line 166 of The Battle of Maldon, and last weardod, aeppefealuwe - followed the apple-fallow track, in lines 2164-65 of Beowulf. A road is referred to as fealwe straete - fallow road (street), in line 916 of Beowulf, and to steeds, in fealwe mearas - fallow horses, in line 865 of Beowulf. The colour fallow

---

171

Anderson and William, Old English Handbook,  
 p. 254.

applied to horses brings the question of scire - shining, blāc - flashing, and beorhte - bright, back to light again. A brown horse is brown no matter how exercised the imagination of the viewer might be, but the amount of sunlight striking that horse may change the light caused to be reflected from it, and make it appear yellowish brown. This was the case of the piece of green corduroy exposed to bright light, reference to which was made on page 68. Finally, flame is described as fealo lig - yellow flame, in line 218 of The Phoenix.

It comes as no surprise that gold - gold, the most precious Anglo-Saxon metal to be associated with treasures, should be counted as a colour word in Anglo-Saxon terminology. The difficulty, however, arises in distinguishing it from yellow. The word gold and its compounds is used over one hundred times.<sup>172</sup> Appearing more frequently are: gold-blēoh - a golden colour or golden-hued (object); gold-beorht - bright with gold, as in line 33 of The Ruin; goldfāh or goldfāg - variegated or shining with gold, as in lines 308, 994, and 1800 of Beowulf; goldfellen - of gilded leather; goldtorht - bright like gold; and goldhoma or goldhama, as in line 991 of Elene.

---

<sup>172</sup> Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," p. 199.

Grēne - green was the colour most popular with Anglo-Saxon writers; most references are found in religious poetry.<sup>173</sup> Would this point to a liturgical influence, green being the conventional colour of hope? Green does not occur in Anglo-Saxon heroic poems. It is found in eorðan eallgrēne - the earth all green, in line 798 of Andreas; in grēne folde - the green earth, in line 1561 of Genesis; in grēnewongas - green fields, in line 5 of Riddle 66; in grēne graes - green grass, in line 6 of Riddle 15; in synd on worulde grēne geardas - in the world are green regions, in lines 510-11 of Genesis; in heafod hindan grēne - on back of head, green, and sē hals grēne - the green neck, in lines 293 and 298 of The Phoenix; and lēaf beoð grēne - the leaves are green, in line 314 of Solomon and Saturn.

This limited survey of the use of colour words in Anglo-Saxon poetry has demonstrated the continued need and importance of semantics which must be used to determine the exact meaning and correct interpretation of words used to describe colours. This study has made clear also that the dictionary can assist only in establishing a foundation for discovering the meaning of a word, that is, the proper relationship between name and sense, the concept or idea the word implies being determined by its historical development.

---

<sup>173</sup> Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," p. 200.

Lindheim was conscious of the problem involved when he pointed that

few people would deny that the range and power of any vocabulary cannot be adequately reflected in a dictionary. Dictionaries are incapable of presenting other than purely formal links between words owing to their alphabetical arrangement; their space is too restricted to permit printing of words in adequate context; and finally, it is beyond their scope to show why ideas are expressed in a certain way.<sup>174</sup>

Lindheim's statement implies that the dictionary cannot give the historical sense or development of a word; this can only be arrived at by experience, and by bringing expert knowledge to the text being read or translated. In the case of Anglo-Saxon religious works, for example, the Latin originals should be consulted when possible. Furthermore, a word should be examined to discover if it used conventionally, symbolically, figuratively, or literally; to have developed this aspect of colour words in Anglo-Saxon poetry in this thesis would have entailed going far beyond the limits of this paper. There is no doubt that some Anglo-Saxon colour words were determined by convention, others were symbolic of the objects described, several were used figuratively, and various literally. To investigate every

---

<sup>174</sup> Lindheim, "Problems of Old English Semantics," p. 67.

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 91

Anglo-Saxon colour word, and determine its use under these terms remains another attractive topic for a thesis.

Much more research has been done for this part on semantics in relation to Anglo-Saxon, and much information culled. A detailed discussion of that information is not possible here because of the already long treatment given the topic.<sup>175</sup> The purpose of this section on Anglo-Saxon semantics has been to show that without a deep knowledge of the language and its historical background, a true, that is, correct interpretation of Anglo-Saxon literature is not possible. Baugh mentions that a contemporary of Samuel

---

<sup>175</sup> Among the topics investigated and found to be of particular interest to this paper are:  
S. O. Andrew, "Some Principle of Old English Word Order," Medium Aevum, III (October, 1934), pp. 167-88.  
(Cambridge, 1940), p. 31 (doubt as to principal or subordinate clauses may affect the meaning).

Wilfrid Bonser, The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England (London, 1963), pp. 117-67 (the pagan background); pp. 216-20 (colour); pp. 246-49 (the Lorica); pp. 306-40 (herb remedies); pp. 381-402 (the body, from the head downwards); and pp. 403-18 (other diseases).

J. M. Hart, "The Anglo-Saxon gien, giena," MLN, VIII (1892-93), pp. 122-23.

George Hempl, "The Etymology of Old English aebre, aefre, E. ever," MLN, III-IV (1888-89), pp. 417-18.

Walter W. Skeat, English Dialects (Cambridge, 1911), pp. 1-9.

Henry Sweet, "Old English Etymologies," "Various Notes, Disguised Compounds in Old English," and "Dialects and Prehistoric Forms of Old English," in Collected Papers of Henry Sweet, ed., H. C. Wyld (Oxford, 1913), pp. 212-27, 185-211.

Charles Huntington Whitman, "Old English Mammal Names," JEGP, VI (1906-07), pp. 649-57.

Butler described the first part of Hudibras, as "the most admired piece of drollery."<sup>176</sup> In this century drollery is synonymous of jesting, humour, or oddity. Butler's work had all that, but it was primarily what the word implied in Restoration semantics, "an attack - or a miscellany largely filled with attacks."<sup>177</sup> This exemplifies the importance of knowing the historical meaning of words. Similarly, many of Chaucer's works cannot be given a correct interpretation unless the courtly love tradition on which they are based is understood. To expect a correct understanding of Anglo-Saxon literature on the basis of the words as they appear today, translated in many cases without the benefit of semantics and other Anglo-Saxon scholarship, is making a drollery of what is literature.

## 2. Influence of Latin and Christianity

### Upon Anglo-Saxon.

The reader, student, or scholar of Anglo-Saxon who pays a genuine attention to semantics in his interpretation

---

<sup>176</sup> Albert Croll Baugh, Tucker Brooke, Samuel C. Chew, Kemp Malone, Geo. Sherburne, A Literary History of England (New York, 1948), p. 734.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 734.

of Anglo-Saxon literature will soon discover that Latin and Christianity had a marked influence on the Anglo-Saxon language. In many cases difficulties of interpretation will solve themselves in the Latin background of Anglo-Saxon. This is illustrated very clearly in pointing out the origin of certain Latin themes in Anglo-Saxon writings, such as the ubi sunt theme, and rhetorical figures, as the exemplum, interrogatio, repetitio, and consolatio, some of them exemplified in the homilies, and in The Seafarer, The Wanderer, The Gifts of Men, The Fates of Men, and Christ.<sup>178</sup>

The underlying power of Latin on the language of the Anglo-Saxons has been recognized by scholars of all ages. Every complete history of the development of the English language devotes some space to it.<sup>179</sup> Bosworth found it useful to

---

<sup>178</sup> Cross, Latin Themes in Old English, pp. 3-9.

<sup>179</sup> This list is restricted to the works which have been consulted for this paper:

Albert C. Baugh, A History of the English Language, 2nd ed. (New York, 1957), pp. 29-32, 52, and 86-106.

Edwin Lee Johnson, Latin Words of Common English (Boston, 1931), particularly, pp. 3-34.

Mario Pei, The Families of Words (New York, 1962), pp. 4ff, 11ff, 17ff, 21, 23ff, 28-29, 32ff, 37-38, 44ff, 49ff, 52-53, 55, 58, 70, 80, 86, 94, 100, 102ff, 112, 114, 117, 130ff, 134, 146, 158, 163, 179, 183, 185, 188, 193, 196, 199, 206, 208, 216, and 225.

Thomas Pyles, The Origins and Development of the English Language (New York, 1964), pp. 85-86, and 323-28.

Logan Pearsall Smith, The English Language, 2nd ed. (London, 1960), pp. 17-37, and 100-122.

Frederick T. Wood, An Outline History of the English Language (London, 1954), pp. 37-41, 126-27, 148, and 248-253.

accompany many of his definitions by Latin equivalents.<sup>180</sup>

In an article on Beowulf, Malone emphasizes the rôle of Latin in Anglo-Saxon literary works, which "are rooted and grounded in the Latin Christianity which dominated the culture of western Europe from the post-classical period" on.<sup>181</sup> The Latin tongue, he remarks, was not a novelty when Aldhelm and Caedmon began to compose, and by "the seventh century a large body of Latin Christian prose and verse had come into being."<sup>182</sup> With Aldhelm's oratio simplex - straightforward prose, and his oratio perpetua - ornate and artistic style, the tradition was continued with Wilfrid, Ceolfrith, abbot of Monkwearmouth and Bede's teacher, and throughout the eighth century with Bede, Egbert, Boniface, and Alcuin.<sup>183</sup>

The influence of Latin on the Anglo-Saxon language is also noticeable in Latin borrowings throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, although the amount of Latin loan words is surprisingly small.<sup>184</sup> The nature of this borrowing throws considerable light on the understanding of the language. Borrowing was done directly when an Anglo-Saxon word could be used to translate a Latin meaning, word for word, as the

---

<sup>180</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary.

<sup>181</sup> Kemp Malone, "Beowulf," ES, XXIX (1948), p. 161.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., pp. 161-63.

<sup>183</sup> René L. M. Derolez, "Anglo-Saxon Literature;

Anglo-Saxon word gifu - gift. Gifu has its origin in the runic symbol X exemplified in line 19 of The Rune Poem: X gumena byp gleng ond herenys - a gift is the honour and praise of men, the rune X representing the Anglo-Saxon letter g, the name of which is gifu - gift or favour. In this case the word gifu is used to describe the Latin gratia in the sense of divine grace or undeserved favour, and is called a direct borrowing from Latin.<sup>185</sup> Dryhten - lord, king, or chief, is another word which is an exact parallel of the corresponding Latin; because its native meaning could be easily applied to describe the Christian God, and was found, indeed, adequate to translate the Latin dominus, it was used as such.

The rendering of abstract ideas was often done indirectly by coining native compounds, so much so, that when a word shows that the idea expressed is not a Germanic concept, it is usually safe to regard it as a borrowing from Latin. The abstract word religion, for example, was rendered by æfaestnes, from æ - law, statute, custom, rite, marriage, faest - fast, fixed, firm, stiff, solid, constant,

---

'Attic' or 'Asiatic'? Old English Poetry and its Latin Background," English Studies Today, 2nd Series (1961), pp. 95-96.

<sup>184</sup> Lindheim, "Problems of Old English Semantics," p. 73.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

fortified, and nes - a suffix for feminine abstract nouns. Another case in point is the Anglo-Saxon word - wyrd, which eventually became identified with fate, from Latin fatum, but originally it was found inadequate to convey the idea of Latin providentia - divine providence. This was too vague, and the strange, abstract, and ambiguous concept was made clear in the word fōrsceāwung - contemplation, foresight, from fōrsceāwian - to foresee. Such loan-translations are easily recognized because they express an idea taken from a foreign culture, are originally identical or partly so with the corresponding Latin terms, and the prefixes, stems, and endings are very similar to the Latin.<sup>186</sup>

Another type of borrowing which actually falls under the coining of new words, is the analogical transference of ideas. A Latin word made of a single form is translated into Anglo-Saxon by one word made up of two or more elements expressing the same idea. For example, Latin apostolus - apostle becomes the Anglo-Saxon compound āerendwreca or āerendraca, from two words; a) geāerendian - to go on an errand, carry a message, send word to, and āerende - an errand, a message, an embassy, news, tidings, a mission; and b) wreca or reccan - to unfold a tale, to narrate, recite, tell, say,

<sup>186</sup> Lindheim, "Problems of Old English Semantics," pp. 73-75.

Kroesch, "Semantic Borrowing in Old English," pp. 50-51.

to unfold the meaning of anything, to explain, interpret, expound, to rule, direct, guide, and to correct, to wield authority, give judgement, to take care of, and be interested in.<sup>187</sup> Finally, there is borrowing by synonymic analogy, that is, association by analogy, in which the meaning only is affected in the analogical process. This happens when an Anglo-Saxon word is associated with a Latin synonym and takes on another meaning by extension in addition to those the Latin synonyms are known to have. Such words are edreccan - chew, ruminare, and by extension consider, from Latin ruminare; and tacn - token or sign, and by extension, a prognostic, symptom, standard, banner, from Latin signum.

The Anglo-Saxon borrowing habit from Latin has a parallel in the Old German literature extant. A prominent feature of that literature is its bilingual character, the second language element being Latin or Greek. It is recognized that much of the older Germanic literature is a product of translations from those languages into Germanic idioms.<sup>188</sup> In translating from Latin, the translator was often hard put to it to find in

---

<sup>187</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 18, and 788.  
Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 9, 278.

<sup>188</sup> Kroesch, "Semantic Borrowing," p. 51.

his dialect adequate expression for the ideas of the foreign tongue. If he borrowed the Latin term he was less likely to be understood; so he more often attempted to express the idea by using a native word or combination of words, at times in word-for-word translations, at other times more freely by native circumlocutions. These semantic borrowings represent largely ideas that had not previously found adequate expression in the native language, and this probably accounts for the large number of compounds in this type of words.... Latin was a tremendous force in the modification of the Germanic language.<sup>189</sup>

The same procedure was followed by the Anglo-Saxons. There is no doubt that a knowledge of the borrowing methods of Anglo-Saxon writers enables a clearer understanding and an easier interpretation of their works by tracing certain words to their roots and determining their precise meaning.

The influence of Virgil in Anglo-Saxon England of the seventh and eighth centuries has left a lasting imprint on the writings of that period, and the effects cannot be underestimated. In describing the style of Beowulf as truly "admirable," W. S. Mackie remarks that "the author was, like Virgil, a lord of language."<sup>190</sup> Jack D. Ogilvy, in his

---

<sup>189</sup> Kroesch, "Semantic Borrowing," p. 52.

<sup>190</sup> W. S. Mackie, "Notes Upon the Text and The Interpretation of 'Beowulf'," MLR, XXXIV (1939), p. 515

painstaking and valuable compilation of books known to Anglo-Saxon writers of Latin, from the period 670 to 804, reports that, according to his anonymous biographer, Alcuin was so much enthused and given to Virgil in his youth that he had to be "recalled to studies more befitting a churchman by infernal intervention somewhat reminiscent of Jerome's anti-Ciceronian dream."<sup>191</sup> It is significant that Virgil is among the few pagan names mentioned by Alcuin in his catalogue of the York library. That the Anglo-Saxons knew Virgil as well as any one in the Middle Ages should not be surprising; it was the fashion of the time. To draw a complete list of uses of Virgil by Anglo-Saxon writers is another thesis topic worth considering. It is known already that

every Englishman of whose work we have more than a page or two - and some ... only a few lines - shows some acquaintance with the Aeneid. Boniface, Lul, Milret of Worcester, Egburg (a learned lady of Boniface's

---

<sup>191</sup> J. H. Baxter, C. Johnson, J. F. Willard, eds, "An Index of British and Irish Latin Writers 400-1520," Bulletin du Cange, Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi, Tome VII (1932), pp. 110-219.

Charles Cross, ed. The Sources and Literature of English History from the Earliest Times to about 1485 (London, 1915), pp. 1-718.

J. D. A. Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin Writers from Aldhelm to Alcuin (670-804) (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), Studies and Documents, No. 2, pp. 88-89.

circle), Tatwine ... the author of Beowulf ... knew the Aeneid ... Aldhelm and Bede, Boniface, Lul, and Alcuin seem to have known the Eclogues, and Tatwine and Alcuin the Georgics. Vs. 2 of Tatwine's twenty-eighth Riddle may echo Ciris, 122; but Aldhelm's quotation of Culex comes by way of Donatus' Vita Virgilii.<sup>192</sup>

There were other reasons why Virgil was so popular at that time in Anglo-Saxon England. With the coming of the scholars Theodore and Hadrian in 669, the establishment of centers of learning, the flowering of the golden age of Anglo-Saxon libraries, between the coming of Hadrian and Theodore and the death of Benedict Biscop in 690, the eighth century was receiving the impetus that was to make it one of the greatest periods of England's intellectual history.

Ogilvy lists some 250 authors known, or whose writings were available at that time, representing well over a thousand works including, among other topics, theology, biblical commentary, hagiography, grammar and rhetoric, history, mythology, philosophy, astronomy natural history, jurisprudence, and medicine.<sup>193</sup> It is known from these that the aggregate of patristic works in Latin and Greek formed an extraordinary library, and the belles lettres collection of pagan and Christian Latin poets was unique. Latin clas-

---

192

Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin, p. 89.

sics, however, were the inspiration and guidance of Anglo-Saxon writers in the formation of their style and diction, Virgil and Cicero being the most popular authors, with Virgil remaining the master of poetic form, and the model grammarians and rhetoricians emulated.<sup>194</sup> A dozen pages of Aldhelm's quotations from Virgil have been gathered and show even distribution through his prose and poetry.<sup>195</sup>

Virgil's moral teachings were held in high admiration by the Church of the Middle Ages, and churchmen looked upon the pagan divine as a "Roman Isaiah," and made every effort to reconcile the poet's pre-Christian sentiments with Christian doctrine, transforming often Virgil's sayings, such as, non, mihi si linguae centum oraque centum -<sup>196</sup> not if I had a hundred tongues and mouth (referring to the terrors of hell), to the praise of God, as Alcuin's semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt -<sup>197</sup> your glory, name and renown will endure forever. Earlier, St. Boniface had written in line 568 of his Aenigmata: et poemata Erebi

<sup>193</sup> Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin, pp. 1-90.

<sup>194</sup> Tom Burns Haber, A Comparative Study of the Beowulf and the Aeneid (Princeton, 1931), p. 5.

<sup>195</sup> Albert Stanburrough Cook, "The Possible Begetter of the Old English Beowulf and Widsith," Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, XXV (April, 1922), pp. 335-36.

<sup>196</sup> J. W. Mackail, ed. The Aeneid (Oxford, 1930), VI 625, p. 239. All references to The Aeneid are from this edition, and translations are personal unless indicated to the contrary.

lustrent per devia Ditis -<sup>198</sup> may thus bless even the poems of Erebus through the wildernesses of Dis, echoing very strongly Virgil's Aeneid VII, lines 568-69: hic specus horrendum et saevi spiracula Ditis / monstrantur - here is revealed a dread cavern and the windings (maze) of cruel Dis.

Anglo-Saxon literary ecclesiastics could choose from a gold mine of similar Virgilian phrases, such as the following lines from the Aeneid: I, 604: mens sibi conscia recti ... - a mind avail within itself of the Right; III, 57: auri sacra fames - accursed hunger for gold; IV, 412: improbe amor, quid non mortalia pectora cogis - cruel love, to what extremes do you not impel human hearts; I, 349: auri caecus amore - blind with love of gold; V, 815: unum pro multis dabitur caput - one head (life) will be given (sacrificed) for many; and there were many more. It is relevant to remember that

Zappert says of classical allusions found in the writings of the clergy that, unless there is definite proof that the author had access to another poet, the natural conclusion is that Vergil is the most probable source .... Countless quotations from the

---

<sup>197</sup> Haber, A Comparative Study, p. 6.

<sup>198</sup> St. Boniface, Aenigmata, line 568, mentioned by Haber in A Comparative Study of the Beowulf and the Aeneid, p. 9.

letters of ecclesiastics of all ranks show how great an influence Vergil really possessed during the Middle Ages in Britain.<sup>199</sup>

Finally, Anglo-Saxon kings who were scholars contributed also to Virgil's popularity, and liked to think that their ancestry could be traced back to the kings of early Rome.<sup>200</sup> There were Aethilwald, King of Mercia, whose writing style was as brilliant as that of his master Aldhelm; King Geolwulf of Northumbria, to whom Bede dedicated his History of the English Church and People; and King Aldfrid of Northumbria, to whom Aldhelm addressed his De Metris.<sup>201</sup>

With Latin learning very popular, Virgil's prestige running high, and Anglo-Saxon scholars bent on giving their writings the Virgilian touch and flavour, it should not come as a surprise to anyone, if contemporary experts of Anglo-Saxon writings should recognize and point to the classical technique which Anglo-Saxon works have inherited from Virgil and other Latin classics.<sup>202</sup> Commenting on Beowulf Klaeber states:

---

<sup>199</sup> Georg Zappert, Virgils Forleben im Mittelalter (Vienna, 1851), mentioned in Haber's A Comparative Study, pp. 6-7.

<sup>200</sup> Haber, A Comparative Study, p. 5.

<sup>201</sup> Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin, p. 105.

<sup>202</sup> Adeline C. Bartlett, The Larger Rhetorical Patterns in Anglo-Saxon Poetry (New York, 1935), pp. 110-113.

Latin influence ... is perceptible in the figures of antithesis, 183 ff., anaphora, 864 ff., 2107 ff., polysyndeton, 1763 ff., 1392 ff. Also Latin models for certain kennings and metaphors (e.g., appellations of God and the devil (Grendel), and for terms denoting 'dying' and 'living') ... in the use of certain appositive participles (thus in 815, 916, 1368, 1370, 1913, 2350) and, likewise, in the predilection for passive construction (in cases like 642 f., 1629 f., 1787 f., 1896 f., 3021 f., ...). The use of the plur. form of the neuter 203 æalra 1727, is no doubt a Latinism.

To an informed Latinist, many idioms appearing in Anglo-Saxon are recognized to be Latin renderings of similar Latin expressions; for example, Latin ill vero - but he, is used frequently by Aelfric, and is translated into Anglo-Saxon by - he soðlice.<sup>204</sup> Some other Latinisms discovered in stylistic devices are the doubling of sentences with antithetical content, a rhetorical figure so prom-

---

<sup>203</sup> Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. lxviii, and xciv. The rhetorical figure anaphora is the repetition of the same word or phrase in several successive clauses; the polysyndeton consists in the use of several conjunctions close together or the repetition of the same conjunction, and is the opposite of the asyndeton, that is, the rhetorical figure that omits the conjunctions, as I came, I saw, I conquered.

<sup>204</sup> Aelfric's Homilies, ed. Thorpe, I 462. 12, mentioned by S. O. Andrew in Syntax and Style in Old English (Cambridge, 1940), p. 53. Other pure Latinism mentioned are: nec mora; ne quidem; ne tum quidem; ne sic quidem; ne ic; nec ego; nec ... nec; p. 65.

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 105

inent in Latin homiletic style, and exemplified in Beowulf, lines 183-88; the paratactic construction which will be discussed in Chapter IV, under rhetorical patterns; the anaphora found in the parallel group, as in lines 2105-14 of Beowulf, with the anaphora hwīlum - sometimes; the paranomasia or wordplay; the chiasmus, a rhetorical figure having a pair of similar expressions, the second being an inversion of the first, for example, he rose and down sat she, showing command of balance and echo. To these examples may be added macaronic passages written in a blend of Anglo-Saxon and Latin, as in lines 667-77 of The Phoenix, The Lord's Prayer III, A Summons to Prayer, and some of The Metrical Charms.<sup>205</sup> Riddle 90 is written in Latin only.

Latin contributed also to the understanding of certain Anglo-Saxon inflexions and to the phonology of the language, that is, the science of speech sounds and their history and changes. Certain Latin words when introduced into Anglo-Saxon were subjected to inflexional and phonological changes. Such are the Latin mensa - table, which became Anglo-Saxon mēse, the weak feminine retaining the original a ending at the time the word was introduced; Latin strata - street, became Anglo-Saxon strāet, the a

---

205 A. C. Bartlett, The Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 4, 7-8, 36, 40-42, and 81.

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 106

being dropped; and Latin candela - candle, for Anglo-Saxon candol and candel, with the ending being changed to ol or el. Some of the phonological phenomena are represented by the change of the short vowel e into u before nasals, as in Anglo-Saxon pund - pound (in weight or in money) or pint, from Latin pondo, and munt - hill or mountain, from Latin mons; the Latin diphthong ia, in diabolus - devil, becoming eo, in deofol.<sup>206</sup> There are many similar changes, but the purview of this paper does not allow to elaborate the topic.

## Influence of Christianity.

The deep rooted influence of Christianity on Anglo-Saxon letters comes to the surface every time new scholarship is added to the fast growing volume of Anglo-Saxon research. It has been shown that Christian literature in prose and verse in the Latin language was popular at the time of Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin, that is, during the seventh and eighth centuries, when Latin Christianity dominated the culture of western Europe. Regarding the effects of this scholarship on Anglo-Saxon England, it should be remembered that the Church had developed alongside a strong

---

<sup>206</sup> Henry Sweet, "Dialects and Prehistoric Forms of Old English," Collected Papers of Henry Sweet, ed. H. C. Wyld (Oxford, 1913), pp. 185-88, and 193-94.

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 107

and enlightened pagan civilization and culture which were exhibited in Roman classical antiquity, and that the

Roman and Irish missions of the sixth and seventh centuries planted the Church of England in the midst of another pagan culture .... The new religion did not scorn the literary tradition either of classical or of Germanic paganism. Aldhelm, the first ... to compose religious verse in Latin, and Caedmon, the first ... to compose religious verse in English, were contemporaries .... Each sang the praises of the Christian God in an artistic medium inherited from paganism. Each poured new wine into old bottles.<sup>207</sup>

In the case of classical antiquity much Greek and Latin literature was bequeathed to succeeding Christian generations who were able to draw comparisons of value with contemporary writings, and follow the evolution of words and their meanings under Christian influence. This was not the case with Anglo-Saxon writings whose total destruction was avoided by chance only. The relatively small number of writings extant demonstrate already a marked <sup>influence</sup> of Christianity on the thinking and writing of Anglo-Saxon writers, an influence that almost every one concedes. Had the contents of the libraries of so many monasteries and centers of

---

<sup>207</sup> Malone, "Beowulf," English Studies, p. 161.

learning for young men, and the valuable manuscripts turned out at the busy scriptoria throughout Anglo-Saxon England survived in their totality, the evidence of the influence of Latin Christianity would most likely emerge much greater.

The healthy spirit of the Roman Church was soon to permeate the life of the Anglo-Saxons, their mode of thinking, and their language. It is too often forgotten that the strength of Christianity lies in its endeavour to reveal ultimate truth in the speech of man. In so doing, the medium of expression, language, is developed to a considerable degree of perfection, and becomes a powerful instrument for transmitting the new religion, its spiritual doctrine and meaning, and the philosophy of life and general culture the new faith engenders.

The Church of Rome made a great impression on the Anglo-Saxon heathens because the new religion appealed to them with its emphasis on external representation, and particularly with Pope Gregory's tolerant approach toward heathen worship and practices. In addition, the Anglo-Saxons discovered in Latin Christianity a unique organization which, to their Teutonic minds, appeared superior to their own in its ethical ideas, its order of companions or comitatus and, in many other ways, a religion that could fit their way of life, so much so, as to become their own and

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 109

something real to which they could contribute with their body and soul. The great missionary movement of the eighth century was a direct result of that influence.

The influence of Latin Christianity on Anglo-Saxon religious vocabulary is tremendous. This is shown convincingly in two excellent works by H. MacGillivray and A. Keiser.<sup>208</sup> MacGillivray was inspired in his endeavour by the works of three scholars, R. von Raumer,<sup>209</sup> Karl Weinhold,<sup>210</sup> and Bernhard Kahle,<sup>211</sup> who had studied Old High German, Gothic, and Old Norse respectively with reference to the same influence. MacGillivray inherited from them the idea for the topic, and copied their method for the classification of the material; he undertook the gigantic task

---

<sup>208</sup> H. S. MacGillivray, "The Influence of Christianity on the Vocabulary of Old English," Studien zur englischen Philologie, VIII (Halle, 1902).

Albert Keiser, The Influence of Christianity on the Vocabulary of Old English Poetry, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol. V, Nos. 1 and 2 (University of Illinois, 1918).

<sup>209</sup> R. von Raumer, Die Einwirkung des Christentums auf die Althochdeutsche Sprache (Stuttgart, 1845).

<sup>210</sup> K. Weinhold, Die Gotische Sprache im Dienste des Christentums (Halle, 1870).

<sup>211</sup> B. Kahle, "Die altnordische Sprache im Dienste des Christentums," I. Teil: Die Prosa. Acta Germanica, I, 4 (Berlin, 1890), pp. 305-425.

... "Das Christentum in der altwestnordischen Dichtung," Arkiv f. Nord. Fil. N.S., XIII (1891), pp. 1-40, and 97-160.

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 110

of tracing the influence of Christianity in all Anglo-Saxon poetry and prose pieces. Part of his work was published in 1902, but fourteen years later he declared that his hopes for the completion of the work begun had been abandoned.<sup>212</sup>

Keiser limited his field of operation. He took on the research begun by MacGillivray, made ample use of his predecessor's material, and completed a survey of the poetic works only. The prose work, however, has been left unfinished since MacGillivray's initial work. As a result, many details have remained incomplete with the exclusion of prose from Keiser's study, and many important words have been omitted. A few examples will illustrate. Cyðere, from Greek martus - witness, and by extension martyr, that is, one who bears witness by his death, this word appearing in poetry as Anglo-Saxon martyre, martyr, martir, or martr, and as prowere, from prowian - to endure, suffer, die, pay for. An attractive word is leornigcniht, leornugcniht, or leorningcild - a youth engaged in study, scholar, disciple, or student, from leornian - to learn, study, read, and leorning - learning, study, meditation, reading, and cniht - a boy, youth, attendant, servant, from knight, one who serves.

---

<sup>212</sup> Keiser, "Influence of Christianity," p.5

As it was so rightly affirmed

the exclusion of prose from this study has resulted in most regrettable incompleteness at many points. ... Considering the prose of the Anglo-Saxon period from the Cura Pastoralis to the great homilist Aelfric, what 'literature' could reflect more inevitably and more completely the 'Christian Influence on the language? Prose, not poetry, is primarily discursive, argumentative, persuasive, just the medium to express popular thought. Poetry does not systematize thought; for that one looks to prose. For an enumeration of the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit we do not look to Cynewulf's Christ ... but to the homilies and tracts of Aelfric .... So too for the heafod-leahtras, the 'Deadly Sins,' we turn to Aelfric ....<sup>213</sup>

The value of the research done with Anglo-Saxon poetic works does not lose in merit because of the incompleteness of the prose investigation. On the contrary, the scholarly nature and importance of Keiser's study emphasizes the necessity of looking at both prose and poetry for a complete analysis, since without one, the other cannot be a representative and definitive work on the influence of Christianity on the language of the Anglo-Saxons.

Hundreds of religious words, that is, words owing

---

<sup>213</sup> James W. Bright, "Brief Mention," MLN, XXXVI (May, 1921), Review of Albert Keiser's work, p. 317. It should be remarked that Bright confuses the nature of

their origin from contact with Christianity, including derivatives, synonyms and kennings, compounds, and several hundred Biblical proper names, are now known to have come directly from Latin by way of borrowing, imitation, or translation. It is logical that these words should be found in terms relating to religion or pertaining to it. God, the angels, faith, the soul, the Virgin Mary, saints, martyrs, liturgy, church buildings and services, the sacraments, the elect, the damned, heaven, hell, devils, death and judgment, are some of the many topics which have yielded words owing their origin to Latin Christianity. The following words will exemplify.

Hæðen - heathen, pagan, gentile in contrast to Christians, appears in hæþenra hyht - the heathen's hope, in line 179 of Beowulf. Crīsten - christian, from crīst - the anointed one, was originally borrowed directly from the Hebrew word meaning messiah, and in Anglo-Saxon it was taken directly from Latin christiani, a word which in turn comes from the Latin verb catechizare, the prima signatio of the catechumens, distinguished from baptism itself, the Anglo-Saxon equivalent being crīstnian - to make a Christ-

---

literature, or at least seems to do so. One goes to scientific writing, in preference to literature, to learn the truth about things. The main purpose of the homilist is generally to communicate. Most sermons of Bossuet are pieces of scientific writing; this, in no way, excludes the homily from literature.

ian or to baptize; this word is found in crīstnað and claensað - (water which) christianizes and cleanses, in line 397 of Solomon and Saturn. Hēahfaeder comes probably from Latin pater excelsus - the high or great father, that is, God is thought of in terms of a patriarch, a word which is translated by hēahfaeder, from hēah - high, tall, lofty, sublime, and faeder - father.

Marian maessan - Mary's mass or Marymas, in line 20 of The Menologium, has to do with Candlemas, the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary; it is the most ancient festival in honour of the Mother of Jesus. It is interesting to observe that, at first, Candlemas was celebrated on the 14th of February, forty days after Christ's birth, but with Christmas being moved back to December 25, Marymas fell on February 2. In the East, the feast was primarily a festival of the Lord, but in the West, Mary was eulogized and became the centre of attraction. Anglo-Saxon maesse - mass has its origin in Latin messa or missa. Amen is borrowed directly from Latin.

Terms denoting God's word are many. An example is bod or gebod - command, message, precept, preaching; another is bebod - commandment, injunction, order, decree, as in we ... þine bodu bræcon - we broke thy commandments, in line 109 of The Lord's Prayer II; ac min bibod bræce -

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 114

but my commandment break, in line 1393 of Christ; and swa bebugeð<sup>x</sup> gebod - as the commandment extendeth, in line 230 of The Menologium.

An exceedingly interesting word that points to the teaching of Christianity is middangeard or woruld - the earth, that is, the middle dwelling situated between heaven and hell. The doctrine of the Church teaches that there is a place called heaven for the elect, a home termed hell for the damned, and the dwelling of man living on earth, being a temporary abode for man awaiting, in the physical sense, to go to one or the other place. Latin used mundus and saeculum - the world, as opposed to heaven, while Old High German used mittilgard or mittangeard for Latin mundus and saeculum. Middangeard appeared also to describe mankind, as in middangeardes weard - the guardian of mankind, in line 596 of Daniel.

An equally striking word is maegen meaning strength, power, vigor, and might. It was used by the Church to translate the Latin virtus - virtue, as in maegn ond modcraeft - virtue and intelligence, in line 408 of Elene. Other words used for virtue are duguða<sup>x</sup> - virtue, from power, as in line 57 of The Panther; cyst - meaning freewill, election, the choicest, moral excellence, virtue, as in cystum, in line 106 of The Gifts of Men; and the plural of pēaw - usage,

custom, habit, conduct, disposition, and in the plural, virtues, good manners, morals, as in crīstenum pēawum - christian virtues, in line 1210 of Elene. Keiser lists 343 religious terms which he considers exclusively poetical words, excluding Biblical names, kennings in general, and many derivatives.<sup>214</sup>

The examples given in this section serve to illustrate, in a partial way only, the considerable influence of the Church on the language of the Anglo-Saxons, and how the beliefs of the new faith found expression in the everyday vocabulary of the people. It is to the credit of the high ideals and doctrine of the Church that

Christianity with its solution of the problems connected with life and the hereafter had once more won over virile Teutonic tribes. And a people that could glory in the learning of Bede and Alcuin, did not lack poets to set forth the anxieties the aspirations, and the hopes imparted by the new religion. In the remains of that poetry we find mirrored the consciousness of sin and guilt, the firm trust in the powerful Redeemer, the world-weariness and melancholy yearning for a future life with its pleasures and blessings - in

---

<sup>214</sup> Keiser, "Influence of Christianity", pp. 132-38.

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 116

short, all the important features  
and ideas connected with Christianity.<sup>215</sup>

A typical illustration of the effect of the new religion on the life of the Anglo-Saxons, and the genuine concern they had for final things is the constant appearance of the after-life theme in poems which have been described as belonging to non-religious poetry, that is, poetry whose subject matter is not something related to religion. To a people who depended so much on nature for everything about them, and looked upon the world with mixed feelings of pleasure and bitterness, the reawakening of plant life in the spring when winter was past, symbolized death, resurrection and judgement. This symbol is found exemplified in The Seafarer. The description of winter, representing death, is followed by spring, portraying the resurrection of man, and Judgement Day. The emotions of the seafarer are overcome at the thought of death, resurrection and judgement, and act as an incentive to give him strength to face the life voyage ahead, and to look to his salvation when there is still time. This serves as a prologue; what follows deals with the certainty of death along with the importance and necessity of leading an exemplary

---

215

Keiser, "Influence of Christianity," p. 15.

life in good deeds. This Anglo-Saxon approach to life is in no way strange to a civilization steeped in the faith and the doctrine of the Church, and it reflects clearly the effects of patristic and Latin writings upon the people. The seed which dies and by its death brings forth new life is paralleled to Christ in death and to man who will rise from the grave with a 'new' body. This was a very familiar theme with the Fathers of the Church,<sup>216</sup> and was certainly in the mind of the poet of The Phoenix.

The keen interest of the Anglo-Saxons in hagiographic works is another strong factor which contributed, in no small way, to the influence of the Church doctrine and precepts on the way of life of the people. Some of the lives came from Ireland, and many more were brought back from Rome by Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop to be later copied in scriptoria for distribution to new houses. Extensive collections of saints' lives are known to have existed at

---

<sup>216</sup> N. F. Blake, "The Seafarer, Lines 48-49," Notes and Queries, IX (May, 1962), pp. 163-64. The above treatment of The Seafarer has been inspired by the views expressed in this article. Patristic references are: Gregory of Tours in his De cursu stellarum expresses the theme in this way: Aequa est enim et arborum natura, quae, ut puto, ipsam resurrectionem signat, cum in hieme nudatae foliis tamquam mortui habentur, verno vero tempore ornantur foliis, decorantur floribus, pomisque aestate replentur. Gregory is following in a tradition here which goes back ultimately to I Corinthians xv. 35-38. It is found also in Origen's Contra Celsum, V. 18; Clement, the Roman's First Epistle to the Corinthians, XXIV; Tertullian's De resurrectione, XII;

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 118

that time. Ogilvy lists 46 different lives known and recorded for the period 706-735.<sup>217</sup>

The many specimens which have survived bear witness that the writing of the lives of saints became a popular form of literary endeavour in the seventh and eighth centuries. Bede mentions the lost life of the sister of Bishop Earcomwald, Abbess Aedilburgae or Ethelburga of Berecingum (Barking) in the East Saxon district; she died in 664,<sup>218</sup> and the anonymous Vita Guthberti which he rewrote, one in prose and the other in verse; these scarcely could have been later than 700. The oldest life of St. Gregory the Great was written by an anonymous monk of Whitby in 713.<sup>219</sup> There were lives of Wilfrid, Guthlac, Ceolfrith, Martin, Felix, Bede's History of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow, and many others.<sup>220</sup> Any civilization interested as the Anglo-Saxons were in the deeds of sacrifice and abnegation of holy men, their contemporaries, cannot but reflect the influence of a strong faith animating

---

<sup>217</sup> Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin, pp. 1-4.

<sup>218</sup> Bede, A History of the English Church and People, trans. and ed. Leo Sherley-Price (Harmondsworth, 1960), IV, 6, 9, pp. 213-15.

<sup>219</sup> Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin, p. 1.

<sup>220</sup> Blair, Anglo-Saxon England, pp. 320-23.

---

Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechesis, XVIII, 6; and Dracontius' Carmen de deo, 621 ff. This is not an exhaustive list.

it. This was the lot of the Anglo-Saxons of the seventh and eighth centuries.

The student of Anglo-Saxon is usually amazed at the considerable amount of Biblical quotations he finds throughout Anglo-Saxon literature. This habit of the Anglo-Saxon writer to refer to the Bible is another convincing evidence of the far reaching influence of Christianity on the thinking of Anglo-Saxons who knew the Old and the New Testaments well, and were 'thoroughly acquainted with the Christian religion' and its dogmas.<sup>221</sup> The imposing and colossal chrestomathy of Biblical extracts from all Anglo-Saxon prose works, the result of painstaking efforts on the part of A. S. Cook,<sup>222</sup> represents a useful Anglo-Saxon magnum opus of unlimited practical value in offering considerable material for the study of Anglo-Saxon semasiology, "a study which like that of English semasiology in general has been too much neglected."<sup>223</sup>

A careful examination of those Biblical extracts

---

<sup>221</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, The Audience of Beowulf (Oxford, 1951), pp. 7-9.

<sup>222</sup> Albert S. Cook, ed. Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers (London, 1898). After the publication of a second book of quotations this work has been known as the 1st Series.

....., ed. Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers, Second Series (New York, 1903).

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 1st Series, p. ix.

shows the tendency of Anglo-Saxon writers to vary their expressions when paraphrasing or rendering a passage although the Latin original is the same. It demonstrates also the author's range of vocabulary and synonyms for a given idea, the peculiarities of his diction, how early Anglo-Saxon evolved in relation to the language of the tenth and eleventh centuries, the extent of semantic changes, and how syntax was affected.<sup>224</sup> Above all, those Biblical excerpts

- 
- 224 C. E. Bale, The Syntax of the Genitive Case in the Lindisfarne Gospels (Iowa University, 1907).  
 M. Callaway, Jr., The Absolute Participle in Anglo-Saxon (Baltimore, 1889).  
 ....., "The Appositive Participle in Anglo-Saxon," PMLA, XVI (1901), pp. 141-360.  
 ....., The Infinitive in Anglo-Saxon (Washington, 1913).  
 ....., Studies in the Syntax of the Lindisfarne Gospels (Baltimore, 1918).  
 A. S. Cook, A Glossary of the Old Northumbrian Gospels (Lindisfarne Gospels or Durham Book) (Hall, 1894).  
 ....., "Archaic English in the Twelfth Century," Scottish Historical Review, XII (1915), pp. 213-15.  
 L. H. Dodd, A Glossary of Wulfstan's Homilies, Yale Studies in English, XXXV (New York, 1908).  
 Emily H. Foley, The Language of the Northumbrian Gloss to the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Part I, Phonology, Yale Studies in English, XIV (New York, 1903).  
 Mattie A. Harris, A Glossary of the West-Saxon Gospels, Latin-West Saxon and West Saxon-Latin, Yale Studies in English, VI (Boston, 1899).  
 G. Herzfeld, An Old English Martyrology, EETS, CXVI (London, 1900).  
 Margaret D. Kellum, The Language of the Northumbrian Gloss to the Gospel of St. Luke, Yale Studies in English, XXX (New York, 1906).  
 J. P. Kinard, A Study of Wulfstan's Homilies: Their Style and Sources (Baltimore, 1897).  
 Elizabeth M. Lea, "The Language of the Northumbrian Gloss to the Gospel of St. Mark, Part I, Phonology," Anglia, XVI (1893), pp. 62-134, Part II, Infl., pp. 135-206.

are a permanent tribute to the permeating influence of the Church and the doctrine of Rome on the minds and writings of the Anglo-Saxons.

It is now widely accepted that the influence of St. Augustine of Hippo was greatly instrumental in moulding Christian culture in early mediaeval times, and was not long in taking roots in Anglo-Saxon England soon after the conversion of the country to Christianity.<sup>225</sup> Among the forces responsible for initiating, shaping, and orienting the vernacular writings of the early Anglo-Saxons towards Christian concepts were, undoubtedly, two of St. Augustine's important works, Civitas Dei and De Doctrina Christiana. Christian poetry, that is, poetry whose subject matter deals with a Christian topic, was to flourish from Caedmon on and become among the most important writings of the period.

The Anglo-Saxons regarded St. Augustine's writings as second only to the Scriptures in authority, and on the

---

A. S. Napier, Old English Glosses (Oxford, 1900).  
G. Otten, The Language of the Rushworth Gloss to the Gospel of St. Matthew, Parts I and II (Leipzig, 1890-91).

W. B. Owen, "The Influence of the Latin Syntax on the A.-S. Gospels," Transactions of American Philological Association (1882), pp. 59-64.

Jane Weightman, The Language and Dialect of the Later Old English Poetry (Liverpool, 1907).

<sup>225</sup> Bernard F. Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry (New York, 1959).

same footing as the works of St. Jerome and St. Gregory the Great among the Fathers of the Church.<sup>226</sup> There were 76 different writings of St. Augustine known to the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>227</sup> According to St. Augustine, "a man speaks more or less wisely in so far as he is more or less proficient in Holy Scriptures,"<sup>228</sup> a view which was probably responsible for stimulating the wide interest which developed in Anglo-Saxon England for knowledge of the Old and the New Testaments, sacred writings, the lives of saints, religious poetry and writings generally characterized by a religious flavour, such as the works of Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin testify.

Operating over a wide range of action in literary experiments, the language was bound to become enriched with a host of religious terms and expressions. Furthermore, under Augustine's theory of Christian culture, the allegory, the fable, the paranomasia, the kenning,<sup>229</sup> the trope, the metaphor,<sup>230</sup> the simile, the allusion, the parable, the

---

<sup>226</sup> Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin, p. 13.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-20.

<sup>228</sup> Augustine of Hippo, Patrologiae, Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi, Opera Omnia, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1861), De Doctrina Christiana 4, 7(5).

<sup>229</sup> H. van der Merwe Scholtz, The Kenning in Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Poetry (Utrecht, 1928).

James Walter Rankin, "A Study of the Kennings in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," JEGP, VIII (1909), pp. 357-422, and JEGP, IX (January, 1910), pp. 49-84.

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 123

gnome,<sup>231</sup> the symbol, are necessary instruments which must serve a Christian purpose to arrive at the truth in words, not words themselves - in verbis verum amare, non verba.<sup>232</sup>

Augustine encourages the use of rhetoric, but deplores rhetoric for the sake of rhetoric.<sup>233</sup> This, according to his theory, activates the muscles of the mind, which must play a vital rôle "beyond the ordinary" in realizing the beauty of truth as the strain imposed by the 'obscurity' of the language will provide "a specific literary pleasure not of the sensibilities but of the mind."<sup>234</sup> With this in mind, one looks back at Anglo-Saxon literature, discovers the origin of rhetorical figures, acquires knowledge of the use which is made of them, and is able to trace the extent of the influence of Christianity in the works, and facilitate an understanding of the effect of the new faith upon the language, thought, and style of the

---

<sup>230</sup> Francis B. Gummere, The Anglo-Saxon Metaphor (Halle, 1881).

<sup>231</sup> Blanche Colton Williams, Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon (New York, 1914).

<sup>232</sup> Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, pp. 28, and 40-41.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-11.

Anglo-Saxons.

It has been demonstrated that Anglo-Saxon literature is a composite of Germanic background, classical structure, Latin and Christian influences. Discussing Anglo-Saxon rhetoric, a scholar has compared the combined elements found in Anglo-Saxon literature to a poetic tapestry filled with greatly elaborated pictorial groups, and heavily encrusted with superimposed ornaments contributing to make it a

tapestry ... not purely Germanic but ... woven from both Germanic and classical threads and ... Germanic and classical patterns. The treads stretched up and down on the loom, the warp, may be mostly Germanic; but some at least of the cross threads, the weft or the woof, are classical. The fabric is a mixture, which is some lights appears heathen and Germanic, in others Christian and Latin.<sup>235</sup>

Surely, some of the cross threads, heavily steeped in Latin Christianity, are responsible for the Christian and Latin aspect of the fabric, and remain the colours predominantly emerging from the tapestry.

The importance of Anglo-Saxon semantics and etymol-

---

<sup>235</sup> Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 109.

## ANGLO-SAXON SEMANTICS AND LATIN CHRISTIANITY 125

ogy, for understanding the Anglo-Saxon language and arriving at an accurate interpretation of Anglo-Saxon literature, has been demonstrated in Chapter II. In addition, Latin and Christianity have been shown as two significant influences in the development of the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary. Chapter III will investigate mood in Anglo-Saxon poetry, will examine how Anglo-Saxon poets interpreted and reacted to nature, and will inquire into the spirit of the age as a possible influence on their writings.

## CHAPTER III

### MOOD, NATURE, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

#### IN

### ANGLO-SAXON POETRY

The meaning of a word in a piece of literature is determined, it has been seen, by its etymological and historical sense, and its contextual background. In Anglo-Saxon literature, the meaning of a verb, more than any other word, is greatly influenced by the context in which it is used. Consequently, Chapter III will examine mood, nature, and the zeitgeist in Anglo-Saxon poetry for their contextual relation to the meaning of words.

#### 1. Mood in Anglo-Saxon Poetry.

An important aspect of Anglo-Saxon literary tradition is the technique employed to convey a required mood or tone. This is achieved indirectly and suggestively by the enumeration of external objects from which the mood emerges, and by the handling of a highly select diction rich in fine distinctions. The description preceding the

## MOOD, NATURE, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE 127

appearance of Grendel's dam in Heorot, in lines 1251-78 of Beowulf / exemplifies the case. The poet prepares the setting: Heorot has been in festivities celebrating Grendel's death, night has come, and reced - the hall, remains weardode - guarded, by unrim eorla -<sup>236</sup> many warriors (thanes), sigon pā tō slāepe -<sup>237</sup> who (they) sank to sleep! But joy is ephemeral: sum säre angeald aefenraeste -<sup>238</sup> one sorely paid for his night's rest, and foreboding is in the air: paette wrecend pā gýt lifde -<sup>239</sup> that an avenger yet lived. The contrast is perfect. Peace and joy are replaced by the uneasy and qualmish atmosphere which has developed, and the audience is prepared for the mounting mood, one of consternation and terror. It is known how Grendel was horrible; the mother is no better and she is shown to be just as terrible. Using the indirect and suggestive method, the poet gives the passage, lines 1258-66, a fiendish touch by establishing the ides āglāecwif -<sup>240</sup> woman monster's genesis from Cain, and relating her to the first murderer.

The above-mentioned passage is immediately followed

---

<sup>236</sup> Beowulf, ll. 1237-38.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., l. 1251.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., ll. 1251-52.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., ll. 1256-57.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., ll. 1259-60.

by Grendel's experience at the hands of Beowulf, lines 1266-76. The purpose is to suggest, by association, something dreadful to come, and to heighten the idea of fear and danger which falls like a hammer blow at the close of the passage when the mood unfolds completely and the audience is left in suspense: ond his moder pā gýt / gifre ond galgmōd / gegān wold / sorhfulne sið, / sunu dēoð wrecan <sup>241</sup> and now his mother, yet greedy and gloomy, would go a sorrowful undertaking, to avenge her son's death. The opening lines of the passage immediately following leave no doubt in the minds of the audience, and confirm the mood: cōm pā tō Heo-rote, / ðaer Hring-Dene / geond þaet saeld swāefum <sup>242</sup> came she to Heorot, where the Danes slept throughout the hall. Consternation is now general, fear and terror reign supreme.

The choice of appropriate diction with subtle shades and nuances of meanings was a valuable asset to the Anglo-Saxon poet in his technique for developing the desired mood. The passage just examined, lines 1251-76, is packed with words having deep associative connotation and, placed in the context as it is, and seen in the light of the preceding pas-

---

241 Beowulf, ll. 1276-78.

242 Ibid., ll. 1279-80.

sage, is highly suggestive of the evil, fear and terror the poet wants to evoke.

Expressions like op ðaet ende becwōm - until an end came; swylt aefter synnum - death after sins; ðaette wrecend þa gyt - that an avenger yet; yrmbē gemunde - remembered (her) misery; cealde streamas - cold (bitter) streams; tō ecgbanan - the murderer; hē þā fāg gewāt - he then blood-stained departed; morpre gemearcod - by murder marked; wēsten warode - in the desert (waste) inhabited; heorowearh hetelīc - the accursed foe hateful; wīges bīdan - the fight awaiting; drēame bedāēled - of joy bereft; dēapwic sēor - the abode of death to see; mancynnes fēond - the foe of mankind; gifre ond galgmōd - greedy and gloomy; sorhfulne sīð - a sorrowful undertaking; sunu dēoð wrecan -<sup>243</sup> her son's death to avenge, contribute much to impart the mood, and teem with suggestive allusions and related associations. Some of these allusions will be illustrated.

The end came, refers to the death of Grendel and to the terrible things monsters were associated with in the minds of the Danes, and by extension, the Anglo-Saxons. Death after sins, cold streams, and the desert inhabited

---

<sup>243</sup> Parts quoted are from the following lines of Beowulf in order of appearance; 1254, 1255, 1256, 1259, 1261, 1262, 1263, 1264, 1265, 1267, 1275, 1275, 1276, 1277, 1278, and 1268.

meant hell, and had Biblical affiliations well known to Anglo-Saxon audiences. Ecgbanan <sup>-244</sup> is translated by murderer, from ecg - edge (sword) and bana - slayer, that is, slayer with a sword or simply murderer, and the word is pregnant with associations. Blood-stained, morppe <sup>-245</sup> the accursed foe, and the foe of mankind, refers directly to Grendel, and by extension to Cain and hell. Of joy bereft, gloomy, and sorrowful remind the Danes of the terror attending Heorot with Grendel's night raids. The power of the diction is strengthened by such words as goldsele - gold-hall (Heorot), unriht - unrighteousness, gūðceare - war-care (grievous strife), āglāēcwif - demon (fiend), waeteregesan - water-terror, and (helle) gast <sup>-246</sup> spirit of (hell).

In addition, there are many overtones to the passage, lines 1251-76. A case in point, the custom almost sacred with Anglo-Saxons to square a murder with a killing. The obligation of a father having to avenge the killing of his son, or a brother that of a brother, and vice versa, with almost no end to the feud, gave rise to some of the

---

<sup>244</sup> Beowulf, l. 1262.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., l. 1264.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., parts quoted are from the following lines in order of appearance: 1253, 1254, 1258, 1259, 1260, and 1274.

bitterest blood-feuds in Anglo-Saxon history.<sup>247</sup> When the poet followed Aristotle's law of probability and necessity and brought Grendel's mother out of her mere to avenge the killing of her son, the audience was given a development it expected and looked for.

The ability of Anglo-Saxon poets to develop mood as a third dimension from contextual use of diction is demonstrated by Storms in an instructive essay on the style of Beowulf, in which he discusses subjective and objective emotive connotation as an aspect of Anglo-Saxon literary craftsmanship.<sup>248</sup> The author was apparently familiar with the works of Ogden and Richards; he adopted their choice of descriptive terminology, but not their conclusions.<sup>249</sup>

The word murky, in the expression ofer myrcan mōr - over the murky moor, in Beowulf line 1405, describing the approach to Grendel's mere, is typical of the adventitious

---

<sup>247</sup> Paul E. Morin, Beowulf, A Christian Poem: An Approach to Certain Difficulties, unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Ottawa (Ottawa, March 1964), pp. 175 ff.

<sup>248</sup> G. Storms, "The Subjectivity of the Style of Beowulf," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, ed. Stanley B. Greenfield (University of Oregon, 1963), pp. 171-86.

<sup>249</sup> C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, The Meaning of Meaning, A Study of the Influence of Language Upon Thought and of The Science of Symbolism, 10th ed. (London, 1960).

I. A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (London, 1959).

meaning Anglo-Saxon words take on in the hands of poets.

Mirce is translated by murk or murky. The following breakdown clarifies the meaning of mirce:

adj. I. dark, murky: Da mircan gesceaft  
(hell), .... Gang ofer myrcan mōr -  
her course o'er the dark moor ....  
II. in a metaphorical sense (of sin,  
crime, etc.) dark, black, evil:  
Mircne maegencreaft mǎn-womma gehwone -  
dark power, each sinful stain ....  
Deāh bū drype bolige, myrce mǎndaede  
.... Leahtras mirce mǎnslaga - crimes,  
black deeds of wickedness .... Mircast  
mǎnweorca - blackest of crimes ....  
(Havel. mirke; Chauc. Piers P. merke;  
Prompt. Parv. myrke obscurus, tenebro-  
sus; O.Sax. mirki; Dan. Swed. mörk.)....  
n. Darkness; - Se ðe hiē of ðam mirce  
(the fiery furnace) generede .... Myrce  
(or adv?) gescyred shrouded with dark-  
ness .... (Piers P. men þat in merke  
sitten; Scot. mirk; Icel. myrkr; n.  
darkness; mǎrkvi darkness, thick fog;  
Dan. mörke.<sup>250</sup>

The meaning of mirce is clear enough, but no mention is made of its origin and association with the darkness, that is, the lack of light, that accompanies an eclipse.<sup>251</sup> The average Anglo-Saxon was a great admirer of the wonders of nature, which he associated with the supernatural. Some, he longed for, like spring; others, he dreaded. The eclipse with its darkening clouds was an omen of evil and struck him with terror and consternation. He did not understand

---

250

Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 689.

natural phenomena, but knitted about them a rich vocabulary and unique expressions, denoting his wonder and remaining, at best, a tangible way of showing his belief in them.

Murk or murky in modern English means dark, darkness, obscure, or heavy darkness; in Anglo-Saxon it could take on an added sense depending on the context and the situation in which it occurred.

It has been seen that the figurative sense of murk is monstrously or diabolically wicked; this is the contextual emotional connotation implied in the use of it, in line 1405 of Beowulf,<sup>252</sup> the adscititious meaning being arrived at by way of association. Storms calls it "emotional coloring"<sup>253</sup> which can be objective or subjective. The objective emotional meaning is stated to be:

the emotive sense ... directly conveyed and ... always present with the word. Happy, cheerful, sad, grievous, fearful, horrible, angry, etc., have as reference a particular emotion; they have an objective coloring. A word like dark on the other hand has no

---

251 Storms, "Subjectivity of the Style," p. 174.

252 Ibid., p. 174.

253 Ibid., p. 174.

objective, no permanent and inherent emotional coloring, but it may assume an emotional connotation by the context or the situation in which it occurs. The so-called figurative meaning is frequently characterized by an added emotional sense; dark prospects, dark looks, the powers of darkness, etc. In many instances both an objective referential sense and an emotive sense may be present and the borderline is often difficult to draw.<sup>254</sup>

The subjective emotional colouring is the meaning a word takes from an emotional tone or from the contextual situation. "The intensity of the emotive element is usually subjective. 'Darling' has an objective emotional quality, but it has also a wide subjective range, dependent on the person who uses it, the tone of the speaker, the situation that evokes it, etc. An incongruous situation, or an incongruous tone, may even change the objective quality, as happens for instance, when it is applied in sarcasm."<sup>255</sup>

The denotation of moor probably meant originally, dead or barren land, and its connotation evolved in time to designate an unenclosed and waste ground;<sup>256</sup> this is the objective emotional meaning. The use of moor, in line 1405 of

---

<sup>254</sup> Storms, "Subjectivity of the Style," p. 174.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>256</sup> Murray, A New English Dictionary, Vol. VI, Part II, pp. 644-46.

Beowulf, has also a subjective emotional colouring from the contextual arrangement. To the idea of moor the poet adds that of gloom and terror through his choice of murky used with a number of associations, namely, the evil doings of a monster, Grendel's dam, the savage and brutal death of Aeschere, and the fear of what may happen to Beowulf's expedition. This contributes to impart an atmosphere of consternation reminiscent of the extreme dread which seized the people upon witnessing an eclipse.

Is barren or dead land, in a particular atmosphere, frightening? It can be! Experience in the jungle of Mozambique reveals that at the sight of a hyena crossing a stretch of barren land, in mid-day-swelting weather of sub-equatorial Africa, to enter a thicket of scorched vegetation, sun-baked earth, decayed and fallen trees, one slowly feels the air no longer reaching the lungs, is suddenly seized with dread and loneliness, and with the thought that he should not have ventured there! Dark and menacing skies would complete the picture and convey the atmosphere. This is the mood the poet developed, in line 1405 of Beowulf, through the use of ofer myrcan mōr - over the murky moor.

Mood in Anglo-Saxon poetry is also developed through the "method of indirection and suggestions."<sup>257</sup> It is not

---

257 Walter Morris Hart, "Ballad and Epic A Study

done through one word, but the atmosphere is gradually built up through the enumeration of events, circumstances, causes, consequences, and external objects to which the mood is transferred and from which it unfolds. A good example is found in lines 250-96 of Judith, in the passage describing Judith's incredible feat, the Hebrews' joys and regain of heart, the uneasiness of the Assyrians seeking to reach their leader Holofernes, whom they believe to be in his tent with Judith, and the stark confusion that followed. The passage exhibits the art of the poet through his ability to convey a mood of distress, consternation, fear, even pity among the Assyrians, and the utter deceit and ensuing chaos which climax the discovery of their slain captain.

Nervousness dominates the sight about the tent of Holofernes. No soldier dares disturb the leader, although it has become imperative that someone should with the Hebrews advancing upon them. Who will be 'brave' enough to enter the tent to warn the leader? Something must be done! The poet relates that beornas stodon - the warriors stood, ymbe hyra beodnes tēaef - around their prince's tent,

---

in the Development of the Narrative Art," Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature, Vol. XI (Boston, 1907)

pearle gebylde - very excited, sweorcendferhoe <sup>258</sup> sad at heart. Hi ða somod ealle - they then all together, ongunnon cohhetan - began to cough (that is, to make noise to draw attention), cirman hlude - to cry out loudly, ond gristbitian - and to gnash their teeth, gōde orfeorme - of good destitute, id toðon torn poligende <sup>259</sup> showing their anger (with teeth in grief) suffering.

From line 273 the reader learns that the eorlas - earls, did not succeed in their efforts to awake the chief, until finally, someone gathered enough 'courage' to venture inside the tent only to discover his goldgifan -gold-giver, lifes belidenne <sup>260</sup> of life deprived. Immediately, he gefeoll freorig to foldan - fell cold to the ground, hreoð on mode - mad (furious) in mind, ongan his feax teran - began to tear (off) his hair, ond his hraegl somod <sup>261</sup> and his armour as well. Finally, struck with fear he informed his companions of the impending catastrophe. Seized with panic and fright, the warriors threw down their weapons, took flight, but were destroyed in death at the hands of

<sup>258</sup> B. J. Timmer, ed. Judith (London, 1961), lines 267-69, p. 30.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., lines 269-72, pp. 30-31.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., lines 279-80, p. 31.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., lines 280-82, p. 31.

the Hebrews.

It should be kept in mind that the poet has already told the reader of the death of Holofernes, in lines 153-175, before he relates how the Assyrians discovered it, and how they reacted to it, in lines 278-91. The reader, in fact, has already read through lines 186-246 how the Hebrews, after learning of the fate of Holofernes, prepared for battle under the leadership and encouragement of Judith, gave chase immediately after to the Assyrians, engaged them in battle and defeated them. However, before the final battle, which will see the complete destruction of the enemy, the poet chooses to narrate how the Assyrians sought Holofernes, lines 256-77, how they discovered him, lines 278-89, and what effect his death had on them, lines 289-296. All this time the reader is aware of the death of Holofernes, the subsequent disorderly retreat and rout of Assyrians. The poet shows his skill in being able to develop the desired mood after the event has been made known before it actually happens.

The passage in lines 2232-70 of Beowulf, describing the plight of the owner of the hoard and the last survivor of his family, contains another excellent example of how mood is developed indirectly from the enumeration of external objects. Sē ān ðā gēn loda duguðe, sē ðaer lengest

hwearf -<sup>262</sup> he the last one (at length, latest) of the people's nobles, who there longest remained (moved about, wandered). The elegiac mood, reminiscent of that found in Deor, evolves from associating the aergestreona -<sup>263</sup> ancient treasures in the hoard to what they once stood for, and what they represent now. Hringa hyrde - the guardian of rings, faettan goldes - of plated (beaten) gold, eorla aehte the wealth of princes, guðdeað fornam - death in battle took away (carried off or destroyed), fyra gehwylcne - every man and seledream - the joy of hall; nāh, hwā sweorde wege - none (now) may brandish the sword, or wear hearda helm (hyr)stedgolde - the tempered helmet with gold adorned; swefad - (they) sleep in death, pa ðe - those who, aet hilde gebad - in battle stood, ofer borda gebraec bite ĭrena - over the crash of shields (and) the bite of irons (swords); (everything) brosnað aefter beorne - falls to pieces with the hero, ne maeg byrnan hring - nor may the byrnie or corselet, wide feran -<sup>264</sup> pass onward.

The mood reaches a climax when the poet recalls:

---

<sup>262</sup> Beowulf, lines 2237-38.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., line 2232.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid. In order of appearance are lines: 2245, 2246, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2252, 2252, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2260, and 2261.

## MOOD, NATURE, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

140

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| gomen glēobēames,   | Naes hearpan wyn,  |
| geond sael swinged, | nē gōd hafoc       |
| burhstede bēated.   | nē se swifta mearh |
| fela feorhcynna     | Bealocwealm hafad  |
|                     | forð onsended!     |

The poet could not have brought back to memory anything more powerful, dearer to the hearts of the Anglo-Saxons, that could have pleased them so much, that they could understand so well and , at the same time, that could leave them so sad, saudades - sweet sorrows as the Portuguese would say, as the mention, by allusion, of the comitatus spirit. It was throwing wide open the doors of their imaginations, to allow a flow of the sweetest memories: of cherished fellowship, loyalty and devotion to one's lord and kinsmen, joys of the meadhall, gift receiving, boasting, singing by scop, and recital by gleemen of noble deeds and achievements of valor. Such were the good days in the life of the Anglo-Saxons, but they had passed, and sadness is all that remains now!

The poet knew precisely what cord to touch to bring out the desired music. He did that most impressively and artistically in describing the joy of the last survivor at the sight of his treasures, giðmormōd giðhōo, maende ān

---

265 Beowulf, lines 2262-66; There is no joy of harp, / no mirth of the glē-wood (harp), / no good falcon / flies through the hall, / nor the swift steed / the castle court tramps. / Baleful death has / many living beings / sent forth.

aefter eallu -<sup>266</sup> sad of mind his sorrows complained of one after all, that is, sad of mind, he complained of his sorrows one after the other, feeling, as Deor did, tender regrets and longing for the past he had known and loved so dearly. Memories of yesterday brought back the sweet sound of the harp, the swift swish of the falcon's flight breaking the air overhead, the mead-heavy staccato laughter across the hall, the unsteady tramping of impatient steed in the courtyard, the muffled jingling of coats of mail approaching, and the deaden din of spears, swords and helmets being pulled off and lined against the wall for an emergency. Death, he reflects, has silenced it all, and a door has forever been closed over it all! Such were the sad thoughts of the last survivor oð ðaet dēaðes wylm hrān aet heortan -<sup>267</sup> until death's surge seized (touched) him at heart.

## 2. Nature in Anglo-Saxon Poetry.

Anglo-Saxon poets are often accused of having been unable to react to certain things in nature. This is in-

---

<sup>266</sup> Beowulf, lines 2267-68.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., lines 2269-70.

terpreted the result of shortcomings, which are usually explained in terms of obtuseness, inability to be attracted or impressed by certain phenomena, dulness of the eyes and, generally, a lack of aesthetic appreciation, poetic feeling, and subtlety.<sup>268</sup> Such an appraisal, of the Anglo-Saxons' inability to react to certain things in reality, is erroneous, and is tantamount to an acknowledgement that the poet and the forces that rouse him to activity are part of a mechanical or mathematical process. This is not the case, and the real reason why Anglo-Saxon poets interpreted nature as they did lies in another direction. Why did Shakespeare choose drama in preference to other genres? Why did Chaucer not write dramas? Why did the Restoration and early 18th Century writers prefer satire? Why does a poet write about certain topics in preference to others? The answer to these questions is found in the nature and function of the poetic process, and in the writer's particular general experience which is often conditioned, among other things, by the conventions of the time and the spirit of the age.

A close examination of Anglo-Saxon poetic records reveals that poets responded persistently to some aspects

---

<sup>268</sup> Elizabeth Deering Hanscom, "The Feeling for Nature in Old English Poetry," *JEGP*, V (1903-05), pp. 441, 443-45, 446, 454, 458, 460, and 462.

of nature, and less frequently to sunsets, colours in the modern sense, the moon, the stars, the scent of flowers, spring, summer and extreme heat, fruits and flowers, odours, hills and mountains, and vegetation in general. The display of colours peculiar to sunsets does not seem to have been recorded.<sup>269</sup> Reference to the beauty of the departing day is found in general terms only and in the occasional poem, for example, in lines 68-71 of The Order of the World, lines 1247-48 of Andreas, and lines 136-38 of Genesis. Colour, in relation to sunset is dull, and describes the incoming darkness in line 1306 of Andreas: brunwam - dusky, from bruman - to become brown; lines 1279-80 of Guthlac: swearc ... won under wolcnum - became dark, from sweorcan - to become dark, and wan under the clouds.

Only one reference is made to sunset in The Phoenix where the sun is described in lines 141-42: sunne on suð-rodor / saeged weorþeð - the sun in the southern sky is made to sink, from saegan - to cause to sink. In lines 2449-51 of Genesis, one finds a reference to the evening glow departing: forð gewat / aefenscina þa com aefter niht / on last daege - forth went (disappeared) the evening glow then came night on the track of day.

---

<sup>269</sup> Hanscom, "The Feeling for Nature," p. 458.

Mona - the moon is mentioned thirteen times without any description attached to it.<sup>270</sup> The stars are referred to as tungol - a luminary, as in line 933 of Christ, and as steorra - star used by itself four times and occasionally to describe the sun or the moon.<sup>271</sup>

Allusions to the scent of flowers are in general terms wanting in specific details.<sup>272</sup> Such is the case of lines 1272-74 of Guthlac: him of mude cwom / swecca swe-tost, / swylce on sumeres tid / stincað on stowum - from his mouth came the sweetest smells, such as in summer time places exhale; of line 356 of Christ and Satan: blost-man stences - the smell of flowers; and of lines 44-47 of The Panther: stenc ... wyrta blostmum - smell of plant blossoms.

Two flowers only, the lily and the rose, are mentioned by name.<sup>273</sup> In lines 24-27 of Riddle 41, the enigma is said to be stronger in fragrance bonne ricels oppe rose - than the incense or the rose, and more delicate than be li-

---

<sup>270</sup> Hanscom, "Feeling for Nature," p. 460.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., pp. 459-60.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., p. 442.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., p. 442.

lie - the lily. Other references to flowers are general. The delight at the sight of blossoms is expressed in The Riming Poem, line 4; blissa bleoum, blostma hiwum - the joy of colours, the hues of blossoms. Flowers are mentioned several times in The Phoenix but always in a general way, as in lines 71-75 where they are described as holy ornaments of the wood and fair (beauty of the trees) blossoms.

Fruits are rarely mentioned and, when they are alluded to, the reference is made in general terms. They are acknowledged as the blessings of autumn prosaically in The Phoenix. The apple appears several times in religious poems in relation to Adam and Eve.<sup>274</sup>

There are few references to spring and summer in the Anglo-Saxon poetic records, and those are mentioned in a conventional way with little colour. In Beowulf, spring is described; wuldor-torhtan weder -<sup>275</sup> gloriously bright weather. Hrim - frost is associated with spring in lines 35-36 of Menologium: hrime gehyrsted - with frost covered (adorned, from gehyrstan); in line 6 of Maxims II; and is referred to as lencten hrimigost - spring is the frostiest of seasons, in the Gnomic Verses. References to sumor - summer are also deprived of any colour. The extreme heat of

---

<sup>274</sup> Hanscom, "Feeling for Nature," p. 443.

<sup>275</sup> Beowulf, line 1136.

summer, referred as the burning of the sun, is rare outside The Phoenix, and Christ.<sup>276</sup> Summer is described in lines 88-90 of Menologium: bringð / sigelbeorhte dagas ... / wearme gewyderu - bringing sunbright days, and warm weather; and in lines 209-10 of The Phoenix: on sumeres tid, sunne halost - in summer time, the hottest sun.

Odours are not mentioned often in Anglo-Saxon poetry; when they are, scent is used to describe them.<sup>277</sup> Mountains and hills, likewise, are referred to sparingly and always with the commonplace description of green, high, and steep. A passage of The Phoenix, lines 21-26, echoes a note of fear.<sup>278</sup>

Apart from the references to flowers and fruits mentioned earlier, vegetation is usually represented by the generic term wyrt - plant, and wudu - wood.<sup>279</sup> For example, one finds in lines 10-12 of Riddle 5: laececynn - physicians mid wyrtum wunde gehaelde - with plants heal wounds. With the exception of brerum - briars, mentioned in line 31 of The Wife's Lament, and ðorn - thorn (thistle), in line 7 of The Rune Poem, other references to plants are limited to corn, as a seed, in The Phoenix, lines 252-53: purh cornes

<sup>276</sup> Hanscom, "Feeling for Nature," p. 440.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., p. 454.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., p. 443.

gecynd, / be aer claene bið / saed onsawen - through (by virtue of) the nature of corn (grain), which is at first sown as pure (clean) seed; in line 25 of The Rune Poem: hwitust corna - whitest of corns (seeds); and graes - grass appears in some passages, as in line 1881 of Beowulf: graesmoldan - greensward.

If the Anglo-Saxon poetic records lack in descriptions of certain things in nature, the alleged deficiency is greatly compensated by details given about winter, trees, storms, the sea, the wind, hail, frost, snow, ice, rain, mist, moors and fens, the sun, eclipses, night, the coming of day, and clouds.<sup>280</sup> A list of poems with specific line references could be given, but it is too long for inclusion here. Furthermore, the article referred to in footnote 280 gives a general idea of the extent to which Anglo-Saxon poets went in their treatment of certain aspects of nature. What seems more to the point is an endeavour to discover, in the light of what is known about certain things of the Anglo-Saxon period, some of the reasons why poets wrote about nature as they did.

It should always be remembered that many Anglo-Saxon works were lost. If the corpus of works extant were larger,

---

<sup>280</sup> Hanscom, "Feeling for Nature," pp. 44, 446-53, 455-57, 459, and 461.

it is possible that some works might reveal songs to the morning, to spring, to the beauties of summer, sunsets, and the treatment of other subjects in nature. It is known from available works that the interest of Anglo-Saxon poets in nature was focused on certain objects and particular aspects of nature. It has been pointed out that the Anglo-Saxon people admired certain 'mysteries' in nature, and were attracted to them without having any knowledge of what caused them. The manifestations of those phenomena filled them with awe or terror. They talked about them, discussed them, coined expressions to describe them, just as the present civilization discusses cancer, hurricanes, fall-out shelters, and orbiting the earth in manned satellites.

Men of the twentieth century understand the workings of nature which produce mist, wind, hail, frost, snow, ice, storms, clouds, and eclipses; the Anglo-Saxons did not. What may appear very childish to this generation was replete of secrets and riddles to the Anglo-Saxons. In addition, most of those phenomena brought them sufferings. Winter, for example, was the worst season of the year with its long bitter nights of darkness. The North Sea was a challenge at all times, the route of invaders they had once followed, and the majestic and mad giant which separated them from the Continent. Moors and fens were uninviting in their appearance and full of dangers in the eyes of the onlookers.

Today, the average man on this hemisphere lives in a modern world of luxury in comparison to the average Anglo-Saxon. Few there are who suffer year after year from the inclemency of nature; few Anglo-Saxons were ever protected against raw nature. It is not surprising, then, that their reactions were in most vehement terms. Why? The answer rests in the fact that the Anglo-Saxons reacted more spontaneously and vividly to what touched them most sensibly. They used personification for their weapons, ships, and war gear, that is, things intimately close to them,<sup>281</sup> but feeling and emotion were not generally attributed to nature in describing certain objects, and there is hardly any trace of pathetic fallacy in their approach to nature-observation.

The Anglo-Saxons' view of nature was realistic or physical, not sentimental or anthropomorphic.<sup>282</sup> As one writer described it, nature "n'inspire le poète qu'autant qu'il en a l'expérience directe."<sup>283</sup> In other words, not a

---

<sup>281</sup> Neil David Isaacs, Personification in Beowulf (1959), Brown University Ph. D. Thesis.

<sup>282</sup> Hanscom, "Feeling for Nature," p. 462.

<sup>283</sup> Emile Pons, Le Thème et le Sentiment de la Nature dans la poésie anglo-saxonne (Strasbourg, 1925), Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg, Fascicule 25, p. 156: nature inspires the poet only in as much as he has experienced it directly, that is, personally.

sentimental reaction, but one that is a direct response to physical experience. The hardships the Anglo-Saxons faced were a challenge to their endurance, and a claim on their initiative and ability to overcome them. In keeping with the custom of the age, they glorified in the success achieved by extolling the deeds performed, and praised the virtues exhibited. Anglo-Saxon poetic records abound in such eulogies: The Seafarer, Beowulf, The Wanderer, The Battle of Maldon, The Menologium, Deor, The Wife's Lament, and in another field, but in keeping with the same approach to nature, Judith, Daniel, Andreas, and Guthlac, to mention a few only.

It is sincerely believed that Anglo-Saxon poets, who could master passages as those mentioned from The Phoenix, and The Seafarer, or could describe ice, as it is done in lines 29-31 of The Rune Poem: I (is) byþ oferceald, ungemetum slidor, / glisnab glaeshluttur, gimumm gelicust, / flor forste geworwht, faeger anyne - ice is excessively cold, immeasurably slippery, glistens as transparent glass, like precious stones, a floor by frost wrought, a joyful sight, could not be obdurate to the sensible manifestations of nature or indifferent to them, and fail to admire glorious sunsets and other beauties of nature. That the light of the ice attracted the Anglo-Saxon poet more than another aspect

of it, or that he preferred to write about the hardships of life at sea instead of the grandeur of the Milky Way, must not be charged against him as shortcomings. A critic of Anglo-Saxon writings should always remember that one sees because and as others have seen. There is still much truth in the old saying that we see that which we have eyes to see; but we have eyes to see that which we have been taught to see, and largely that which others have seen.<sup>284</sup>

Anglo-Saxon poets, as it has been mentioned, reacted to things in nature close to them, always the result of a priori experience. It is now stated that their attitude towards nature, that is, their feeling for nature, took a form already modern and a very rare thing, if at all existing, at that time in France and Germany.<sup>285</sup> Reasons for the Anglo-Saxon poets' interpretation of nature appear now, in the twentieth century, far removed from the works they produced. The critic who fails to turn to Anglo-Saxon civilization to discover what spirit animated the age, and neglects to familiarize himself with the forces that likely influenced the writer, will fall short of a correct appraisal of the works examined. One goes to literature to discover something unrevealed until then about the author

---

<sup>284</sup> Hanscom, "Feeling for Nature," p. 439.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., pp. 439-41.

and common to all men.<sup>286</sup> Before this is possible, it becomes sometimes necessary to investigate the circumstances under which a work was produced, and the conditions attending at the time, remembering that the more remote in time the work is, the greater the difficulties. It must be emphasized, however, that the influences which may have affected a writer do not explain the nature of literature, although they contributed to the making of it, but may help to understand it.

In studying Anglo-Saxon literature, it is important and relevant to view it in the light of the Christian writers' frame of mind, which was no longer under the influence of the pagan myth, but was animated by a rationalism inherited from a recent Christianity, alive, dynamic, realistic and contemplative. It was seen that the importance of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon thinking and writing was tremendous particularly in the seventh and eighth centuries. The critic must never lose sight of this when studying the literature produced in that period. Emil Pons, whose work has already been mentioned, has made a valuable contribution to Anglo-Saxon studies through his investigation of nature

---

286

Marcotte, The God Within, p. 33: "Consequently, the 'part' of Self which the maker of literature expresses in his work is precisely that 'part' which he cannot know, even himself, in any other way, and, at the same time, it is a 'part' of that 'part' of himself which he shares with every other man."

in Anglo-Saxon poetry. One should remember, he says, that the soul of the Anglo-Saxon

a reçu trop fortement l'enpreinte du christianisme pour revenir aux joies bruyantes et vives, aux impulsions irrésistibles, aux insouciances et aux ravissements d'antan; elle a appris à s'exprimer d'une autre voix ... par la nature du 'Charme' le sujet s'élève, comme dans l'incantation contre une terre inféconde, et aussitôt les vers se christianisent avec une aisance surprenante ... parce qu'à la multiplicité des bons ou mauvais génies se substitue plus facilement, dans son unité, l'idée de Dieu ou de la Providence. ... de ces survivances païennes au milieu d'oeuvres chrétiennes, telles que la description des tourments de l'enfer, dans le Christ, au moyen d'images ou de conceptions païennes (serpents, torture du froid) ... nous observons que ces survivances sont dans la forme et non dans le sentiment...<sup>287</sup>

287

Pons, Thème et Sentiment de la Nature, pp. 59, 80, and 81; The soul has received too strongly the imprint of Christianity to return to the turbulent and riotous (dissolute) joys of life, to irresistible impulses, to freedom from care, and ravishing delights of yester years; it (the soul) has learned to speak with another voice .... by nature of the 'Charm' the topic becomes dignified, as in the incantation against a barren land, and immediately the verses become Christianized with a surprising ease ... because to the multiplicity of the good and bad spirits is substituted more easily, in its unity, the idea of God or Providence. ... of those pagan beliefs in the midst of Christian works, such as the descriptions of hell, in Christ, by means of pagan images or concepts (serpents, torture through cold) ... we note that those survivals (customs) exist in form and not in sentiment (feeling).

The new Christian faith was imbued with a keen sense of death, no longer wrapped in myth, but seen through a Christian rationalism which appears everywhere in Anglo-Saxon poetry, and is inseparable from Christianity.<sup>288</sup> This may explain in part why poets turned to the sea to give vent to their poetic feelings, painting it, as they did, in all its glory and terror, in powerful alliterative verses which have remained to this day among the best descriptions of the sea in Anglo-Saxon poetry. The sea was probably that which they fancied most, because it was more alive than anything they had experienced in nature; that which they admired most, because they knew it better than anything else in life; that which commanded their respect most, because danger and death lurked more there than anywhere else; and finally, that which attracted them most, because it was more mysterious than anything they knew and, at the same time, it remained the greatest challenge, for beyond it lay eternal myth.

The sea in Anglo-Saxon poetry had priority over many subjects, and to the Anglo-Saxon poet, nature meant

presque uniquement la mer, la mer  
ou ses alentours tels que les sombres  
falaises, les promontoires escarpés  
dépeints par Beowulf ou les lacs, les

---

<sup>288</sup> Pons, Thème et Sentiment de la Nature, p. 156.

étangs qui lui ressemblent ou la rappellent, la mer sous tous ses aspects, la mer propice et riante, mais beaucoup plus la mer furieuse ou glacial, menaçant et torturant l'homme et cependant toujours aimée.<sup>289</sup>

The sea storm topic was paramount in the poet's imagination, and he returned to paint it constantly because

c'est dans ces descriptions de tempête que se déployait le mieux sa force. La mer est la grande inspiratrice, non seulement parce qu'elle répond mieux que tout autre aux secrètes et primitives aspirations des Anglo-Saxons, à leur passion ancestrale pour la lutte et les dangers.<sup>290</sup>

The physical joy of the conquest of the sea shown by the Anglo-Saxons was neither primitive nor pagan. Truly human and permanent, it was second only to another sentiment equally dear to their hearts and which they cherished even more, a deep feeling for the terror of the sea. Under the influence of Christian thought they gave precedence to it as a literary theme.<sup>291</sup>

---

<sup>289</sup> Pons, Thème et Sentiment de la Nature, p. 98: Nature, in Anglo-Saxon poetry, is particularly and almost solely the sea, the sea or its surroundings such as the dark cliffs, the steep headlands described by Beowulf or the lakes and pools which resemble it or recall it to mind, the sea under all its aspects, the sea auspicious and smiling, but much more the enraged and frigid sea, menacing and torturing man, and yet always cherished.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., p. 99: it is those sea storm descriptions which best displayed his skill. The sea is the great inspiring force, not only because it is the most familiar and best known sight, but also because, better than any other, it satisfies the hidden and primitive yearnings of the Anglo-

Seen in this light, the critic is in a better position to recognize three important influences underlying most Anglo-Saxon poetry: 1) a deep Christian feeling about death and a propensity for probing the mysterious nature of it; 2) a realism, based on an active and genuine contact, free from the sensual and steeped in the idealization of every experience;<sup>292</sup> 3) the appearance of some of the effects of the pagan myth, no longer primitive and savage but much faded and transformed through rationalism influenced by Christianity. These neo-pagan effects are manifested principally as an expression of passionate love in domestic life, of devotion to the comitatus spirit in the lord-and-thane relations, of longing for heroism through war and danger, of delight in the magic of runes, charms, and heir-looms, and of the use of certain forms of language as the riddle.<sup>293</sup> Almost every poem in Anglo-Saxon literature can be shown to come within one of the three influences.

A more detailed explanation is needed about the spirit of idealization exhibited by the Anglo-Saxons in

---

Saxons for their ancestral passion for struggle and dangers.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>292</sup> Albert H. Tolman, "The Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," PMLA, III (1887), p. 39.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., pp. 62-93.

their contacts with life, and which they so predominantly reflected in their poetry. Every experience was idealized, the result, no doubt, of a soul thoroughly imbued with Christian principles. This attitude acted as a purifying agent in the life of the Anglo-Saxons elevating their approach to nature and interpretation of what attracted them in life to an intellectual and spiritual level, thereby eliminating the mere satisfaction of the senses which, otherwise, could go uncontrolled and degenerate into voluptuous appetites. Thus, love having been idealized, there are no poems dealing with the physical aspects merely of lover-and-maid relations as are found in modern poetry. Woman is mentioned occasionally, and she appears as the "noble, honored spouse, chaste and dignified. She is her husband's best and dearest friend, bone of his bone."<sup>294</sup> This reticence did not come, in any way, from a cold heart. The Anglo-Saxons were capable, on the contrary, of the noblest and tenderest love feelings, as exemplified in The Wife's Lament, and The Husband's Message. To some modern critics this mode of expression of sentiments of love is antiquated; this is simply because the world today is not accustomed to see love interpreted in that sense and described in the delicate and spiritual nuances the heart of the Anglo-Saxon,

---

<sup>294</sup> Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 41.

purified through a new Christianity, could express.

Taine was probably under the influence of Barbe-Bleue when he so erroneously wrote that the Saxon poets represented warfare "as a murderous fury, as a blind madness which shook flesh and blood, and awakened the instincts of the beasts of prey."<sup>295</sup> Ironically, as this may be, no such description exists in Anglo-Saxon literature. As a matter of fact, war was heroism to the Anglo-Saxons, not slaughter. War was highly idealized, as the accounts given in some passages of Anglo-Saxon poetry attest, as in Beowulf. Poets stress in great detail the preparations before battle scenes, and delve at length into the causes and consequences of the conflict. The physical aspect of fighting, slaughter, wounds, and the death of the hero are mentioned usually in brief generalities, leaving the rest to the imagination. Even the harsh sounds of war and grief were idealized into songs.<sup>296</sup>

The idealization of the comitatus spirit resulted in a spiritual affinity reminiscent of the tender love of Christ for his apostles, and the strong affection of the disciples for their Master and their holy attachment to Him.

---

<sup>295</sup> H. A. Taine, History of English Literature, trans. H. van Laun (London, 1892), Vol. I, p. 62.

<sup>296</sup> Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 41.

In Anglo-Saxon life, the love of man and woman was superseded by the love of lord and retainers, and became one of the noblest and most sacred conceptions in Anglo-Saxon life, so well expressed in The Wanderer, and The Battle of Maldon. A fine example is also given in Beowulf of the devotion of the followers for their lord; Beowulf for Hygelac, Wiglaf for Beowulf; in the care, protection, and favours dispensed by the lord to his followers; and the lord's concern for the well-being of his thanes or retainers: Hrothgar for his people and Aeschere, Beowulf for his people.

Drinking in the meadhall was closely linked to the comitatus spirit and, likewise, was idealized.<sup>297</sup> Drinking mead was not mere sensual pleasure, but part of a ritual which played an important rôle in the retainer's life as the supreme occasion for recounting his exploits of heroism and for boasting. Their boasts, to perform deeds of valour, were not mere words thrown to the wind to impress, but sprang from noble hearts who would fight to the last rather than abandon their lord and companions. How difficult it is to understand this today when lip service is the common practice!

Etiquette occupied a prominent place in Anglo-Saxon life and came under idealization. In Beowulf, Hrothgar's

---

297

Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 42.

queen, Wealhþeow, offers the drinking cup to Beowulf as a good hostess would normally do; Wulfgar, official of the court of Hrothgar, cuþe ... duguðe þeaw -<sup>298</sup> knew the etiquette of high society. There are many other references in the poem to court and warrior life. With idealization permeating Anglo-Saxon life and bringing out noble sentiments from ordinary daily activities, subjects treated in Anglo-Saxon poetry are usually in elevated terms free from vulgar expressions, and "nothing gross appears. Every person and object is exalted almost to a stage of perfection, or is dismissed from sight and mention as completely bad."<sup>299</sup>

### 3. The Spirit of the Anglo-Saxon Age.

It cannot be stressed too often that Anglo-Saxon literature, like all others, can best be understood through a knowledge of the period in which the works were produced. Writing about Latin themes in Anglo-Saxon poetry, James Cross expressed this opinion in clear terms stressing that the critic

of mediaeval literature faces difficulties caused by the passing of

---

<sup>298</sup> Beowulf, line 359.

<sup>299</sup> Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 41.

time between the creation of that literature and his reading of it. Symbols can fade so quickly, allusions pass with the society which knew them, and the logical connections of one age can become incomprehensible to a later time. Thus, knowledge of appropriate modes of behaviour, patterns of thought, and ways of expression is an obvious adjunct to the criticism of Old English poetry.... A critic should be prepared to understand the mediæval attitude, while yet remembering that the knowledge which he gains is merely of the age, and that it may not always be applied to a poem under review.<sup>300</sup>

Certain modes of behaviour of the Anglo-Saxons, influences to which they responded, attitudes towards certain things in life, patterns of thought and expressions have been discussed and shown to belong to the life of the Anglo-Saxons. A word, in general, will now be said about the spirit that animated the Anglo-Saxons of the seventh and eighth centuries, the age that produced Beowulf, is reflected in it, and with which this paper is mostly concerned.<sup>301</sup>

It is known from Bede's Ecclesiastical History and

---

<sup>300</sup> Cross, Latin Themes in Old English, p. 1.

<sup>301</sup> Morin, Beowulf: A Christian Poem. The spirit of the Anglo-Saxon age was discussed at length in pages 81 to 102, with special emphasis on the epic nature of Beowulf, learning, manuscript illuminations, and the great missionary activities carried from Anglo-Saxon England to the Continent.

from the works of writers of the twentieth century that the age was unique in intellectual enlightenment and achievements, and an age that produced some of the greatest names of the Middle Ages.<sup>302</sup> Among the men responsible for the spreading of a strong Christianity on the Island were St. Augustine of Thanet, Bishops Justus of London, Paulinus of Rochester, Rufianus of York, and Laurentius of Canterbury. Some of the illustrious scholars who endowed the period with their knowledge were Theodore of Tarsus, Hadrian, Aldhelm, Egbert, and Alcuin. There were men, like Benedict

- 
- 302 Some of the works which treat the subject are:  
 Blair, Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England.  
 Bonser, The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England.  
 Brodeur, The Art of Beowulf.  
 R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial (London, 1964), a monograph of the British Museum.  
 Chambers, Man's Unconquerable Mind.  
 Eleanor Shipley Duckett, Alcuin Friend of Charlemagne (New York, 1951).  
 Gareth W. Dunleavy, Colum's Other Island (Madison, 1960).  
 Gerald Ellard, Master Alcuin, Liturgist (Chicago, 1956).  
 Ritchie Girvan, Beowulf and the Seventh Century (London, 1935).  
 John Godfrey, The Church in Anglo-Saxon England (Cambridge, 1962).  
 F. E. Harmer, Anglo-Saxon Writs (Manchester, 1952).  
 R. H. Hodgkin, A History of the Anglo-Saxons (Oxford, 1959).  
 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry.  
 Kenneth Jackson, Peter Hunter Blair, Bertram Colgrave, Bruce Dickins, Joan and Harold Taylor, Christopher Brooke, Nora K. Chadwick, Celt and Saxon (Cambridge, 1963).  
 Kendrick, Codex Lindisfarnensis.

Biscop, keenly interested in the collecting of European works of arts, who arranged the coming of craftsmen from Europe, and gathered and set up imposing libraries in the spirit of Cassiodorus. There were writers like Bede who illuminated the period with their works.

It was the golden age of the conversions with missionaries like Wilfrid and Willibrord, Boniface and Willihad.<sup>303</sup> Holy men like Cuthbert, and hermits and martyrs gave the period the name of - Age of English Saints.<sup>304</sup> Outstanding clergymen continued the work of Augustine: Mildred of Worcester, Daniel of Webster, Torhthelm of Leicester,

- 
- William Witherle Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition (New York, 1963).  
 E. T. Leeds, Celtic Ornament (Oxford, 1933).  
 Morin, Beowulf, A Christian Poem.  
 D. Elizabeth Martin-Clarke, Culture in Early Anglo-Saxon England (Baltimore, 1947).  
 Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin Writers.  
 H. V. Routh, God, Man, and Epic Poetry (Cambridge, 1927).  
 F. M. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England (Oxford, 1955).  
 .. .. ., The Latin Charters of the Anglo-Saxon Period (Oxford, 1955).  
 Dorothy Whitelock, ed. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (London, 1961).  
 .. .. ., Audience of Beowulf.  
 .. .. ., Changing Currents.  
 .. .. ., ed. English Historical Documents c.500-1042 (London, 1955).  
 C. L. Wrenn, Beowulf (London, 1963).  
<sup>303</sup> Hodgkin, History of the Anglo-Saxons, pp. 340-43.  
<sup>304</sup> Chambers, Man's Unconquerable Mind, p. 54.

and Pecthelm of Whithorn. Monastery schools at York, Canterbury, Jarrow, and at other places became famous in Europe.<sup>305</sup> Scriptoria of the reputation of Lindisfarne produced works, such as The Lindisfarne Gospels, a manuscript which has remained to this day among the greatest achievements in manuscript illuminations. The manuscript was wrought in letters of gold and silver on purple parchment, and was encased in gold and silver cases set in precious stones. Aristocrats made history as well. Among the most prominent were Kings Aethilwald or Aethelbald and Offa of Mercia, Ceolwulf and Aldfrid of Northumbria, and Oswin of Deira. Altogether, it was an outstanding period in intellectual, social, religious, and artistic attainments which saw

a new heaven and a new earth ... a  
new language, a new writing ...  
books and an education based on books.  
It opened to them the literature of  
Rome, and a civilization ... from all  
the Mediterranean world .... What was  
impossible to a Christian people when  
old and young had their visions, and  
when signs and wonders were reported  
from every quarter? Even the relics  
of native saints were ... as effica-  
cious as those ... from Rome. And the

---

305  
Routh, God, Man, and Epic Poetry, p. 84.  
Blair, Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England,  
p. 144.  
Hodgkin, History of the Anglo-Saxons, pp. 365-  
66.

other miracles - the stone churches, Aldhelm's Latin style, Bede's Ecclesiastical History, the art of the Lindisfarne Gospels, and of the sculptured crosses - are not these enough to demonstrate that the Anglo-Saxons ... were as much alive and as gifted as the Elizabethans.<sup>306</sup>

No single incident could develop into wider and far reaching effects, do more good to Anglo-Saxon studies in general, and clear the air of the whole background of Beowulf in contributing to the reassessment and enlightenment of the poem, than the discovery in 1939 at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, East Anglia, of a ship cenotaph from the third quarter of the seventh century. A treasure, the richest yield ever given up by British soil,<sup>307</sup> was discovered in a burial chamber amidships, and was conjecturally valued at some half a million pounds,<sup>308</sup> approximately one million and a half dollars. Historically, this discovery had the salutary effect of eliminating, in one majestic stroke, the unfounded and false beliefs that Anglo-Saxon England belonged to "a dark age," and its civilization was the product of a "universal and slovenly individualism, without

---

<sup>306</sup> Hodgkin, History of the Anglo-Saxons, pp.365-66.

<sup>307</sup> Bruce-Mitford, Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, p. 11.

<sup>308</sup> R. W. Chambers, Beowulf, Supplement by C. L. Wrenn, (Cambridge, 1959), p. 509.

restraint, without discipline, without education, and without effectual contact with Continental civilization."<sup>309</sup>

Only an advanced and refined civilization could have developed an atmosphere beneficial to the production of poems of the calibre of Beowulf, Andreas, Guthlac, Christ, Judith, Elene, and favourable to the type of Latin prose writings left by Aldhelm and Bede. It is not surprising, therefore, that the same civilization witnessed the collection of works of art of the value and wealth found in the Sutton grave treasure, "of a magnificence unequalled in Western Europe,"<sup>310</sup> considered to be "the greatest gift ever received by the British Museum from a living person,"<sup>311</sup> and "one of the most remarkable and splendid" donations ever made to the British national archaeological collections.<sup>312</sup>

The items discovered at Sutton Hoo include a sword with golden pommel and hilt encrusted with garnets. A

---

<sup>309</sup> E. Wingfield-Stratford, The History of British Civilization, 2nd ed. (London, 1930), p. 118.

<sup>310</sup> Francis P. Magoun, Jr., "The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial: A Chronological Bibliography," Speculum, XXIX (1954), p. 116.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., p. 116. The treasure was declared not to be "treasure trove" at a coroner's inquest, and became the property of the finder, Mrs. E. M. Pretty on whose estate it was discovered. She then presented it to the British Museum.

<sup>312</sup> Bruce-Mitford, Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, p. 3.

large shield of Swedish workmanship is considered to be of great age and of the type mentioned in Beowulf. It is made of iron and gilt-bronze, with gold leaf and wood, and ornamental figures showing a bird of prey, a dragon, a human face, and twelve animal heads. There is a great ceremonial whetstone with four carved faces and two carved lobed knobs surmounted by bronze saucers, one at each end, and held in place by bronze ribs; and a royal iron standard mounted with a bronze stag with spreading antlers reminds one of Heorot in Beowulf. From Alexandria in origin, there is a heavy bronze bowl with drop handles and a base ring on which are engraved four animals: a camel, a donkey, a lion, and a large feline. A beautiful hanging-bowl, identified to be of Celtic manufacture, is made of thin bronze with eight enamelled escutcheons, the centre one supporting a bronze fish, and another in the form of an animal head with eyes set with garnets and gold discs; the bowl has patches of fine silver plates which were riveted to it at some time, and are decorated with birds' heads. The discovery of the remains of a six-stringed rectangular harp ornamented with bronze plaques in the form of birds' heads is most revealing. The harp occupied a place of prominence in Anglo-Saxon times. It is known from Caedmon's story, and it is referred to in Beowulf and in other poems. The silver objects yielded are of classical designs and Mediterranean origin. They include

a set of ten silver bowls with cruciform designs, two silver baptismal spoons of Byzantine type, one dish with assay stamp of the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius I, dated 491-518, a fluted bowl with classical head, and a silver cup.

Of particular interest to the Beowulfian student is the huge iron and gold helmet of old Swedish workmanship, with silver-covered metal crest, grooved in chevron-pattern, bronze eyebrows inlaid with silver wire, gilt-bronze boars' heads, embossed symbolic sword-dance Wodanistic figures, and square-cut garnets set in metal cells. The helmet is complete with iron visor, a gilt-bronze nose in relief, mouth, upper lip, and a close-trimmed moustache, iron cheek pieces, iron neck-guard thrust out and back, a riveted crown inlaid with silver wire (mentioned in line 1031 of Beowulf) made of narrow tin ribs fluted, gilded, embossed with figures, and a gilt-bronze animal head with gnashing teeth and garnet eyes.

From what is believed to be a harness, the Sutton Hoo find gave up forty-one individual pieces of solid gold, garnet encrusted. Under a purse-lid with jewelled gold frame and seven ornamental plaques of blue and white or red and white mosaic glass with garnets of the highest grade jewellery, were forty Frankish gold coins and two gold billets.

The finest piece artistically is a native Anglo-Saxon great belt-buckle of solid gold decorated with interlacing animal pattern and birds' heads. Strikingly remarkable for the skill of its work are the clasps in cloisonné with long thick gold pins, animal heads encrusted with filigree and tiny garnet eyes, gold chains and staples in design of linked boars, bird and snake figures in filigree to complete them.

The Sutton Hoo treasure yielded also vessels and large drinking horns with silver-gilt mounts, iron-bound wooden buckets, and sheet bronze cauldrons. Altogether, there are four thousand individually cut garnets in the jewellery, most of them backed by patterned gold foil and fitted into gold cells, representing the excellent craft work of Anglo-Saxon goldsmiths and gem-cutters.<sup>313</sup>

The munificence and sumptuousness of the Sutton Sutton Hoo treasure is an indication of the wealth avail-

---

<sup>313</sup> The Sutton Hoo treasure is discussed in the following works:

Bruce-Mitford, Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, British Museum Monograph.

Peter Clemoes, ed. The Anglo-Saxons, pp. 201-03.

Aarni Erä-Esko, "Sutton Hoo and Finland," Speculum, XXVIII (July, 1953), pp. 514-15.

Hodgkin, History of the Anglo-Saxons, Appendix "The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial," pp. 696-734 in Vol. II.

Sune Lindqvist, "Sutton Hoo and Beowulf," Antiquity, XXII (1948), pp. 131-40.

Magoun, Jr., "Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial," pp. 116-24.

able in Anglo-Saxon times, the comfort of living the people enjoyed, and is an undeniable proof of the culture of the age. Sutton Hoo serves even more convincingly to prove that the Anglo-Saxon civilization which cultivated the arts and religion to an eminent degree, and produced advanced artistic achievements, fostered conditions equally favourable to the encouragement and development of letters. Indeed, it was a period of "learning and enlightenment," and one of "the eminent ages of English scholarship."<sup>314</sup> Anglo-Saxon literary works extant, although few in number but, like the Sutton Hoo finds, of superior quality, represent fragments and samples only of the literary products of the age. Nevertheless, they reflect, in a striking manner, the heroic times of Anglo-Saxon England of the seventh and eighth centuries when a civilization built on high standards and ideals flourished in a unique blend of Christian, Germanic pagan, Classical Mediterranean, and Celtic environment.

The other important centers of learning, in addition to the monasteries and their schools, were the courts where

---

Herbert Maryon, "The Sutton Hoo Helmet," Antiquity, XXI (1947), pp. 137-44.

Wrenn, Supplement to Beowulf, by R. W. Chambers, pp. 116-24.

Life Magazine, "The Treasure of Sutton Hoo," Vol. XXXI, No. 3, pp. 82-85 (July 16, 1951).

<sup>314</sup>

Chambers, Man's Unconquerable Mind, p. 65.

culture was at its height,<sup>315</sup> with an important court poetry developing an atmosphere favourable to the production of great poetry. In an article on Beowulf and Sutton Hoo, Nora Chadwick refers to Beowulf as

our only great Anglo-Saxon narrative poem on a secular theme .... an ambitious composition. Its specialized diction and elaborate style are the late product of a mature school of court poetry. The tone is formal and exalted, suited only to a highly refined milieu, to whom the dignity and high seriousness of epic themes and spiritual values are familiar. The poet is well acquainted with court life, and has moved familiarly in aristocratic circles .... The metre and form of the poem, the note of reflection and the 'elegiac' tone, the leisurely pageantry and the quiet dignity of the grand theme, ... suggest that the tradition had long been known in the milieu in which the poet of Beowulf composed.<sup>316</sup>

The permeating influence of the teaching of Christianity made headway in bringing forth men of valour imbued with wisdom of mind, gentleness of heart, and mildness of manners,<sup>317</sup> and resulted in general happiness, charity, and

---

<sup>315</sup> Blair, Anglo-Saxon England, pp. 52-53.

<sup>316</sup> Nora K. Chadwick, Beowulf and Sutton Hoo, in "The Monsters and Beowulf," in Peter Clemoes, ed. The Anglo-Saxons (London, 1959), pp. 201-03.

<sup>317</sup> Many examples are cited by Bede in his Ecclesiastical History, for example, Oswin, King of Deira.

enthusiasm soon to bear fruits far beyond the confines of Anglo-Saxon England, in an eagerness and ambition for the propagation of the faith and a manifestation of bold courage, and unremitting self-sacrifice in missionary work. This was an age of heroic times, and with advanced social, aristocratic, and religious customs, it was fertile ground for heroic poetry. Anglo-Saxon poetic records show that much was produced.

Chapter III has elucidated, by way of selections from poems, the technique employed in Anglo-Saxon poetry for developing mood. This, as it has been explained, was done by the enumeration of external objects, by using highly suggestive diction in contextual arrangement, and by indirection and suggestions. The Anglo-Saxon poet's interpretation of nature has also been discussed. Things which seemed to attract him most were mentioned, and some reasons given for this preference, namely, the poet's realistic approach to nature, his outlook on some "mysterious" workings of things about him, the Christian frame of mind he brought to nature, which was responsible for the keen interest in death and in the sea, and the spirit of idealization. Finally, the spirit of the age was exemplified by the Sutton Hoo treasure, and was shown capable of stimulating the production of great literary works in an age when the in-

centive to create was being constantly activated and encouraged. As a result, Chapter III throws additional light on Anglo-Saxon poetic technique, and prepares the way further for an investigation of the contribution of the verb to the poetic diction of Beowulf by removing certain difficulties. Chapter IV will now consider certain Anglo-Saxon stylistic characteristics in order to continue the task of disposing of more difficulties in the interpretation of Anglo-Saxon poetic style.

## CHAPTER IV

## SOME ANGLO-SAXON

## STYLISTIC AND SYNTACTICAL

## CHARACTERISTICS

An understanding of the most important stylistic peculiarities and linguistic data of Anglo-Saxon style and poetic technique will help towards an interpretation of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Klaeber was already well aware of that in the article he wrote in 1905 dealing with the style and language of Anglo-Saxon poetry, as the basis for the elucidation of certain passages in Beowulf. He explained:

I propose on the following pages first to review certain stylistic and linguistic facts which, though familiar enough in a general way, are still in need of especial, careful observation to insure a more accurate interpretation of the text. That the phenomena discussed are not peculiar to Beowulf, but may be found throughout the Anglo-Saxon poetry - and even beyond the Old English limits of the Teutonic literature - need not be urged against the usefulness of these collections, for is not the poem of Beowulf the great classic representative of this literature, including matters of form?<sup>318</sup>

---

<sup>318</sup> Fr. Klaeber, "Studies in the Textual Interpretation of Beowulf," MP. III (October, 1905), p. 236.

Klaeber's approach stands to reason since few will deny that it is normal for a poem to be, usually, in the style of the period in which it was produced. In addition, Beowulf is the chef d'oeuvre of Anglo-Saxon poetry extant, and an examination of poetic features peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon age must take one back constantly to the masterpiece. Consequently, Chapter IV will examine certain stylistic and syntactical characteristics, including rhetorical patterns, the intensity and conciseness of the Anglo-Saxon line, the scarcity of articles and pronouns, the repetition technique, climax and transition, the use of the pronoun, the round-about approach, the order of words in the structure of the Anglo-Saxon sentence; this survey will be completed with a few words about Anglo-Saxon metrics and alliteration.

### 1. Rhetorical Patterns.

The method of Beowulf, in relation to rhetorical patterns and devices used in Anglo-Saxon poetic technique, is "the method of all Anglo-Saxon epic ... the more ... verse patterns are studied, the more they help to interpret the design of the whole poem."<sup>319</sup> Verse patterns are sections or groups of verses of a poem, irregular in struc-

---

<sup>319</sup> Adeline Courtney Bartlett, "The Larger Rhetorical Patterns in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," Columbia University Studies in English and Comparative Literature, Number 122 (New York, 1935), p. 7.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

176

but unified, complete in themselves with a beginning and an end, of various lengths according to thought and design, forming logical little units within the larger whole. Verse patterns are constructed on traditional rhetorical patterns such as the repetition, the parallel, the balance, the antithesis, the chiasmus, and the contrast. They are not stanzas or strophes as we know them in modern English versification; in fact, all Anglo-Saxon poetry, with the exception of Deor and perhaps Wulf and Eadwacer, is non-strophic verse.

The verse pattern is believed to be traceable to Old Germanic or from Latin or Hebrew, through the Vulgate. Its existence in Anglo-Saxon poetical records is evidence that the poet saw beyond the end of the line, and was not merely concerned, as many have believed it, with alliteration and kennings. One who fails to recognize the verse pattern as a stylistic device of the age, deprives himself of a medium for the comprehension of the poem in which it is used, and may lose the nuance of the thought it helps to convey, as well as the logical and structural unity of the passage. There are several kinds of verse patterns according to the predominant rhetorical device it employs. The most characteristic are the envelope, the parallel, the incremental, and the rhythmical patterns.<sup>320</sup> The following examples will illustrate.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

177

When words or/and ideas are used at the beginning and are repeated at the end of a group of verses, the pattern thus developed is called an envelope, the collection of lines forming a logical whole in thought content as well as a unit to the ear and the eye. A fine and simple example was singled out by Hart in 1907, and was termed "envelope figure,"<sup>321</sup> a name which has remained to designate this type of verse groups.<sup>322</sup> An example is found in the following lines of Beowulf:

|                   |                                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Yrmelāfes         | Dēad is Aeschere,                   |
| mīn rūnwita       | yldra brōþor,                       |
| eaþlgestealla,    | ond mīn rāedbora,                   |
| hafelan weredon,  | þonne wē on orlege                  |
| eoferas cnysedan. | þonne hniton fēþan,                 |
| [æþeling] æergōd, | Swy(lc) scolde eorl wasan,          |
|                   | swylc Aeschere waes! <sup>323</sup> |

This verse pattern is built on two contrasted parts, dēad - swylc and is - waes. The second part contains an antithesis formed by the present tense of TO BE thrown against the

320

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 7, 8, and 107. Included under decorative inset are gnomic, homiletic, elegiac, runic, and macaronic passages; also, the ecphrasis of a lyric-descriptive nature, and narrative digressions. Under conventional device, the formal introductory and concluding passage used often in Anglo-Saxon poetry is put down as a formula and is discussed along with the speech or dialogue.

321

Walter Morris Hart, "Ballad and Epic, A Study in the Development of the Narrative Art," Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature, XI (Boston, 1907), p. 201.

322

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 11.

323

Beowulf, lines 1323-29; Dead is Aeschere, /

## STYLISTIC, STYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

178

preterit of the same verb. Important also, and usually lost to the unprepared or uninformed reader, is the rôle of swylc on which veers the descriptive content of the pattern, and the sound effect developed from the juxtaposition of is to waes echoing dēad. Thus, the beginning and the end of the passage are wrapped up in the idea of loss.<sup>324</sup>

Another example of this type of pattern built on an ordinary chiasmus, that is, the order of the words in one verse form a kind of parallel and are inverted in another or second verse, is found in Maldon:

- |      |                                                     |                                                                         |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.25 | <u>Pa</u> <u>stod</u> <u>on</u> <u>staeðe</u>       | <u>stiðlice</u> <u>clypode</u>                                          |
| 1.26 | <u>wicinga</u> <u>ar</u> ,                          | <u>wordum</u> <u>mælde</u> ,                                            |
| 1.27 | <u>se</u> <u>on</u> <u>beot</u> <u>abead</u>        | <u>brimlipendra</u>                                                     |
| 1.28 | <u>aeraende</u> <u>to</u> <u>þam</u> <u>eorle</u> , | <u>þær</u> <u>he</u> <u>on</u> <u>ofre</u> <u>stod</u> . <sup>325</sup> |

In the first half of line 25, the words pa stod on staeðe are inverted to on ofre stod in the second half of line 28. In the second half of line 25, the words stiðlice clypode

---

Yrmenlaf's / elder brother, / my trusted confident / and  
my counselor, / my shoulder-marshall / when we in war /  
our heads defended, / when troops clashed, / and boar-  
crests smote. / Such should a nobleman be, / good in the  
making, / such was Aeschere.

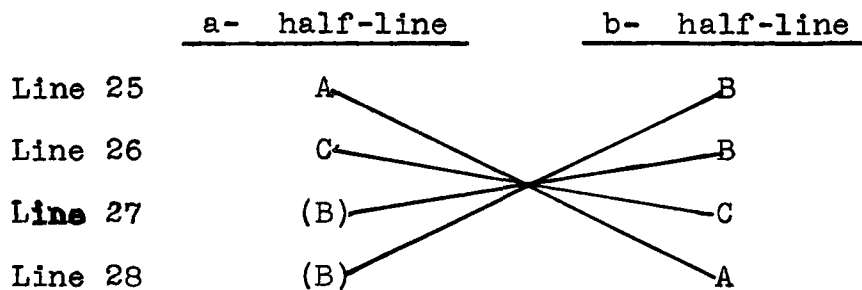
<sup>324</sup> Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 10.

<sup>325</sup> Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Records, Vol. VI, p. 7,  
lines 25-28: Then stood on the shore, / sternly shouting /  
the Vikings' messenger, / words spoke, / who menacingly  
(threateningly) delivered / the Viking / the message to  
the earl, / where he on the shore stood.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

179

are related to the first half of line 28, aerfende to pam  
eorle, so that the idea of the message being transmitted is  
 completed with the content of the second half of line 26,  
wordum maelde, and the first half of line 27, se on beot  
abead. Finally, the first half of line 26, wicinga ar, and  
 the second half of line 27, brimlipendra form a chiasmic  
 disposition. A diagram helps to a clearer understanding of  
 this pattern arrangement;



Thus: A- the place idea, B- the message, and C- the Vikings' messenger, while lines 27a and 28a, placed in parentheses as (B), are considered incomplete and indirect expressions of the idea of the Vikings' messenger.<sup>326</sup> Reading the passage aloud will bring out the arrangement even better.

It is immediately evident that a number of combinations are possible within the envelope pattern itself depending on the rhetorical approach followed. Such are found

---

<sup>326</sup> Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 10.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

180

in lines 702-11 of Christ, 54-62 of Exodus, 1322-30 of Guthlac, 612-35 of Daniel, 1363-91 of Genesis, 876-89 of Elene, and 166-74 of Juliana.

Most remarkable is the double envelope pattern not infrequently used by Anglo-Saxon poets; an example is the passage contained in lines 853-917 of Beowulf. Few editors have taken these sixty-five lines as a single paragraph, yet, a careful reading of them will bring out the rhetorical divisions. The scheme is built as follows; a) the praise of Beowulf, in lines 856-57: Bēowulfes mæryðð / mæned Beowulf's fame celebrated, and line 872: sifð Bēowulfes snyttrum styrian - Beowulf's undertaking to relate with skill; b) the joy of the Danish warriors, in line 854: of gomenwāpe - the joyous journey, and line 863: glaedne Hrōthgār - the joyful Hrothgar; and finally, c) men riding, in line 855: mēarum rīdan - to ride on horses, lines 864-65: hlēapan lēton, on geflit faran, fealwe mēaras - let gallop and race in contest their bay steeds, and lines 916-17: hwīlum flītende fealwe strāete mēarum mæton - sometimes contending they measured the grey road with their horses. A closer look at the poem reveals that the passages immediately preceding this double envelope pattern, lines 837-52, and immediately following it, lines 917-24, present two different parts of the story, both being introduced by line

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

181

837: Da waes on morgen - then was in the morning, and line  
 917: Da waes morgenleht - then the morning light was, thus  
 forming a parallel in keeping with the poet's habit of  
 rhetorical composition.<sup>327</sup> Another double pattern exists  
 in lines 491-646 of Beowulf, dealing with the Breca episode.

The parallel pattern is perhaps better known, as  
 an Anglo-Saxon stylistic device, than the rhetorical. It  
 consists in the doubling of individual sentences or groups  
 of sentences, the parallelism thus built having syntactical  
 peculiarities, similarity in form, and relationship in con-  
 tent, with repetition, balance, and antithesis being the  
 elements on which the pattern is built.<sup>328</sup> An example from  
 lines 355-60 of The Phoenix will serve to illustrate this  
 pattern.

|                     |                                       |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| cyning aelmihtig,   | God ana wat,                          |
| wifhades þe weres;  | hu his gecynde bið,                   |
| monna cynnes,       | þæt ne wat aenig                      |
| hu þa wisan sind    | butan meotod ana,                     |
| faeger fyrngesceap, | wundorlice,                           |
|                     | ymb þæs fugles gebýrd. <sup>329</sup> |

<sup>327</sup> Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 11-23.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-33.

<sup>329</sup> Krapp and Dobbie, Vol. III, p. 104, lines 355-360, The Exeter Book: God alone knows, / King almighty, / what the species is, / whether woman or man; / this no one knows / of the race of men, / nobody but God, / how the rulings are / remarkable, / beautiful ancient decree, / about the bird's birth.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

182

The parallel exists in the negative statement contained in the second part beginning in the second half of line 357: baet ne wat aening / monna cynnes, / butan metod ana - none of mankind knows, nobody but God, viewed in relation to the statement of the first part beginning line 355: God ana wat - God alone knows, although here, the negation is one in appearance only.

Other specimens are found in lines 161-64 of Judgement Day II, 95-102 of Soul and Body I, 10-19 and 1-8 of The Meters of Boethius 21 and 27, 1450-69 of Christ, 236-42 of Christ and Satan, 79-87 of Guthlac, 1-10 of Elene, 272-82 of Juliana, and lines 210-28, 331-47, and 2016-24 of Beowulf. The parallel pattern has been used freely by the psalmist, particularly in Psalms 79, 104, 113, 117, 134, and 135.<sup>330</sup> The most outstanding of the parallel group is the pattern containing an anaphora, that is, "the repetition of the same word or phrase in several successive clauses,"<sup>331</sup> thus forming a series of parallels. The well known Ubi sunt motif belongs to this group.

Most common in the balance group of the parallel pattern are members marked by hwilum - sometimes, as in

---

<sup>330</sup> Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp.31-39,

<sup>331</sup> C. T. Onions, ed., The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford, 1939), Vol. I, p. 62.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

183

lines 2107, 2109, and 2111 of Beowulf; eala - alas, as in lines 76-106 of The Harrowing of Hell; oðer - other, as in lines 467-89 of Genesis B; and sum - one, some, or some one, as in lines 80-84 of The Wanderer. The antithesis is another type in the parallel group, as in lines 183-88 of Beowulf, 4-13 of Prayer II, 8-26 The Gifts of Men, and 712-29 of Daniel.<sup>332</sup>

As the name implies, the incremental pattern is built on a crescendo-like plan with a series of logical parallel members gradually mounting towards a culmination. The Anglo-Saxon writer made an effective use of the echo which develops from this pattern, and used it as a stylistic device, an appeal to the ear and, as every excellent craftsman would, as a link to bind the schematic arrangement of the sections.

A case in point is the description found in lines 702-36 of Beowulf of the coming of Grendel from the moor in the murky night to Heorot. The passage is made up of four sections beginning at lines 702, 710, 720, and 728 respectively, with various artistic repetitions, such as com - came, in lines 702, 710, and 720 acting as connectors. The reader hears echoes from the words scynscaða - hostile demon, in line 707, and manscaða - wicked ravager, in line

<sup>332</sup>Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp.40-48.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

184

712; rinc - the man (Grendel), in line 720, and rinca - the men (the Geats), in line 728; winreced - the wine-hall, in line 714, and reced - the hall, in lines 720 and 721; mynte expected, in lines 712 and 731; on wanre niht - in the black night, in line 702, and ofer þa niht - after that night, in line 736. It is interesting to realize that

this passage has been often and justly admired. Nobody today, it is perhaps safe to assume, would take the cumulative structure as evidence of patchword origin. The repetition of com is instead felt to be an artistic device. There are other instances of artistic repetition in this same passage, which, although they are less conspicuous ... appear to serve the same purpose of linking the four parts.<sup>333</sup>

Other examples of the incremental pattern are found in lines 37-52 of The Battle of Brunanburh, 104-19 of Daniel, 199-235 of Judith, 196-205 of Genesis and lines 1296-1313 and 1767-84 of the same poem.

The rhythmical pattern is the result of the expanded line, with emphasis on rhythm rather than meter. Built something like the Freytag triangle, line expansion in this pattern has a three-way movement, with a climb, a climax and a decline, the logical, rhetorical and rhythmical elements

333

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 49.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

185

forming one. This pattern is often built on speech material. The speech plays a foremost rôle in heroic poetry, and the Anglo-Saxon poet was at home with it weaving it into a variety of rhythmical pattern types. Examples are found in lines 1162-68 of Beowulf, 423-40 of Guthlac, 224-49 of Daniel, 131-35 of The Dream of the Rood, 565-79 of Exodus, 106-09 of The Seafarer, 25-28 of The Rune Poem, and in many other poems.<sup>334</sup>

## 2. Intensity and Conciseness of the Anglo-Saxon Line.

The importance of having a knowledge of the style and syntax of Anglo-Saxon literature to experience Anglo-Saxon poetry to its maximum, and to be able to interpret and translate it accurately, has always been paramount in the minds of Anglo-Saxon teachers and scholars. This was recognized as far back as 1887.<sup>335</sup> The student of Anglo-Saxon is often struck by the intensity, conciseness, and weightiness of the line of the Anglo-Saxon poems he reads. At first, these characteristics are interpreted as faults

---

<sup>334</sup> Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp.62-71.

<sup>335</sup> Albert H. Tolman, "The Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," PMLA, III (1887), pp. 17-47. The essay outlines and discusses several Anglo-Saxon stylistic devices and characteristics of the contemporary spirit, including alliteration, the metaphor, epithets, kennings, the variation, the parallel, the comitatus spirit, and the elegiac mood. This essay must be read by all students of Anglo-Saxon.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

186

of style, but if an investigation is made they are discovered to be stylistic qualities. A passage taken at random from Judith illustrates:

~~syððan~~ <sup>Pa</sup> wurdon blide burhsittende,  
~~ofer~~ <sup>hi</sup> gehyrdon hu seo halgie spræc  
 ofer heanne weall. Here waes on lustum.  
 Wið paes faestengeates folc onette,  
 weras wif somod, wornum ond heapum,  
 creatum ond drymmum þrungon ond urnon  
 ongean ða þeodnes maegð þusendmaelum,  
 ealde ge george.<sup>336</sup>

Soon, the student discovers that the emphasis placed on accent and alliteration is partly responsible for the vigorous style and the weight of the line. Critics have called it "the strange emphasis" of Anglo-Saxon style.<sup>337</sup>

Although Hippolyte Taine was misled in much of his appraisal of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and his approach to literature generally,<sup>338</sup> he was attracted by the chief care of

---

<sup>336</sup> Dobbie, Beowulf and Judith, Vol. IV, p. 103, lines 159-166: Glad then were they / the citizens (dwellers-in-borough), / after they heard / how the holy (one) spoke / over the high wall. / The army was in joy. / To the fortress gate / the people hastened, / men and women together, / in multitudes and heaps, / in crowds and throngs / hurried and ran / towards the Lord's maid / by thousands, / old and young.

<sup>337</sup> Hemrich Rehrmann, "Essay Concerning Anglo-Saxon Poetry" (Lübbe, 1877), mentioned in Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 23.

<sup>338</sup> Taine, History of English Literature, Vol. I. On page viii of his Avertissement (Foreword) written in 1871 Taine remarks that he might have left to Englishmen the task of writing the history of English literature.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

187

the Anglo-Saxon poet "to abridge" and "to imprison thought."<sup>339</sup> This characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry was warranted, or at least called for, by the exigencies of the

"Peut-être valait-il mieux laisser ce soin aux gens de la maison; ils diront qu'ils connaissent mieux le personnage, puisqu'ils sont de sa famille. Cela est vrai; mais, à force de vivre avec quelqu'un, on ne remarque plus ses particularités. Au contraire un étranger a cet avantage que l'habitude ne l'a point émoussé; involontairement il est frappé par les grands traits; de cette façon il les remarque. C'est là toute mon excuse; je la présente au lecteur anglais avec quelque confiance, parce que, si j'examine mes propres idées sur la France, j'en trouve plusieurs qui m'ont été fournies par des étrangers et notamment par des Anglais." This is typical of Taine, the historian, to approach literature as he does history, and try to explain literature solely in terms of the kind of men who wrote it, the times in which they lived, and the society to which they belonged. But surely, a Frenchman's "propres idées sur la France" is one thing, having nothing to do with his appraisal of French literature, which is something else. If it did, it would be just as valid as the negative appraisal of a beautiful Japanese Haiku by a United States marine winner of the Purple Heart, who suffered the worst atrocities at the hands of the Nipponese. His judgement could easily be blurred and strongly influenced by his hate of anything connected with Japan. To make the evaluation of literature subjective and a matter for historicism is the wrong approach.

339

Taine, History of English Literature, Vol. I, p. 43. In addition, Taine's appraisal of Anglo-Saxon poetry and the "barbarians" who produced it misses the goal when it comes to style. Taine does recognize that "the remnant of Anglo-Saxon poetry suffices to show the strange and powerful poetic genius of the race." But he becomes shocking, and exhibits a genuine ignorance typical of any French critic, so impudent and categorical in a judgement based on false premises, when he describes Anglo-Saxon religious poetry as the result of "the romantic imaginations of babbling clerics mere composers of adventure;" when he states there is "no art, no natural talent" in their poetry "for describing singly and in order the different parts of an object or an event;" or when he judges the imagery of Anglo-Saxon poetry "too feeble" and "not knowing how to unfold itself;" literature with "entangled" ideas, written by "clumsy-fingered, unintelligible" poets who "neglected" their

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

188

alliteration and the Anglo-Saxon line, whose shortness did not allow the poet to hold back the expression of an idea. The effect was also partly achieved through the abundant use of the metaphor and the personification. The diction was adorned with an extraordinary variety of synonyms that has accounted for the name given Anglo-Saxon poetry, "the poetry of synonyms."<sup>340</sup> Two other figures of speech, the simile and the allegory, were hardly used at all.

## 3. The Scarcity of Articles and Pronouns.

Taine complained that in Anglo-Saxon poetry "articles, particles, everything capable of illuminating thought, of marking the connection of terms, of producing regularity of ideas, all rational and logical artifices, are neglected. Passion bellows forth like a great shapeless beast; and that is all."<sup>341</sup> Tolman replied that the French historian "overstates" the case, and "mistates it," that "he is wrong in

---

art producing works "the acme of barbarism," outstanding by "the harshness of the expression, which, subservient to the energy and shocks of the inner sentiment, seeks only to exhibit it intact and original, spite of all order and beauty, - such are the characteristics of their poetry, and these will be the characteristics of the poetry which is to follow," in relation to "Homer's happy poetry." Pp. 41-44. In footnote Number 1 of page 41, Taine mentions that he read Anglo-saxon poetry in translation. This may explain, in part, depending whose work he read, his difficulty of comprehension and interpretation.

<sup>340</sup> Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 24.

thrusting aside as rude and worthless the poems which he cannot appreciate."<sup>342</sup> Taine's difficulties stemmed, not so much from his inability to appreciate Anglo-Saxon poetry, as from an utter ignorance of the Anglo-Saxon language and its style. The scarcity of articles, particles, and pronouns was dictated by the rigid requirements of alliteration and meter, and cannot be put down as a defect. Only great craftsmen could have turned out Anglo-Saxon poems as they did. Anglo-Saxon poets were boxed in, so to speak, with the limitations of the type of versification they used, just as Alexander Pope was, with the heroic couplet, and Gerard Manley Hopkins with his sprung rhythm had to manoeuvre expertly and steadily. The Anglo-Saxon poet may be compared to an experienced sea captain who knows the idiosyncrasies of his ship and every inch of the treacherous coast along which he navigates, feels in advance how she will react against the elements at a given movement, and remains the master in control at all times of both ship and elements. Likewise, the Anglo-Saxon poets had to be deeply versed in the devices of poetic technique, fully exercised in the use of the unwieldy meter, in utmost com-

---

<sup>341</sup> Taine, History of English Literature, p. 43.

<sup>342</sup> Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 34.

mand of the language, skilfully knowledged in the ways of adaptation to make the language fit the meter and express what they wanted, and produce at the same time the desired effect. This is exactly what Anglo-Saxon poets<sup>were and</sup> did. Their works have none of the alleged shortcomings Taine believed he ~~re~~cognized in them, on the contrary, they exhibit to a degree of high perfection the poetic art of Anglo-Saxons.

#### 4. The Repetition Technique.

When Taine wrote that the Anglo-Saxon poet's "ideas are entangled, without notice, abruptly," he "will return to the idea he has quitted, and insert it in the thought to which he is giving expression,"<sup>343</sup> he gave proof again of how little he understood Anglo-Saxon literary techniques. Surely, there can be nothing wrong with what has been called "crossed repetition," or more normally, parallelism, with the passing back and forth between two or more thoughts. Many writers have used this technique. Milton, for example, in lines 26-83, Book I of Paradise Lost, intensifies the torments of Hell and makes them more effective by a back-and-forth, one-two, one-two-one movement.<sup>344</sup>

---

<sup>343</sup> Taine, History of English Literature, p. 43.

<sup>344</sup> Helen Darbishire, ed. The Poetical Works of John Milton (Oxford, 1952), Vol. I, pp. 6-7, lines 26-83. The passage begins with a pair of questions taking up lines

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

191

An extension or development of the cross repetition technique is the parataxis, that is, the placing of propositions one after another, without showing their connection or interdependence.<sup>345</sup> The leaving of thoughts and returning to them at leisure was a popular stylistic device with Anglo-Saxon poets, and one that made oral recitation more pleasurable to the listeners. The critic unfamiliar with Anglo-Saxon writings sees inconsistency in the writer who used it. The case is well clarified in the statement that

A.-S. poetry expresses paratactically in independent clauses, those ideas of time, cause, manner and accompaniment which we are accustomed to express syntactically, in subordinate clauses. Thus, there is nothing

---

27 to 33 "say first what cause moved our Grand Parents ... to fall off," and "who first seduced them?" The reply is given in lines 34-44, including a biographical sketch of how Satan became what he is. The description of the torments of Hell is a three-way affair; the physical, lines 45-49 with Satan being "hurld headlong flaming from th'Ethereal Skie;" the spiritual, lines 50-60; "confounded though immortal ... for now the thought both of lost happiness and lasting pain torments him;" and the physical-spiritual, lines 61-69; "a dungeon horrible ... great Furnace ... darkness visible ... torture without end ... ever-burning Sulfur unconsum'd." New thoughts are introduced in lines 70-74: "such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd" with the horrors of hell still being referred to, in line 75 the fallen angels' new abode is "unlike the place from whence they fell," and in line 81 Beëlzebub appears for the first time. The change of movement or thought from the cause of the fall and punishment, to the description of the torments and Hell itself, to the Justice of the Almighty, to a comparison between the new state and the former, to the introduction of Beëlzebub, although different, belongs to the same subject and is used by the poet to bring about the desired effect.

<sup>345</sup> W. T. Harris, ed. Webster's New International

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

192

in the construction to indicate that the poet has not abandoned his first line of thought and taken up a new one. Hence, if the reader does not keep his own mind 'on the key,' he may fancy that the author is jumping about aimlessly.<sup>346</sup>

Some passages will illustrate.

In line 224 of Daniel, the poet begins to describe the episode of the casting of the three young Hebrews into the furnace by Nebuchadnezzar; Da weardyrre anmod cyning - then was in anger the proud king, introduces various thoughts in independent clauses before coming back to his original idea of the furnace and the king of Babylon, at line 409: Da paet ehtode / ealdor peode / Nabochodnossor, / wið pam hehstum / folcgesidum - then the lord of that nation Nebuchadnezzar spoke unto the princes who stood near by. Many examples exist in Beowulf. The passage dealing with the melting of the sword blade in dam Grendel's cave, beginning at lines 1606, is followed by the thoughts of spring, God's power over the seasons, God the Creator, back to the melting sword, at line 1616, then, a reference is made to the hot and poisonous blood, in lines 1617-18, ending finally with the return of Beowulf swimming back to the

---

Dictionary of the English Language (Springfield, 1928), p. 1566.

<sup>346</sup> Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 36.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

193

surface of the mere, in lines 1619-20. Another passage is found in lines 2451-60 describing King Hrethel's mourning of his son who was accidentally killed. The art displayed by the poet in the paratactic construction is to give a passage a total effect with the use of many details spread over a number of principal clauses. The examples they left throughout their poems testify to the success achieved.

## 5. Climax, the Transition, and the Pronoun.

There are other less important, but nevertheless, typical poetic devices forming part of the general frame of Anglo-Saxon stylistic patterns. In many cases Anglo-Saxon poems appear to have been put together at random without any consideration to climax. As it was rightly remarked, "climax is so nearly an instinctive device with us moderns that one is not fitted to do justice to the power of A.-S. poetry until he becomes accustomed to the absence of it."<sup>347</sup>

This observation applies likewise to the use of the abrupt transition, and to the pronoun which is introduced in a passage before the noun it replaces is identified. The sudden transition, as employed by the Anglo-Saxon poet, has been a common device used by poets of all ages. In Act

---

<sup>347</sup> Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 38.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

194

III of Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare places Scene i in Syria, Scene ii in Rome, Scene iii in Alexandria, Scenes iv and v in Athens, Scene vi in Rome, Scene vii near Actium in Antony's camp, Scene viii in Caesar's camp in a plain somewhere else near Actium, Scene ix in another part of the plain somewhere else near Actium, Scene x in a different part still of the plain, and Scene xi in Alexandria. These abrupt transitions from one part of the world to another are explained as a means by Shakespeare "to give the impression of majestic breadth, of an action embracing half of the then known world, which he wanted for the sake of the concluding effect."<sup>348</sup> It was for the reason of effect also that the poets of Beowulf and of other Anglo-Saxon poems used it.

It was equally common for Anglo-Saxon poets to introduce an idea with a pronoun, and then mentioning later by name the thing or person described. The poet of Beowulf uses hī - they, in line 28, for gesipas - companions, mentioned in line 29. The passage is: hī hyne þa aet-bāeron / tō brimes farode, / swaese gesipas, / swā hē selfa baed -<sup>349</sup> they him then bore unto the sea current,

<sup>348</sup> William Shakespeare, ed. The University Society (New York, 1901), p. 184.

<sup>349</sup> Beowulf, lines 28-29.

his dear companions, as he himself had urged. Beowulf begins to speak to the coastguard, in line 260, and does not identify himself by name until eighty-three lines further on when addressing Hrothgar, in line 343: Bēowulf is nama - Beowulf is my name.

#### 6. The Roundabout Approach.

Many students of Anglo-Saxon literature have recognized the circumambient structure of certain passages in Anglo-Saxon poems, but have overlooked its poetical significance. The structure of Beowulf, for example, "is not sequential, but complementary; at the outset certain parts of a situation are displayed, and these are given coherence and significance by progressive addition of its other parts."<sup>350</sup> Recognizing that the procedure by "circuitous route, is not obscure,"<sup>351</sup> the great Beowulfian scholar Klaeber erroneously called it "lack of steady advance," and saw in it a "rambling, dilatory method, with forward, backward, and sideward movements," denoting "looseness" of construction.<sup>352</sup> Klaeber failed to see the fundamental impor-

---

<sup>350</sup> Joan Blomfield, "The Style and Structure of Beowulf," RES, XIV (1938), p. 399.

<sup>351</sup> Beowulf, p. 136.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., pp. lvii-lviii.

tance of the principle involved and its rôle in the poem, that is, the displaying of the separate but essential features or parts of an event complementary to one another, the total effect being attained through the sum of them all. In other words, the poet synchronizes the separate aspects into a coherent whole after each momentary visual impression has been touched off.<sup>353</sup>

A case in point is found in the accounts of Beowulf's fight with Grendel in Heorot, lines 745-815:

Grendel's movements and motives and his final sense of defeat are first described (745-57). The poet next reverts to Beowulf's grapple, considered as a fulfilment of his aefen-spraec. In 764-5 ... the tearing off of Grendel's arm, is obscurely stated in a metaphor. The fight is then represented from the point of view of the Danes (765-90) who hear the din raging within their hall; ... the shriek of defeat ... elaborated ... (782-88). Lastly, the sensations of the Geats when they see their Lord at grips with the monster provide an opportunity for contrasting Grendel's magic immunity from bite of iron with his impotence against the decrees of providence (801-15); these reflections are concluded with an explicit account of the severing of the claw, darkly alluded to before. The outcome for each of the three parties - Beowulf, Grendel, and the Danes - is then summed up, and the severed claw again mentioned, this time as the proof and symbol of Grendel's final defeat.<sup>354</sup>

<sup>353</sup> Blomfield, "Style and Structure," p. 399.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., pp. 399-400.

The same technique, on a much wider scale, envelops the poem of Beowulf as a whole in unity of theme. To unfold the plot and to bring out the important traits of his hero's character, the poet uses a background of Danish and Geatish history into which he weaves the behaviour and deeds of his hero in youth, maturity, and old age. Thus Beowulf is discovered to have the violence and strength of a beast, wisdom and humility, to submit to the decrees of Providence, to show himself a true King, and to give his life for those he loves.

The interpretation of this poetic technique is not as simple as it appears. The poet works through abstraction, formalism, and uses a language clothed in imagery and symbolism very much unfamiliar to us. The most outstanding features of his style, and this applies to other Anglo-Saxon poems, are considered to be "the ritual of language and exploitation of its metaphysical aspects."<sup>355</sup> This explains why a thorough knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language and literary tradition, and an understanding of the spirit of the age are prerequisites for the study of the literature of that period in the original.

---

<sup>355</sup> Blomfield, "The Style and Structure of Beowulf," p. 403.

## 7. Word Order in Sentence Structure.

The newcomer to Anglo-Saxon shows surprise at the structure of the sentence. Annoyance is experienced where ambiguity is believed to exist from lack of clause subordination. This is particularly noticeable with subordinate clauses placed at the beginning of a statement; with coordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns, and adverbs found at the commencement of a sentence, as swylce - also or likewise, in line 293 of Beowulf, or þa git - yet again, still, hitherto, besides, further, as in line 1866 of Beowulf; and with verbs standing at the end of a sentence in construction of the conjunctive order, as in line 1269 of Beowulf: þær him āglāeca / aetgrāepe wearð<sup>356</sup> - where for him the monster aggressive was. An investigation of the subject discloses a preference, or dislike, by Anglo-Saxon writers for certain forms of sentence structure, the use of which was apparently dictated by the poetic and syntactical conventions of the day.<sup>356</sup>

Three kinds of Anglo-Saxon sentence structure may be identified. The common order is similar to the simple

---

<sup>356</sup> S. O. Andrew, "Some Principles of Old English Word Order," Medium Aevum, III (October, 1934), p. 181.

principal sentence of modern English, as An Antiochia pare ceastre waes sum cyninge Antiochus gehaten - in the city of Antioch was a king named Antiochus.<sup>357</sup> The other type is the conjunctive order, that is, the common order existing in subordinate clauses after coordinating conjunctions and after other conjunctives, particularly, relative pronouns and adverbs when they appear first in the sentence.

The subordinate clause form, that is, the conjunctive order, is exemplified in lines 917-19 of Beowulf: pā waes morgenlēcht / scofen ond scynded. / Ēode scealc monig / swiðhicgende / tō sele pām hēan - when the morning light was sent forth and hastened, went many a warrior valiant to the high hall. The coordinating conjunction form is found in lines 1661-63 of Beowulf: ac mē geūde / ylda Waldend, / paet ic on wāge geseah / wlitig hangian / ealdsweord ēacen - but me granted the Ruler of men that on the wall I saw hang beautiful an old mighty sword. The relative pronoun and adverb forms when they begin the sentence are illustrated in line 2406 of Beowulf: Sē waes on ðām ðreāte / preottēoða secg - who in that troupe was the thirteenth man, and in line 907 of Beowulf: swylce oft

---

<sup>357</sup> Peter Goolden, ed. The Old English Apollonius of Tyre (Oxford, 1958), p. 2.

bemearn / ǣrran mǣlum - also often bewailed in former times.

The third type is the demonstrative order. It is usually introduced by a demonstrative adverb placed at the beginning of the sentence, as in line 1495 of Beowulf: bā waes hwīl daeges - then was a day (day-while). Failure to recognize these Anglo-Saxon syntactical and stylistic conventional sentence structures, and to establish the correct syntactical precedence of one clause over the other leads to inaccurate discernment of the interdependence of the clauses within the sentence, improper punctuation, and misinterpretation of the true meaning and full force it.

In a more extensive treatment of the subject, Andrew makes a restatement of the findings contained in his earlier article, already referred to, and pushes further his development of the subject, including the paratactic sentence structure and an investigation into syntactical peculiarities common to verse.<sup>358</sup> In these syntactical characteristics are features of Anglo-Saxon style relevant to this paper and considered a prerequisite to a correct understanding of the Anglo-Saxon sentence form and its meaning, and to an accurate translation into modern English. Unfortunately, these stylistic features seem to go unnoticed, and are usually overlooked as punctuation will show in the editions and translations of Anglo-Saxon works. Even Sweet

missed it in his Grammar,<sup>359</sup> and Andrew asked:

Are such subordinate clauses good usage in O.E. side by side with the more usual type? It will be contended here that they are, and it will be necessary to examine the evidence carefully since the wide prevalence of the type seems not be generally realized; no example of it is given by Sweet in his excellent Primer among the sentences which form Chapter I, although these illustrate almost every other type of O.E. clause; and the editors of O.E. texts almost invariably print such clauses as principal sentences, except when the verb is unstressed (e.g., 'waes, weard", etc.)<sup>360</sup>

An example of a stressed verb is shown in Ða geseah se Haelend þa menigu; þa het he hig faran - and Jesus seeing great multitudes about him, gave orders to pass over the water; the Vulgate having videns autem Iesus, there is every possibility that the first sentence is a temporal clause.<sup>361</sup> In other words, in cases such as this, editors show subordinate propositions as principal sentences.<sup>362</sup> In fact,

---

<sup>358</sup> S. O. Andrew, Syntax and Style in Old English (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 72-86, and 87-100.

<sup>359</sup> Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Primer, 9th ed., revised by Norman Davis (Oxford, 1957), pp. 1-61.

<sup>360</sup> Andrew, "Some Principles of Old English," p. 178.

<sup>361</sup> The Holy Bible, ed. James Cardinal Gibbons (Baltimore, 1914), Matt. viii. 18, p. 11.  
Andrew, Syntax and Style, pp. 9-10.

<sup>362</sup> Andrew, Syntax and Style, pp. 3, 4, and 5.

an examination of pa - sentences in Anglo-Saxon texts translated from Latin reveals that alleged principal clauses turn out to be subordinate.<sup>363</sup>

It should be remembered that there are very few punctuation marks in the original Anglo-Saxon texts, the punctuation in the texts available today has been supplied by modern editors. The substitution of commas for the existing stops after the first sentences will change them from principal to subordinate clauses and reestablish normal syntax. Most editors <sup>punctuate</sup> them as principal sentences and, in so doing, introduce ambiguity. Thus, Klaeber edits lines 1600-1601 of Beowulf: Ðā cōm nōn daeges. / Naes ofgēafon / hwate Scyldingas - Then came noon (the ninth hour). Left the headland the valiant Scyldings, instead of Ðā cōm nōn daeges, / naes ofgēafon / hwate Scyldingas - Then came noon, left the headland the valiant Scyldings. By substituting the period for a comma after daeges, what was shown as a principal sentence becomes a subordinate clause, the ambiguity is removed, and normal Anglo-Saxon syntax is made right.

Stress plays an important rôle in Anglo-Saxon pa - sentences as it does in certain modern languages. For example, the first person plural indicative present of the

---

363

Andrew, Syntax and Style, p. 10.

Portuguese verb falar - to speak, is distinguished from the first person plural preterit by a stress in speech, and by an acute accent in writing. Falamos - we speak, is present; falámos - we spoke is past, the difference existing in the stressed á of the second falámos. It is not uncommon, of course, for ambiguity to arise, and it does, particularly in speaking if the speaker does<sup>not</sup> give the syllable its proper stress, and in writing if the accent is not indicated. The ambiguity in Anglo-Saxon, going back to the pa - sentences, appears in the written text mostly, because "in speech, principal sentences must always have been differentiated from clauses, pa (adv.) being stressed and pa (conj.) unstressed."<sup>364</sup>

Another experience fairly general among newcomers to Anglo-Saxon is to interpret the existence and apparent existence of the paratactic construction as a lack of grammatical subordination in the sentence, particularly in poetry, and a convincing evidence of the immaturity of the language. It is a case of mistaken identity resulting from an illusion. The reader fails to understand or grasp the significance of the syntactical construction, inherent in the paratactic structure, which is used to indicate subordination by means of an idiomatic mode of expression. It

---

<sup>364</sup> Andrew, Syntax and Style, p. 18.

is wrong to call the existence of the paratactic structure in Anglo-Saxon a weakness of the language. Andrew warns against that when he states "because of its supposed paratactic construction, the OE epic style, especially in Beowulf, has been described as archaic or primitive; there could be no greater delusion. Abundant proof" exists to show that "the epithet 'paratactic'," used pejoratively is inadmissible to describe the syntactical form of Anglo-Saxon writings including Beowulf.<sup>365</sup> The parataxis, that is, the placing of clauses in succession without showing interdependence,<sup>366</sup> exists in all languages, each one being distinguished by its own characteristic features while sharing forms common to all. The parataxis, as opposed to the hypotaxis, is also described as "a rhetorical device by which a subordinate relation is idiomatically expressed by a coordinately juxtaposed sentence."<sup>367</sup>

Among the forms peculiar to Anglo-Saxon writings may be distinguished the following paratactic sentence. One type is introduced by wolde - the preterit, third person

---

<sup>365</sup> Andrew, Syntax and Style, p. 94.

<sup>366</sup> Murray, A New English Dictionary, Vol. VII, Part I, p. 465.

<sup>367</sup> Andrew, Syntax and Style, p. 87.

singular of willan - to will, be willing, wish, desire, to be used to, to be about to, as in lines 1292-93 of Beowulf: Hēo waes on ofste, / wolde ūt panon, / fēore beorgan, / pā hēo onfunden waes - She was in haste, would out from thence, save her life, as she discovered was. Another model is introduced by wende - the preterit, third person singular of wēnan - to ween, think, fancy, expect, imagine, believe, hope, to fear (for), to despair (of), and to wonder, as in lines 2327-29 of Beowulf: Daet ōām gōdan waes / hreow on hrēore, / hegesorga māest; / wēnde se wīsa, / paet hē Wealdende - That the good (king) was troubled in heart (mind), of heart-sorrows greatest; weened the wise (king), that he the Almighty. Finally, there is the clause introduced by cwæð - the preterit, third person singular of cweðan - to mention, say, speak, name, call, proclaim, summon, declare, agree, and resolve,<sup>368</sup> as in lines 90-92 of Beowulf: Saegde sē þe cūpe / frumsceaft fīra / feorran reccan, / cwæð paet se Aelmihtiga / eoroan worh(te). He said who could the origin of men (mankind) from far relate, mentioned (proclaimed) that the Almighty wrought the earth. A point of interest emanating from these examples is the position of the verb at the beginning of the clause.

<sup>368</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 1225-28, 1187-88, and 178-79.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

206

Other paratactic sentence forms include the defining clause, usually introduced by swa don - as do, or the like; the comparative, and the adjectival clauses. There are also many subordinate clauses, paratactic in appearance and construction, used throughout Anglo-Saxon poetic records. The poet of Beowulf was particularly successful in his choice of subordinate propositions for the handling of transitions. Such are, the introduction of Beowulf, Hygelac's thane, to the story, in lines 194-99; the challenge of the Danish coastguard, in lines 229-34; and the last scene of the poem, that is, Beowulf's burning on the pyre, in lines 3134-38. This stylistic device shows the skill of the poet for introducing transitions, which have "nothing 'primitive' about" them, and "are as artfully contrived as any in later English poetry."<sup>369</sup>

Many other cases, judged parataxis, are subordinate constructions, the correlation existing by means of adverbs, such as nu - now, sīððan - since, and swa - so as; examples are found in lines 424-27, 2070-73, and 3066-69 of Beowulf. Finally, there is the periodic sentence structure by far the most important, exemplified in lines 461-69, 1260-66, 1376-79, and 2442-47 of Beowulf, and often mistaken for paratactic. This type of construction is made up of a principal clause and a number of correlated subordinate propositions

<sup>369</sup>Andrew, Syntax and Style, p. 96.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

207

forming a single period or sentence unit.

It has often been said, in uninformed quarters, that Beowulf is the grand classic of Anglo-Saxon paratactic style. This erroneous opinion is rejected by a competent authority in Anglo-Saxon sentence structure, S. O. Andrew, whose diligent investigation of Anglo-Saxon texts has produced statistical evidence and convincing illustrations confirming that the syntactical sentence construction exhibited in Anglo-Saxon writings does not lack in subordination. He states:

If we add together all the supposed principal sentences in the poem which are really either subordinate or coordinate clauses and the ambiguous sentences which are preferably taken as subordinate, we have a total of over 260, and the traditional text, if rightly punctuated, is quite transformed by the addition of 260 new dependent clauses, which is at the rate of one in every twelve lines. Nothing in fact is left of the supposed paratactic style; except for the occasional use of idiomatic parataxis, itself ... a subordinating device, the prevailing sentence-structure is not paratactic at all but periodic.<sup>370</sup>

To complete this epitome of the word-order in Anglo-Saxon sentence structure some poetic idioms or syntactical features confined to Anglo-Saxon poetry will be examined.

---

370

Andrew, Syntax and Style, pp. 99-100.

Often mistaken for a parataxis is the asyndetic coordination. The asyndeton, as opposed to the polysyndeton, is a rhetorical figure that omits the connective, as in: I came, I saw, I conquered.<sup>371</sup> The asyndeton, widely used in Beowulf, is a coordinate clause without conjunction, but dependent on a principal sentence. In the following examples from Beowulf, the two clauses have different subjects, as in lines 7-8, 89-91, 356-58, 891-93, and 1256-59. In the following passages, the subject being the same in both clauses is left out idiomatically in the second, as in lines 1318-20, 2391-93, and 2918-20 from Beowulf.

It is important to note that the great majority of so called subjectless principal sentences in Beowulf, some one hundred, are in fact coordinate clauses, in which the omission of the subject was common idiomatic practice.<sup>372</sup> In a number of cases the second clause is a paraphrase of the first, as in lines 1310-11 and 1810-12 of Beowulf, or may complete the meaning of the first, as in lines 1223, 2703-05, and 1943-45 of Beowulf. There<sup>are</sup>/many instances where the asyndetic construction is built up with more than two clauses, the coordinated propositions depending on a third. This type of construction is found in lines 415-19,

---

<sup>371</sup> Murray, A New English Dictionary, Vol.I, p.528.

<sup>372</sup> Andrew, Syntax and Style, p. 77.

622-25, 881-84, 2280-82, and 2369-72 of Beowulf.<sup>373</sup>

Another frequent occurrence in Anglo-Saxon verse is the use of principal propositions exhibiting the conjunctive order, mostly in the he þa - he (they) then sentence forms with idiomatic interception of the personal pronoun, that is, a personal pronoun stressed in its own right may, like a noun, be dissociated from its verb, a practice that has been an accepted poetic convention throughout the history of English literature.<sup>374</sup> Other forms are found after connectives, such as; swylce - likewise, also, as in line 293 of Beowulf; þa git - yet, still, again, further, besides, as in line 1866 of Beowulf; sona - soon, forthwith, immediately, as in line 1794 of Beowulf; swa - so, thus, in this manner, as in line 559 of Beowulf; forðam - therefore, as in line 679 of Beowulf; nu - now, as in line 1818 of Beowulf; oft - often, as in line 2018 of Beowulf; and symle - ever, always, as in line 2880 of Beowulf; after the negatives: nalas, that is, nalaes, nales, nallas, nalles, nealles - not at all, as in line 43 of Beowulf; naefre - never, as line 655 of Beowulf; and no þy aer - none the sooner, yet ... not, as in line 2466 of Beowulf; and following the

---

<sup>373</sup> Andrew, Syntax and Style, pp. 73-75.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid., p. 54. A well known example is given from Milton: So hé with difficulty and labour hard / Moved on.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

210

exclamatory hwaet - what, lo, behold, well,<sup>375</sup> as line 1774 of Beowulf.

Other cases of conjunctive order are sentences introduced after a pronoun-subject with rhetorical stress, as in line 318 of Beowulf; after a pronoun in an oblique case with stressed position, as in line 477 of Beowulf; and in sentences with oblique cases when the subject, a pronoun instead of a noun, comes before the stressed pronoun and is proclitic to it, as in line 426 of Beowulf.<sup>376</sup>

## 8. Anglo-Saxon Metrics and Alliteration.

A survey of some of the Anglo-Saxon stylistic peculiarities most relevant to this thesis must not overlook a reference to Anglo-Saxon prosody including alliteration. In an article on Anglo-Saxon poetic style, it was remarked that "the language and style" exhibited by Anglo-Saxon poets "could not be any ordinary language or style."<sup>377</sup> This statement was dictated, it seems, from a knowledge of the

<sup>375</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 956, 478, 895, 940-41, 320-21, 727, 742, 875, 712, 706, 17, and 571.

Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 332, 154, 313, 328, 133, 253, 260, 306, 247, 245, 9, and 197.

Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. 406, 349, 400, 403, 333, 381, 383, 406, 379, 378, 296, and 361.

<sup>376</sup> Andrew, Syntax and Style, pp. 80-82.

<sup>377</sup> George K. Anderson, The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons (New York, 1962), p. 47.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

211

complexities inherent in the skilful and felicitous manipulation of the Anglo-Saxon metrical form.

To describe the Anglo-Saxon metrical line as a mere irregular line of two hemistichs with four main stresses, divided equally between two half-lines linked together by alliteration, and separated by a caesura, is to underestimate the art of the poets who composed with it. There is much more to the Anglo-Saxon metrical line than meets the eye; not every writer was able to "make" with it, because the practice from which Anglo-Saxon metrical rules were later inferred proved to be linguistically demanding, with an unyielding stress-pattern, and an exacting accuracy of thought. The Anglo-Saxon verse was the tool of experts, and only those writers who brought great craftsmanship to their metrical art were happily successful.

The ability to manoeuvre the Anglo-Saxon line freely implied the theoretical and practical following knowledge of: the metrical pattern for each half-line represented by Sievers' five types;<sup>378</sup> of the proper distribution of trochaic and iambic metrical types prescribed by the effect and mood intended; of the adequate manipulation of the hypermetric verses, that is, half-lines; of the apt

---

378

Anderson, Literature of the Anglo-Saxons, p.48.

phrasing and stress disposition; of the skilled balancing of syntactical and metrical pauses; of the appropriate choice of vocalic and consonantal endings for stress purposes;<sup>379</sup> of the timely placing of initial rests in the lines as the occasion for the sounding of the harp;<sup>380</sup> of the judicious introduction of syncope and elision for occasional variation in the second foot of each type; of the discriminate, that is, showing judgement in the, use of anacrusis, which gave the value of the free run-on line; and, finally, of the practical application of the stichic form with run-on lines, including the introduction of new elements at the beginning of the second half-line, and the avoiding of monotony by making the end of the sentence coincide with the end of the line for major pauses.<sup>381</sup>

Alliteration was an integral part of the Anglo-Saxon metrical form. The skilful use of it was a demanding task: in the hands of some writers it could be heavy, redundant, euphuistic, and monotonous, but handled by masters it was

---

<sup>379</sup> A. J. Bliss, The Metre of Beowulf (Oxford, 1962), p. 31.

<sup>380</sup> John Collins Pope, The Rhythm of Beowulf (New Haven, 1942), pp. 88-95.

<sup>381</sup> Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxx.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

213

dictated by a great "sense of poetic propriety in the mind of the poet."<sup>382</sup> The mechanism of alliteration presented difficulties, and to achieve success was a challenge. If a writer was well versed in all the other aspects of Anglo-Saxon metrics but lacked skill in the use of alliteration, his art suffered. The pillars of alliteration were the four main stresses of every line, with the key of the alliteration of the line located in the first main stressed syllable of the second half-line. The key stress alliterated with the first or second main stress or both of the first half-line, but very seldom with the second stress of the second half-line. Consonantal alliteration was more frequent than vocalic. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, sometimes pronouns and adverbs were stressed, and poets took advantage of this to emphasize certain words they wanted brought into prominence. Alliteration played a dual rôle: it belonged to the metrical mechanism, and it was part of the syntactical design of the sentence.

It has often been repeated that happy alliterative combinations were the result of chance. It was not so where poetry was concerned. Bliss who has delved at length into Anglo-Saxon poetic records declares at the end of his investigation of the Anglo-Saxon metre:

---

382

Bliss, The Metre of Beowulf, p. 135.

the analysis of the combinations of pairs of verses into lines reveals that the combinations are not the result of mere chance. The poet combines his pairs of verses in such a way as to achieve greater variety, both of rhythm and of phrasing, than chance would dictate; and at the same time to ensure that the falling rhythm of Type A, the norm of Old English metre, is maintained in as many lines as possible.<sup>383</sup>

The demands of alliteration were rigid and far greater than those of end-rime, and with the close affinity existing between metre and style, the Anglo-Saxon poet had to measure his skill in choice of diction. This prompted certain uninformed critics to advance that poets used words which alliterated, whether or not they were the best words that could be used;<sup>384</sup> or that the metre was a compelling force which determined the style;<sup>385</sup> or that the mechanism of alliteration "became too obvious," and the synonyms used "became a source of weakness" because they were "often multiplied" unnecessarily.<sup>386</sup> Some writers were guilty of those pitfalls, but poets avoided them, and their works are examples of fine craftsmanship. Beowulf was described "a finely regulated and richly rhythmic achievement."<sup>387</sup>

---

<sup>383</sup> Bliss, The Metre of Beowulf, p. 138.

<sup>384</sup> Anderson, Literature of the Anglo-Saxons, p. 49.

<sup>385</sup> Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 19.

<sup>386</sup> Kenneth Sisam, Studies in the History of Old English Literature (Oxford, 1962), pp. 16-17.

<sup>387</sup> Pope, Rhythm of Beowulf, p. 95.

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

215

The same could be said of many other Anglo-Saxon poems. The charge that alliteration was responsible for endless repetitions of synonyms is not founded. In keeping with Anglo-Saxon poetic style and diction, the poet repeated his ideas in every possible way, but not words. Tolman clarified the point and explained that the

remorseless energy of the alliterative metre uses up, devours, the thought so rapidly that repetition becomes a necessity. Thus A.-S. poetry progresses like a spirited horse, which takes a few long bound forward, only to follow that by much prancing and tossing without any advance. But this repetition of the main idea is made enjoyable by the constant variation of the language. Each repetition must emphasize some new phase or characteristic by the use of new terms.<sup>388</sup>

There is little strain on the imagination to picture Anglo-Saxon poets struggling over their poetry in an attempt to find the right verbs, nouns, or adjectives, that would convey their artistic ideals and satisfy, at the same time, the exigencies of the metrics and alliteration. This happened to the poet of Beowulf and to the great poets of all other periods when the technical demands of poetic form met in the apt diction represented by the word and phrase, verse or sentence.<sup>389</sup>

---

<sup>388</sup> Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 23.

<sup>389</sup> Bryan, "Epithetic Compound Folk-Names in Beowulf," Studies in English Philology, p. 123

## STYLISTIC, SYNTACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

216

Chapter IV has illustrated some of the Anglo-Saxon stylistic and syntactical characteristics. Verse groups, called rhetorical patterns, involving the use of repetition, parallel, balance, antithesis, chiasmus, and contrast, were examined, examples were given and an interpretation of them made. The intensity and conciseness of the Anglo-Saxon line, the scarcity of articles and pronouns, the use of repetitions and transitions, the adduced lack of climax, the unusual place of the pronoun, the roundabout approach followed in bringing out facts, the word-order of the sentence-structure were explained, the method of metrics discussed, and the practice of alliteration defended. All the features of style and syntax considered in Chapter IV are important for an understanding of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and style. Chapter V will examine the verb in Beowulf and its contribution to the poetic diction of the poem.

## CHAPTER V

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

This study has shown, so far, that an understanding of Anglo-Saxon literature calls for a certain familiarity with Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique, semantics, how Anglo-Saxon poets reacted to nature and developed mood in their works, how these, in turn, affected by the influence of Latin Christianity and the spirit of the age moulded their thoughts and acted upon the vocabulary they used, what stylistic features their writings display, the rhetoric and the kind of sentence structure they disclose, and the type of metre they exhibit. It would seem logical to assume, now, that since the verb is the most important part of speech of the Anglo-Saxon language, that is, the skeleton on which all the other parts of the sentence are supported,<sup>390</sup> its proper function in Anglo-Saxon literature, in poetry for the concern of this study, may be determined by the effect one or more elements of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique, singly or jointly, produce on it. Consequently, this paper can now proceed at an examination of action words in Anglo-

---

<sup>390</sup> Ritchie Girvan, Beowulf and the Seventh Century, Language and Content (London, 1935), p. 2.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

218

Saxon writings generally, and in Beowulf particularly, for the purpose of knowing the rôle of the verb in the art of the poem.

In Beowulf, an epic poem having 3183 lines, there are at least 810 verbs. This number is made up of 360 uncompounded verbs, 150 others with the prefix ge-,<sup>391</sup> an additional 100 appear without an affix and are called simple verbs, and finally there are 200 compounded verbs with various prefixes.<sup>392</sup> It should be observed that this total

---

<sup>391</sup> The prefix ge- causes a shift in aspect from durative (habitual and continuous actions) to perfective (momentary actions), as fēran - to go, and geferan - to reach, or winnan - to fight, and gewinnan - to win. In some cases there is also a shift from intransitive to transitive verb.

<sup>392</sup> Among some of the other verbs appearing with affixes are: be-rēafian - to bereave, despoil, deprive, as in lines 2746, 2825, and 3018 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, rēafian - to rob, plunder, rifle, take by force, waste, ravage, as in lines 2773, 2985, and 3027 of Beowulf; ā-beōdan - to announce, offer, as in lines 390 and 668 of Beowulf, and wish good luck or salute, as in lines 653 and 2418 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, bēōdan - 1) to offer, tender, give, as in line 385 of Beowulf, and 2) to announce, as in line 2892 of Beowulf; aet-beran - to bear or carry (to), bear away, as in line 1561 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, beran - to bear, carry, wear, bring, often applied to armour, as in lines 48, 231, 291, and 1024 of Beowulf; an-gyldan - to pay (a penalty) for, as in line 1251 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, gieldan - to yield, pay, pay for, reward, requite, render, worship, serve, sacrifice to; for-lāedan - lead to destruction, as in line 2039 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, lāedan - to lead, bring, as in lines 1159, 3177 of Beowulf; on-findan - to find out, discover, perceive, as in lines 1522, 1890, 2300, and 2713 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, findan - find, as in lines 207, 1156, 1378, 1838, and 2870 of Beowulf, and devise, as in line 3162 of Beowulf; for-standan - to withstand,

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

219

of 810 verbs is exclusive of repetitions, such as, sculan - shall, must, ought, is to, etc., which is used 86 times, or grētan - to approach, touch, attack, and to greet, salute, address, which appears 16 times, or weorðan - to happen, come to pass, arise, become, etc., which occurs 59 times, and there are others.<sup>393</sup>

Some general characteristics pertaining to the Anglo-Saxon verbs should be mentioned here. The use of certain affixes to verbs, and their effects, which establish distinctions between durative and perfective, ingressive and resultative, have already been mentioned in footnotes 391 and 392. In the Anglo-Saxon language motion is understood differently sometimes from what it is today, and the use of the preposition is determined by the idea of rest rather than motion. This is exemplified in the verb fēolan - to penetrate or reach, as in lines 1281 and 2225 of Beowulf, and aet-fēolan - to stick to or hold firmly, as in line 968 of Beowulf. Some verbs are known today to be verbs of rest, but in Anglo-Saxon they are verbs in which the idea of motion exists vividly, either literally or

---

hinder, prevent, as in lines 1056 and 1549 of Beowulf, and to defend (against), as in line 2955 of Beowulf, and without the prefix, standan - to stand, continue in a certain state, as in lines 926, 1434, and 2271 of Beowulf.

<sup>393</sup> Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. 392, 346, and 422.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

220

figuratively, as sceawian - to look at, view, examine, see, behold, occurring 19 times in Beowulf,<sup>394</sup> as in line 2285.

Other verbs have the function of creating a state of mind, as hatian - to hate, that is, to demonstrate hatred by actions, reflecting the idea one entertains, as in lines 2319 and 2166 of Beowulf; lufian - to love, that is, to treat kindly, reflecting what is in one's heart, as in line 1982 of Beowulf; unnan - to wish somebody to have something, not begrudge, grant, as in lines 346 and 1661 of Beowulf; and eahtian - to deliberate about something, consider, watch over, rule, esteem, praise, as in lines 1222, 1407, and 3173 of Beowulf. The unusual regimen of certain verbs, as dēman - to judge, bodian - to announce, derian - to harm, ōleccan - to flatten, command the use of the dative, that is, the indirect object, the cognates of which are transitive in modern English.

Other peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon verb are the instrumental function of the genitive case attending certain verbs, as in lines 845, 1439, and 2206 of Beowulf. A singular verb is used with a plural subject, as in Beowulf, line 904, with the verb following, and line 1408, with the verb preceding. One finds a lack of control in the inter-

---

<sup>394</sup> Klaeber, Beowulf, 391.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

221

change of cases, most conspicuous in lines 424-26 and 1977-80 of Beowulf, wið - with, appearing with the accusative, that is, the direct object, and the dative, that is, the indirect object, and in lines 1830-35 in which an apposition in the accusative case follows a noun in the dative case. The violation of the consecutio temporum time sequence, used in dependent clauses in the transition from past to present, is found in the passages beginning with lines 1313, 1921, 1925, 2484, and 2493 of Beowulf.

Other characteristics regarding Anglo-Saxon subject-verb agreement are: a compound subject and a singular verb; a compound subject in which the second part of it is added after the first member of the compound and the verb have been expressed; a plural subject with a singular verb; and a compound verb changing number without a change taking place in the subject. More than 75 examples of subject-~~verb~~ apparent incongruities, that is, that look like incongruities, have been discovered to exist in Beowulf and, although several are questionable, they illustrate the kind of difficulties awaiting the student of Anglo-Saxon.<sup>395</sup>

A very striking trait of the Anglo-Saxon sentence is the subjectless verb, exemplified in line 1020 of Beowulf:

---

<sup>395</sup> Henry Bosley Woolf, "Subject-Verb Agreement in Beowulf," MLQ, IV (1943), pp. 49-55.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

222

forgeaf þa beowulfe brand healfdenes -<sup>396</sup> gave then to Beowulf the sword of Healfdene. Some editions of Beowulf: Thorpe's,<sup>397</sup> Wyatt and Chambers',<sup>398</sup> and Klaeber's, have made an emendation of brand - sword, to bearn - son, in order to provide forgeaf with an expressed subject. This paper refutes the emendation on the basis that it does away with an ellipsis, which is an important stylistic feature of Beowulf, and that the change thus carried out weakens the poetic value of the line.<sup>399</sup> This is a typical example of what may happen, sometimes, to an Anglo-Saxon manuscript in the hands of certain editors and translators, Klaeber is not included here, who are unaware or overlook certain Anglo-Saxon stylistic devices and technique, and consider distinguishing marks of Beowulf in terms of modern norms.

Anglo-Saxon ellipses developed from subjectless verbs are often interpreted as solecisms in modern rhetoric. The desire of editors, in this case, seems to have been to

---

<sup>396</sup> Julius Zupita, ed. Beowulf, 2nd ed. with introductory note by Norman Davis (London, 1959), p. 48.

<sup>397</sup> Benjamin Thorpe, ed. The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf, The Scôp or Gleeman's Tale, and The Fight at Finnesburg (Oxford, 1855), p. 68.

<sup>398</sup> A. J. Wyatt, ed. Beowulf with The Finnsburg Fragment, new ed. revised with introduction and notes by R. W. Chambers (Cambridge, 1920), p. 52.

<sup>399</sup> Sherman M. Kuhn, "The Sword of Healfdene," JEGP, XLII (January, 1943), p. 82.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

223

translate line 1020 of Beowulf with a subject. It is interesting to observe that in Anglo-Saxon if a subject is expressed or suggested by one or several substantives in the preceding or the following clause, it can be omitted. Another case in point are lines 2519-21 of Beowulf in which the ic - I, appears in line 2519, and remains understood in lines 2520-21 without fear the passage may develop into a solecism.<sup>400</sup>

The ellipsis of the subject is found also after a formal speech, as in line 2892 of Beowulf. In this case, Wiglaf's discourse, contained in lines 2864-91, provides the cue. To an Anglo-Saxon, the appearance of a subject with heht - commanded or ordered, as in line 2892, would have been redundant and considered bad taste. Similar examples occur in lines 1216-32 of Beowulf, and in lines 45-62 of The Battle of Maldon. Truly speaking, the subjects in these cases are merely understood. Subjectless verbs are found also after so called digressions, as in lines 115-25 and 916-20 of Beowulf. Generally, it may be said that the subject is left out of the Anglo-Saxon sentence when the

---

<sup>400</sup> Alois Pogatscher, "Unausgedrücktes Subjekt im Altenglischen," Anglia, XXIII (1901), p.263. Many examples from Anglo-Saxon prose and poetry are given.

Ernst Kock, "Interpretations and Emendations of Early English Texts. III," Anglia, XXVII (1904), pp.218-37.  
Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. xci-xciv.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

224

context is clear.

Among the elements of surprise awaiting the students looking at Beowulf for the first time, is the end-position of the verb in the word-order of the Anglo-Saxon sentence. The opening lines of Beowulf make plain the predominance of that feature in Anglo-Saxon poetry. In the first ten lines of Beowulf the characteristic is exemplified seven times, namely, in line 2: gefrūnon - have heard; line 3: fremedon - displayed; line 5: oftēah - dragged away; line 6: wearð - was; line 7: gebād - experienced or lived through; line 8: pāh - prosper; and line 10: hyran scolde - must obey. This trait of the Anglo-Saxon verb has apparently been inherited from ancient Germanic rule.<sup>401</sup>

Remarks about Anglo-Saxon time relationship in the use of verbs will clarify another Anglo-Saxon syntactical crux. Two tenses only, the present and the preterit, are distinguished in form in Anglo-Saxon verbs. Since the present tense form is used to express many different time relationships, including the future, the student faces another difficulty in the interpretation of Anglo-Saxon texts. Later on in Anglo-Saxon times, the present forms of bēon - to be, sculan - shall, willan - will, with the infinitive were used to express future time. Earlier, the preterit of

---

<sup>401</sup> Klaeber, Beowulf, p. xciv.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

225

intransitive verbs was formed with habban - to have, and the past participle, and the perfect of intransitive verbs with wesan - to be, and the past participle. Later, habban was used also to form the preterit of intransitive verbs. The old Anglo-Saxon passive voice is still recognized in the verb hattan - to call, and appears in the form of hatte, from Gothic haitada - is or was called, and later was expressed by the forms of bēon and wesan - to be, and sometimes by weorpan - to become, and the past participle.<sup>402</sup> The prothesis of the negative adverb ne - not, with eom - I am, eart - you are, is - he is, and other similar forms, becomes neom - I am not, neart - you are not, and nis - he is not.<sup>403</sup>

Certain generalities regarding the use of the present tense form must be borne in mind when reading Anglo-Saxon texts. The present tense form is employed to express actual present time, that is, that which is real, as in line 2653 of Beowulf; to denote future time, as in line 293 of Beowulf; to establish the universal, timeless, or gnomic present, as in lines 20 and 2029-31 of Beowulf; to describe an action originating in the past but not completed at the time the speaker refers to it, comparable to Latin iam - at

<sup>402</sup> Wright, Old English Grammar, pp. 235-36.

<sup>403</sup> Eduard Sievers, An Old English Grammar, trans. ed. Albert S. Cook, 3rd ed. (Boston, 1903), p. 351.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

226

this moment or now, and Latin jam dudum, equivalent to French depuis longtemps - for a long time or since, and Portuguese and Spanish desde - since, as in lines 265, 290, 996, and 1923 of Beowulf; and finally, in subordinate clauses after verbs of saying, thinking, knowing, and seeing, to indicate the preterit. It is not uncommon, in the last case mentioned, for the subjunctive mood to appear instead of the present tense, as in lines 1314, 1719, 2486, and 2495 of Beowulf.<sup>404</sup>

The Anglo-Saxon student should not forget that the present and the future are easily distinguished by the use of adverbs denoting futurity, and by the distinction between perfective and imperfective verbs, the present tense form of the former being used to show future time, and the present tense form of the latter usually to convey real present time. Although the historical present was used widely in the Latin texts available at the time, it rarely appears in Anglo-Saxon texts. A case in point is The Blickling Homilies, and another, lines 2024-29 of Beowulf.<sup>405</sup> The observations made so far regarding the Anglo-Saxon verb show that

---

<sup>404</sup> J. M. Steadman, Jr. "The Ingeld Episode in Beowulf: History or Prophecy?" MLN, XLV (December, 1930), pp. 522-25.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid., pp. 524-25.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français, pp. 347 and 211.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

227

a lack of knowledge or a misunderstanding of certain syntactical complexities regarding<sup>time</sup>/relationships in Anglo-Saxon verbs will lead to a wrong interpretation of the texts read.

The paratactic sentence construction, that is, the rhetorical device by which a subordinate relation is idiomatically expressed by a coordinately juxtaposed sentence, was discussed earlier, pages 203-206. In lines 1339, 2158, and 2239 of Beowulf, the verbs wolde - would, cwaed - said, and wende - weened, fancied, or believed, appear at the beginning of the thought and are subjectless. When cases like these occur, the verb is sometimes replaced by a hendiadys, that is, a figure of style that expresses a thought by two words joined by and, rather than by a noun with a qualifying adjective, or by two verbs rather than a single verb, as woldon ond wendon - wished and weened, from willan - to will or wish, and wēnan - to ween, as in line 1604 of Beowulf: wiston ond ne wendon - wished and weened not.<sup>406</sup>

It is not uncommon for an Anglo-Saxon verb to take its meaning from another verb, or for the meaning to develop or become reinforced by a verb preceding or following it. This is in keeping with the Anglo-Saxon manner of

406

Andrew, Syntax and Style in Old English, pp. 87-88.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

228

building up meaning from context. An example is found in line 2814 of Beowulf: ealle wyrd forswēop - fate has swept (them, that is, the earls) all, meaning, all the earls have died, and line 2816 of Beowulf: ic him aefter sceal - I shall after (follow) them, the verb forswēop, from for-swāpan - to sweep off, becoming clearer and giving strength and meaning to sceal - I shall. A verb like weallan - to be agitated, rage, toss, well, bubble, seethe, foam, be hot, boil, may be reinforced or given added dimension in meaning when in contact with a verb closely related to it in meaning, as brinnan - to burn, from Latin ardere - to be on fire, shine, throw out sparks, sparkle, be resplendent, glow, and beornan or biernan - to burn, be on fire, give light, from Latin ardere, exardere - to become enflamed, light itself, and comburare - to burn completely, destroy by fire, and burn alive.<sup>407</sup>

Because the structure of the Anglo-Saxon verse line compelled the poet to be concise, he had to develop power of expression, that is, thought had to be expressed with clarity and brevity. One of the most important tools used by Anglo-Saxon poets to achieve this end was the metaphor. Often a metaphor in the subject gives way to another in the

<sup>407</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 1174, 126, and 86.

Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français, pp. 63, 230, and 125.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

229

verb, and sometimes to a third in the object. Examples occur in line 1523 of Beowulf: paet se beadolēoma bītan nolde - that the battle-flash (battle-gleam or battle-light, that is, the sword) would not bite; and in lines 1121-24 of Beowulf: bengeato burston, donne blōd aetspranc, lādbite līces - (their) wound-openings (wound-gates) burst (open), then blood sprang out, from the body's hostile bite.<sup>408</sup>

In other instances the poet uses a noun with a vigorous verb to convey an idea and develop a certain mood. This is exemplified in line 15 of The Fortunes of Men - summe sceal hreoh fordrīfan - the tempest shall drive one away, hreoh - storm, and fordrīfan - to drive away, force, compel, drive out, eject, banish, hreoh and fordrīfan complementing each other. Another example is found in line 949 of Christ - swogað windas - roar the winds, from swōgan - to make a sound, move with noise, rush, roar, (of wind, water, flame), and when used figuratively, the verb swōgan means to move with violence, enter with force, invade, and windas - winds. In certain cases ideas are implied in the union of nouns or other words, the verbs thus formed having no connection by literal interpretation, as in regolian -

---

<sup>408</sup> Tolman, "Style in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 31.  
Francis B. Gummere, The Anglo-Saxon Metaphor  
(Halle, 1881), pp. 11-25.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

230

to draw lines with a ruler, and onhōhsnian - put a stop to, as in line 1944 of Beowulf.<sup>409</sup>

The respect for authority, almost sacred, in Anglo-Saxon times, a behaviour the twentieth century does not understand, transformed Anglo-Saxon verbs of causing into verbs of ordering. When orders were given in the Anglo-Saxon period, the emphasis was not on the pronouncement of the commands, but on the acts brought about by the orders, that is, on what was caused to be. It follows that certain verbs of ordering may have a causing counterpart. Depending on the emphasis placed by the writer, hātan - to promise, call, or to order, ordain, bid, direct, may be a verb of ordering or a verb of causing. The verb of ordering is considered an imperfective verb because it does not necessarily produce an effect, that is, the accomplishment of an act may or may not follow the commandment given. On the contrary, the verb of causing indicates the completion of an act, and is a perfective verb, for there is a way in which it can be said that a causative verb states that an action has been completed. The distinction is most impor-

---

<sup>409</sup> Hanscom, "Feeling for Nature in Old English Poetry," pp. 450-51, and 462.  
 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 304, and 961.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

231

tant in the interpretation and translation of a passage. In lines 198, 1035, 2190, and 3110 of Beowulf, the emphasis on hātan is causative, not mandatory.

A similar relation exists between verbs of compelling or forcing, as nīedan - to force, compel, and constrain, geprēatian - to threaten, afflict, trouble, harass, restrain, press, oppress, urge, force, and compel, geprēan - to restrain, and compel, prēagan - to reprove, rebuke, punish, distress, and oppress, and braestan - twist, press, and constrain, and verbs of allowing, as lāetan - to allow, remain, leave behind, depart from, let alone, bequeath, allow to do, cause to do, consider, regard as, suppose, emit, set free, assert, pretend, allot, and assign.<sup>410</sup>

The meanings of verbs of ordering, causing, forcing, and allowing are closely related in the general idea implied in them, that is, putting something in place or in motion by inexpressed means or violence. The fine distinction existing between those verbs is sometimes difficult to establish, but it can usually be discovered from the emphasis they carry and from contextual interpretation.<sup>411</sup>

---

<sup>410</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 710, 457, 1066, 1065, and 613-14.

<sup>411</sup> James Finch Royster, "The Causative Use of Hātan," JEGP, XVII (1918), pp. 82-93.  
Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 511, 456.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

232

The important rôle of Anglo-Saxon metrics in the sentence and its effect on the verb should not be overlooked. Anglo-Saxon versification, as it has been seen, calls for brevity and power of thought, the alliterative distinctiveness of the line restricting the length of the verse, in a way similar to the English heroic couplet or the Japanese Haiku,<sup>412</sup> and compels the poet to be laconic. As a result, the poet had to compress his thought in a few vigorous words bursting with meaning, and had to strive to provide a forceful and highly significant verb as the gear on which would veer the energy of expression of the whole verse. There is a way in which it can be said that the poet used a select verb in every case, but not every verb was select in the sense of poetic. For example, waes - was, is used 243 times in Beowulf, and other forms of the verb wesan - to be, appear 198 times for a total of 441 occurrences of the verb to be.<sup>413</sup>

This fact leads to an important observation: not all the verbs in Anglo-Saxon poetry are poetic words. General-

---

<sup>412</sup> Haiku, sometimes Written Hokku, is a form of Japanese poetry which states in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables a clear picture designed to arouse a distinct emotion and suggest a specific spiritual insight. Earlier in the century the Haiku was a formative influence on the imagists. (From: Thrall, Hibbard, and Holman, A Handbook to Literature, p. 217.)

<sup>413</sup> Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. 323-24.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

233

ly, however, and particularly because Anglo-Saxon poetry called for power of expression in the line, the verb is usually discovered to be pregnant with meaning and rich in associations and allusions. The verb can only be appreciated, that is, the full weight of its meaning understood, when the sense implied is grasped and the experience it conveys is interpreted. Examples will illustrate.

Sea imagery, as earlier mentioned, is a favourite subject of the Anglo-Saxon poet. A fine poetic specimen is contained in lines 1903-13 of Beowulf, describing Beowulf's homecoming. The poet uses seven nouns to depict the ship, and thirteen verbs, two of which are understood, and seven are well chosen to reinforce the meaning. The lines are:

|                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| drēfan dēop waeter,  | Gewāt him on naca             |
| Dā waes be maeste    | Dean land ofgeaf.             |
| segl sāle faest;     | merehraegla sum,              |
| nō, þaer wēgflotan   | sundwudu þunede;              |
| sides getwāefde;     | wind ofer yðum                |
| flēat fāmigheals     | saegenga for,                 |
| bundenstefna         | forð ofer yðe,                |
| þaet hīe Gēata clifu | ofer brimstrēamas,            |
| cūpe naessas;        | ongitan meahton,              |
| lyftgeswenced,       | cēol up geprang,              |
|                      | on lande stōd. <sup>414</sup> |

---

<sup>414</sup> Departed he in the ship / churning (ploughing)  
 the deep water / the Danes' land left. / Then was upon  
 the mast / a sea-garment, / a sail (held) fast by a  
 rope; / the sea-wood creaked; / not there the wave-  
 floater / the wind above the billows (blowing) / (in no  
 way) from its course impeded (delayed), / the sea-goer  
 (floater) went on, / floated the foamy-necked / forth  
 over the waves, / the bounden (well-wrought) prow /

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

234

The literal translation of these lines is not made with the idea of supplying an adequate, that is, artistic rendering of the passage in question. As Wyld once pointed out "no impression equivalent to that produced by the Anglo-Saxon can possibly be gathered from a bald and literal rendering;<sup>415</sup>" the translation of the lines quoted above is a literal version. This was done for the purpose of emphasizing certain elements of the diction, but the literal equivalent thus made is to the detriment of the poetic value of the lines, and does not do justice to the art of the poet. The translation, as it is given, is far from being convincing that the passage is artistically wrought with a wealth of imagery, every word and phrase replete with meaning, with extraordinary variety in the choice of words, with striking and beautiful forms of expressions teeming with pictorial, and the lines, efflorescent with human touch, permeate life with palpitating images and sound associations.

It is perhaps appropriate and timely at this point to mention that a translation of poetry from one language to another is never adequate in the sense of translating the poetic intuition and the artistic ideal of a poem to

---

across the sea's currents, / till they the Geats' cliffs  
(homeland) / could see, / the well known headlands; /  
the galley forward thrust / driven before the winds (wind-  
impelled), / until it stood (came to rest) upon the land.

<sup>415</sup> Wyld, "Diction and Imagery," pp. 70-71.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

235

the point of having the same poem in another language. What actually takes place in the translation is a paraphrase or explanation of the logical sense, and the allusions inherent in the artistic ideal. The work thus produced is not a poem; it is, at best, a French explication d'auteurs.

The opinion expressed here is nothing new and applies also to literary prose. Much is lost in the translation of a work, and it is

worse than unfortunate that the genuine beauty of Anglo-Saxon poetry is hidden from the average reader in translation, .... 'Stream of narrative' and 'flow of narrative' are not indeed happy terms to apply to the Anglo-Saxon epics ....

I do not see how it is possible, except perhaps as a tour de force, to paraphrase or to imitate in one language the poetry of another language without following to some extent the technique of the original.<sup>416</sup>

One must go further and say, that to follow the technique of an original piece of literature in translation is impossible because the poetic intuition which produced the artifact is the result, among other things, of the poet's particular general experience which is different in every man.<sup>417</sup> What can actually happen and, indeed, has happened

---

<sup>416</sup> Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp.109-10.

<sup>417</sup> Marcotte, The God Within, pp. 10-24.

in the past is that the translation made became part of the artist's particular general experience and a potential objective correlative,<sup>418</sup> which in time could develop into a poetic intuition. Such seems the case of Alfred Tennyson's The Battle of Brunanburh,<sup>419</sup> Ezra Pound's The Seafarer,<sup>420</sup> and many others, including the so called 'faked' translations of James Macpherson's Ossian,<sup>421</sup> Thomas Chatterton's literary 'forgeries' of poems and prose pieces,<sup>422</sup> and finally, Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat.<sup>423</sup>

---

<sup>418</sup> T. S. Eliot, Selected Essays, 3rd ed. (London, 1951), p. 145: "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative': in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked." It is very important to remember that Eliot makes his definition of objective correlative belong to the appetitive world, but in fact, in the process of the poetic intuition, it belongs to the cognitive faculties, as shown by Paul J. Marcotte, in The God Within, pp. 25-37, and 55-72.

<sup>419</sup> Alfred Tennyson, The Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson (London, 1904), pp. 534-36.

<sup>420</sup> Ezra Pound, Selected Poems, ed. T. S. Eliot (London, 1958), pp. 77-79.

<sup>421</sup> John Louis Haney, ed. English Literature (New York, 1924), pp. 253-54.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid., pp. 257-58.

<sup>423</sup> Edward Fitzgerald, Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám (New York, no date), pp. 65 ff.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

237

Returning to the excerpt describing Beowulf's homeward voyage from Heorot, the passage could be the object of an enlightening paper on the use of sea imagery, rejecting, at the same time, what has been erroneously described as an Anglo-Saxon exaggerated fondness or mannerism for epithets or synonyms. Several of the eleven verbs found in those lines will now be examined to show that they are the result of thoughtful consideration and careful selection, to demonstrate the poet's ability to make use of the verb to convey the mood required by his artistic ideal, and to illustrate that the verbs so chosen contribute to the enrichment of the poetic diction of the poem.

The first verb is gewat - departed, used in line 1903, from gewitan - to depart or go. At first sight there seems to be nothing unusual about the choice of this action word, meaning simply to leave. There is much more, and the poet could have used any of several other verbs. The choice of gewat at this particular moment and place has its raison d'être, the word meaning to turn one's eyes in a particular direction with the intention of taking that direction, to set out towards a goal, to pass over, to go away, to retire, even to die.<sup>424</sup> The etymology of gewat - helps further to grasp the sense in which the poet of Beo-

---

<sup>424</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 469.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

238

wulf used it. To depart means to separate, to part from, to quit, to die, from Old French départir or despartir, des, from Latin dis - from, with the idea of separation or removal, and French partir, from Latin partire - to divide or put asunder, from Latin transire or discedere - to go beyond and away from, to go to the other side, to separate, with the French meaning se séparer or s'écarter.<sup>425</sup> The prevalent meaning arising from this is to die, in this context figuratively of course, in the sense of going away and not coming back, of breaking away, once and for all, from certain things which are being left behind, such as, loved ones, cherished memories, pleasant company and surroundings, etc. This is Beowulf's case; having destroyed the monsters, covered himself with glory, and made many friends, he is now turning his back, that is, departing from it all, in other words, in going away he is dying a bit.

The verb gewat is rich in associations and develops the mood intended by the poet. A departure is often sad, but when a loved one leaves with the almost certainty that he will not return, hearts throb with emotion, a strange sadness fills the atmosphere, and tension mounts as the last

---

<sup>425</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français illustré, pp. 199, and 659.

....., Dictionnaire illustré latin français, p. 1120.

Skeat, Etymological Dictionary, p. 163.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

239

moment approaches. The joys and smiles of the farewell feast are soon transformed into mixed feelings of melancholy, heartbreak, and concealed sobs. Hrothgar, the matchless king, blameless in every way, magnificent in his formal attire and accompanied by his retainers, expresses his last thanks to Beowulf for all he had done for his people. The aged king's face is flushed with sadness, and the piercing crystal-like look<sup>8</sup> of his eyes reaches far beyond the visible, for he knows that many winters have deprived him of the joys of strength, old and grey, he will not see his friend and champion again! Among the men, the atmosphere rings with laughters, last moment jokes and messages are exchanged, and the best wishes of good-luck, bon voyage, and safe journey home are heard above the hubbub of the leave-taking gathering.

Beowulf's escort, light in hearts, is eager to board the beloved ocean craft; the men long to see the cupe naessas - the well-known headlands of their country again. As the din of the coats of mail, of shields and spears echo behind the Danes, the heavy sounding steps and the firm and decided gait of the Geats reach the shore where the ship rests at anchor, the final farewell takes place. A sword mounted with gold, a treasure and heirloom, is given to the guardian of the vessel. More adieus are in the making, a hurried word, a final good-bye, a <sup>4</sup>1st glance, and sighs of

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

240

relief mark the definitive parting.

As the ship pulls away from the strand, the water-side echoes the muffled sound of roaring commands, the resounding creak of a broad-beamed ship, the squeaking oars and splashing water, the keen laughters and impulsive shouts of joy, the thumping beat and pounding waves, while overhead, the salty sky teems with bustle as the much-ado sea gulls shrill their way about and add to the commotion, as if taking part in the activities, by contributing local colour with their high-pitched and piercing cries. All this, and more than space allows to mention here, is contained in the verb gewitan which, by way of associations, imparts the mood of sadness which has overtaken the Danes, and the sadness mixed with joyous excitement which has filled the Geats at the thought of their impending homecoming trip.

The verb gewitan is usually followed by a verb of motion, in this case, by drēfan - to stir up or make the water turbid, a word which in itself is full of meaning, whether taken literally, figuratively, or symbolically. Any one who has handled the oars of a boat or of a canoe, or has seen the paddle-type rear and side wheels of old river steamboats chew up the water, or has been at the command of an outboard motor, particularly when its mechanism performed reverse action churning the water and turning up the bottom,

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

241

or has witnessed the hellish frenzie stirred up by the powerful propellers of transoceanic liners coming or leaving their moorings will have an idea of the associations the verb drēfan secretes.

It is not so much what the verb drēfan is, as how it acts on one's mind by way of allusions, that makes it a particularly well chosen and suggestive verb. When used in the context as it is in line 1904 of Beowulf, it brings back to life all that has been said about gewitan plus a myriad of activities connected with putting a ship to sea. On board, every member of the crew is either busy giving orders, pulling, pushing, tying, holding, watching, steady-ing, or moving about something that seems quite familiar; at sea, the waves are doing their utmost to react to the treatment they receive at the hands of the ship, eddying, churning, chewing, splashing about the oars, the side of the ship and the rudder, while the floor of the sea does its share by spitting up, as best it can, every living thing that is disturbed, and throws up foam that clings to everything.

Overhead, the air is a maze of sea mews moving about in what appears utter confusion but, in fact, well ordered flights, each bird knowing every movement that is made and in what direction, their shrieks and shrills as if voicing annoyance at the ship's departure. On shore, an-

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

242

other type of movements with men hurrying to and fro or looking about, standing or taking up the vigil, hesitating and putting things away, straightening or securing others, and turning and disappearing.

A look at the etymology of drēfan will help to understand the fine shades of meaning it has. Drēfan means to stir up, disturb, agitate, confuse, churn, trouble, the Latin equivalents being agitare, commovere, turbare, used in relation to dēop waeter - the deep water, in line 1904 of Beowulf. Agitare has the French sense of mettre en mouvement ou en branle, that is, to set a ship in movement or action, as used by the biographer Cornelius Nepos, the friend of Cicero, in Dion 9,2: navem agitare in portu -<sup>426</sup> faire manoeuvrer un vaisseau dans le port - to put a ship amoving in port. Agitare means also to shake, in the French sense of remuer and agiter, as in Cicero's De Natura Deorum 2,26: maria agitata ventis -<sup>427</sup> les mers agitées par les vents - the seas rising through (the action of) the winds; and French se remuer or se déplacer - to put a move on or to move from one place to another, as in Thebais 2,206 of Papinius Stacius: Fama finitimis agitatur agris -<sup>428</sup> la

<sup>426</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 86 and 1714.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid., pp. 86 and 1707.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid., pp. 86 and 1707.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

243

Renommée parcourt les territoires voisins - fame wanders aboutneighbouring territories, and French se mettre en mouvement, as in Cicero's De Divinatione 2, 139: tum animus agitatur ipse per sese -<sup>429</sup> alors l'âme se meut par elle-même (trouve en elle-même son principe d'activité) - the soul moves by itself (that is, finds in itself its principle of movement).

Latin commovere is a synonym of agitare, and more specifically has the meaning of the Latin se commovere, as in Cicero's De Finibus 5,42: ex loco -<sup>430</sup> bouger d'un endroit ou quitter un endroit - to move from one place or to leave a place. Latin turbare is also a synonym of agitare, the French equivalent being rendre trouble, mettre en désordre, altérer - to make turbid or muddy, to sow disorder, to alter relating to water, and by extension, to Latin turbidus and French confus - confused, as in Ovide's Epistulae 17,7: freta ventis turbida -<sup>431</sup> mer bouleversée par les vents - a sea troubled by the winds, or as in De Natura Rerum 2,1 of Lucretius: mare, aequora -<sup>432</sup> agiter la mer - to disturb the sea, and by extension, to Latin turbo - ce

<sup>429</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 86 and 1717.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid., pp. 355 and 1707.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid., pp. 1613 and 1713.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid., pp. 1613 and 1713.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

244

qui tourne en rond, tourbillon, tourbillonnement - that which pivots on itself, as a whirlwind, a whirlpool or an eddy, whirling or eddying, as in Curculio of Plautus: ex-oritur ventus turbo -<sup>433</sup> un vent s'élève en tourbillon - a wind rises in a whirlpool.

The etymological origin of the verb drēfan having been established, it would seem evident that this word, as used in line 1904 of Beowulf, has a denotative as well as a connotative meaning, and plays another rôle in addition to the important duty it fulfills in developing mood. It is explained first in terms of its normal denotative sense, that is, the stirring up of water in order to move the ship, and this is the sense in which drēfan must be interpreted as shown earlier. The connotative implication is bound with the associations it brings back and the mood it creates. It is also used symbolically. Gazing at the eddies made by the oars, the water churned up at the stern, and the sea acting generally about the ship, one's imagination becomes very active and fancies seeing life, as it really is, through the agitations of the water. For Beowulf and his retainers, names like Hrothgar and Heorot, Grendel and his Dam, Aeschere and the mere, Unferth and Breca, Hygelac

---

<sup>433</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 1613 and 1715.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

245

and Wiglaf, Wealhpeow and Hrothmund remain part of their particular general experience and episodes in the animated sea of their lives. Another event, the homeward trip, has begun in the every-day contest for livelihood, and as high tide is followed by low tide, heavy seas by calm and fair weather, there is a way in which life may be compared to the movements of the agitated water.

The struggle the ship faces every moment of her life at sea is like one's conflict in life from the time of birth, and as the ship must move through time and space, navigate in clear and stormy seas, face constant hazards, and overcome difficulties, so must men pilot their lives and follow the best course they know through the constant turmoil of daily happenings. Beowulf silenced Unferth, overcame Grendel and his mother, faced the return trip, surmounted difficulties at home, just as he had to crush the Dragon at the end of his life. Drēfan is rich in poetic associations in the context in which it is used in line 1904 of Beowulf, and contributes to the poetic diction of the poem.

It is significant that the verbs gewat and drēfan are immediately followed, in line 1904, by ofgeaf - left, from ofgifan, ofgyfan, or ofgiefan - to give up, leave, abandon, resign, quit, desert, or even in the sense of die, as in line 2251 of Beowulf: lif ofgeaf - he gave up life.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

246

In the line under review, ofgeaf is used in connection with the land of the Danes - Denaland which Beowulf and his men are leaving behind them, never to return according to the poem. Ofgeaf placed at the end of <sup>the</sup> line completes the statement, and is used in syntactic parallelism to gewāt appearing at the beginning of the statement, to which it is related in the sense just elaborated.

The Latin cognate of ofgeaf is destituo and destitutio - to abandon in the figurative sense, the Old High German being abageban, and the Old Saxon afgeban.<sup>434</sup> The denotation of ofgeaf is to leave physically the land of Hrothgar, to depart or go away; as a result, the contextual association of ofgeaf and its parallel relation to gewāt develop the connotative value, figuratively speaking, into abandoning or forsacan - to give up in the sense of to forsake a land. This is Denaland which has been good to them and where they have made friends. In other words, ofgeaf means figuratively, to break away from or close the door on a particular experience of life, that is, to die a bit. Looked at in this light, ofgeaf contributes to the mood of sadness which hovers in the background of this passage relating to Beowulf's departure from Denaland.

---

<sup>434</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 740.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français,  
p. 509.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

247

Other verbs of interest in lines 1903-13 of Beowulf are faest, appearing in line 1906, from faestan or faestnian - to hold or make fast or firm, to fasten, secure, entrust, commit, or commend, the Latin equivalent being firmitas, from firmitas - firm or to make firm or solid.<sup>435</sup> Faest is a well known word today, the modern English, to hold fast or to make secure, coming in direct line from its Anglo-Saxon cognate. The word is popular and convenient in the vocabulary of the seaman. It has a denotative meaning in line 1906, but it is possible that the poet of Beowulf may have intended a connotative meaning, as well, from the word's contextual appearance.

The verb punede - creaked, from punian - to make a noise, sound, resound, creak, groan, is used in line 1906 in apposition to the kenning, that is, an Anglo-Saxon periphrastic conventionalized expression used instead of a single word, sund wudu -<sup>436</sup> sea wood, for ship. The verb punede is aptly chosen for its conventional meaning describing the noise originating from the friction of the ship's timbers of her structure caused by the stress put on it by the rolling and the pitching of the sea. The shuddering, thrumming, and groaning of a ship at sea is a familiar sound to those ac-

435

Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 267.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français,  
p.669

436

Beowulf, ed. Julius Zupita, p. 87.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

248

customed to the sea, and many will remember the noise for the sleepless nights it has brought them. Dunede may be applied, as it is in line 1906, to describe the ship as a whole or an aspect of it, as the noise from the rolling and pitching, or the rubbing of the moving oars, or the movements of the rudder, or any other part, or noise, on which the poet wishes to focus attention. Dunede was a word familiar to those who went to sea, and the use of it in the passage under study could awake a host of cherished associations and related allusions of the kind so ably expressed in The Seafarer. It helps, at the same time, to convey the proper mood.

Of particular concern to this paper, in the remaining lines of the passage being reviewed, are the verbs get-waēfan - to separate, part, put an end to, but particularly, to delay, hinder, restrain, deprive, detain, as in lines 1907-08 of Beowulf: no paer wegflotan / wind ofer yðum / sides getwaefde - in no way there did the wind (blowing) across the waves delayed (impeded or hindered) the wave-floater on its journey. Another verb is faran - to go, proceed, march, go beyond, go away (in the sense of to move or to change place), sail, the Latin cognates being ire, vadere, incēdere, transire, migrare, navigare, and by extension, to fare or journey on, from Sanskrit pri - to bring over.<sup>437</sup>

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

249

The verb faran is used widely in Anglo-Saxon for expressing every kind of going from one place to another, the poet giving it the required meaning through contextual association, in this case, the description of a sea voyage, as in sāegenga fōr - the sea goer went on, line 1908 of Beowulf. A great deal more is implied in the verb fōr. Looked at literally, fōr has little colour, but seen in the light of its etymology and the seafaring contextual background of lines 1903-13 of Beowulf, fōr is pregnant with significance. In Anglo-Saxon days, as always, a ship had to keep a steady course, and with the 'benignant' cooperation of the elements, the hard work of a sturdy crew, final destination could be reached safely and without delay. Anyone who has sailed the North Sea at any time, but particularly from September to April, knows that this is to leave much unsaid about seafaring days of old when a heavy ship, unwieldy oars, a sail, and a cumbrous rudder were the only means of propulsion to overcome the powerful and treacherous North Sea, and be able to remain master of it.

The respect of the Anglo-Saxon for the sea was not a myth. It was a genuine veneration mingled with awe, ad-

---

<sup>437</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 270.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français,  
pp. 856, 1642, 792, 1592, 975, and 1016.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

250

miration, and perhaps fear for the unknown beyond the seas, but at the same time, although certain intangible factors bordering on the mysterious puzzled them, they knew the sea to be a reality from experience. In those days, when a ship took to the sea anything could happen, and to faran on was a wish foremost in the minds of those connected with it. The meaning of faran implied to have a good voyage with a minimum of hardships, that is, to keep on course, to meet good sailing conditions, to reach home - safely and healthy. This was the hope of all, but the possibility of fulfilment was always overshadowed with feelings of anxiety and misgivings since the sea was known to exact a heavy toll; this was the reality the Anglo-Saxon knew but too well. The most important thing which could happen a ship in those days was to faran on, that is, to fare well, with the implied meaning of the ship sailing according to plans and to the satisfaction of all concerned. As long as the ship would faran on, a safe journey with a happy landing was in the making. The Anglo-Saxons realizing the true import of faran in sāegenga fōr would react to the rich associations it stirred in them.

Beowulf's embarkation must have been a strongly built boat, manned by an able and eager crew, sailing in ideal conditions and taking advantage of favourable winds, for the poet reinforces sāegenga fōr by flēat fāmigheals

forð ofer yðe - scudded (floated) the foamy necked forth over the wave (the ship sped on across the main), in line 1909 of Beowulf. This line must be interpreted with the idea of swiftness, the poet achieving that with the use of the verb flēat, from flēotan - to float, swim, sail, and its contextual arrangement with the adverb forð - forth, forward, onward, and the kenning fāmigheals - foamy necked (that is, the ship was afoam).

Although the verb flēotan is passed over by most modern translators, and is put down as float in the modern sense of the word, flēotan means a great deal more. The etymology of flēotan shows that it has its origin in Sanskrit plu - to float or swim. It is cognate with Old Saxon fliotan, Old High German fliuzan or fleoza, Middle High German vliuzen, Latin fluere - to flow, from Greek to navigate, and Latin navigare.<sup>438</sup> It will be shown that flēat means more than merely to float. The basic and most important idea is movement forward as indicated by the word swim, in Sanskrit plu. Most modern translators, as may be verified from the references given in the next footnote, give flēat a literal rendering or translation with the result that the idea of movement forward, of speed or veloc-

---

<sup>438</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 292.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français,  
p. 1016.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

252

ity is lost.<sup>439</sup> This is wrong, and speed is definitely implied from navigare, the Latin equivalent of the Greek cognate, whose roots are navis - ship, and agitare - to press on or drive on, hence, to pass over the sea, to travel by water, or to sail.<sup>440</sup>

It is true that a seaworthy ship floats, and this is the idea implied in flēotan, but a ship must do something else besides floating to overcome the high seas and reach her destination. This is exactly what the poet conveys in line 1909, where the idea of speed prevails, and is reinforced by forð and particularly by fāmigheals, immediately associating the image thus produced, that is, of foam

---

<sup>439</sup> Clarence Griffin Child, trans. Beowulf (Boston, 1904), p. 52.

James M. Garnett, trans. Beowulf An Anglo-Saxon Poem (Boston, 1900), p. 58.

R. K. Gordon, trans. Anglo-Saxon Poetry (London, 1959, Every Man's Library, No. 794, p. 39.

Francis B. Gummere, trans. Beowulf (New York, 1925), p. 82.

John R. Clark Hall, trans. Beowulf (London, 1962), p. 117.

Jho; Lesslie Hall, trans. Beowulf, An Anglo-Saxon Epic Poem (Boston, 1900), p. 65.

Vincent F. Hopper, trans. Beowulf (Great Neck, 1962), p. 128.

Wentworth Huyshe, trans. Beowulf (London, 1908), p. 125.

William Ellery Leonard, trans. Beowulf (New York, 1925), p. 82.

Charles Scott Moncrieff, trans. Beowulf (London, 1921), p. 66.

Chauncey Brewster Tinker, trans. Beowulf (New York, 1902), p. 93.

Walter Thomas, trans. Beowulf et les premiers fragments épiques anglo-saxons (Paris, 1919), p. 50. Thomas

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

253

a characteristic of any fast moving vessel, forming about the curved-prow ship. The word chosen in translation to render the proper connotation of fleat must impart the idea of swiftness. This is done with the verb to scud, the nature of which is to hurry. More specifically, it means hurried movement; used imperatively, to be off or to make haste; and applied to the sea, it becomes a technical nautical term meaning, to sail or move swiftly on the water, or to run before a gale with little or no sail.<sup>441</sup> The same idea of speed is expressed in lines 496-98 of Andreas: is pes bat ful scrid, / faered famigheals, / fugole geli-cost / glided on geofone - the ship is going at full speed, fares the foamy necked, like a bird flying she slides over the water (sea). The idea of swiftness is reinforced with the simile of the flying bird.

The last two verbs appearing in lines 1903-13 of Beowulf are gebrang - pressed on or thrust forcibly, of line 1912, and stōd - stood, from standan - to stand, of line 1913. Gebrang is from gepringan - to press on, the Latin equivalent being contendere - to lighten or stiffen, extend,

---

uses "le navire flottant" - the floating ship, but Hubert Pierquin, in his Le Poème anglo-saxon de Beowulf, translates the passage by "franchissait les courants de l'océan" - shot, run past or over the ocean billows, p. 510.

<sup>440</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, p. 1016.  
<sup>441</sup> Onions, Shorter Oxford Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 1817.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

254

brace oneself, and is allied to Latin trudere - to push with strength and violence.<sup>442</sup> The verb gebringan is a happy and apt choice for the occasion. At this point the vessel is within the cupe naessas - well-known bluffs of line 1912, of the home of the Geats. At the sight of the cliffs the oarsmen double their energy with great sighs of relief and enthusiasm, and the ship, in line 1913, lyftgeswenced - driven (beaten) before the wind, like a thoroughbred race horse rounding the last bend and gathering momentum, presses on home with a tremendous forward thrust past the headlands, and there on land she stands! Seven words only, like the simple stroke of a great master, are required to give an extraordinary colourful passage, a striking appeal and a powerful finish. Such are the words cēol up gebrang / lyftgeswenced, on lande stōd - the keel (ship) pressed or pushed on (upwards) driven (or beaten) before the wind, came to rest upon the land (ran aground or was grounded), lines 1912-13 of Beowulf.

In this passage again the contextual relation of gebrang is the key to the understanding of the lines, and the grasping of the happy mood it conveys, of the relaxed satisfaction of the crew upon reaching homeland after a

---

<sup>442</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 457.  
 Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français,  
 pp. 415 and 1608.  
 Skeat, Etymological Dictionary, p. 645.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

255

long absence. This is a good example of the terseness of Anglo-Saxon poetic thought. Not a single word could be removed from the seven words used in this context without altering the meaning or weakening its purport. Cēol - keel is a synecdoche for ship; it is allied to Latin carina, from the half shell of a nut, to French coque (d'un navire), and Latin celox - a light ship.<sup>443</sup> Figuratively speaking, everybody and everything, that is to say, the members of the crew and every part of the ship in the cēol - keel, were set upon their mettle as they caught sight of the familiar headlands. The adverb ūp - up, which is used as a postposition, has the same function as forð in forð ofer yðe - forth, that is, forward over the wave (ocean) of line 1909. As a postposition, the adverb ūp clarifies and reinforces the meaning of geprang, but unlike modern English postpositions, it comes before the verb, not after. In its particular position immediately before geprang, the adverb ūp creates the impression of a hammer blow, that is, of a thrust upon geprang, while the compound immediately following geprang, lyftgeswenced - driven before the wind, becomes the third and last word in ūp geprang lyftgeswenced - pressed on weather-driven (driven before the wind), lines 1912-13, forming a sort of triune expression, whose effect,

---

<sup>443</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 266 and 286.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

256

like a booster rocket, seems to enable the ship to round off the headlands and, in one final sweep, pick up the necessary momentum to run the keel aground in a majestic landing, just as the custom of the time would have it, that is, the ship on lande stōd - on land stood or came to rest upon the shore, in line 1913.

Of noteworthy interest for its function in the last line of the passage under examination is the compound verbal adjective lyftgeswenced - driven by (before) the wind, in line 1913, from lyft - air, sky, clouds, atmosphere, breeze, or heavens, and the verb swencan - to press hard, to cause a person to labour or to cause a person trouble, as to harass, vex, or afflict, in the sense of the Latin cognate flagellare - to whip. The Anglo-Saxon verb swencan is allied to geswencan - to agitate, trouble, vex, fatigue, afflict, harass, or oppress, with the Latin equivalents pulsare and agitare, tribulare, vexare, fatigare, adfligere, adficere, and opprimere. Cognate with these are the Anglo-Saxon sweng - a blow or stroke, from the verb swingan to swing, and the verb swincan - to labour or toil, the modern English cognate appearing as swink, meaning to labour, exert oneself, to toil, work hard, slave, drudge, as used by Spenser, and swinked or swinkt, wearied with toil, as used by Milton, in line 293 of Comus.<sup>444</sup>

---

<sup>444</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 650,

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

257

Two of the Latin verbs mentioned in the paragraph immediately preceding are most significant in helping to understand the meaning of lyftgeswenced. One verb is adfligere, the French equivalent being frapper (heurter) contre - to strike (knock or run) against, as in Latin ad scopulos adflicta navis of Cicero's Pro C. Rabirio Postume 25 - navire jeté contre les rochers - ship thrown (pushed) against the cliffs; tempestas naves Rhodias adflixit of Julius Caesar's De Bello Civili 3,37,2 - la tempête jeta à la côte (drossa) les navires Rhodiens - the storm knocked against the coast (drove ashore) the Rhodian ships; and (ferrea manus) navem ita undae adfligebat ut..., from Ab Urbe Con Ita Libri 24,34,11 of T. Livius - (la main de fer) abattait le navire sur les flots avec tant de violence que... - (the iron hand) pushed down (blew down or threw down) the ship upon the sea (billows) with such force (violence) that....<sup>445</sup>

The other Latin verb is agitare, which has already been described on page 242 with the idea of to put in movement. The relation of agitare to swencan is contained in

---

948, and 448.

Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 671, 1277, 86, 1599, 1669, 655, 37, 35, and 1086.

Darbshire, Works of John Milton, Vol.II, p.171.

<sup>445</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 37, 1706, 1707, and 1712.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

258

the French idea of pousser vivement - to push briskly or sharply, that is, with strength, as in terris agitare vel undis Trojanos potuisti of Virgil's Aeneid 12,802 - tu as pu poursuivre les Troyens sur terre ou sur mer - you were able to push after (pursue) the Trojans on land and at sea; and the French idea of remuer or agiter - to move or shake, as in maria agitata ventis of Cicero's De Natura Deorum 2, 26.<sup>446</sup>

From the meanings derived from flagellare, adfligere, agitare, and modern English swink, a clearer understanding of the full weight of lyftgeswencan is now possible. What is implied in lyftgeswencan is tantamount to high winds blowing so strongly as capable, so to speak, of lifting the ship and making her come to rest on shore. In other words, the prevailing idea inherent in lyftgeswencan is forward thrust resulting from powerful winds blowing about high cliffs, deep gorges, towering fjords, catching the vessel like the lashes of a whip, figuratively of course, beating down upon her with repeated and continued swinging motion, striking or knocking against the keel, shaking, pushing, and moving the ship with the strength characteristic of coastal winds about headlands. The contextual meaning of lyftgeswenced is fraught with suggestiveness.

---

<sup>446</sup> Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 86-87, 1719, and 1707.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

259

Several pages have been needed to give a partial exegesis of eleven lines of Anglo-Saxon poetry, with special emphasis placed on certain verbs. There are many more similar passages in Anglo-Saxon poetry, which are replete with poetic wealth, and much more space than the limits of this thesis allow would be needed to discuss them. As a compromise, verbs will be singled out of other passages which will be examined, and individual verbs taken at random from Anglo-Saxon poetry will be discussed. A case has been made, from the discussion of lines 1903-13 of Beowulf, against the danger of literal translation of Anglo-Saxon poetry and in favour of the importance and necessity of interpreting words in the light of their etymological background and contextual associations. Very few words in Anglo-Saxon can be taken at their face value; words like gēwat, drēfan, ofgeaf, punede, flēat, forð, geprang, and lyftgeswenced, are capable of yielding an abundance of poetic meanings if seen and understood in their milieu.

It remains a difficult task to explain adequately the full significance of the diction of Anglo-Saxon excerpts of poetry by merely pointing to the suitability of the choice of the verbs and their richness in suggestiveness, that is, tending to stimulate thought or reflection, without showing their effect on other words in the context, and

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

260

what meaning they take in association with them. However, some knowledge may still be gathered from an examination of certain verbs, and comments made about them. A wider and deeper acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon verbs will help to understand the important use Anglo-Saxon poets made of them, and will help to reveal how fully charged action words are with allusions.

An appropriate example is found in two verbs of lines 44-47 of The Whale. First, there is the verb bedenian or bedeman - to cover, stretch on or over, spread over, from Latin obducere and French recouvrir, as in Cicero's De Natura Deorum 2,120: trunci obducuntur cortice - les troncs se recouvrent d'écorce - (tree) trunks are covered (cover themselves) with bark. Poetically, Latin obducere has the French equivalent of voiler - to veil, obscure, dim, shade, as in Horace's Epodon Liber 15,5: frons obducta - front couvert, asombri - frowning (covered) brow (forehead), gloomy face (forehead). Figuratively, Latin obducere means in French tirer à soi, absorber, boire - to pull towards oneself, to absorb, to drink, as used in Cicero's Tusculanae Disputationes 1,96, and in Seneca's Dialogi 1, "De Providentia" 3, 12.<sup>447</sup>

The figurative sense of obducere is interesting. As-

<sup>447</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 94.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 1052, 1707, 1711, 1707, and 1717.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

261

suming that the Anglo-Saxon poet of The Whale had a knowledge of it or of Latin words cognate with it, the choice of the verb bedenian represents the stroke of a master. Heolophelme, line 45 of The Whale, means a helmet which makes the wearer invisible or conceals him,<sup>448</sup> that is, the helmet puts the wearer in darkness, is so far as the viewers are concerned, in dimming the view, so to speak, of the people looking at him. As a result, there is a way in which heolophelme may be described as a dusky covering, something pulled over, although darkness is not mentioned as such. The art of the poet here lies in his ability to suggest and emphasize darkness from the context in which the passage takes place, and in his cleverness to choose a word which conveys the exact meaning desired. This shows again the richness of Anglo-Saxon words, the imagery that may be developed from them, the effect needed to carry the thought, and the poets' dexterity with the vocabulary they use.

The expression heolophelme bepeaht - overtaken by a dusky covering (darkness), that is, veiled in or enshrouded in darkness, in line 45 of The Whale, is immediately followed by helle seced - hell (he) seeks. This is a reference to the fable of The Whale and the account it contains of the journey of lost souls dragged to hell by the devil. The lure to which the soul is attracted is likened to a whale

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

262

which is mistaken for an island on which weary seamen unwisely and rashly alight. The whale, personifying the devil, plunges into the bottomless depths of the sea, representing hell, carrying the seamen, symbolizing evil men's souls. The familiarity of Anglo-Saxons with scriptural allusions would enable them to associate darkness with hell immediately. Taking advantage of this knowledge the poet is free to suggest darkness by way of an image, thus enriching his poetic diction with heolopelme, and completing the image with the verb bepeaht which serves a double purpose. It conveys the idea of stretched or covered in the French sense of voiler, and figuratively it carries the sense of Latin obducere - pulled towards oneself or absorbed in darkness, this thought being suggested by contextual allusion and the word heolophelme, and confirmed, beyond any doubt, in helle seced<sup>x</sup> - hell seeks (he) of line 45.

A word is necessary about the verb seced<sup>x</sup> - he seeks, from secan - to seek, found in line 45 of The Whale. Basically, this verb means to search for, inquire, ask for, look for. In line 45 of The Whale it is cognate with Latin invisere and French aller voir, visiter, faire visite - to go see, visit, or pay a visit to, as used by Cicero in Epistulae ad Atticum 12,30,1 and in De Oratore 1,249. The more precise meaning of seced<sup>x</sup> is found in the general sense of

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

263

Latin petere, the French equivalent being chercher à atteindre - to seek to reach, and in the unequivocal meaning of French diriger sa course vers, or chercher à gagner - direct or point one's course towards (a certain direction), or endeavour, that is, make efforts to reach, as in Miltiades 5,5 of Cornelius Nepos: naves petere - chercher à rejoindre les navires - to make efforts to reach the ships. The word is particularly well exemplified in the French idea of aspirer à - to aspire to, as in Cicero's Orator ad M. Brutum, 56: eloquentiae principatum - aspirer au premier rang dans l'éloquence - to aspire to the first place (to the top, the summit) in eloquence.<sup>449</sup> Diving through the depths of the sea of hell, the devil with the damned souls aspires, that is, craves for reaching the bottomless pit. This is the sense in which seced<sup>x</sup>, in helle seced<sup>x</sup> - aspires to hell, line 45 of The Whale, must be interpreted and translated, because the devil, that is, the fallen angel, has his residence in hell, and belongs there by his fallen nature, and must aspire to hell in everything he does.

The Phoenix is rich in Anglo-Saxon poetic diction,

---

448 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 178.  
Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 529.

449 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 854.  
Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 301.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français,  
pp. 854, 1707, 1168, and 1707.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

264

and hundreds of pages would be required to bring out the striking variety of its vocabulary, the extraordinary wealth of its figurative language, the astounding store of its associations and allusions, and the astonishing range and diversity of meanings of certain words.

Action words in The Phoenix, as in all other Anglo-Saxon poetic records, perform an important function. To single out a few as examples are the verbs lixed<sup>x</sup>, from lixan - to shine, flash, glitter, gleam, flare, and glimmer. The Latin cognates are found in fulgere - to make lightening or to be lightening, light, shine, sparkle, glisten, and flash; coruscare - to shine, sparkle, glitter, gleam; and lucere - to twinkle, shine, give light in speaking about the stars, shine through, and be visible. This verb, as was pointed out in the section under colours, is rich in poetic associations and allusions. Lixan has a variety of synonyms which appear constantly in Anglo-Saxon literature, and are used to describe the effect of light on objects. It is a favourite of Anglo-Saxon poets who have developed about it fine descriptive distinctions, the nature of which can only be revealed from the context, as in line 33 of The Phoenix: sunbearo lixed<sup>x</sup> - the sunny grove shines.<sup>450</sup>

---

<sup>450</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 644.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français, pp. 266, 162, and 372.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

265

Dreosað, in line 34 of The Phoenix, from dreosan - to fall (as fruits and rain), perish (plants, men, riches), become weak (health, plants), fail, and fade (plants), is applied in this line of The Phoenix to describe vegetation which never fades or declines. The Latin cadere - to fall, an equivalent of dreosan, has seven basic different relations, each one having several related but distinct meanings. This gives an idea of the variety of meanings which dreosan may take on,<sup>451</sup> the exact, being determined by the sense in which it is used in the context.

Stondað, from stondan or standan - to stand, as in stand in the sense of to continue to be, in line 36 of The Phoenix: grene stondað - (the grove) shall remain green (whatever the time of the year), is another fine example of what appears to be an Anglo-Saxon very ordinary verb, turns out to be one difficult of precise appraisal in translation. Bosworth needs three quarter of a page to list the different senses in which stondan may be used; these are divided in twelve categories. Stondan means to stand, occupy a place, stand firm, this being the main idea and the denotation of the verb. Its connotations are many; to con-

---

451

Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 910-11.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français,

p. 87.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

266

geal, to remain, continue, abide, to stand good, be valid, be, exist, take place, to oppose, resist attack, to reprove, to stand still, ~~stop~~, to appear, flash out, to arise, come, to be present to, come upon, to be of no account, to stand up, keep one's feet, to attack, assail, to perform, consist, to depend on, and there are many others. This variety of meanings which can be applied to stondan is further evidence of the difficulty waylaying the translator of Anglo-Saxon, and serves as an excellent example illustrating the contextual importance of Anglo-Saxon words in determining their accurate meanings.<sup>452</sup>

To complete this extremely partial treatment of the verbs in The Phoenix attention will be given to the following verbs. Line 36 uses bibead, from bibeodan - to ordain, order, command, and bid, in god bibead - God ordained; bibeodan is similar to Latin jubere - to give order, with at least ten different meanings, and mandare in the sense of to entrust, with five meanings. The verb brosniað\* - decays, from brosnian - to crumble, decay fall to pieces, rot, wither, be corrupted, perish, cognate with Latin corrumpere, deficere, dissolvere, perire, is used literally in line 38 of The Phoenix: naefre brosniað\* - never decays (leaf), but the verb frequently appears in a connotative and figurative

<sup>452</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 910-11.  
Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 318.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

267

sense. Lines 37-38 of The Phoenix yield the verb behongen from gehongian or gehangian - to hang, hang with, be suspended, depend, in wudu bið gelice bledum gehongen - the wood shall be hung (like) with fruits.

Onspringað is a verb strongly suggestive. It is allied to German entspringen, and means to spring, from on-springan - to spring forth, issue, originate, rise, gush forth, burst or push forth, burst asunder, and describes the action of streams springing forth from mountains, as in lines 62-63 of The Phoenix: ac þær lagustreamas, wundrum wraetlice, wyllan onspringað - but there streams, wondrously splendid, freely spring out. Leccap, from leccan - to water, irrigate, wet, moisten, slake (to mix with water), lave, from Latin lavare - to bathe oneself, to flow gently upon or against, as the sea upon a beach, as in line 64 of The Phoenix: foldan leccap - laving the earth, is a fine application of the verb leccan, for there is a sense in which the water from a spring does mix, so to speak, with the land it waters.

Brecað, from brecan - to break, fills half a page of colourful connotative meanings, figurative and symbolic, of Bosworth's dictionary; brecan is used to impart the idea of breaking forth, with a variety of nuances in shatter, burst out, tear, to curtail, injure, violate, destroy, op-

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

268

press, to break into, rush into, storm, capture, to press, force, to break or crash through, burst forth, spring out, to subdue, tame, to roar, and to bubble, as in line 67 of The Phoenix: brimcald brecað - ocean-cold (waters, meaning springs) bubble (from). A compound verb is found in geond-farað, from geondfaran - to traverse, pervade, from geond - through and faran - to go, of line 67: bearo ealne geond-farað pragam brymlice - at times go through the whole grove majestically.

Gelaæded, as in line 244 of The Phoenix, from ge-laædan, is rich in suggestive meanings, such as, to lead, guide, conduct, bear, carry, lift, take, bring, bring forth, bring up (produce), to pass, lead life, to mark, to beat the bound of land, to do, to place, lay, to sprout forth, grow, spread, to take a wife, marry, the Latin cognates being: ducere, deducere, agere, inducere, deferre, perferre, derivare, educere, producere, and educare. The Anglo-Saxon verb awyrde, in line 247 of The Phoenix, from awierdian - to spoil in the sense of harvests and fruits of the earth, appears also in the sense of injure, hurt, corrupt, seduce, destroy, and kill. Finally, peccað, used in line 249 of The Phoenix, from peccan - to cover, cover over, conceal, to swallow up, to thatch, is another Anglo-Saxon verb particularly popular in the figurative sense, as may be seen from

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

269

the variations peccan is capable of taking.<sup>453</sup>

A most enjoyable passage full of well-known allusions is contained in lines 850-64 of Christ. Life, in these lines, is compared to a dangerous journey aboard a sea-stallion riding a sea full of hazards, the world, and with the grace of God's Son, the dangerous ocean is overcome, and the trusty sea-horse is tied up to a safe port. Among the most colourful verbs of the passage are liðan, line 851, to go, but this verb is usually associated and applied to describe a sea voyage. It is cognate with Latin applicare - diriger vers (en parlant de vaisseaux) - to direct or guide towards in the sense of steering or sailing ships, as in Cicero's De Inventione 2,153: navem eum applicarunt - ils dirigèrent vers lui le vaisseau - they guided the ship (they sailed) towards him, and by extension, it becomes like French faire aborder - to lead in the sense of direct or guide (ashore), as in Caesar's De Bello Civili 3,101,5: adplicatis ad terram navibus - après avoir fait aborder les

---

<sup>453</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 98, 127, 402, 510, 758, 627, 121, 406, 62, and 1043.  
 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 58, 267, 214, 56, 152, 208, 30, and 356.  
 Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français, pp. 348, 381, 360, 39, 177-79, 211, 215, 317, 411, and 504-505.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

270

navires au rivage - after having guided the ships to shore.<sup>454</sup>

The verb lacað<sup>\*</sup> used in line 854 of Christ, from lacan - to move up and down as a ship does on the waves, that is, to wave about, is a highly suggestive verb with the idea of movement being dominant. It is also used to describe the movements of a bird in flight, and the fascinating trepidation of flames. In another sense it means to play on instruments, with the obvious image of movements back and forth. In its context, lacað<sup>\*</sup> is applied to the sould which is tossed about the windy crests of daily difficulties and temptations.<sup>455</sup>

A simple verb is gelidan<sup>\*</sup> - to go, move, travel, sail, advance, proceed, and come, as in line 857 of Christ: aerpon we to londe geliden haefdon - before that we had sailed (come) to land. If the emphasis, in translation, is not placed on the sailing aspect of geliden haefdon, the contextual association of the passage and the allusions it contains are lost.<sup>456</sup>

The Anglo-Saxon verb oncnawan, appearing in line 861 of Christ: paet we oncnawan - that we should know

---

<sup>454</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 643.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire illustré latin français, pp. 146, 1707, and 1706.

<sup>455</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 604.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

271

(God's grace), has four meanings. Oncnawan means to know in the sense of recognize or identify a person or an object; the second meaning is to know with emphasis on to understand and attain knowledge of, as in line 861 of Christ; the third sense of oncnawan is to know, that is, to learn by observation, to observe or perceive; finally, the verb oncnawan may be used in the sense of to acknowledge, that is, to make acknowledgement of a fault, or to acknowledge a greeting. The distinction between these meanings is made clearer from knowledge of the Latin cognates: agnoscere - to recognize, perceive, understand, and admit; cognoscere - to learn, know, seek to know, become acquainted with, study, learn, and inform; and noscere - to learn to know, examine, study, seek to recognize, recognize, conceive, listen, and admit.<sup>457</sup> Related to God's grace, in line 861 of Christ, oncnawan implies that man is capable, through grace, of attaining knowledge of discernment between right and wrong, or good and evil, and is able to navigate on the rugged sea of life, steering a steady course that will take him safely across to the port of heaven.

---

Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 208.

<sup>456</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 410.  
Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 220.

<sup>457</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 748.  
Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 262.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français,  
pp. 39, 121, and 417.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

272

Having examined verbs in excerpts from Beowulf, The Whale, The Phoenix, and Christ, individual verbs will now be singled out for examination, and to uncover the variety and shades of meanings which may be applied to them. This will corroborate further what has been observed so far, namely, that besides being excellent observers with animated imaginations, Anglo-Saxon poets exhibit a keen sense of feeling noticeable from the many fine distinctions in meanings, and show a skill of expression not so much in the choice of words themselves, since a word can have several significations, but in making the words develop the proper mood through their contextual arrangement, and take on, as a result, the intended meanings. Such a technique, that is, the ability of giving sense to a word by means of the context in which it appears and mood in which it develops, rendered the poet's art very difficult, and left students of Anglo-Saxon poetry, in the twentieth century, struggling mercilessly with the meanings of words. This Anglo-Saxon semasiological characteristic must not be construed as reflecting poorness or dearth of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary and lack of variety. If this were the case, modern English should also be considered poor, when words such as nice, fine, big, large, thing, boat, plant, to make, to put, to go, to do, to move, and others, are made to express many meanings.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

273

One of the interesting verbs in Anglo-Saxon vocabulary is scacan or sceacan,<sup>458</sup> the modern English cognate appearing as shake. It is immediately realized, from what has been said about the vivid imagination of Anglo-Saxon poets, what sterling use they made of scacan and the nuances of expressions they dressed the word with. Scacan serves sixteen meanings, at least, with a number of distinctions for each one. Some of the general meanings are: to shake or quiver, move quickly to and fro, brandish, go, glide, dispatch, hasten, flee, depart, die, pass on, pass from, proceed, hurry off, go forth, even to weave.<sup>459</sup> To weave is associated with the verb bregdan - to move quickly, pull, shake, swing, and has twenty-two other meanings.<sup>460</sup> When used transitively scacan means to dispatch, hasten something on, and intransitively of immaterial things, to depart, pass away, hasten on, etc.

Scacan occurs eight times in Beowulf in the following instances. In line 917: pā waes morgenlēoht scofen ond

<sup>458</sup> Wyld, "Diction and Imagery," pp. 85-87.

Doreen Maude Ellen Gillan, The Connotations of the Old English Terms Sceacan, Faege, Aeglaeca: A Study in the Method of Determining the Poetic Values of Old English Words (London, 1959), pp. 17-43.

<sup>459</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 819-20.  
Gillan, Connotations of Old English, pp. 17-43.

<sup>460</sup> Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 156.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

274

scynded - when the morning light was sent (pushed or thrust) forth and hastened, scacan is used intransitively here meaning to shake, sent forth. In line 1124: waes hira blaed scacen - was their power (glory or renown) departed, the verb scacan is transitive and refers to slain soldiers in war, implying the idea of their prosperity being shattered and, having been shaken out of them, has been lost forever. In line 1136: pā waes winter scacen - then was winter departed (that is, sent away), scacan is used transitively with the idea of winter being shaken off, that is, spring shaking nature free of winter. In line 1802: pā cōm beorht scacan - then came the bright (sun) hastening (then came on), the intransitive use of scacan conveys the idea of nature shaking off, that is, flinging out, scattering or dispersing darkness from its face. In line 2254: dug(uð) ellor s(c)eoc - retainers have departed elsewhere, scacan is also used intransitively, the idea of dying carrying with it the notion of hurrying or hastening. In line 2306: pā waes daeg sceacen - then was day departed (sent away), scacan is transitive and conveys the idea of shaking off, similar to the use made of it in lines 1136 and 1802. In line 2727: þā waes eall sceacen - then was all departed, all referring to daeghwila - days, appearing in line 2726, in other words, the days had passed or had run out on Beowulf, scacan being used transitively in the sense of shattered,

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

275

as in line 1124. Finally, in line 2742: bonne min sceaced<sup>x</sup> when departs my (life), scacan is used intransitively with the straight forward meaning of life going, that is, flinging out or dying out.

The verb sīgan - sink or fall, used in Beowulf, line 1251: sigon - sank, in the expression sigon bā tō slāepe - (they) sank to sleep or fell asleep, has become very prosaic in modern English. Inherited from Anglo-Saxon through Latin, the expression has been adopted as part of every-day modern language. It was not just a matter-of-fact with the Anglo-Saxons. The expression was poetic, and the poet of Beowulf made it serve double duty. Bosworth gives four principal and several related meanings with sixty explanatory lines for the description of the verb sīgan.<sup>461</sup> Sense I - is to pass from a higher to a lower position, to sink, descend, decline, fall down.<sup>462</sup> Basically, this is the meaning conveyed in line 1251 in so far as the idea of passing from one stage to another is concerned, but the sense goes beyond. Sense II - to move towards a point (to make a descent upon a place)<sup>463</sup> is more appropriate as long as it is applied figuratively, this being confirmed by Bosworth under IIb.<sup>464</sup>

---

<sup>461</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 782.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid., p. 782.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid., p. 782.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid., p. 782.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

276

The art of the poet, exhibited in line 1251, is to give the verb sīgan a joint denotative and connotative meaning, to relate it indirectly to the beginning of the passage immediately following, and to prepare the mood of terror developed in the passage contained in lines 1251-76 at the beginning of which it appears.

Beowulf's thanes had made merry and had indulged in both food and mead, tired and heavy, they were happy to take a reclining position on their cots. This is the denotation of sīgan as used in line 1251, the physical aspect of sīgan being emphasized. In a figurative sense, and taken with slāepe - sleep, the connotation of sīgan is to move to a certain point, in this case, that of heavy sleep. The artistry of the poet goes beyond this point. The verb sīgan, in its position at the beginning of a passage which serves to introduce Grendles modor - Grendel's mother, in line 1258, and her wicked DESCENT upon Heorot, is suitably and artfully chosen. The expression sigon pā tō slāepe, of line 1251, is in apposition to sum sāre angeald æfenraeste - one sorely paid for his night's rest, of lines 1251-52, that is to say, one was sent into permanent "sleep," meaning death. Sīgan is then echoed in and related to the passage immediately following and beginning line 1279 with com pā tō Heorot - came she (Grendel's mother) to Heorot, in other

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

277

words, Grendel's mother made a DESCENT upon Heorot. Finally, the passage prepares the way for the mood of terror developed and conveyed by the passage following.

The art of Anglo-Saxon poets appears also in the technique employed in using a word which is connected etymologically to two verbs having the same root, thus being able to develop a double meaning from the word. An example of this is the noun blæd - power, vigor of life, glory, renown, as used in line 1124 of Beowulf, and the verbs blāwan - to blow, breathe, be blown, sound, inflate, kindle, inflame, flare, allied to Latin sufflare, and the verb blowan - to blow, in the sense of to flower, flourish, bloom or blossom, with Latin equivalents florere, efflorere, reflare, and reflorere.<sup>465</sup> A great deal of confusion may arise in the mind of the translator in a case like this. The difficulty rests in distinguishing one verb from the other, their various parts being identical except the present indicative and the infinitive, and then, when the occasion warrants it, in establishing whether the noun is used denotatively, that is, that which blows or flourishes like a plant, or figuratively, the connotation of blæd being used to emphasize fame or success. In most cases the context will help to clarify the

---

<sup>465</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 108, 113.  
 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 51, 53.  
 Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français, pp. 623, 258, 216, and 543.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

278

meaning.

Attention may be called to several other verbs in Beowulf. Gesēcan or gesēcean - to seek or search, go to, visit, go to attack, inquire about, ask for, pursue, follow, look for, try, strive after, long for, wish or desire, expect from, approach, attain to, as in line 692: āefre gesēcean - ever seek, that is, will never see again or go visit the loved ones at home.<sup>466</sup> Forniman - to take away, deprive of, plunder, waste, devastate, destroy, consume, annul, disfigure, overcome, as in line 695: wældēað fornam - a murderous or bloody death had taken away, in the sense of snatched away.<sup>467</sup> Angyldan - to pay a penalty for, as in line 1251: sum sære angeald - some sorely paid for, is allied to angieldan or angildan - to yield, pay for, reward, requite, render, worship, serve, sacrifice, punish, and is related to wergild - compensation, value of a man's life.<sup>468</sup> Swingan - to beat, strike, smack, whip, scourge, flog, chastise, afflict, swing, fly, divide by a blow,<sup>469</sup> is used most

<sup>466</sup> Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 301.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>468</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 43.  
Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 21, and

405.

<sup>469</sup> Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 33.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

279

effectively in the dual capacity of denotation and connotation in line 2264: geond sael swinged - (hawk) swings through the hall. Denotatively, it was a familiar sight to see hawks flying in the hall; connotatively, it was a characteristic of a prosperous hall, alive with the comitatus spirit of deeply-rooted fellowship, of mead drinking, of festivities and gay laughters, the absence of which, implied in line 2264, signifies gloom in the individuals and the nation to which they belong, therefore, figuratively, the hawk swinged not,<sup>470</sup> meaning an absence of all those things, in other words, a nation living in misery.

A colourful verb is bītan - to bite, in the sense of cut, wound, as in line 1523 of Beowulf: bītan nolde - (the sword) would not cut, that is, wound, from which comes bite - a sting or sword-cut. Bītan is allied to Latin findere - to split open, mordere - to bite, caedere - to beat, to cut down, to split or break in two, to mow down in the sense of to kill, and to sacrifice animals, in the French sense of égorger - to cut one's throat, and vulnerare - to wound, damage, and figuratively, to wound or damage someone with words.<sup>471</sup> Already partially discussed on pages 262-63, the

<sup>470</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 958.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 50.

Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français, pp. 255, 400, 88, and 712.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

280

verb sēcan or sēcean - to seek, in the sense of to try to find or to get, try to reach by attack, go to, visit, is used more than 35 times in Beowulf, as in line 2820: sāwol sēcean - (Beowulf's soul departed) to seek (the reward of the good).<sup>472</sup> Two other verbs used as synonyms of to die or depart from this world are oflāetan - to leave, relinquish, as in line 1183: worold oflāetest (a friend of Scyldings thou) leavest the world, and geferian or geferan - to go, depart, carry, reach, attain, bring about, in combination with habban - to have, as in line 2844: haefde aeghwaeder ende gefēred - he had to each one brought an end (to this transitory or perishable life).<sup>473</sup>

Scriðan - to glide has a wide selection of meanings, and appears four times in Beowulf, as in line 650: scaduhelma gesceapu scriðan cwōman: the cover of night (shadow, darkness or shapes of darkness), or shapes and forms, that is, the shadow covering of creatures, came advancing (stealing in). Basically, the etymology of scriðan is Old Saxon scriðan, scriðan - to go, pass (of time, light), Old High German - scriðan which is cognate with Latin gradi - go forward and advance, Icelandic skriða - to creep, crawl, glide, and slide.

Anglo-Saxon scriðan has five principal meanings, each one having several variations, such as, to go, take

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

281

one's way to a place; to go hither and thither, go about, wander; of the gliding motion of a ship, cloud, bird, smoke, kite and the like; of the increase or decrease of light; and finally, of the coming of time, seasons, and of the passage of time. Scriðan is artfully chosen in line 650 of Beowulf, the poet using three meanings to convey the idea of night descending on nature. These are: the decrease of light, the advancing, that is, the crawling, creeping or stealing motion of coming night, and the spreading of darkness to cover all things in nature.<sup>474</sup> There are two other verbs allied to scriðan; glīdan - to glide, slip, slide, glide away, vanish, the Latin cognate appearing as labi - to slide in the sense of stumble, trip or totter, and to go, run, let go, as in line 2073 of Beowulf: glād ofer grundas - glided over the earth, and the verb sneōwan - to hasten, go, in the sense of gliding or hastening over, as in line 62 of The Wonders of Creation: eastan snowed<sup>x</sup> - hastens from the east (referring to the coming of day).<sup>475</sup>

472 Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 395.

473 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 391.  
Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 117.

474 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 842.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français,

p. 278.

475 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 481, 891-92.  
Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 156, 312.  
Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français,

p. 353.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

282

A large number of Anglo-Saxon verbs are very similar and their contextual association is the only factor capable of sorting them out and determining their precise meanings. Examples from Beowulf are gladian - to glisten, shine, as in line 2036, and glitnian - to glitter, shine, as in line 2758; scinan, to shine, as in line 606, and blican - to shine, gleam, as in line 222; līxan - to shine, glitter, gleam, as in line 311, and glidan - to glide, slip, vanish, as in line 2073. Talian - to suppose, consider, claim, maintain, appears in lines 532, 594, 677, 1845, and 2027; and tellan - to account, reckon, consider, occurs in lines 794, 1773, 1810, 1936, 2067, 2184, and 2641. Teohhian - to appoint, assign, is found in lines 951, 1300, getēon - confer, bestow, grant, in lines 366, 1044, 2165, getēon - to draw, in lines 1545, 2610, and getēon - to assign, allot, in lines 2295, and 2526.

Hātan - to name, call, order, command, is used thirty times, and gehātan - to promise, vow, threaten, is used eight times. Dencan - to think, be intent on, mean intend, occurs eleven times, and gebencan - to think, remember, conceive, in line 1474. Slēan - to strike, slay, is used twelve times, and geslēan - to achieve or bring about by fighting, as in lines 459, and 2996. Unnan - not begrudge, wish, grant, like, appears in lines 503, 960,

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

283

1225, 2855, and 2874, and geunnan - to grant, in lines 346, and 1661. Wendan - to turn, is intransitive in line 1739, and gewendan - to turn, is transitive in lines 186, and 315. Windan - to wind, fly, curl, eddy, gold made into rings, is found in lines 212, 119, 1193, 1382, and 3134, and gewindan - to go, turn, reach by flight, in lines 763, and 1001. Cyðan - to make known, show, is used in lines 262, 349, 659, 700, 923, 1940, and 2695, and gecyðan - to make known, announce, in lines 257, 354, 1971, and 2324.<sup>476</sup>

This study of Anglo-Saxon verbs is brought to a close by a partial list of findings which have come to light in the course of four years of Anglo-Saxon studies. Nēosan and nēosian are two different verbs very much alike in meaning: to seek out, inspect, go to, visit, attack, and occur twelve times in Beowulf. Nēosan is used most suggestively in line 63 of Judith: bealoful his beddes neosan - (Holofernes) the baleful one his bed to seek, that is to say, at the sight of the lovely and strikingly beautiful Judith, Holofernes had but one thought - to spend a pleasurable night with the enchanting maid, and he immediately his beddes neosan - sought his bed!<sup>477</sup> Hȳdan which Klaeber

<sup>476</sup> Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. 345, 407, 382, 351, 412, 399, 417, 421, 425, and 315.

<sup>477</sup> Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 715.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

284

translates as hide, in line 2766 of Beowulf,<sup>478</sup> and Kemp Malone as heed,<sup>479</sup> and gehȳdan - to hide, keep secret, as in Beowulf, line 3059 are easily mistaken. Hafelan hȳdan - (my) head to hide, in line 446 of Beowulf, that is, to bury the head as would happen at interments, is elucidated by F. Mezger who shows that the reference is not so much to the interment of the body of which the head is part, as to the custom of covering the head of the dead with a cloth when a burial took place.<sup>480</sup> Geweorpan is an impersonal verb meaning: suit, seem, agree upon, decide, agree in thinking, agree upon in the sense of settle, as in lines 1598, 1996, and 2026 of Beowulf,<sup>481</sup> and illustrates a different and rather distinct use of the verb, but when examined in the light of Latin equivalents and Old High German roots, geweorpan, appearing in the lines of Beowulf mentioned here, must be interpreted in the sense of - it was the opinion of many, that is, many agreed, that you leave to or let the South Danes, or, it pleases me, suits me with respect to this, or , I desire it.<sup>482</sup>

---

478 Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 362.

479 Kemp Malone, "Old English (Ge) Hȳdan 'Heed'," A Grammatical Miscellany Offered to Otto Jespersen on His Seventieth Birthday (London, 1930), pp. 45-54

480 Fritz Mezger, "Two Notes on Beowulf," MLN, LXVI (January, 1951), pp. 36-38.

481 Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 422.

482 Frank G. Hubbard, "Beowulf 1598, 1996, 2026; Uses of the Impersonal Verb Geweorpan," JEGP, XVII (1918), pp. 119-24

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

285

The verb drīfan is a common verb used transitively and intransitively in connection with ships at sea. It means to drive, as in lines 1130-31 of Beowulf: ne meahte ... drīfan hringedstefnan -could not drive (his) ring-prowed (curved necked) ship, and in line 2808: feorran drīfað - from afar drive (ships). Other verbs related to the sea in Beowulf are beran - to bear, carry, bring, wear, as in line 48; aetberan - to bear or carry to, bear away, as in line 519; weallan - to swell, surge, boil, appears twelve times in a literal sense, as in line 515, and five times figuratively, meaning having to do with emotions, as in line 2599; and winnan - to contend, fight, as in line 1132.<sup>483</sup>

A verb replete with allusions in relation to the sea is rīdan - to ride, swing on gallows, ride at anchor, as in line 1893 of Beowulf; another meaning is to swell, surge, and roll, as in line 1883 of Beowulf: sē þe on ancre rād - which at anchor rode, and in line 1392 of Genesis, and line 32 of Riddle 3: fāmig rīdan - (ship) rides (through) the foam. The verb rīdan has given birth to six important substantive compounds connected with the sea.<sup>484</sup>

---

<sup>483</sup> Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. 297, 306, and 420.

<sup>484</sup> Caroline Brady, "The Synonyms for 'Sea' in Beowulf," Studies in Honor of Albert Morley Sturtevant (Lawrence, Kansas, 1952), pp. 22-46

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

286

They are: brimrād - sea-road, from brim - sea water, and rād - road, ride, riding, expedition, journey, raid, modulation, name of the rune for R, and road, as in lines 1262 and 1587 of Andreas; hronrād or hranrād - whale-road, as in line 266, 634, and 821 of Andreas, line 205 of Genesis, and line 10 of Beowulf; hwēolrād - wheel-road, a word which appears in glossaries only; seglrād - sail-road, in the sense of swinging with the waves, riding, pitching, rolling, tossing, in other words, seglrād is the riding place of a ship, as in line 1429 of Beowulf; streamrād - the course or bed of sea, that is, a watery road, the road across the sea, as in line 54 of The Gifts of Men; swanrād or swonrād - swan's road, that is, the sea, as in line 196 of Andreas, line 200 of Beowulf, line 996 of Elene, and line 675 of Juliana; and wigrād or wigrōd - a war-road, that is, along which an army passes, as in line 2084 of Genesis. An inquiry into Latin equivalents of rīdan and its substantive compounds reveals that equitatio - horseback riding, itio - action of going, profectio - departure, via - road, quadriga - chariot (used figuratively), rheda - coach, and modulatio - cadence, are all allied.<sup>485</sup>

485

Gaffiot, Dictionnaire agrégé latin-français, pp. 223, 345, 505, 521, 558, and 397.

Caroline Brady, "The Old English Nominal Compounds in -RĀD," PMLA, LXVII (1952), pp. 538-571.

Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 781, and 795.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

287

Cringan and gecringan - to yield, cringe, fall, perish, and gringan - to sink down, perish, are used for the verb to die, as in line 126 of Elene, lines 635, 113, 1209, 1337, 1568, and 2505 of Beowulf, and in lines 292, 302, and 324 of The Battle of Maldon.<sup>486</sup> Other verbs used to convey the idea of death are gewitan - to depart, go; hweorfan - to move, go depart; and ofgyfan - to give up, leave, as in line 1681 of Beowulf: pā pās worold ofgeaf - when (he) gave up this world (resigned). The expression flet ofgeafon - he gave up the floor, in line 61 of The Wanderer, is used for he died. In other words, the denotation of flet ofgyfan - to give up the floor means to make way for another, and the connotation, to die implying the idea of making room for another in this world.<sup>487</sup>

A colourful verb which may take several meanings, particularly when used to describe mental attitudes, is sworcan or swearcan - to grow dark, darken, become overcast, be obscured, be troubled, sad, become grievous, gloomy, troublesome, angry, fall out of mind, as in line 1737 of Beowulf: on sefa(n) sweocec - in (his) mind darkens, and in line 1279 of Guthlac.<sup>488</sup>

---

486 Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 313.  
 490. Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 170, and  
 487 Wyld, "Diction and Imagery," p. 81.  
 488 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 949.  
 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 781, 795.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

288

From the Anglo-Saxon comitatus spirit or German Gefolgschaft comes the verb folgian or gefolgian - to follow, pursue, accompany, follow after, attain, obey, serve, observe, and is allied to Latin comitari - to accompany, adhaerere - to be related, that is, tied to in the figurative sense, meaning to be always at the side of, alienare - to belong to another, and servire - to be slave to, that is, to be under the care or in the service of another, as in lines 1102, and 2933 of Beowulf.<sup>489</sup>

One of the many verbs originating from Christianity through Latin is halgian or gehalgian - to hallow, sanctify, consecrate, dedicate, ordain, reverence, keep holy. It appears in the sense of consecrate, in line 586 of Andreas, the consecration of a bishop in line 1650 of Andreas, the dedication of a church in line 1646 of Andreas, in a metaphorical sense, in line 1482 of Christ. Halgian is<sup>a</sup> cognate of Latin consecrare - to consecrate by religious act, that is, to acknowledge as having a divine character, dedicare - to declare, reveal, dedicate, sacrare - to consecrate or offer to a divinity, sacrifice, devote, initiare - to initiate, instruct, receive, ordinare - to place in regular order, that is, to ordain; and sanctificare - to make inviolable or

---

<sup>489</sup> Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 41.  
 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 300.  
 Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français, pp. 125, 19, 42, and 587.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

289

sacred.<sup>490</sup>

Other verbs having their origin in Christianity are syngian and gesyngian - to sin, transgress, err, perpetrate crime, commit adultery, from Latin peccare - to sin; for-hycgan - to despise, detest, reject, from Latin despicere, as in line 299 of Daniel; tweogan - to feel doubt or hesitate, when used in a religious sense, from Latin dubitare; onscunian - to regard with loathing, abhor, detest, ex-ecrate, regard with disfavour, curse, refuse, reject, shun, regard with fear, irritate, from Latin abhorrere, detestari, exsecrari, resistere, abdicare, and exacerbare; beswican - to entice, delude, offend, from Latin decipere - deceive, illicere - entice, seducere - seduce, illudere - delude, prodere - betray, scandalizare - offend or scandalize, supplantare - supplant, deficere - weaken, and evadere - evade, as in lines 29 of Daniel, 568 of Guthlac, and 451 of Genesis.

The verbs forlaedan, forlaeran, fortyhtan, spanan, and scyccan, are used also in the sense of to seduce, in one or the other meanings of beswican. The Anglo-Saxon verbs for faith are renderings of the Latin credere, fidere, and

---

<sup>490</sup> Keiser, Influence of Christianity, pp. 29-30.  
 Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 300.  
 Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 167.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

290

sperare, namely, gelefan, gelifan, and gelyfan, with two others, treowan and getreowan, being used in the sense of gelefan, as in lines 434-35 of Juliana. Gecyrran appears in the sense of to convert, from Latin convertere, and apostacy, being a turning away from God, is represented by acyrran or acirran, rendering the Latin avertere, as in lines 411 of Juliana, and 1119 of Elene.

Anglo-Saxon verbs of worship are represented by the general term beowan - to serve, from Latin servire. More specific verbs are onsecgan - to vow or sacrifice, from Latin sacrificare, as in line 255 of Juliana; biddan - to ask, pray, intreat, beseech, bid, order, require, from Latin petere, poscere, precari, deprecari, rogare, and postulare, as in line 271 of Exodus; gebiddan is a rendering of orare and adorare, as in line 1 of The Lord's Prayer III; cleopian - to call upon, from Latin clamare, as in line 1318 of Elene; halsian or healsian - to adjure, to call upon, from Latin obsecrare; cigan - to call upon, when used in a religious sense, is a rendering of Latin invocare; andettan is a compound of and and hatan, and means to confess, acknowledge, give thanks, promise, vow, from Latin confiteri; aerendian - to intercede, plead a cause, as in line 665 of Genesis, from Latin intercedere; gegyrnan - to entreat, beg, from Latin desiderare. Other verbs are

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

291

herian - to praise, from Latin laudare and celebrare, as in line 333 of Daniel; weorðian - to honour or worship in the religious sense, from Latin honorare, as in line 153 of Juliana, and in the Latin sense of adorare, celebrare, and laudare, as in lines 270 of Exodus, 1886 of Genesis, and 394 of Christ; wuldrian - to glorify, praise, from Latin gloriari, as in line 401 of Christ; maersian - to glorify, praise, exalt, as in line 617 of The Phoenix, from Latin cantare; bletsian and gebletsian in the sense of to bless, from Latin benedicere, as in lines 358 and 362 of Daniel.<sup>491</sup>

There are other verbs not necessarily describing things connected with Christianity but deriving their origin from it. An example is the Anglo-Saxon verb regolian - to draw lines with a ruler. The word regol means rule, regulation, canon law, standard, pattern, monastic code of rules, and by extension, a ruler, that is, an instrument. Regol owes its origin to Latin regula - a rule or ruler which was used by Germanic tribes in the building

491

Keiser, Influence of Christianity, pp. 98, 106, 107, 109, 110-12, 113, 29, 19, 36, 57, 74, and 58.

Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 450, 965, 313, 1023-24, 757, 93, 1055, 758, and 18.

Gaffiot, Dictionnaire abrégé latin-français, pp. 454, 189, 210, 3, 190, 240, 553, 2, 229, 163-64, 254, 603, 158, 587, 566, 471, 485, 499, 186, 560, 486, 439, 24, 116, 426, 342, 141, 334, 188, 360, 103, 293, 24, 103, 360, 277, 93, and 81.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

292

of their dwellings, the word appearing as such in line 489 of Guthlac. After monasticism appeared, the meaning of regol was extended to include ecclesiastical rule. Later, a word was coined meaning to measure with a ruler. Other derivatives are regolbryce - breach of rules, regolfaest - rigid, strict, adhering to monastic rules, regollagu - monastic law, regollic - according to canonical or regular rules, regollif - life, according to ecclesiastical rules, regolsticca - rule, the instrument called a ruler, regoldeaw - discipline of monastic rule, and regolweard - regulator, director, ruler, abbot, or provost.<sup>492</sup>

A last example in this investigation of Anglo-Saxon verbs is tieman or timan; this verb may be used to express two basic categories of meanings. The first is to teem, be productive, tieman being cognate of team - a line of descendants, offspring, progeny, family, or children. When applied to a female, it means to be pregnant, bear, bring forth young; when referring to a male, it means to beget, have intercourse with a woman; and when neither one is indicated, it means to have offsprings, bring forth. The second category/meanings includes four variations of tieman. It may be employed as a technical legal term equivalent to vouching to warranty as a step in the proceedings of a suit for the

<sup>492</sup> Keiser, Influence of Christianity, p. 36.  
Clark Hall, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, p. 279.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

293

recovery of property; in a general sense, to refer an opinion to the source from which it is derived in its support; to resort to, appeal for help; and to lead to. Tieman represents a typical example of the variety of meanings Anglo-Saxon verbs have, illustrates the difficulties of interpretation they create, and serves as an appropriate specimen for closing this partial survey of Anglo-Saxon verbs.<sup>493</sup>

More pages could be filled with pertinent comments about verbs in Beowulf and Anglo-Saxon verbs generally, but the number would be large and beyond the scope of this paper. The approach which was followed in this chapter consisted in a close examination of a cross section of verbs in Anglo-Saxon poetry. It was aimed at showing the importance, colour, and variety of the verbs in Beowulf and in other Anglo-Saxon poems, for the expressed purpose of demonstrating that the poet of Beowulf chose his verbs skillfully, that is, carefully, appropriately, and with taste. The verbs examined prove beyond doubt that the poet of Beowulf is a first class artist who manipulated his craft with assurance, poise, and the balance of a master of the language. The poet exhibits among other achievements the ability of dotting his work with accurate, powerful, image-creating action words from which meanings are developed from

<sup>493</sup>Bosworth, Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, pp. 986, 972.

THE VERB IN BEOWULF

294

contextual arrangement. This investigation of Anglo-Saxon verbs has brought to light also certain difficulties which students and translators of Anglo-Saxon poetry must overcome if their interpretation of Anglo-Saxon poems is to be carried out in the environment and atmosphere in which the works were composed, the precise meaning arrived at, and the proper mood inherent in them apprehended.

## CONCLUSION

The original plan for this thesis was far more comprehensive than the material contained in the five chapters presented here. On the basis of the extensive research carried out in preparation for the working of this topic, and the copious notes and references accumulated, Chapter V of this work would have become longer than this paper, and the planned thesis greatly voluminous.

When most of the preliminary research work had been completed, it became evident that a project much beyond the scope of the normal requirements for a doctoral thesis was in the making, and the original plan, if continued, would require another year, possibly two or more, to complete. It was then decided, upon the recommendation of the thesis director and the concurrence of the head of the English Department, that the present work be submitted as the usual partial fulfillment for the degree of doctor of philosophy in English literature, and the completion of the original plan be submitted later, if so desired, as a requirement for the degree of Doctor of Literature.

Some of the material which had to be left out of this thesis includes a chapter on the treatment of figures

## CONCLUSION

296

of style in Anglo-Saxon literature in their relation to Beowulf, and how they contribute to an understanding of the poetic style, technique, and diction of the poem. The figures are the metaphor,<sup>494</sup> epithets,<sup>495</sup> <sup>the</sup> kenning and kent heiti,<sup>496</sup> compounds,<sup>497</sup> rhetorical understatements or

- 
- 494 Gummere, The Anglo-Saxon Metaphor, pp. 22-24.  
 Hanscom, "Nature in Old English," p. 461.  
 Wyld, "Diction in Anglo-Saxon," pp. 57-83.  
 Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon," pp. 28, and 30.  
 Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 52.

- 495 Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon," pp. 24, 26-27.  
 Joan Blomfield, "The Style and Structure of Beowulf," Review of English Studies, XIV (1938), pp. 396-403.  
 William Frank Bryan, "Epithetic Compound Folk-Names in Beowulf," Studies in English Philology, A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber, eds. Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud (Minneapolis, 1929), pp. 121-23.  
 Malone, "Ingeld," MP, XXVII (1930), p. 258.  
 Klaeber, "Studies in the Textual Interpretation of 'Beowulf'," MP, III (October, 1905), p. 13.  
 Hart, "Ballad and Epic," p. 210.  
 R. E. Kaske, "Sapientia et Fortitudo as the Controlling Theme of Beowulf," An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, p. 288.  
 Martin-Clarke, Culture in Early Anglo-Saxon Culture, p. 69.

- 496 Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, p. 18.  
 Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxiv.  
 James Walter Rankin, "A Study of the Kennings in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," JEGP, VIII (1909), pp. 357-422, and IX (January, 1910), pp. 49-84.  
 Van der Merwe Scholtz, The Kenning in Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Poetry (Utrecht, 1928).  
 Ann Kirkman, "Reviews," The Kenning in Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Poetry, MLR, XXV (April, 1930), pp. 196-97.  
 Douglas C. Collins, "Kenning in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," Essays and Studies, N.S., XII (1959), pp. 1-17.  
 Malone, "The Kenning in Beowulf 2220," JEGP, XXVII (1928), pp. 318-24.  
 Pons, Thème et Sentiment de la Nature, pp. 85,

## CONCLUSION

297

litotes,<sup>498</sup> the antithesis,<sup>499</sup> episodes or digressions,<sup>500</sup>

86, and 103.

Malone, "Review," Le Thème et le Sentiment de la Nature, MLN, XLIII (June, 1928), pp. 406-408. Malone does not do justice to this work.

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 80-81.

Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," pp. 25-32.

497

Charles Koban, Substantive Compounds in Beowulf (University of Illinois, Ph.D. Thesis, 1963).

Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxiv.

Caroline Brady, "The Old English Nominal Compounds in -RAD," PMLA, LXVII (1952), pp. 538-71.

Godfrid Storms, Compounded Names of Peoples in Beowulf (Utrecht, 1957).

Francis P. Magoun, Jr., "Recurring First Elements in Different Nominal Compounds in Beowulf and in the Elder Edda," Studies in English Philology, A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber, eds. Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud, pp. 73-78.

Bryan, "Epithetic Compound Folk-Names," pp. 120-134.

H. C. Wyld, "Old English Etymologies," Collected Papers of Henry Sweet (Oxford, 1913), pp. 212-219.

.. .. ., "Various Notes, I. Disguised Compounds in Old English," Collected Papers of Henry Sweet, pp. 220-21.

.. .. ., "Dialects and Prehistoric Forms of Old English," Collected Papers of Henry Sweet, pp. 185-211.

Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," pp. 17-47.

Martin-Clarke, Culture in Early Anglo-Saxon, p. 82.

Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, Appendix B, pp. 254-71, and p. 6.

498

Frederick Bracher, "Understatement in Old English Poetry," PMLA, LII (December, 1937), pp. 915-34.

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 94.

Malone, "Notes on Beowulf," Anglia, LXIX (1950), pp. 295-300.

S. O. Andrew, Postscript on Beowulf (Cambridge, 1948), p. 94.

W. J. Sedgefield, ed. Beowulf (Manchester, 1935), p. xvii.

Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxv.

## CONCLUSION

298

the expression of purpose,<sup>501</sup> the personification,<sup>502</sup> the  
the anticipation,<sup>503</sup> the contrast or heightening of effect,<sup>504</sup>

---

Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, p. viii.  
Klaeber, "Studies in the Textual Interpretation  
of 'Beowulf'," pp. 235-41.

499 Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 44-50.  
Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 33.  
Blomfield, "Style and Structure," p. 397.

500 Klaeber, Beowulf, p. liii.  
Blomfield, "Style and Structure," pp. 396, 400.  
Brodeur, "The Structure and the Unity of Beowulf," PMLA, LXVIII (December, 1953), pp. 1186, 1192-94.  
Adrien Bonjour, The Digressions in Beowulf (Oxford, 1950).  
R. M. Wilson, "Review," The Digressions in Beowulf, Review of English Studies, III (1952), pp. 165-66.  
G. L. Brook, "Review," The Digressions in Beowulf, MLR, XLVI (April, 1951), p. 300.  
Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 132-181.  
Andrew, Postscript on Beowulf, pp. 91, and 98.

501 Hubert G. Shearin, "The Expression of Purpose  
in Old English Poetry," Anglia, XXXII (1909), pp. 235-52.  
Frank H. Chase, "Review," The Expression of Purpose in Old English Prose, Yale Studies in English, XVIII, ed. Albert S. Cook (New York, 1903), JEGP, VI (1906-07), pp. 121-28.

502 Neil David Isaacs, Personification in Beowulf  
(Brown University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1959).

503 Bonjour, "The Use of Anticipation in Beowulf,"  
in Twelve Beowulf Papers, pp. 11-28.  
Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 220-46.

504 Malone, "Beowulf," pp. 169-70.  
Kaske, "Sapientia et Fortitudo," p. 289.  
Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 220-46.  
Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 32.  
Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. lxiv-lxviii.  
George K. Anderson, The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons (New York, 1962), pp. 105-53.

## CONCLUSION

299

the parallel,<sup>505</sup> repetitions,<sup>506</sup> the dialectical form,<sup>507</sup>  
 the formula,<sup>508</sup> the appositive,<sup>509</sup> the pattern,<sup>510</sup> the

505 Bonjour, "The Technique of Parallel Descriptions in Beowulf," in Twelve Beowulf Papers, pp. 51-65.

Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon," pp. 32-34, 24.

John R. Clark Hall, trans. Beowulf, new ed. C. L. Wrenn with Prefatory Remarks by J. R. R. Tolkien, pp. ix-xlii.

N. F. Blake, "The Seafarer, Lines 48-49," Notes and Queries, IX (1962), pp. 163-64.

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 35-44.  
 Tom Burns Haber, "Parallels in Motif and Sentiment," this is Chapter IV of A Comparative Study of the Beowulf and the Aeneid (Princeton, 1931), pp. 88-133.

Andrew, Postscript on Beowulf, pp. 95, and 97.

506

Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxvii.

Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 52.

Malone, "Beowulf," p. 166.

Pons, Thème et Sentiment de la Nature, p. 142.

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 116.

Hart, "Ballad and Epic," p. 195 and footnote on p. 196.

Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," pp. 25-36

507

Baugh, A Literary History of England, p. 925.

508

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 91.

A. S. Cook, "The Beowulfian Mapelode," JEGP, XXV (1926), pp. 1-6.

Klaeber, "Studies in Textual Interpretation of Beowulf," pp. 243-47.

Godfrey Leonard Gattiker, The Syntactic Basis of the Poetic Formula in Beowulf (University of Wisconsin, Ph.D. Thesis, 1962).

509

Morgan Callaway, Jr., "The Appositive Participle in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," PMLA, IX (1901), pp. 141-360.

....., "The Appositive Participle," being Chapter II of Studies in the Syntax of the Lindisfarne Gospels (Baltimore, 1918), pp. 45-89.

510

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 100.

## CONCLUSION

300

dialectical form,<sup>511</sup> the parenthetical exclamation,<sup>512</sup>  
 Biblical allusions,<sup>513</sup> the riddle,<sup>514</sup> the proverb,<sup>515</sup>

<sup>511</sup> G. P. Thomas, "Notes on the Language of Beowulf," MLN, I (April, 1906), pp. 202-207.  
 Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxv.

<sup>512</sup> George Philip Krapp, "The Parenthetical Exclamation in Old English Poetry," MLN, XX (February, 1905), pp. 33-37.

Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. lxv-lxvi.

<sup>513</sup> Albert Stanburrough Cook, Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers (London, 1898).

Morton W. Bloomfield, "Patristics and Old English Literature: Notes on Some Poems," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, p. 36.

F. M. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, p. 197.

Marie Padgett Hamilton, "The Religious Principles in Beowulf," An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, pp. 110, and 116-17.

Dorothy Whitelock, Audience of Beowulf, p. 5.

Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 4, 8, and 34.

C. Abbetmeyer, Old English Poetical Motives Derived from Sin (Minneapolis, 1903), Dissertation, University of Minnesota.

A. R. Skemp, "The Transformation of Scriptural Story, Motive and Conception in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," MP, IV (1906), pp. 423-70.

(New York, 1904)  
 W. O. Stevens, The Cross in the Life and Literature of the Anglo-Saxons, Yale Studies in English, XXIII

Louise Dudley, "An Early Homily on the 'Body and Soul' Theme," JEGP, VIII (1909), pp. 225-53.

<sup>514</sup> Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 18, 36.

Paul F. Baum, trans. Anglo-Saxon Riddles of the Exeter Book (Durham, 1963).

Brodeur, "The Riddle of the Runes," University of California Publications in English, III, No. I (1932-44), pp. 1-15.

Frederick Tupper, Jr., "The Cynewulfian Runes of the First Riddle," MLN, XXV (December, 1910), pp. 235-41.

W. S. Mackie, ed. The Exeter Book, Part II (London, 1934), EETS, No. 194, pp. 88-151, 190-91, and 202-39.

Claude Jones, "Some Notes on Riddle 21," MLR, XXXII (April, 1937), pp. 281-83.

## CONCLUSION

301

gnomic passages,<sup>516</sup> the conceit,<sup>517</sup> the irony,<sup>518</sup> the

---

Laurence K. Shook, "Old English Riddle No. 20: Heoruswealwe," Franciplegius Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honor of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr., eds. Jess B. Bes-singer, Jr. and Robert P. Creed (New York, 1965), pp. 194-204.

<sup>515</sup> Walter W. Skeat, Early English Proverbs (Oxford, 1910).

W. W. Skeat, The Proverbs of Alfred (Oxford, 1907), pp. 9, 15, 36-43, 69, 73, 78, 79, 83, 92, 94, 95, 139, 195, 226, 257, 284, and 293.

R. Morris, ed. Old English Homilies (London, 1867), EETS, Series I, pp. 1-3, 89, 247, and 284.

.. .. ., ed. Old English Miscellany (London, 1872), EETS, pp. 95, and 125.

J. M. Kemble, ed. Salomon and Saturn (London, 1848), Aelfric Society, pp. 41, 77, and 206.

Archer Taylor, "He that will not when he may; when he will shall have nay," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, ed. Stanley B. Greenfield (University of Oregon, 1963), pp. 155-61.

Helen Pennock South, The Proverbs of Alfred, Studied in the Light of the Recently Discovered Maidstone Manuscript (New York, 1931).

Ritchie Girvan, "Reviews," The Proverbs of Alfred, Studied in the Light of the Recently Discovered Maidstone Manuscript, MLR, XXXVII (July, 1932), pp. 324-25.

Carleton Brown, "The Maidstone Text of the 'Proverbs of Alfred'," MLR, (July, 1926), pp. 249-60.

Malone, "Ingeld," MP, XXVII (February, 1930), p. 259.

<sup>516</sup> Blanche Cotton Williams, Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon (New York, 1914), pp. 29-41.

Malone, "Notes on Gnomic Poem B of the Exeter Book," Medium Aevum, XII (1943), pp. 65-67.

Ralph W. V. Elliott, "Byrhtnoth and Hildebrand: A Study in Heroic Technique," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, p. 54.

Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, p. 197.

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Pattern, pp. 73-74, and 92.

C. M. Bowra, Heroic Poetry (London, 1961), p. 30.  
Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxi.

<sup>517</sup> Marjory Rigby, "The Seafarer", 'Beowulf', l. 769, and a Germanic Conceit," Notes and Queries, IX (July,

## CONCLUSION

302

theme,<sup>519</sup> the runes,<sup>520</sup> the aposiopesis,<sup>521</sup> the varia-

1962), p. 246.

Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 220-53.

518

Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lx.

Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," pp. 42-43.

Bryan, "Epithetic Compound Folk-Names in Beowulf," pp. 122, 128, and 129.

Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 220-53.

519

Magoun, Jr., "Some Notes on Anglo-Saxon Poetry," Studies in Medieval Literature in Honor of Professor Albert Groll Baugh, ed. MacEdward Leach (Philadelphia, 1961), p. 273.

Dudley, "Early Homily on the 'Body and Soul' Theme," pp. 225-53.

Magoun, Jr., "The Theme of the Beast of Battle in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, LV (1954), pp. 81-90.

Bertha S. Phillpotts, "Wyrd and Providence in Anglo-Saxon Thought," Essays & Studies, XIII (1928), pp. 7-27.

J. E. Cross, "Aspects of Microcosm and Macrocosm in Old English Literature," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, pp. 1-22.

Pons, Thème et Sentiment de la Nature, pp. 25-33.

Kaske, "Sapientia et Fortitudo," pp. 269-310.

James E. Cross, Latin Themes in Old English Poetry (Lund, 1962), pp. 6, 8, and 11.

Robert P. Creed, "The Singer Looks at His Sources," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, pp. 44-52. Traditional theme is defined on page 50.

Bloomfield, "Patristics and Old English Literature," pp. 37-38: Christian and Germanic themes.

520

Ralph W. V. Elliott, Runes an Introduction (Manchester, 1963), p. 121.

Tupper, Jr., "Cynewulfian Runes," pp. 235-41.

C. L. Wrenn, Anglo-Saxon Poetry and the Amateur Archaeologist (London, 1962), The Chambers Memorial Lecture, pp. 11, 14, 15, 16-19.

Brodeur, "The Riddle of the Runes," pp. 1-15.

Joseph Mansion, "The Old English Inscription on the Brussels Cross," English Studies, XXI (1939), pp. 145-64.

A. S. Napier, "Contributions to Old English Literature, 2. The Franks Casket," An English Miscellany Presented to Dr. Furnivall in Honour of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday (Oxford, 1901), pp. 362-81.

## CONCLUSION

303

tion,<sup>522</sup> and the direct discourse.<sup>523</sup> Another chapter <sup>with</sup> ~~lost~~ the heroic epic nature of Beowulf in specific terms,<sup>524</sup> the

M. D. Forbes and Bruce Dickins, "The Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses," MLR, X (January, 1915), pp. 28-36.

<sup>521</sup> Francis Berry, "A Suppressed 'Aposiopesis' in 'The Fight at Finnsburgh'," Notes and Queries, CIX (May, 1954), pp. 186-87.

<sup>522</sup> Klaeber, Beowulf, lxv.  
Fred Colson Robinson, Variation: A Study in the Diction of Beowulf (University of North Carolina, Ph.D. Thesis, 1961).

Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," pp. 23, 37, and 42-43.

G. Storms, "The Subjectivity of the Style of Beowulf," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, pp. 171-86.

Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, pp. 39-70.

Klaeber, "Studies in Textual Interpretation," pp. 235-65.

Arthur E. Du Bois, "The Unity of Beowulf," PMLA, IXL (1934), p. 376.

<sup>523</sup> Robert Levine, Direct Discourse in Beowulf: Its Meaning and Function (University of California, Berkeley, Ph.D. Thesis, 1963).

<sup>524</sup> Stanley B. Greenfield, "Beowulf and Epic Tragedy," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, pp. 91-105.

Nora K. Chadwick, "The Monsters and Beowulf," The Anglo-Saxons Studies in some Aspects of their History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickins, ed. Peter Clemoes (London, 1959), p. 201; high seriousness of epic themes, and p. 203: personnel and mise-en-scène.

C. L. Wrenn, ed. Beowulf (London, 1958), p. 41.

Maurice B. McNamee, Honor and the Epic Hero (New York, 1960), pp. x-xiii, 86-117.

James R. Hulbert, "A Note on the Psychology of the Beowulf poet," Studies in English Philology A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber, pp. 189-95.

E. G. Stanley, "Haethenra Hyht in Beowulf," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, pp. 136-51, especially p. 136: heroic ingredients.

C. C. Batchelor, "The Style of the Beowulf: A Study of the Composition of the Poem," Speculum, XII (1937),

## CONCLUSION

304

elegiac mood in Anglo-Saxon literature,<sup>525</sup> particular

pp. 330-42, particularly p. 332; heroic material, and p. 341; epic convention.

Charles Moorman, "Suspense and Foreknowledge in 'Beowulf'," College English, XV (1954), pp. 379-83.

Klaeber, "Attila's and Beowulf's Funeral," PMLA, XLII (June, 1927), pp. 255-67.

James R. Hulbert, "Beowulf and the Classical Epic," MP, XLIV (November, 1946), pp. 65-75.

R. M. Lumiansky, "The Dramatic Audience in Beowulf," JEGP, LI (October, 1952), pp. 545-50.

Chambers, "Beowulf and the Heroic Age," in Archibald Strong, Beowulf (London, 1925), pp. vii-xlix.

Ralph W. V. Elliott, "Byrhtnoth and Hildebrand," pp. 53-70.

Bonjour, "The Beowulf Poet and the Tragic Muse," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, pp. 129-35.

Alain Renoir, "The Heroic Oath in Beowulf, the Chanson de Roland, and the Nibelungenlied," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, pp. 237-66.

G. N. Garmonsway, "Anglo-Saxon Heroic Attitudes," Franciplegius Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honor of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr., pp. 139-46.

Albert Bates Lord, "Beowulf and Odysseus," Franciplegius Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honor of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr., pp. 86-91.

Malone, "Beowulf," pp. 162-63, 164, 166-67, and 170-72.

Morin, Beowulf A Christian Poem, pp. 47-80.

Frank Bessai, "Comitatus and Exile in Old English Poetry," Culture, XXV (June, 1964), pp. 130-44.

Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," pp. 40-41.

Martin-Clarke, Culture in Early Anglo-Saxon England, p. 37: "The Epic Beowulf and its Setting."

Chambers, Man's Unconquerable Mind, p. 53.

Taine, History of English Literature, Vol. I, pp. 36, and 41.

Stopford A. Brooke, English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest (London, 1930), pp. 82-83.

Wrenn, Anglo-Saxon Poetry and the Amateur Archaeologist, pp. 4, and 21-23.

Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. lv-lix.

Anderson, Literature of the Anglo-Saxons, pp. 105-53.

Hart, "Ballad and Epic," pp. 198ff.

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, pp. 7, 100-01

## CONCLUSION

305

studies and research in the area of diction in Beowulf,<sup>526</sup>

Brodeur, "Structure and Unity of Beowulf," pp. 1185, and 1193.

E. M. W. Tillyard, The English Epic and Its Background (London, 1954), pp. 1-20, 117-26, and 148-50.

Bowra, Heroic Poetry, pp. 3-5, 29-37, 42-43, 132-78, and 215-53.

Bowra, From Virgil to Milton (London, 1945), pp. 1-32.

Lascelles Abercrombie, The Epic (London, no date), pp. 13, 65-67.

William Witherle Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition (New York, 1963), pp. 244-91.

Tom Burn Haber, A Comparative Study of the Beowulf and the Aeneid (Princeton, 1931).

<sup>525</sup> B. J. Timmer, "The Elegiac Mood in Old English Poetry," English Studies, XXIV (1942), pp. 33-44.

Tolman, "Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 45.

Pons, Thème et Sentiment de la Nature, pp. 146-55.

Sister Mary Angelica O'Neill, Elegiac Elements in Beowulf (Washington, 1932), pp. 27-72.

Bartlett, Larger Rhetorical Patterns, p. 79.

Anderson, Literature of the Anglo-Saxons, p. 154.

Charles W. Kennedy, Old English Elegies (Princeton, 1936).

E. Blackman, "Reviews," Old English Elegies, Charles W. Kennedy, MLR, XXXII (October, 1937), pp. 599-600.

<sup>526</sup>

Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. vi, and lxxiii-lxxi.

Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, especially Chapter I.

J. R. R. Tolkien, Beowulf the Monsters and the Critics, Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture British Academy (London, 1936).

Bojour, Twelve Beowulf Papers.

Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition.

J. R. R. Tolkien, "Prefatory Remarks," in John R. Clark Hall, trans. Beowulf, pp. ix-xliii.

C. L. Wrenn, "Notes and an Introduction," in John R. Clark Hall, trans. Beowulf, pp. 1-19.

Malone, "Beowulf," pp. 161-72.

Malone, "Symbolism in Beowulf," English Studies Today, Second Series (1961), pp. 81-91.

Klaeber, "Studies in the Textual Interpretation of 'Beowulf'," MP, III (October, 1905), pp. 235-65.

Dorothy Whitelock, Audience of Beowulf.

Andrew, Postscript on Beowulf.

## CONCLUSION

306

and certain Beowulfian theses which have illuminated the diction of the poem.<sup>527</sup> A part of the last chapter, which

Klaeber, "Studies in the Textual Interpretation of 'Beowulf'," MP, III (April, 1906), pp. 445-65.

John A. Nist, "Textual Elements in the Beowulf Manuscript," Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, XLII (1957), pp. 331-38.

C. L. Wrenn, ed. Beowulf with the Finnesburg Fragment, pp. 9-84, the Introduction is very important.

Batchelor, "The Style of the Beowulf," pp. 330-42.

R. W. Chambers, Beowulf An Introduction to the Study of the Poem with a Discussion of the Stories of Offa and Finn, with a Supplement by C. L. Wrenn (Cambridge, 1959).

Albert Stanburrough Cook, "The Possible Begetter of the Old English Beowulf and Widsith," Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, XXV (April 1922), pp. 281-346.

Wentworth Hayshe, trans. Beowulf An Old English Epic (New York, 1908), pp. xxxiv-xxxvi.

Kennedy, Beowulf the Oldest English Epic, pp. ix-lxv.

Andrew, Syntax and Style in Old English.

Hubert Pierquin, Le Poème Anglo-Saxon de Beowulf (Paris, 1912), pp. 381-612.

Girvan, Beowulf and the Seventh Century, Language and Content.

Andrew, "Some Principles of Old English Word-Order," Medium Aevum, III (1934), pp. 167-88.

<sup>527</sup> Robinson, Variation: A Study in the Diction of Beowulf.

Koban, Substantive Compounds in Beowulf.

Gattiker, Syntactic Basis of the Poetic Formula in Beowulf.

Levine, Direct Discourse in Beowulf: Its Meaning and Function.

Stanley Marvin Wiersma, A Linguistic Analysis of Words Referring to Monsters in Beowulf (University of Wisconsin, Ph.D. Thesis, 1961).

Isaacs, Personification in Beowulf.

Gillan, The Connotations of the Old English Terms sceacan, faege, aeglaeca : A Study in the Method of Determining the Poetic Values of Old English Words.

## CONCLUSION

307

may have detached itself as a separate chapter, dealt with the major problem of translation of certain passages from Beowulf, similar to the excerpt discussed on page 233, taken from thirty-one translations of Beowulf,<sup>528</sup> twelve of which are listed under footnote number 439 of page 252.

- 
- 528  
 Diedrich Wackerbarth, trans. Beowulf An Epic Poem (London, 1849).  
 Benjamin Thorpe, trans. The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf, The Scop or Gleeman's Tale and the Fight at Finnesburg (Oxford, 1855).  
 Thomas Arnold, trans. Beowulf a Heroic Poem of the Eighth Century (London, 1876).  
 H. W. Lumsden, trans. Beowulf An Old English Poem (London, 1881).  
 John Earle, trans. The Deeds of Beowulf (Oxford, 1892).  
 William Morris and A. J. Wyatt, trans. The Tale of Beowulf Sometime King of the Folk of the Weder Geats (London, 1898).  
 John R. Clark Hall, trans. Beowulf and the Finnesburg Fragment (London, 1911).  
 Hubert Pierquin, trans. Le Poème anglo-saxon de Beowulf (Paris, 1912).  
 Ernest J. B. Kirtlan, trans. The Story of Beowulf (New York, 1914).  
 J. Duncan Spaeth, trans. Old English Poetry (Princeton, 1922).  
 Archibald Strong, trans. Beowulf (London, 1925).  
 D. H. Crawford, trans. Beowulf (London, 1926).  
 Harry Morgan Ayres, trans. Beowulf (Williamsport, 1933).  
 Mary E. Waterhouse, trans. Beowulf (Cambridge, 1949).  
 Charles W. Kennedy, trans. Beowulf the Oldest English Epic (New York, 1962).  
 John R. Clark Hall, trans. Beowulf and the Finnesburgh Fragment (London, 1963).  
 Burton Raffel, trans. Beowulf (New York, 1963).  
 David Wright, trans. Beowulf (Harmondsworth, 1963).  
 Edwin Morgan, trans. Beowulf (Berkeley, 1964).

## CONCLUSION

308

The first plan was to deal with the Beowulfian verb exclusively, and the early stage of the research was oriented toward an examination of verbs in Beowulf. It was soon discovered, however, that action words in Beowulf could be investigated, elucidated, and appreciated properly only in the light of a shrewd knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language, its etymological and syntactical complexities, a thorough understanding of the connotative, thematic, and contextual overtones of words and their meanings, Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique, the influence of Latin and Christianity on the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, mood and nature in Anglo-Saxon poetry, the spirit of the age, and Anglo-Saxon stylistic characteristics. It became manifest, in the process, that all these elements affect the verb in their own specific ways, and contribute to give it meaning, colour, and consistency. Verbs from other Anglo-Saxon poetic records were examined to afford a comparison. Gradually, the verb in Beowulf emerged as an important element of the poetic diction of the work. Finally, the overall results establish the verb in Beowulf as the fundamental ingredient of the poetic diction of the poem, the verb acquiring its importance not so much taken by itself, as in conjunction with contextual elements from which it derives its poetic value.

## CONCLUSION

309

The views expressed in the paragraph immediately preceding are confirmed by Brodeur in his scholarly and indispensable work on the poetic skill displayed by the author of Beowulf. Brodeur estimates the number of distinct verbs in Beowulf to be very large,

probably about one thousand ... most of them are used in prose as readily as in poetry. A large proportion of the verbs in Beowulf are mere compounds of common verbs ... their simplices were certainly part of the vocabulary of speech. Only a few belong to the diction of poetry, and the sources of artistic effect seldom reside in them although these may be found in a good many striking combinations of verbs admirably chosen to express the impact of an action upon its object, or the action especially appropriate to the subject. In such cases the effect lies in the harmony of the verb with other elements of the clause.<sup>529</sup>

It is stated, therefore, from the information made available in this thesis, that the poet of Beowulf has enriched the poetic diction of the poem through the use of carefully chosen verbs, the contribution made becoming evident only in the light of elements of Anglo-Saxon language, poetic diction, technique, and style, and of certain influences coeval with Beowulf.

---

<sup>529</sup> Brodeur, Art of Beowulf, p. 7.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbetmeyer, C. Old English Poetical Motives Derived from Sin. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1903. A Dissertation.
- Abercrombie, Lascelles. The Epic. London: Martin Secker, no date. Series: The Art and Craft of Letters.
- Anderson, Marjorie, and Blanche Colton Williams. eds. Old English Handbook. Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1935.
- Andrew, S. O. Postscript on Beowulf. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1948.
- , ———, "Some Principles of Old English Word-Order," Medium Aevum, III (1934), 167-88.
- , ———. Syntax and Style in Old English. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1940.
- Arden, P. S. First Readings in Old English. 2nd ed. Wellington: New Zealand University Press, 1951.
- Arnold, Thomas. trans. Beowulf A Heroic Poem of the Eighth Century. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1876.
- Augustine of Hippo. Patrologiae, Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi, Opera Omnia. 22 vols. Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris: Librairie Didier, 1861.
- Ayres, Harry Morgan. trans. Beowulf A Paraphrase. Williamsport: The Bayard Press, 1933.
- Ayres, Henry Morgan, "The Tragedy of Hengest in Beowulf," JEGP, XVI (1917), 282-95.
- Bale, C. E. The Syntax of the Genitive Case in the Lindisfarne Gospels. Iowa Studies in Language and Literature, No 1. Iowas University Master Thesis. The State University of Iowas, 1907.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

311

- Bartlett, Adeline Courtney. The Larger Rhetorical Patterns in Anglo-Saxon Poetry. New York: Columbia University Press, 1935. Columbia University Studies in English and Comparative Literature, Number 122.
- Batchelor, C. C., "The Style of Beowulf, A Study of the Composition of the Poem," Speculum, XII (1937), 330-42.
- Baugh, Albert C. A History of the English Language. 2nd ed. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Tucker Brooke, Samuel C. Chew, Kemp Malone, Geo. Sherburne. A Literary History of England. New York: Appleton, Century-Crofts, Ind., 1948.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, "Improvisation in the Middle English Romance," Proceedings of the American Philological Society, CIII (1959), 418-54.
- Baum, Paul F. trans. Anglo-Saxon Riddles of the Exeter Book. Durham: Duke University Press, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, "The Beowulf Poet," PQ, XXXIX (1960), 389-99.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, "The Meter of Beowulf," MP, XLVII (November, 1948), 73-91.
- Baxter, J. H., C. Johnson, J. F. Willard, "An Index of British and Irish Latin Writers 400-1520," Union Académique Internationale, Bulletin du Cange, Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi, Tome VII (1932), 110-219.
- Beaty, John O. "The Echo-Word in Beowulf, With a Note on the Finnsburg Fragment," PMLA, XLIX (June, 1934), 365-73.
- Beckson, Karl, and Arthur Ganz. A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms, A Dictionary. New York: The Noonday Press, 1964. Noonday 203.
- Bede. A History of the English Church and People. Translated and edited by Leo Sherley-Price. Harmondsworth: Penquin Books Ltd, 1960. L42.
- Bennett, J. A. W., "Old English Hrothian," Medium Aevum, XI (1942), 90.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Review of Eleanor Shipley Duckett: Anglo-Saxon Saints and Scholars (New York, 1947), Medium

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

312

Aevum, XVII (1949), 37-38.

Berry, Francis, "A Suppressed 'Aposiopesis' in 'The Fight at Finnsburgh'," NQ, CIX (May, 1954), 186-87.

Bessai, Frank, "Comitatus and Exile in Old English Poetry," Culture, XXV (June, 1964), 130-44.

Bessinger, J. B., "Beowulf and the Harp at Sutton Hoo," University of Toronto Quarterly, XXVII (1957-58), 148-68.

Blackman, E., Review of Charles W. Kennedy: Old English Elegies (Princeton, 1962), MLR, XXXII (October, 1937), 599-601.

Blair, Peter Hunter. An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. See: Jackson, Kenneth.

Blake, N. F. ed. The Phoenix. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. "The Seafarer, Lines 48-49," NQ, IX (May, 1962), 163-64.

Bliss, A. J. The Metre of Beowulf. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962.

Blomfield, Joan, "The Style and Structure of Beowulf," RES, XIV (1938), 396-403.

Bloomfield, Leonard, "Notes on the Preverb ge- In Alfredian English," Studies in English Philology A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber. Edited by Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1929, 79-102.

Bloomfield, Morton W., "Patristics and Old English Literature: Notes on Some Poems," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur. Edited by Stanley B. Greenfield. University of Oregon, 1963.

Bonjour, Adrien, "Comments: A Post-Script on Beowulf and the Singer Theory," "Poésie héroïque du moyen âge et critique littéraire," "Comments: Quelques considérations sur Beowulf et la théorie formulaire," in

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

313

Twelve Beowulf Papers 1940-60. Université de Neuchâtel, 1962, 147-49, 161-64, and 165-72.

Bonjour, Adrien, "Beowulf and the Snares of Literary Criticism," EA, X(1957), 30-36.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, "The Beowulf Poet and the Tragic Muse," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur. Edited by Stanley B. Greenfield. University of Oregon, 1963.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. The Digressions in Beowulf. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1950. Published by the Society for the Study of Mediaeval Languages and Literature. Medium Aevum Monographs, V.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, "The Technique of Parallel Descriptions in Beowulf," in Twelve Beowulf Papers 1940-60, 51-65.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, "The Use of Anticipation in Beowulf," in Twelve Beowulf Papers 1940-60, 11-28.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Twelve Beowulf Papers 1940-60. Université de Neuchâtel, Recueil de travaux publiés par la faculté des lettres, trentième fascicule, 1962.

Bonser, Wilfrid. The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England. A Study in History, Psychology, and Folklore. London: The Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1963.

Bosworth, Joseph. An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary. Edited and Enlarged by T. Northcote Toller. Oxford: University Press, 1954.

Botkine, L. Beowulf Epopée Anglo-Saxonne. Analyse Historique et Géographique. Havre: Imprimerie Lepelletier, 1876.

Bowra, C. M. From Virgil to Milton. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1945.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Heroic Poetry. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1961.

Bracher, Frederick, "Understatement in Old English Poetry," PMLA, LII (December, 1937), 915-34.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

314

- Brady, Caroline, "The Old English Nominal Compounds in -RAD," PMLA, LXVII (1952), 538-71.
- , ———, "The Synonyms for 'Sea' in Beowulf," Studies in Honor of Albert Morley Sturtevant. University of Kansas Publications, Humanistic Studies, No. 29. Lawrence, Kansas: 1952, 22-46.
- Brennan, Robert Edward. Thomistic Psychology. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942.
- Bright, James W., Review of Albert Keiser: The Influence of Christianity on the Vocabulary of Old English Poetry (University of Illinois, 1919), MLN, XXXVI (May, 1921), 315-19.
- , ———, "An Idiom of the Comparative in Anglo-Saxon," MLN, XXVII (June, 1912), 181-83.
- Brock, Edmund. Arthur or Morte Arthure or The Death of Arthur. Edited from Robert Thornton's MS. EETS, 2, O.S., 8. London: Oxford University Press, 1871.
- Brodeur, Arthur Gilchrist, "Design and Motive in the Finn Episode," Essays and Studies by Members of the Department of English University of California. University of California Publications in English, Vol. 14. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1943, 1-42.
- , ———, The Art of Beowulf. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960.
- , ———, "The Climax of the Finn Episode," University of California Publications in English, Vol. 3 (1932-44), Numbers 1 to 9. Number 8 (1943), 285-362. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1943.
- , ———, "The Riddle of the Runes," University of California Publications in English, Vol. 3, (1932-44), Numbers 1 to 9. Number 1 (1932), 1-15. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1932.
- , ———, "The Structure and the Unity of Beowulf," PMLA, LXVIII (December, 1953), 1183-95.
- Brook, G. L. An Introduction to Old English. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1955.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

315

- Brook, G. L., Review of Adrien Bonjour: The Digressions in Beowulf (Oxford, 1950), RES, III (1952), 165-66.
- , ———, "The Relation Between the Textual and the Linguistic Study of Old English," The Anglo-Saxons Studies in some Aspects of their History and Culture presented to Bruce Dickins. Edited by Peter Clemoes. London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959, 280-91.
- Brooke, Stopford A. English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1930.
- Brooke, Christopher. See: Jackson, Kenneth.
- Brown, Carleton, "Beowulf and the Blickling Homilies and Some Textual Notes," PMLA, LIII (December, 1938), 905-16.
- , ———, "The Maidstone Text of the 'Proverbs of Alfred'," MLR (July, 1926), 249-60.
- Bruce-Mitford, R. L. S. The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial. London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1964. A Monograph.
- Bryan, William Frank, "Aërgōd in Beowulf, and Other Old English Compounds of Aēr," MP, XXVIII (November, 1930), 157-61.
- , ———, "Epithetic Compound Folk-Names in Beowulf," Studies in English Philology, A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber. Edited by Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1929, 120-34.
- Buckhurst, Helen Thérèse McMillan, "Terms and Phrases for the Sea in Old English Poetry," Studies in English Philology, A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber. Edited by Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1929, 103-19.
- Bullens, Denison. Steel and Its Heat Treatment. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1916.
- Butcher, S. H. trans. Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Arts. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1964.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

316

Callaway, Jr., Morgan, Studies in the Syntax of the Lindisarne Gospels. Hesperia Supplementary Series: Studies in English Philology. Edited by James W. Bright, No. 5. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1918.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. The Absolute Participle in Anglo-Saxon. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, Dissertation, 1889.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. "The Appositive Participle in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," PMLA, IX (1901), 141-360.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. The Infinitive in Anglo-Saxon. Washington, D.C.: 1913.

Camp, J. M., and C. B. Francis. The Making and Shaping of Steel. Pittsburg: Ginn & Company, 1925.

Campbell, A. Old English Grammar. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1959.

Chadwick, H. M. The Heroic Age. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1912.

Chadwick, Nora, K. See: Jackson, Kenneth.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. "The Monsters and Beowulf," The Anglo-Saxons Studies in some Aspects of their History and Culture presented to Bruce Dickins. Edited by Peter Clemoes. London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959, 171-203.

Chambers, R. W., "Beowulf and the Heroic Age," in Archibald Strong: Beowulf. London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1925.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Bede. Annual Lecture on a Master Mind. Proceedings of the British Academy, XXII (1936), 129-56. London: Oxford University Press, 1936.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Beowulf. An Introduction to the Study of the Poem with a Discussion of the Stories of Offa and Finn. 3rd ed. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1959.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Man's Unconquerable Mind. London: Jonathan Cape, 1939.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. See: Wyatt, A. J.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

317

- Chase, Frank H., Review of Hubert G. Shearin: The Expression of Purpose in Old English Prose, Yale Studies in English, XVIII (New York, 1903), JEGP, VI (1906-07), 121-28.
- Child, Clarence Griffin. trans. Beowulf. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904.
- Child, Francis James. ed. The English and Scottish Popular Ballads. 5 Vols. in 3. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1962.
- Clemons, Peter. ed. The Anglo-Saxons Studies in some Aspects of their History and Culture presented to Bruce Dickins. London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959.
- Colgrave, Bertram. See: Jackson, Kenneth.
- Collins, Douglas C., "Kenning in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," E and S, New Series, XII (1959), 1-17.
- Cook, Albert Stanburrough. comp. A Concordance to Beowulf. Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1911.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. A First Book in Old English. 3rd ed. London: Ginn & Company, Publishers, 1903.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. "Archaic English in the Twelfth Century," Scottish Historical Review, XII (1915), 213-15.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. A Glossary of the Old Northumbrian Gospels (Lindisfarne Gospels or Durham Book). Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1894.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. ed. Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1898.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. ed. Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers, Second Series. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1903.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. "Hadrian of Africa, Italy, and England," PQ, II (October, 1923), 241-58.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. See: Sievers, Eduard.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

318

- Cook, Albert Stanburrough, "The Possible Begetter of the Old English Beowulf and Widsith," Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences. New Haven: XXV (April, 1922), 281-346.
- Crawford, D. H. trans. Beowulf. Translated into English Verse. London: Chatto & Windus, 1926.
- Crawford, S. J., "Grendel's Descent from Cain," MLR, XXIII (1928), 207-08.
- Creed, Robert P., "The Singer Looks at His Sources," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur. Edited by Stanley B. Greenfield. University of Oregon: 1963, 44-52.
- Cross, J. E., "Aspects of Microcosm and Macrocosm in Old English Literature," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur. Edited by Stanley B. Greenfield. University of Oregon: 1963, 1-22.
- , James E. Latin Themes in Old English Poetry. The Philosophical Faculty of the University of Lund. Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, Ltd., (March), 1962. A Monograph.
- Culbert, Taylor, "The Narrative Functions of Beowulf's Swords," JEGP, LIX (1960), 13-20.
- , ———. The Single Combat in Medieval Heroic Narrative. University of Michigan, Ph.D. Thesis, 1957. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Inc., 1964, L.C. Card No. Mic 58-1388.
- Davis, Norman. rev. Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Primer. 9th ed. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1957.
- Derbshire, Helen. ed. The Poetical Works of John Milton. 2 Vols. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1955.
- Derolez, René L. M., "Anglo-Saxon Literature: 'Attic' or 'Asiatic'?" Old English Poetry and Its Latin Background," English Studies Today, 2nd Series (1961), 93-105.
- Dickins, Bruce. See: Jackson, Kenneth.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

319

Dissertation Abstracts. Abstracts of Dissertations and Monographs in Microform. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., XVI No.13, 1956; XVII No. 13, 1957; XVIII Nos. 1-3, 1958; XVIII Nos. 4-6, 1958; XIX Nos. 1-5, 1958; XIX Nos. 6-9, 1958-59; XX Nos. 7-9, 1960; XX Nos. 10-12, 1960; XX Nos. 4-6, 1959; XXI Nos. 1-4, 1960; XXI Nos. 4-8, 1960; XXII Nos. 1-3, 1961; XXII Nos. 11-12, 1961; XXIII Nos. 4-6, 1962; XXIII Nos. 7-9, 1962; XXIII Nos. 11-12, 1962; XXIV No. 10 (April), 1964; XXIV No. 12, Part I (May), 1964.

Dobbie, Elliott Van Kirk. Beowulf and Judith. The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, IV. New York: Columbia University Press, 1953.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems. The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, VI, 1942. New York: Columbia University Press.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. See: Krapp, George Philip.

Doctoral Dissertations. New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., XXII (1954-55).

Dodd, L. H. A Glossary of Wulfstan's Homilies. Yale Studies in English, XXXV. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1908.

Du Bois, Arthur E., "The Unity of Beowulf," PMLA, IXL (1934), 374-405.

Duckett, Eleanor Shipley. Alcuin, Friend of Charlemagne. His World and His Work. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Alfred the Great and His England. London: Collins, 1957.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Anglo-Saxon Saints and Scholars. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947.

Dudley, Louise, "An Early Homily on the 'Body and Soul' Theme," JEGP, VIII (1909), 225-53.

Dunleavy, Gareth. Colum's Other Island. The Irish at Lindsfarne. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1960.

Earle, John. trans. The Deeds of Beowulf. An English Epic

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

320

of the Eighth Century Done Into Modern Prose. Oxford:  
At the Clarendon Press, 1892.

Ede, George. The Management of Steel. London: Macmillan  
and Co. Limited, 1901.

Eliot, T. S. Selected Essays. 3rd ed. London: Faber and  
Faber Limited, 1951.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_. See: Pound, Ezra.

Ellard, Gerald. Master Alcuin, Liturgist. Chicago: Loyola  
University Press, 1956.

Elliott, Ralph W. V., "Byrhtnoth and Hildebrand: A Study in  
Heroic Technique," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur. Edited by Stanley B. Greenfield. University of Oregon, 1963,  
53-70.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Runes An Introduction. Manchester:  
Manchester University Press, 1963.

Emerson, Everett H., "On Translating Beowulf," SAQ, LVI  
(1957), 369-79.

Emerson, O. F., "Legends of Cain, Especially in Old and  
Middle English," PMLA, XIV (1906), 831-929.

Erä-Esko, Aarni, "Sutton Hoo and Finland," Speculum, XXVIII  
(July, 1953), 514-15.

Fisher, Peter F., "The Trials of the Epic Hero in Beowulf,"  
PMLA, LXXIII (1958), 171-83.

Fitzgerald, Edward. Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. New York:  
Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, no date.

Flom, George T. Introductory Old English Grammar Reader.  
2nd ed. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1930.

Foley, Emily H. The Language of the Northumbrian Gloss to  
the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Part I, Phonology.  
Yale Studies in English, XIV. New York: Henry Holt  
and Co., 1903

Forbes, M. D., and Bruce Dickins, "The Ruthwell and Bew-  
castle Crosses," MLR, X (January, 1915), 28-36.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

321

Francis, C. B. See: Camp, J. M.

Frey, Leonard Hamilton. Heroic Narrative Technique in the Anglo-Saxon Christian Epic. University of Oregon, Ph. D. Thesis, 1959, L.C. Card No. Mic 59-4312.

Fulton, Edward, "On Translating Anglo-Saxon Poetry," PMLA, XIII (1898), 286-96.

Gaffiot, Félix. Dictionnaire Abrégé Latin-Français Illustré. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1936.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Dictionnaire Illustré Latin Français. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1934.

Ganz, Arthur. See: Beckson, Karl.

Garmonsway, G. N., "Anglo-Saxon Heroic Attitudes," Franci-plegius Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honor of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr. Edited by Jess B. Besinger, Jr. and Robert P. Creed. New York: University Press, 1965, 139-46.

Garnett, James M. trans. Beowulf An Anglo-Saxon Poem. Boston: Ginn & Company, Publishers, 1900.

Gatenby, E. V. See: Hornby, A. S.

Gattiker, Godfrey Leonard. The Syntactic Basis of the Poetic Formula in Beowulf. University of Wisconsin, Ph.D. Thesis, 1962. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc. 1962, Order No. 63-593.

Gibbons, James Cardinal. ed. The Holy Bible. Baltimore: John Murphy Company, 1914.

Gillan, Doreen Maude Ellen. The Connotations of the Old English Terms Sceacan, Faege, Aeglaeca: A Study in the Method of Determining the Poetic Value of Old English Words. London: Royal Holloway College, M.A. Thesis (April), 1959. London: University of London Library, Photographic Department, No. 16029.

Girvan, Ritchie. Beowulf and the Seventh Century. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1935.

Godfrey, John. The Church in Anglo-Saxon England. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1962.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

322

- Goolden, Peter. ed. The Old English Apollonius of Tyre. Oxford: University Press, 1958.
- Gordon, E. V. ed. The Battle of Maldon. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1960.
- Gordon, R. K. selec. and trans. Anglo-Saxon Poetry. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1959. Everyman's Library, No. 794.
- , ——. The Song of Beowulf Rendered into English Prose. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, no date.
- Greenfield, Stanley B., "Beowulf and Epic Tragedy," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur. Edited by Stanley B. Greenfield. University of Oregon, 1963, 91-105.
- , ——. ed. Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur. University of Oregon, 1963.
- Greg, W. W., "The Five Types in Anglo-Saxon Verse," MLR, XX (January, 1925), 12-17.
- Groom, Bernard. The Diction of Poetry from Spenser to Bridges. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955.
- Gross, Charles. ed. The Sources and Literature of English History From the Earliest Times to About 1485. 2nd ed. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1915.
- Gummere, Francis, B. trans. Beowulf. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923.
- , ——. The Anglo-Saxon Metaphor. Dissertation for the Acquisition of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Freiburg. Hall: E. Karras, Printer, 1881.
- Haber, Tom Burns. A Comparative Study of the Beowulf and the Aeneid. Princeton: University Press, 1931.
- , ——. "Parallels in Motif and Sentiment," in A Comparative Study of the Beowulf and the Aeneid. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1931, 88-133.
- Hall, Jho: Lesslie. trans. Beowulf, An Anglo-Saxon Epic Poem. Translated from the Heyne-Socin Text. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., Publishers, 1900.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

323

- Hall, John R. Clark. ed. A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary. 4th ed. with a Supplement by Herbert D. Meritt. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1960.
- , ———. trans. Beowulf. New ed. Introduction by C. L. Wrenn. Prefatory Remarks by J. R. R. Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1963.
- , ———. trans. Beowulf and the Finnsburg Fragment. A Translation into Modern English Prose. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Company, Ltd, 1911.
- Hamilton, Marie Padgett, "The Religious Principles in Beowulf," PMLA, LXI (June, 1946), 309-30.
- Haney, John Louis. English Literature. Revised and Enlarged Edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1924.
- Hanscom, Elizabeth Deering, "The Feeling for Nature in Old English Poetry," JEGP, V (1903-05), 439-63.
- Harmer, F. E. Anglo-Saxon Writs. Manchester: University Press, 1952.
- Harris, Mattie A. A Glossary of the West-Saxon Gospels, Latin-West Saxon and West Saxon-Latin. Yale Studies in English, VI. Boston: Henry Holt and Co., 1899.
- Harris, W. T. ed. Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language. Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1928.
- Harrison, James A., and Robert Sharp. eds. I. Beowulf An Anglo-Saxon Poem. II. The Fight at Finnsburgh: A Fragment. With Text and Glossary on the Basis of M. Heyne. Boston: Ginn & Company, 1883.
- Hart, J. M., "The Anglo-Saxon gien, giena," MLN, VIII (1892-93), 122-23.
- Hart, Walter Morris, "Ballad and Epic, A Study in the Development of the Narrative Art," Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature. Published under the Direction of the Modern Language Departments of Harvard University. Boston: Ginn & Company, 1907.
- Hempl, George, "The Etymology of Old English aebre, aefre, E. ever," MLN, III-IV (1888-89), 417-18.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

324

- Herzfeld, G. ed. An Old English Martyrology. EETS, CXVI. London: N. Trübner & Co., 1900.
- Hibbard, Addison. See: Thrall, William Flint.
- Hodgkin, R. H. A History of the Anglo-Saxons. 2 Vols. 3rd ed. Oxford: University Press, 1959.
- Holman, C. Hugh. See: Thrall, William Flint.
- Hopper, Vincent F. trans. Beowulf Together With Widsith and The Fight at Finnesburg. In the Benjamin Thorpe Transcription and Word-for-Word Translation. Great Neck, New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1962.
- Hornby, A. S., E. V. Gatenby, H. Wakefield. eds. The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Hubbard, Frank G., "Beowulf 1598, 1996, 2026; Uses of the Impersonal Verb Geweorpan," JEGP, XVII (1918), 119-24.
- Hulbert, James R., "A Note on the Psychology of the Beowulf Poet," Studies in English Philology A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1929, 189-95.
- , ———, "Beowulf and the Classical Epic," MP, XLIV (November, 1946), 65-75.
- Huppé, Bernard F. Doctrine and Poetry. Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry. New York: State University of New York, 1959.
- Huyshe, Wentworth. trans. Beowulf An Old English Epic. London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd, 1908.
- Isaacs, Neil David. Personification in Beowulf. Brown University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1959. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1964, L.C. Card No. Mic 59-4347.
- Jackson, Kenneth, Peter Hunter Blair, Bertram Colgrave, Bruce Dickins, Joan and Harold Taylor, Christopher Brooke, Nora K. Chadwick. Celt and Saxon. Studies in the Early British Border. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1903.
- Johnson, C. See: Baxter, J. H.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

325

- Johnson, Edward Lee. Latin Words of Common English. Boston: D. C. Heath & Company, 1931.
- Johnson, Samuel. A Dictionary of the English Language in which The Words are deduced from their Originals, and Illustrated in their Different Significations by Examples from the best Writers to which are prefixed A History of the Language and An English Grammar. 2 Vols. 2nd ed. London: W. Strahan, for J. and P. Knapton, T. and T. Longman, C. Hitch and L. Hawes, A. Millar, and R. and J. Dodsley, 1755.
- Jones, Claude, "Some Notes on Riddle 21," MLR, XXXII (April, 1937), 281-83.
- Kahle, B., "Das Christentum in der Altwestnordischen Dichtung," Arkiv f. Nord. Fil., N.S., XIII (1891), 1-40, and 97-160.
- , —, "Die Altnordische Sprache im Dienste des Christentums," I. Teil: Die Prosa. Acta Germanica, I. 4. Berlin: (1890), 305-425.
- Kaske, R. E., "Sapientia et Fortitudo as the Controlling Theme of Beowulf," An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism. Edited by Lewis E. Nicholson. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963, 269-310.
- Keiser, Albert. The Influence of Christianity on the Vocabulary of Old English Poetry. University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol. V, Nos. I and 2. University of Illinois Press, 1919.
- Kellum, Margaret D. The Language of the Northumbrian Gloss of the Gospel of St. Luke. Yale Studies in English XXX. New York: Henry Holt & Co, 1906.
- Kemble, J. M. ed. Salomon and Saturn. London: Aelfric Society, 1848.
- Kendrick, Thomas. Codex Lindisfarnensis, British Museum Codex Cottonianus Nero D. IV. 2 Vols. Lausanne, Switzerland: The Urs Graf-Verlag, 1961.
- trans.  
Kennedy, Charles W. Beowulf. The Oldest English Epic. Translated into Alliterative Verse with a Critical Introduction. Oxford: University Press, 1962.
- , —. Old English Elegies. Princeton: University Press, 1936.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

326

- Ker, N. R. Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1957.
- Ker, W. P. Epic and Romance. London: The Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1896.
- Kinard, J. P. A Study of Wulfstan's Homilies: Their Style and Sources. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1897.
- Kirkman, Ann, Review of Van der Merwe Scholtz: The Kenning in Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Poetry (Utrecht, 1928), MLR, XXV (April, 1930), 196-97.
- Kirtlan, Ernest J. B. trans. The Story of Beowulf. Translated from Anglo-Saxon into Modern English Prose. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company Publishers, 1914.
- Klaeber, Fr., "An Old English Proverb," JEGP, V (1903-05), 529.
- , ———, "Attila's and Beowulf's Funeral," PMLA, XLII (June, 1927), 255-67.
- , ———, ed. Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg. 3rd ed. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1950.
- , ———, "Concerning the Functions of the Old English 'Geweorpan' and the Origin of German 'Gewahren Lassen!'" JEGP, XVIII (1919), 250-71.
- , ———, Review of Albert S. Cook: Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers, Second Series (New York, 1903), JEGP, V (1903-05), 126-30.
- , ———, "Studies in the Textual Interpretation of 'Beowulf'," MP, III (October, 1905), 235-65.
- , ———, "Studies in the Textual Interpretation of 'Beowulf'," MP, III (April, 1906), 445-65.
- Kluge, Friedr, "Anglo-Saxon Etymologies," An English Miscellany Presented to Dr. Furnivall in Honour of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday. Oxford: At the University Press, 1901, 199-200.
- Koban, Charles. Substantive Compounds in Beowulf. University of Illinois, Ph.D. Thesis, 1963. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1964, Microfilm No. 64-2915.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

327

- Kock, Ernst, "Interpretations and Emendations of Early English Texts. III," Anglia, XXVII (1904), 218-37.
- Kock, Ernst, A. Jubilee Jaunts and Jottings. 250 Contributions to the Interpretation and Prosody of Old West Teutonic Alliterative Poetry. Lunds Universitets Arsskrift. N.F. Avd. 1 Bd. 14. Nr. 26. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1918.
- Krapp, George Philip, and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie. eds. The Exeter Book. The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, III. New York: Columbia University Press, 1936.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. ed. The Junius Manuscript. The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records I. New York: Columbia University Press, 1931.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. "The Parenthetic Exclamation in Old English Poetry," MLN, XX (February, 1905), 33-37.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. ed. The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius. The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records V. New York: Columbia University Press, 1932.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. ed. The Vercelli Book. The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, II. New York: Columbia University Press, 1932.
- Kroesch, Samuel, "Semantic Borrowing in Old English," Studies in English Philology A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber. Edited by Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1929, 50-72.
- Kuhn, Sherman M., "The Sword of Healfdene," JEGP, XLII (January, 1943), 82-95.
- Laun, H. Van. See: Taine, H. A.
- Lawrence, William Witherle. Beowulf and Epic Tradition. New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. "The Breca Episode in Beowulf," Kittredge Anniversary Papers. Edited by His Colleagues and Pupils. Boston: Ginn & Co., Publishers, 1923, 359-66.
- Lea, Elizabeth M., "The Language of the Northumbrian Gloss to the Gospel of St. Mark, Part I, Phonology," Anglia, XVI (1893), 62-134, Part II, Infl., 135-206.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

328

- Lehmann, W. P., Review of A. J. Bliss; The Metre of Beowulf (Oxford, 1958), JEGP, LIX (1960), 137-42.
- Lehnert, Martin. Poetry and Prose of the Anglo-Saxons. A Text-Book With Introductions, Translations, Bibliography, and an Old English Etymological Dictionary. Berlin: Veb Deutscher Verlag Der Wissenschaften, 1955.
- Leonard, William Ellery. trans. Beowulf A New Verse Translation for Fireside and Class Room. New York: The Century Co., 1925.
- Lerner, L. D., "Colour Words in Anglo-Saxon" MLR, XLIV (1951), 246-49.
- Levine, Robert. Direct Discourse in Beowulf: Its Meaning and Function. University of California, Berkely, Ph.D. Thesis, 1963. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1964, Order No. 63-5526.
- Levison, Wilhelm. England and the Continent in the Eighth Century. The Ford Lectures for 1943. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1946.
- Lewis, C. S. A Preface to Paradise Lost. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.
- Lewis, Charlton T., and Charles Short. eds. A Latin Dictionary. Oxford: University Press, 1951.
- Lewis, William Dodge, Henry Seidel Canby, and Thomas Kite Brown, Jr. eds. The Executive's Desk Book. Chicago: The John C. Winston Company, 1937.
- Lindenheim, Bogislav von, "Problems of Old English Semantics," English Studies Today. 3rd Series. Edinburgh: 1962, 67-77.
- Lindqvist, Sune, "Sutton Hoo and Beowulf," Antiquity, XXII (1948), 131-40.
- Lord, Albert Bates, "Beowulf and Odysseus," Franciplegius Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honor of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr. Edited by Jess B. Bessinger, Jr. and Robert P. Creed. New York University Press, 1965, 89-91.
- Lotspeich, C. M., "Old English Etymologies," JEGP, XL (1941), 1-4.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

329

- Lumiansky, R. M., "The Dramatic Audience in Beowulf," JEGP, LI (October, 1952), 545-50.
- Lumsden, H. W. trans. Beowulf. An Old English Poem Translated into Modern Rhymes. London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1881
- Lusky, George F., "The Verb Forms Circumscribed with the Perfect Participle in the Beowulf," JEGP, XXI (1922), 32-69.
- Mac Gillivray, H. S. The Influence of Christianity on the Vocabulary of Old English. Hall: 1902.
- Mackail, J. W. ed. The Aeneid. Oxford: University Press, 1930.
- Mackie, W. S., "Notes Upon the Text and The Interpretation of 'Beowulf'," MLR, XXXIV (1939), 515-24.
- , "Notes Upon the Text and Interpretation of Beowulf II," MLR, XXXVI (1941); 95-98.
- , "The Demons' Home in Beowulf," JEGP, XXXVI (1938), 455-61.
- , The Exeter Book, Part II. London: EETS, No. 194, 1934.
- , "The Fight at Finnsburg," JEGP, XVI (1917), 250-73.
- Magoun, Jr., Francis P., "Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry," Speculum, XXXII (July, 1953), 446-67.
- , "Recurring First Elements in Different Nominal Compounds in Beowulf and in the Elder Edda," Studies in English Philology. A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber. Edited by Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1929, 73-78.
- , "Some Notes on Anglo-Saxon Poetry," Studies in Medieval Literature in Honor of Professor Albert Croll Baugh. Edited by MacEdward Leach. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961, 273-83.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

330

- Magoun, Jr., Francis P., "The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial: A Chronological Bibliography," Speculum, XXIX (1954), 116-24.
- , ———, "The Theme of the Beast of Battle in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, LV (1954), 81-90.
- Malone, Kemp, "Beowulf," ES, XXIX (1948), 161-72.
- , ———, "Ingeld," MP, XXVII (1930), 257-76.
- , ———, "Notes on Beowulf," Anglia, LXIX (1950), 295-300.
- , ———, "Notes on Gnostic Poem B of The Exeter Book," Medium Aevum, XII (1943), 65-67.
- , ———, "Old English (Ge) Hydean 'Heed'," A Grammatical Miscellany Offered to Otto Jespersen on His Seventieth Birthday. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1930, 45-54.
- , ———, Review of Emile Pons: Le Thème et le Sentiment de la Nature (Strasbourg, 1925), MLN, XLIII (June, 1928), 406-08.
- , ———, Review of Godfrid Storms: Compounded Names of Peoples in Beowulf (Utrecht-Nymegen, 1957), ES, XLI (1960), 1-7.
- , ———, Review of R. A. Williams: The Finn Episode in Beowulf (Cambridge, 1924), JEGP, XXV (1926), 114-17.
- , ———, "Studies in Old English Poetry, 1920-1930," PQ, X (1931), 400-403.
- , ———, "Symbolism in Beowulf," English Studies Today, Second Series (1961), 81-91.
- , ———, "The Kenning in Beowulf 2220," JEGP, XXVII (1928), 318-24.
- Mansion, J. E. ed. Harrap's Standard French and English Dictionary. 2 Vols. London: George G. Harrap & Company, Ltd., 1945.
- Mansion, Joseph, "The Old English Inscription on the Brussels Cross," ES, XXI (1939), 145-64.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

331

- Marcotte, Paul J. The God Within. Essays in Speculative Literary Criticism. Ottawa: The Runge Press Limited, 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Notes Towards an Understanding of Aristotle's Poetics. Ottawa: The Runge Press Limited, 1963.
- Maritain, Jacques. Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry. The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts. The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Published for Bollingen Foundation, New York. New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1960, Bollingen Series XXXV-1
- Martin-Clarke, D. Elizabeth. Culture in Early Anglo-Saxon England. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1947.
- Maryon, Herbert, "The Sutton Hoo Helmet," Antiquity, XXI (1947), 137-44.
- McNamee, Maurice B. Honor and the Epic Hero. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1959.
- Mead, William E., "Color in Old English Poetry," PMLA, XIV (1899), 174-210.
- Menner, R. J., "The Vasa Mortis in the Old English Salomon and Saturn," Studies in English Philology, A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber. Edited by Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1929, 240-53.
- Meritt, Herbert D. See: Hall, John R. Clark.
- Mezger, Fritz, "Two Notes on Beowulf," MLN, LXVI (January, 1951), 36-38.
- Moncrieff, Charles Scott. trans. Widsith, Beowulf, Finnsburgh, Waldere, Deor. Done into common English after the old manner. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1921.
- Moorman, Charles, "Suspense and Fore-Knowledge in 'Beowulf'," CE, XV (1954), 379-83.
- Moorman, Frederick W. The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry from Beowulf to Shakespeare. Strassbourg, 1905.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

332

- Morgan, Edwin. trans. Beowulf. A Translation in Modern English. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964. Cal. 67.
- Morin, Paul-E. Beowulf A Christian Poem: An Approach to Certain Difficulties. Ottawa: University of Ottawa, Unpublished M.A. Thesis (April), 1964.
- Morris, R. ed. Old English Homilies. London: EETS, Series I, 1867.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. ed. Old English Miscellany. London: EETS, 1872.
- Morris, William, and A. J. Wyatt. trans. The Tale of Beowulf Sometime King of the Fdk of the Weder Geats. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898.
- Motherwell, George McCormick. Old English Morphemic Structures: A Grammatical Restatement. Indiana University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1959. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Inc., 1964, L.C. Card No. Mic 59-4027.
- Murray, James. A. H. ed. A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles. 22 Vols. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1888.
- Mustanoja, Tauno F., Review of Kenneth Sisam: Studies in the History of English Literature (Oxford, 1953), Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, LV (1954), 232-39.
- Napier, A. S., "Contributions to Old English Literature, 2. The Franks Casket," An English Miscellany Presented to Dr. Furnivall in Honour of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1901, 362-81.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Old English Glosses. Oxford: At the University Press, 1900.
- Nicholson, Lewis E. ed. An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963, NDP 27.
- Nist, John A., "Textual Elements in the Beowulf Manuscript," Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, XLII. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1957, 331-38.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

333

- Ogden, C. K., and I. A. Richards. The Meaning of Meaning, A Study of the Influence of Language Upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism. 10th ed. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1960.
- Ogilvy, J. D. A. Books Known to Anglo-Latin Writers from Aldhelm to Alcuin. Studies and Documents, No 2. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936.
- Onions, C. T. ed. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. 2 Vols. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1939.
- O'Neill, Sister Mary Angelica. Elegiac Elements in Beowulf. Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1932. A Ph.D. Dissertation.
- O'Neil, Wayne Albert. Oral-Formulaic Structure in Old English Elegiac Poetry. The University of Wisconsin, Ph. D. Thesis, 1960. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Inc., 1964, L.C. Card No. Mic 69-3248.
- Owen, W. B., "The Influence of the Latin Syntax on the A.-S. Gospels," Transactions of American Philological Association (1882), 59-64.
- Pie, Mario. The Families of Words. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1962.
- Pierquin, Hubert. Le Poème Anglo-Saxon de Beowulf. Paris: Alphonse Picard & Fils, Editeurs, 1912.
- Phillpots, Bertha S., "Wyrd and Providence in Anglo-Saxon Thought," E and S, XIII (1928), 7-27.
- Pogatscher, Alois, "Unausgedrücktes Subject in Altenglischen Anglia, XXIII (1901), 260-92.
- Pons, Emile. Le Thème et le Sentiment de la Nature dans la Poésie Anglo-Saxonne. Strasbourg: Librairie Istra, Maison d'Édition, 1925.
- Pope, John Collins. The Rhythm of Beowulf. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942.
- Pound, Ezra. Selected Poems. Edited by T. S. Eliot. London: Faber and Faber, 1958.
- Pyles, Thomas. The Origins and Development of the English Language. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

334

- Raffel, Burton. Trans. Beowulf. New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1963. A Mentor Book, MP531.
- Rankin, James Walter, "A Study of the Kennings in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," JEGP, VIII (1909), 357-422.
- , "A Study of the Kennings in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," JEGP, IX (January, 1910), 49-84.
- Raschen, J. F. L., "Slang: to get cold feet," MLN, XXVIII (June, 1912), 198-99.
- Raumer, von R. Die Einwirkung des Christentums auf die Althochdeutsche Sprache. Stuttgart: 1845.
- Renoir, Alain, "The Heroic Oath in Beowulf, the Chanson de Roland, and the Nibelungenlied," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur. Edited by Stanley B. Greenfield. University of Oregon, 1963, 237-66.
- Richards, I. A. Principles of Literary Criticism. 2nd ed. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1959.
- , —. —. See: Odgen, C. K.
- Rigby, Marjory, "The Seafarer', 'Beowulf', l. 769, and a German Conceit," NQ, IX (July, 1962), 246.
- Robinson, Fred Colson. Variation: A Study in the Diction of Beowulf. University of North Carolina, Ph.D. Thesis, 1961. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc, 1964. No. 61-6143.
- Routh, H. V. God, Man, and Epic Poetry. Vol. II. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1927.
- Routh, Jr., James Edward. Two Studies On the Ballad Theory of the Beowulf. A Dissertation. The Johns Hopkins University. Baltimore: J. H. Furst Company, 1905.
- Royster, James Finch, "The Causative Use of Hātan," JEGP, XVII (1918), 82-93.
- Rychner, Jean. La Chanson de Geste. Genève: Librairie E. Droz, 1955.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

335

Scholtz, Van der Merwe. The Kenning in Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Poetry. Utrecht: N. V. Dekker & Van de Vegt en J. W. Van Leeuwen, 1928.

Schwerdtfeger, Emil. A Dissertation on the History and Development of the English Verb. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1874.

Sedgefield, W. J. ed. Beowulf. 3rd ed. Manchester: At the University Press, 1935. Publications of the University of Manchester, No. CCXXXVIII, English Series No. II.

———, "The Scenery in Beowulf," JEGP, XXXV (1936), 161-69.

Shakespeare, William. Complete Works. Edited by the University Society. 42 Vols. New York: 1887.

Sharp, Robert. See: Harrison, James A.

Shearin, Hubert G., "The Expression of Purpose in Old English Poetry," Anglia, XXXII (1909), 235-52.

Shipley, Joseph T. ed. Dictionary of World Literature. Criticism, Forms, Technique. New Revised Edition. Paterson, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1962. New Students Outline Series, No. 135.

Shook, Lawrence K., "Old English Riddle No. 20: Heoruswealwe," Franciplegius Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honor of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr. Edited by Jess B. Bessinger, Jr. and Robert P. Creed, New York: New York University Press, 1965, 194-204.

Short, Charles. See: Lewis, Charlton T.

Sievers, Eduard. An Old English Grammar. Translated and edited by Albert S. Cook. 3rd ed. Boston: Ginn & Company, Publishers, 1903.

Sir Firumbras. ed. Herrtage. EETS, ES, XXXIV. London: Oxford University Press, 1879.

Sisam Kenneth, "Mr. Pound and The Seafarer," The Times Literary, Friday, June 25, 1954.

———. Studies in the History of Old English Literature. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1962.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

336

- Sisam, Kenneth. The Structure of Beowulf. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1965.
- Skeat, Walter W. An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Early English Proverbs. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1910.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. English Dialects. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1911.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. The Proverbs of Alfred. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1907.
- Skemp, A. R., "The Transformation of Scriptural Story, Motive and Conception in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," MP, IV (1906), 423-70.
- Smith, Logan Pearsall. The English Language. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.
- Smithers, G. V. The Making of Beowulf. Inaugural Lecture of the Professor of English Language. Durham: University of Durham, 1961. A Monograph.
- South, Helen Pennock. The Proverbs of Alfred Studied in the Light of the Recently Discovered Maidstone Manuscript. New York: New York University Press, 1931.
- Spaeth, J. Duncan. trans. Old English Poetry, Translations into Alliterative Verse. Princeton: University Press, 1922.
- Stanley, E. G., "Haethenra Hyht in Beowulf," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur. Edited by Stanley B. Greenfield. University of Oregon, 1963, 136-51.
- Steadman, Jr. J. M., "The Engeld Episode in Beowulf: History or Prophecy?," MLN, XLV (December, 1930), 522-25.
- Stenton, F. M. Anglo-Saxon England. 2nd ed. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1955. Vol. II in The Oxford History of England.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. The Latin Charters of the Anglo-Saxon Period. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1955.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

337

- Stenton, F. M., "The East Anglian Kings of the Seventh Century," The Anglo-Saxons. Studies in some Aspects of their History and Culture presented to Bruce Dickins. Edited by Peter Clemoes. London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959, 43-52.
- Stevens, W. O. The Cross in the Life and Literature of the Anglo-Saxons. Yale Studies in English, XXIII. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1904.
- Storms, Godfrid. Compounded Names of Peoples in Beowulf. A Study in the Diction of a Great Poet. Utrecht: Dekker en Van de Vegt N. V., 1957. A Monograph.
- Storms, G., "The Subjectivity of the Style of Beowulf," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur. Edited by Stanley B. Greenfield. University of Oregon, 1963, 171-86.
- Strong, Archibald. trans. Beowulf. Into Modern English Rhyming Verse. London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1925.
- Sweet, Henry. See: Wyld, H. C.
- Taine, H. A. History of English Literature. Translated by H. Van Laun. 2 Vols. London: Chatto & Windus, 1892.
- Taylor, Archer, "He that will not when he may; when he will shall have nay," Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur. Edited by Stanley B. Greenfield. University of Oregon, 1963, 155-61.
- Tennyson, Alfred. The Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1904.
- "The Treasure of Sutton Hoo," Life Magazine, XXXI, No. 3 (July 16, 1951), 82-85.
- Thomas, G. P., "Notes on the Language of Beowulf," MLN, I (April, 1906), 202-207.
- Thomas, Walter. trans. Beowulf et les Premiers Fragments Épiques Anglo-Saxons. Etude Critique et Traduction. Paris: Librairie Henri Didier, 1919.
- Thorpe, Benjamin. ed. Aelfric's Homilies. 2 Vols, in Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church. Oxford: University Press, 1844-46.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

338

Thorpe, Benjamin. trans. The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf, The Scôp or Gleeman's Tale and the Fight at Finnesburg. A Literal Translation. Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1855.

Thrall, William Flint, and Addison Hibbard. A Handbook to Literature. Revised and Enlarged by C. Hugh Holman. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1960.

Tillyard, E. M. W. The English Epic and Its Background. London: Chatto and Windus, 1954.

Timmer, B. J. ed. Judith. London: Methuen & Co, Ltd, 1961.

———, ———, "The Elegiac Mood in Old English Poetry," ES, XXIV (1942), 33-44.

Tinker, Chauncey Brewster. trans. Beowulf. New York: Newson & Company, 1902.

———, ———. The Translations of Beowulf. A Critical Bibliography. Yale Studies in English, XVI. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1903.

Tolkien, J. R. R. Beowulf The Monsters and the Critics. Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture. Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. XXII. London: Oxford University Press, 1936.

———, ———. See: Hall, John R. Clark.

Toller, T. Northcote. Supplement of An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary. Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth. Oxford: University Press, 1955.

———, ———. See: Bosworth, Joseph.

Tolman, Albert H., "The Style of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," PMLA, III (1887), 17-47.

Tupper, Jr., Frederick, "The Cynewulfian Runes of the First Riddle," MLN, XXV (December, 1910), 235-41.

———, ———, ———. ed. The Riddles of the Exeter Book. Boston: Ginn & Company, 1910.

Van Laun, H. See: Taine, H.A.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

339

- Van Meurs, J. C., "Beowulf and Literary Criticism," Neophilologus, XXXIX (Groningen, 1955), 114-30.
- Wackerbarth, A. Diedrich. trans. Beowulf An Epic Poem  
Translated from the Anglo-Saxon into English Verse.  
London; William Pickering, 1849.
- Waddell, Helen. ed. Mediaeval Latin Lyrics. London;  
Constable, 1959.
- Wakefield, H. See: Hornby, A. S.
- Walker, Warren S., "The Brunecg Sword," MLN, LXVII  
(December, 1952), 516-20.
- Waterhouse, Mary E. trans. Beowulf In Modern English A  
Translation in Blank Verse. Cambridge; Bowes and  
Bowes, 1949.
- Webster, A. Blyth, "Translation From Old English," E and S,  
V (1914), 153-71.
- Weightman, Jane. The Language and Dialect of the Later Old  
English Poetry. Liverpool: 1907.
- Weinhold, K. Die Gatische Sprache im Dienste des Christen-  
tums. Halle: 1870.
- Whitbrow, Ed. Magda. ed. Index to Theses. Accepted for  
Higher Degrees in the Universities of Great Britain  
and Ireland. London; Aslib. Vol. I (1950-51), Vol.  
II (1951-52), Vol. III (1952-53), Vol. IV (1953-54),  
Vol. V (1954-55), etc. to Vol. XII (1961-62).
- White, W. D. The Descent of Christ Into Hell: A Study in Old  
English Literature. The University of Texa, Ph.D.  
Thesis, 1959. Ann Arbor; University Microfilms, Inc.,  
1964, L.C. Card No. Mic 59-6742.
- Whitelock, Dorothy. Changing Currents in Anglo-Saxon  
Studies. Cambridge; University Press, 1958. A Mono-  
graph.
- \_\_\_\_\_. ed. English Historical Documents c.  
500-1042. London; Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955.
- \_\_\_\_\_. ed. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A  
revised translation With David C. Douglas and Susie  
I. Tucker. London; Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

340

- Whitelock, Dorothy. The Audience of Beowulf. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1958.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. "The Interpretation of The Seafarer," Chadwick Memorial Studies. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1950, 261-72.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. The Old English Bede. Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture British Academy. Proceedings of the British Academy, XLVIII. London: Oxford University Press, 1962. A Monograph.
- Whitman, Charles Huntington, "Old English Mammal Names," JEGP, VI (1906-07), 649-57.
- Wiersma, Stanley Marvin. A Linguistic Analysis of Words Referring to Monsters in Beowulf. University of Wisconsin, Ph.D. Thesis, 1961. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1964. Order No. 61-2987.
- Willard, Rudolph, Review of N. R. Ker; Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon (Oxford, 1957), JEGP, LIX (1960), 129-37.
- Willard, J. F. See: Baxter, J. H.
- Williams, Blanche Colton. Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon. New York: Columbia University Press, 1914.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. See: Anderson Marjorie.
- Williams, R. A. The Finn Episode in Beowulf. An Essay in Interpretation. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1924.
- Williams, W. Mattieu. The Chemistry of Iron and Steel Making. London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1890.
- Wilson, R. M., Review of Adrien Bonjour; The Digressions in Beowulf (Oxford, 1950), MLR, XLVI (April, 1951), 200.
- Wingfield-Stratford, E. The History of British Civilization. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1930.
- Wood, Frederick T. An Outline History of the English Language. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1954.
- Woolf, Henry Bosley, "Subject-Verb Agreement in Beowulf," MLQ, IV (1943), 49-55.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

341

- Workman, Rhea Thomas. The Concept of Hell in Anglo-Saxon Poetry Before A.D. 850. University of South Carolina Ph.D. Thesis, 1958. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Inc., 1964, L.C. Card No. Mic 58-6000.
- Wrenn, C. L. Anglo-Saxon Poetry and the Amateur Archaeologist. The Chambers Memorial Lecture. University College, London. London: H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd., 1962. A Monograph.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. ed. Beowulf With the Finnesburg Fragment. London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. See: Hall, John R. Clark.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. See: Chambers, R. W.; Beowulf, Part VI, Recent Work on Beowulf to 1958, 505-548.
- Wright, David. trans. Beowulf. A Prose Translation. Penguin Books, L70. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1963.
- Wright, Joseph, and Elizabeth Mary Wright. Old English Grammar. Oxford: University Press, 1908.
- Wright, Mary Elizabeth. See: Wright, Joseph.
- Wright, Thomas. ed. A Volume of Vocabularies. London: John Henry Parker, 1857-73.
- Wyatt, A. J. ed. Beowulf with The Finnsburg Fragment. New Edition Revised with Introduction and Notes by R. W. Chambers. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1920.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. See: Morris William.
- Wyld, H. C., "Dialects and Prehistoric Forms of Old English," Collected Papers of Henry Sweet. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913, 185-211.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. "Various Notes. I. Disguised Compounds in Old English," Collected Papers of Henry Sweet. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913, 220-21.
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. "Diction and Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association, XI (1925), 49-91.
- Wyld, Henry Cecil, "Experiments in Translating Beowulf,"

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

342

Studies in English Philology. A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber. Edited by Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1929, 217-71.

Wyld, H. C., "Old English Etymologies," Collected Papers of Henry Sweet. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913.

Wülker, R. P. ed. Anglo-Saxon and English Vocabularies (Latin-English). 2 Vols. 2nd ed. London: John Henry Parker, 1857-73, (1884).

Zappert, Georg. Virgils Forleben im Mittlelalter. Vienna: 1851.

Zupita, Julius. ed. Beowulf. Reproduced in Facsimile from the Unique Manuscript British Museum MS. Cotton Vitellius A XV. 2nd ed. Introductory note by Norman Davis. EETS, No. 245. Oxford: University Press, 1959.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to examine the verb in Beowulf in order to determine the contribution made by the poet to the diction of the poem. The findings establish that the verb plays an important rôle in the poetic diction of Beowulf.

The Introduction states the approach. It emphasizes the difficult task awaiting anyone investigating the poem Beowulf, mentions the names of some scholars who have studied it all their lives without exhausting the matter, and points to the necessity of marshalling one's efforts on one aspect, part, or feature of the poem. The last paragraph contains a synopsis of the thesis.

Chapter I deals with Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and technique in general terms. Definitions are given of literature, beauty, prose, verse, poetic diction, poetic technique, style, convention, and tradition. The position of Anglo-Saxon studies in the 1920's is mentioned along with Anglo-Saxon research since 1925. The main crux in the study of Anglo-Saxon poetic works is shown to be an understanding of the Anglo-Saxon language made more difficult by a scarcity of Anglo-Saxon works. It is not uncommon to be led

## ABSTRACT

astray in the interpretation of allusions and meanings of Anglo-Saxon poems. This is illustrated by reference to an article by Paull F. Baum on the poet of Beowulf, and clarification of the problem regarding allusions to the Old Testament. The discovery of the Sutton Hoo treasure, the intellectuality of the seventh and eighth centuries, the many important libraries set up at the time, the centers of learning, the monastery schools, the appearance of saints and scholars, are mentioned in support of the claim that Beowulf was written in a period of marked intellectual achievements. The oral-formulaic theory advanced by Francis P. Magoun, Jr., regarding the making of Beowulf, is examined, discussed, and rejected. Beowulf is seen as having been written pen in hand.

Chapter II shows the importance of semantics as a prerequisite for an understanding of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, and investigates the influence of Latin and Christianity on the vocabulary and the literature of the Anglo-Saxons. Semantics is defined, and several words, including wineleas, daegwoma, widewe, lencten, cealdheort, serve to illustrate the rôle of etymology in the understanding of Anglo-Saxon words. The allusion inherent in brūnecg is explained in terms of knowledge of the tempering of steel. The description of the helmet found in the Sutton Hoo treasure is used to explain the meaning of wala, a word appearing in line 1031 of Beowulf. The multiplicity of meanings of some Anglo-Saxon words and

## ABSTRACT

the difficulty in arriving at a precise understanding of them is illustrated by way of thirteen Anglo-Saxon words and their eighty-seven possible modern English equivalents. Colours in Anglo-Saxon poetry are discussed, and their frequency of appearance in Anglo-Saxon poetical works given. A conclusion is reached that the function of the dictionary is not usually to give the historical sense of words.

The influence of Latin on Anglo-Saxon vocabulary is found to exist in Latin borrowings, abstract ideas rendered by native compounds, and in the analogical transference of ideas. Virgil and Anglo-Saxon are discussed, and books known to Anglo-Latin writers mentioned. The influence of Virgil is seen in Virgilian phrases used by Anglo-Saxon literary ecclesiastics, among Anglo-Saxon kings who were scholars, and in the technique of composition of Anglo-Saxon writings. The effects of Latin appear in Anglo-Saxon idioms and inflexions.

The influence of Christianity on the Anglo-Saxons is investigated, and its effects on their vocabulary noticed. This is illustrated by certain words, a marked concern in final things, hagiography, and Biblical quotations. The rôle of the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo is mentioned.

Chapter III investigates mood in Anglo-Saxon poetry, examines how Anglo-Saxon poets interpreted and reacted to

## ABSTRACT

nature, and shows that the spirit of the age had a strong influence on Anglo-Saxon writings. Examples of how mood is arrived at are taken from Beowulf and Judith. Mood is developed from contextual arrangement by way of enumeration of objects, by indirect and suggestive method, the choice of diction and the use of certain expressions, overtones, and subjective and objective emotive connotation.

Misunderstanding exists in modern times regarding the reactions of Anglo-Saxon poets to nature. The preference of Anglo-Saxon poets for certain aspects of nature is mentioned and discussed. It is shown that their reactions to nature was realistic or physical, the result of a a priori experience. The spirit of the age and the Christian writers' frame of mind are responsible for the Christian rationalism of Anglo-Saxons. This leads to a strong attraction for the sea, and to a spirit of idealization which permeates their lives and is reflected in their attitude towards women, love, the comitatus spirit, mead drinking, and etiquette.

The spirit of the age is investigated and appears as a definite influence on Anglo-Saxon literature. Anyone reading Anglo-Saxon works must do so in the light of the background of the age. The seventh and eighth centuries saw the spreading of a strong Christian faith, the golden age of conversions, the gathering of important libraries, flour-

## ABSTRACT

ishing scriptoria, important centers of learning, and aristocrats making history. This refined civilization was capable of heroic times, and was a blend of Christian, Germanic pagan, classical Mediterranean, and Celtic elements. Beowulf and other excellent poems were the results of this unique civilization which has an echo in the wealth of the Sutton Hoo treasure.

Chapter IV examines some Anglo-Saxon stylistic and syntactical characteristics, illustrates these with examples from Beowulf, Judith and other poems, and demonstrates their fundamental importance for an understanding of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Rhetorical patterns discussed include verse, envelope, parallel, incremental, and rhythmical types. The intensity and conciseness of the Anglo-Saxon line, the scarcity of articles and pronouns, the repetition technique, climax, transitions, the pronoun, the roundabout approach, the word order in sentence structure, and Anglo-Saxon metrics and alliteration are explained and illustrated.

Chapter V examines the verb in Beowulf and, for comparison and contrast, in some other poems. General characteristics of Anglo-Saxon verbs are discussed. They include the use of affixes to verbs, motion and Anglo-Saxon verbs, verbs of rest with the idea of motion, verbs creating a state of mind, the unusual regimen of certain verbs, the instrumental

## ABSTRACT

function of the genitive case, a singular verb with a plural subject, lack of control, violation of the consecutio temporum, a compound subject and a singular verb, a plural subject with a singular verb, and a change in the compound verb without a change in the subject. Other verbal peculiarities discussed are alleged incongruities, subjectless verbs, ellipses - not solecisms, omission of the subject, subjectless heht, the end-position of verbs, the preterit of intransitive verbs, the old passive voice, the prothetic use of a verb, the use of the present tense form, the historical present, the hendiadys, verbs taking their meanings from other verbs, and a metaphor in the subject giving way to a metaphor in the verb. The respect for authority and verbs of causing and ordering, verbs of forcing and allowing, and the dual capacity of verbs are also treated. The Anglo-Saxon verb is shown to be generally pregnant with meaning. Translation of Anglo-Saxon poetry, the contextual relation of verbs, the Anglo-Saxon poet's art, and the struggle facing the student are discussed. Some colourful verbs, similarity of certain verbs, and many verbs having their origin in Christianity are examined. The result of this investigation of Anglo-Saxon verbs points to a high degree of poetic perfection in the maker of Beowulf.