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THE HAGIOGRAPHIC STYLE IN THE OLD
ENGLISH GENESIS A AND EXODUS

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Thesis presented to the School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Introduction

This study concerns the style of the saints' lives written in Anglo-Saxon poetry between the seventh and tenth centuries. It is based on two major arguments: first, there is an identifiable hagiographic style¹ which is common to Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives and distinct from Latin prose saints' lives. This style resulted from the combining of elements of Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry with elements of Latin prose hagiography. It succeeded in meeting the challenge of teaching important Christian ideas through the medium of narrative poetry and incorporated the various elements which formed it into a coherent and unified approach to the material at hand. Second, once identified, this style may be found in Genesis A and Exodus, two poems that have been seen as incomplete paraphrases of books of the Old Testament.

Recognition of the hagiographic style in Genesis A and Exodus relates them to Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiography both in terms of execution and of intent. The two poems are shaped by the same purpose that shaped the lives of the saints, that is, the teaching by example of the fundamental truths of Christian life.²

Before it is possible to discuss the use of the hagiographic style of Anglo-Saxon poetry, a separation must be made between it and the style of Latin prose hagiography, the senior and undoubtedly influential tradition. Fortunately, a natural contrast is presented by the survival of the lives of St. Guthlac in both Latin prose and Anglo-Saxon poetry. The contrasts between the Latin and Anglo-Saxon versions yield the series of stylistic differences that create a tentative definition for the hagiographic style of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

The stylistic differences between Felix's Vita Guthlaci and the Anglo-Saxon Guthlac A and B are classified in this study into four major areas. The first area deals with the introductory remarks made by each writer about his subject. The introductions to the Anglo-Saxon poems are unlike the prose introduction. Unlike the prose writer, the poets are willing to postpone the action of the poems, and postpone the identification of the saint, in order to introduce the thematic substance of the poems. The opening of each poem presents an idea that the poem and the saint will amplify. Nowhere does the poet contract to tell all the relevant details of the saint's life; he is not dedicated to citing authoritative sources; he does not mention his own lack of skill or the insistence of others that he undertake the task. Each poem has a

lesson to teach, and the poet uses the introductory section to identify the lesson he will present.

The second area deals with the use of the saint as a literary character and involves the techniques that each writer uses to explain the once living person who found himself so blessed. The Latin prose life shows an impersonal saint who performs his tasks easily and readily. He undergoes a series of adventures, and triumphs over all difficulties. The Anglo-Saxon poetic Guthlacs are different. They do not engage in a rapid succession of adventures, but rather take part in a few selected actions. These moments of action become, through the poets' concentration upon them, intensely meaningful demonstrations of grace and power. Also, the perceptions and thoughts of the saint are made integral parts of the actions, and the result is a powerful sense of the humanity of the saint that is not found in the Latin life.

The third area also concerns the character of the saint but concentrates on one literary device. Both prose and poetry display a variety of epithets for the saint, but the numbers and kinds of epithets are considerably different. As variation is a key Anglo-Saxon poetic device, one expects the poems to be rich in such terms. They are indeed so, but there is more than repetition involved in the epithets. As several scholars have argued, it is an error to ignore the

patterns of variation in an Anglo-Saxon poem.³ Thus, a study of the epithet patterns in a poetic saint's life adds to our understanding not only of the character of the saint but also of the thematic statement made in the introduction of the poem. This use of purposeful variation in the epithets is not found in the Latin prose. The Anglo-Saxon poet, even when working from a Latin source, brought this useful device to bear on his work.

The fourth area is found in the conclusions to the works. The prose life stops at the end of a chapter devoted to a miraculous occurrence after the death of the saint. Guthlac B is, unfortunately, incomplete; and one can only speculate on how much is missing. Guthlac A, however, does contain a concluding section. It demonstrates the poet's interest in his major theme. The poem turns back on itself at its end, reiterating the ideas with which it began. Here again, the style of the poetic life differs from that of the prose.

These four areas, which are points of difference between the Latin prose life and the Anglo-Saxon poetic lives, are points of similarity between the two poems.⁴ All four relate to the poets' interests in expressing a crucially important Christian idea or ideal. To express the idea, each poet employed the familiar and cherished story of a saint on earth. It was not

important to fit every known adventure that befell the saint into the poem, but it was important to remind the audience of the inevitable connection to be made between this saint and the unending and unbroken line of heroic figures beginning with Adam, reaching its high point with Christ, and continuing through desert ascetics, Roman virgins, and English bishops. Further, it was of vital importance to relate the thoughts and acts of the saint to the lives of those who read or heard his story.

The next step in the identification of the hagiographic style is the search for the use of these four areas in Andreas, Juliana, Fates of the Apostles, and Elene, the most commonly identified poetic saints' lives. The observation of them in these poems strengthens the definition of the hagiographic style and demonstrates its use in a variety of narrative situations.

The use of the hagiographic style is next explored in works concentrating on the acts of Old Testament figures. Judith and Daniel have been called "Hebrew saints' lives"⁵ and are generally held to concentrate on a part of each figure's life and exploits.⁶ That the poets develop these familiar stories in the hagiographic style suggests that the Old Testament figures may be used to serve the same purpose as a saint like Guthlac or Juliana.⁷

The identification of the hagiographic style not only in the six commonly accepted Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives but also in Judith and Daniel, two poems midway between saints' lives and biblical paraphrases, provides the model for the argument that Genesis A and Exodus display the features common to the hagiographic style.

Recognition of the hagiographic style in Genesis A and Exodus indicates a relationship between these two poems and the Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives and suggests that they may be examined in the manner that is employed for the saints' lives. That is, the two poems are not only poetic renderings of the Bible, possibly influenced by patristic or liturgical traditions, but they are also carefully shaped explanations of basic ideals of Christian life. They provided their audiences with a spirited and exciting tale of Biblical heroism and adventure and simultaneously taught and reinforced the importance of patterning one's life after the blessed examples provided by the saints.

Many aspects of the hagiographic style have been noted by scholars concentrating on individual Anglo-Saxon poems or on various stylistic elements in the poems. The remarks of these scholars are of fundamental importance to this study, which often extends such observations beyond their original scope in order to create the overall definition of the hagiographic style.

Much critical opinion is cited here both in order to recognize the basis from which this argument grows and to identify the critical climate which surrounds the different poems at present.

Notes

¹ To make this argument, an explanation of the use of the word style is necessary at the outset. Style here refers to the total effect of a work achieved by the choices made by the writer as he follows a consistent and coherent tradition. The sense of recognition that the reader feels as he moves from one poem to another among the Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives signals the presence of a particular style, and the task at hand is the identification of the key elements of the style that create its distinctive qualities. This definition of style is built upon the observations of several scholars. For example, Pamela Gradon, Form and Style in Early English Literature (London: Methuen & Co., 1971), p. 382:

"If anything emerges from this study of aspects of form and style in Old and Middle English it is confirmation of the truism that style is choice. The distinction between literature and non-literature is, as the Middle Ages rightly perceived, largely a distinction between truth and verisimilitude, history and fictio; the most indifferent of medieval romances, the most banal of modern novels, is still literature, but literature which lacks an effective style. For style is the creation of a structure related to, but distinguishable from, the linguistic form. The distinction is the distinction between a casual photograph and a painting. And the difference is just that personal vision which creates patterns and relationships."

John Gardner, The Construction of Christian Poetry in Old English (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1975), p. xi:

"Since poetic expression may differ from everyday prose expression not only in its choice of ornaments but also in its choice of methods of organization--its disposition and amplification of materials--I use the word

style in a broad sense embracing not only verbal pattern but also structural design. I do not mean that the words style and structure are synonymous; I mean that just as one can speak of a poet's style in handling sentences, one can speak of characteristic styles or organization. . . For instance, the Mesopotamian preference for elaborating descriptions and set speeches but hurrying over major actions is a matter of style. So too John Donne's habit of developing an old analogy to its last logical extension is a part of Donne's poetic style . . . My method is close analysis of the style of individual poems, analysis which tries to discover, intuitively and empirically, the relationship of the given poem's parts and, later, the relationship of the given poem to the poetic tradition."

H. W. Janson, History of Art, 2nd ed. (New York: Prentice-Hall and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1974), p. 36:

"Style is used loosely to mean the distinctive way a thing is done in any field of human endeavor . . . If something 'has no style' . . . Such a thing . . . is not only undistinguished but also undistinguishable; in other words, we do not know how to classify it, how to put it into its proper context . . . Of a thing that has style, then, we expect that it must not be inconsistent within itself, that it must have an inner coherence, or unity; a sense of wholeness, of being all of a piece."

² For a discussion of the intent of hagiography see Raymon S. Farrar, "Structure and Function in Representative Old English Saints' Lives," Neophil, LVII (1973), 83-93:

"Gerould's statement is fundamentally sound, excepting, perhaps, the final phrase which considers the purpose of hagiography to be the glorification of its subjects. Such magnification may be--indeed, is--one facet of the hagiographic genre, but I believe it can be argued that the significance of an individual saint and of the genre overall may be more complex than has been previously noted, that the vitae strive to do more than praise their subjects or even edify their audiences, another of the intentions suggested by some critics." (p. 83)

"The saint, whether historical or not, is a quasi-allegorical figure, manifesting some aspect of the Christian life and the totality of hagiography may well provide a psychomachia of the ideal mental states (and their active consequences) of the practicing Christian--and hence reflecting, in miniature, Christ Himself. Beyond intellectual acquiescence to these ideas, there must be action. As Christ did, so has His saint. So also should the reader. The controlling vision is always salvation history." (p. 87)

³ Cf for example, Leonard H. Frey, "Heroic Narrative Technique in the Anglo-Saxon Christian Epic," Diss. University of Oregon 1959, pp. 63-64:

"The condition of Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse would indeed favor an expansion of statement through variation of epithet; . . . variational development is the obvious basis for the elaboration of Christian matter . . . It must be noted that variations may involve more than epithet or apposition. Often, an epithet may suggest an idea relevant to it, so to speak, and the idea its own variations . . . These clauses depend on the epithets to get them started, then they develop their own variations."

Bernard F. Huppé, The Web of Words (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1970), p. 164. In his analysis of Judith, Huppé says:

"The emphasis of Holofernes' power in the transitional Scene III is accompanied by an increasing emphasis on the wickedness and destructiveness of this power, and the scene throughout contains premonitions of the ensuing, and climatic scene of the beheading. These premonitions are managed first through the choice of epithets for Holofernes."

⁴ Except for the missing conclusion to Guthlac B.

⁵ Cf for example, Roberta Frank, "Some Uses of Paronomasia in Old English Scriptural Verse," Speculum, 47 (1972), 222.

⁶ Cf for example, Huppé, The Web of Words, p. 137:

"The poet's selection for his poem of the climactic episode of the Book of Judith does not perhaps require much explanation because the Old English poet characteristically dealt with biblical narratives selectively; as I have elsewhere shown, even the Genesis A, frequently called a paraphrase, turns out to be a poem providing in extenso a thematic development of a definite selection from Genesis. Even more clearly Daniel and Exodus are selectively thematic."

⁷ For discussion of the use of Old Testament figures as saints, see James R. Hurt, "A Note on Aelfric's Lives of Saints," English Studies No. XVI, 51 (1970), 231-34:

"Aelfric's general framework remains the Augustinian view of history: that human history has been guided by the power of God and that it turns around the three key events of the Fall, the Incarnation, and the coming Last Judgment. The Old Testament saints, Christ and His apostles, and the martyrs and confessors of the period since the Crucifixion epitomize in their lives the travails of the pious in these three ages." (p. 233)

See also Farrar, p. 88. "One most often thinks of Noah and David as prefigurings of the New Testament rather than as 'saints,' yet Aelfric includes them in his Sermo de Memoria Sanctorum."

Chapter I

Prose and Poetic Saints' Lives in Anglo-Saxon England

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the prose and poetic traditions in England which can be seen in the extant saints' lives. It is not my purpose to retrace the history of hagiography: this interesting subject has been treated by a number of writers.¹ Rather, I would like to use their scholarship to discuss some of the characteristics of hagiography as it was practiced in England from the seventh to the tenth centuries and the approaches that modern critics have employed to elucidate both the overall tradition and the structure and style of individual lives.

Saints' lives exist in Latin prose,² Anglo-Saxon prose, and Anglo-Saxon poetry. Of the three, Latin prose hagiography is the senior and best represented tradition. Scholars agree that this prose tradition is an imported one that gradually underwent naturalization.³ Regarding the importing of Latin lives, Rosemary Woolf states "But most important of all, during the seventh century, the Roman church sent manuscripts of saints'

lives."⁴ That prose tradition, according to C. W. Jones,⁵ returns ultimately to the keeping of Easter tables. He feels that the need to recount sufficient detail regarding the saint soon forced what was once a marginal notation to become a narrative: "Calendar entry through the breviary-martyrology to the historical martyrology and the transference of this material to the office in the form of legendary and hagiography, and then into popular romance written in meter and in the vernacular, is a natural . . . growth."⁶

Once the saint's life became an extended treatment of the life and usually the death of an individual, it developed into a highly conventional form.⁷ Early writers of hagiography set patterns that would be followed internationally for years. The identification of conventional elements borrowed and preserved throughout the centuries has been a major interest in the scholarly approaches to the Latin prose lives.⁸ For example, Bertram Colgrave points out that the fourth century Latin translation made by Evagrius, Bishop of Antioch of St. Anastasius' Life of St. Anthony was used by the unknown monk of Lindisfarne when he composed the Life of St. Cuthbert, which was used by Bede when he composed his prose and metrical lives of the same saint.⁹ The idea for an exercise in both prose and poetry, however, belongs to Sedulius, who also influenced Alcuin's prose and metrical lives of St. Willibrord.¹⁰

A popular convention, that of self-effacement, originated with Sulpicious Severus' Life of St. Martin (fifth century) which "opens with the author's declaration of his unworthiness to write about the saint and deprecates his lack of eloquence and his rustic style."¹¹ This opening became all but "universal in later lives."¹²

Other conventions have been identified as well. The popularity of saintly incorruptability, for example, is cited by C. W. Jones. "The incorrupt body is the outward symbol, so standard in the English world of hagiography that Bede assigns it to four English saints: Ethelberga, Fursey, Audrey and Cuthbert as well as to the hand of Oswald . . . Felix states the conventionality of the theme by quoting Bede word for word, with Guthlac inserted for the name of Cuthbert."¹³

Raymon S. Farrar carries the idea of conventionality further than either Colgrave or Jones. He points to the "relative stability of the literary structures within which the hagiographers wrote,"¹⁴ and attempts "to re-evaluate hagiography in some fashion that would explain why authors would feel themselves under no constraint to alter the basic format of their writings."¹⁵ Specifically, Farrar investigates the "standard life of a confessor" and that of a virgin martyr and discovers a number of "topoi" which he demonstrates are common in the examples he uses.¹⁶ His purpose is to discover the

overall purpose of hagiography, and he concludes that "what is probably the most obvious purpose of hagiography" is "that of re-enacting the Christian ideal in one's own life as the saints have done in theirs."¹⁷

Thus, the conventional nature of prose hagiography is dictated by its own major aim: the reminding by example after example of the great truths to be learned from Christ's life and the lives of all those who tried to follow Him.

Whether or not these and other conventional facets are all ultimately related to what Farrar tentatively calls a "psychomachia of the ideal mental states (and their active consequences) of the practicing Christian,"¹⁸ they do occupy a major place in the critical discussion of the hagiographic tradition.

As mentioned, the conventional nature of the lives contributed to the tradition of borrowing material from one life for inclusion in another. Events, even words, from one life reappear in a new context in another. This borrowing, far from being culpable plagiarism, is a valid technique in hagiography. As Thomas Hill, speaking of the Anglo-Saxon poem Andreas, notes, Gregory's Dialogues contain a kind of explanation for this phenomenon. Gregory explains (Lib II)¹⁹ that the acts of Benedict parallel those of such figures as Moses, Elias, Peter, etc. for a purpose. That purpose has to do with the spiritual and not the historical

truth. The unbroken chain of spiritual proofs that links the patriarchs, Christ, and the later saints is shown to the faithful through symbolic events that recur and recur.²⁰

The borrowing of words or phrases, even whole passages, may disturb the modern reader, who has come to regard historical accuracy as superior to any other definition of truth. Handy sections are lifted from one life and inserted into another; and at times the borrowing is related to the conventional nature of much of the life. The introduction to Felix's Life of St. Guthlac,²¹ for example, borrows sections from Evagrius' translation of the Life of St. Anthony and from Bede's prose Life of St. Cuthbert. The material borrowed is conventional; the opening remark that the work has been undertaken at the request of others and that it will cover the life and the death of the saint; the purpose of the work, that is, it will remind the faithful and teach the true way to those who did not know the saint personally. In the Life of St. Guthlac, as well, the description of the saint is borrowed from the Life of St. Anthony.²²

The borrowings may also be related to the popular idea that the saint and his life present a good model for other faithful Christians to follow. The life of Christ provides the ultimate model, and the lives of His saints reflect the events and attitudes that are

of key importance for later Christians to understand and to imitate. The saint, predictably, functions as a type of Christ; and events, even phrases, that link him to Christ help to alert the reader that this relationship exists.

The figural use of the saint indicates a symbolic mode.²³ The borrowings, often attacked by modern critics on the grounds of historical inaccuracy, become appropriate in the symbolic transmission of Christ's life and its meaning to the life of whatever saint is under discussion.

But salvation history and its requirements alone do not completely explain the devices and familiar moments in the lives. To understand the compositional motivations, one must also observe the rhetorical tradition surrounding the writers of the Latin prose lives.²⁴ The Latin lives, both those in prose and those in verse, illustrate their writers' understanding of and desire to fulfill the requirements of proper Christian style.²⁵ An example, the use of physical description for the saints, can clarify the idea. The lengthy, yet uninformative, descriptions owe much to the prescription of rhetoric, and such passages may be borrowed from one life for use in another.

Discussing the "New Life" that Augustine gave to rhetoric, Auerbach quotes the following passage: "et bona facies hominis dimensa pariliter et affecta

hilariter et luculenter colorata" ("good is a human face with regular features, a cheerful expression, and high color").²⁶ The idea is an ancient one, that character can be read in the human countenance and form.²⁷ The use of just such a description becomes a recurring and often borrowed motif in the Latin lives. For example, Guthlac is described as "sed eximia sagacitate pollens, hilari facie, sincera mente, mansueto animo, simplici vultu" ("but possessing remarkable wisdom, he showed a cheerful face, a pure mind, a gentle spirit, a frank countenance")²⁸ and later "Erat enim forma praecipuus, corpore castus, facie decorus, mente devotus, aspectu dilectus, sapientia inbutus, vultu floridus, prudentia praeditus, colloquio blandus, temperantia clarus, interna fortitudine robustus, censura iustitiae stabilis, longanimitate largus, patientia firmus, humilitate mansuetus, caritate sollicitus" ("He was distinguished in appearance, chaste of body, handsome of face, devout of mind, and attractive to look at. He was endowed with wisdom and prudence, bright of countenance, pleasant in converse, outstandingly temperate, strong with inward strength, steadfast in his judgment of what was right, abundant in forbearance, firm in patience, submissive in humility and solicitous in love").²⁹ Colgrave notes that this second set of descriptive terms has been borrowed from the Life of St. Fursey;³⁰ and the ideas, even the words, may be

considered a conventional aspect of the form.³¹ The cheerful countenance was as necessary for St. Guthlac as it was for St. Furseay or St. Athelwold. Rhetorical devices, necessary for good style, are passed from one life to another. Possibly the exchange contributes to a uniformity in tone necessary for the reader to understand the connections between the saints and ultimately between them and Christ.³²

The Latin prose hagiographer had two masters to satisfy. The first, the spiritual master, demanded clear proof that this saint belonged in the closed society of those whose very lives mirror the life of Christ. To please this master, the writer adjusts what was known about his subject to prove analogies between the saint's life and the life of Christ. The writer may well borrow from other lives to support this connection; the popularity of the passages indicating the incorruptibility of the saint's body provides a good example.

The second master, the rhetorically trained school master, wants to observe in this very important work the proper construction and ornamentation. To please this master, the writer must call forth the appropriate style and decoration taught him through good examples both Christian and pagan.³³ One can, for example, observe Bede celebrating Cuthbert in Latin verse and then, in traditional style, rendering the life in

prose.³⁴ The Latin prose saint's life conforms to two sets of literary and artistic rules. The first set governs the spiritual material, and the second governs the literary style.³⁵ The end product is a stylized, highly conventional work.

The Latin lives cited above are both imported and native, and the combination reflects the popularity of the lives and the need for works on English saints as well as lives of international figures. Imported lives were used to provide the basic form for the compositions of English writers.³⁶ English Latin lives themselves were also used as models by English writers.³⁷

A number of influential imported lives have been identified. One key import, for example, was the Dialogues of Gregory the Great. Ogilvy³⁸ speculates that the Dialogues were brought to England "as early as the end of the seventh century"³⁹ and lists the following native writers whose works show its influence: Aldhelm, Bede,⁴⁰ Alcuin, Felix, Boniface, and Aelfric. The Dialogues, as well, are the first work translated in Alfred's ninth century educational program.⁴¹ Although Alfred himself did not make the translation, the fact that the work was chosen for translation indicates its continuing importance.⁴²

The Dialogues contain a number of brief lives (in Books One and Three), an extended life of St. Benedict (Book Two), and a discussion of the soul which is

illustrated with sections of various lives (Book Four).

In "Structure and Function in Representative Old English Saints' Lives,"⁴³ Raymon S. Farrar cites two highly influential imported saints' lives: The Life of St. Anthony, by Athanasius (translated into Latin by Evagrius) and Sulpicius Severus' Life of St. Martin. He includes the following important lives by English writers: The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an anonymous monk at Whitby, Felix's Life of St. Guthlac, The Life of St. Cuthbert, by an anonymous monk at Lindisfarne, Bede's Life of St. Cuthbert, and Eddius Stephanus' Life of Bishop Wilfrid. From these "representative lives," Farrar creates a list of mutually shared topoi. To these popular lives can be added Aldhelm's De Laudibus Virginitatis, the anonymous Life of Ceolfrid, and Willibald's Life of St. Boniface.⁴⁴

From this strong Latin tradition comes the vernacular prose tradition. An analogous situation can be found in the French tradition. Speaking of French vernacular saints' lives, J. D. M. Ford says "Now it is patent to the most casual observer that the Old French legends of saints, whether in verse or in prose, derive in very large measure from anterior documents in Latin."⁴⁵ The earliest surviving English life is thought to be a ninth century Mercian life of St. Chad.⁴⁶ Of this life Gerould remarks "In English there is preserved a life of St. Chad, the Mercian bishop of

the seventh century, which could not have been made later than 950; but it stands quite alone, a waif, and a very ragged one. It seems to be the translation of a Latin homily for use on the saint's day, which in turn is based on Bede; and it follows Bede's account slavishly though often inaccurately."⁴⁷ The observation that the life is in fact a translation of a Latin work is common to other collections of Anglo-Saxon prose saints' lives. Of these translated lives, probably the best known collection is Aelfric's Lives of the Saints.⁴⁸ Written after the series of Catholic Homilies,⁴⁹ the saints' lives, according to Rosemary Woolf, "became a part of the remarkable movement to provide sermons in the vernacular for the common people."⁵⁰

James R. Hurt sees more specific but generally compatible aims:

... the yoking in "De Memoria Sanctorum" of biography and direct moralizing--the successive listing of saints and of vices and virtues--suggests the spirit in which we should read the Lives. The best saints' lives, including Aelfric's, had a double concern, with both historical fact and spiritual truth, and their often sensational or garish actions were designed to reveal an 'inner truth' usually masked by the confused surface of ordinary life.⁵¹

Aelfric's Lives of the Saints are a series of rather special lives. They include "as well the passions and lives of those saints whom the monks, but not the laity, honour in their services."⁵²

G. I. Needham sees Aelfric's purpose in translating this series in clear-cut terms:

All Aelfric's vernacular works were undertaken with one aim in view: to enable his countrymen to enjoy the spiritual benefits to be derived from a knowledge of the Latin literature of the church, by making available to them in their own language some of the literature itself, and the means of learning for themselves the language in which it is written.⁵³

This statement might suggest that Aelfric's vernacular work is simple translation; but, as Needham remarks, "He (Aelfric) usually refers to his works as translations--though they would certainly not be regarded as such today."⁵⁴

In spite of Aelfric's expressed desire to add nothing new to his work ("I say nothing new in this book, for it has stood written in Latin books for a long time, though the unlearned did not know it; nor will I falsely pretend to do so, for fathers strong in faith, and holy teachers write it in Latin for a lasting memorial, and for future edification of future generations"),⁵⁵ Dorothy Bethurum observes Aelfric's usual practices of "skilled condensations of the Latin text, translating certain passages with fair literalness, but summarizing far more than he translates."⁵⁶

Aelfric was translating content from his Latin sources, but "his rhythm was an English rhythm, arrived at in an English fashion . . . There was behind him a

tradition of prose adorned by alliteration, attempting the effects of poetry."⁵⁷ Also, one should remember that Aelfric was deliberately preparing his translations for an English audience.

Earlier than Aelfric's Lives of the Saints, The Blickling Homilies⁵⁸ contain a number of saints' lives.

Gerould notes:

The Blickling Homilies . . . include a half dozen legends . . . The homilies have received much praise as early examples of good prose narrative; but they deserve it only so far as adequate translation may always be commended . . . From the fact that two of the legends have been found in other manuscripts than that containing the homilies, it is clear that the desire for stories of the saints in the vernacular was not limited to any one monastery.⁵⁹

The nineteenth homily, "St. Andrew," is a useful example. In this homily, the writer tells of St. Andrew's rescue of St. Matthew, who was captured and blinded by cannibalistic Marmedonians. Andrew, at first reluctant but then steadfast and determined, effects the rescue, survives terrible torture, temporarily drowns the evil Marmedonians (with Christ's help), and finally converts and teaches the repentant savages. As has been noted, this homily is much like the Old English poem Andreas.⁶⁰ It is not, however, considered a possible source for the poem.⁶¹ This saint's life, like the others, is relatively free of moral comment. Bethurum's comment that Aelfric is "interested in

narrative in Lives of Saints and very little in homeletic material"⁶² applies to The Blicking Homilies saints' lives as well. The forms are the traditional Latin ones, but the style is English.

There are other prose saints' lives. The Vercelli Book, for example, contains 23 homilies, some of which are saints' lives.⁶³ Of particular note in the Vercelli collection is a version of the life of St. Guthlac (homily 23). A similar work has been identified in MS. Vespasian D. xxi,⁶⁴ suggesting once again the popularity of both the saint and vernacular versions of his life. The use of these lives as homilies and their authors' primary interest in narrative make them appear clear and straightforward. Critics point out that the writers of these saints' lives have altered and adapted their sources with considerable skill, even originality; but the Anglo-Saxon prose saints' lives present few problems of interpretation. They owe their form if not their style to Latin sources,⁶⁵ and their clear and easily discerned purpose, to provide spiritual truth and spiritual proof to the congregation, guided their content.

Relating the Anglo-Saxon prose saints' lives to the Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives requires a step backward in time. The poetic tradition is generally held to be the older one, a situation also discerned in French vernacular hagiography. J. D. M. Ford,



commenting on "Legends of saints in Old French prose,"

says:

They were probably prepared for a public of laymen not so illiterate as those for whom the versified accounts were intended. . . . They began to appear later than the accounts in verse for hardly any of them can be dated earlier than the 13th century, while, as we know, the verse lives run back through the 12th, 11th and 10th centuries even into the ninth.⁶⁶

The English tradition, while a bit older, is similar. Regarding saints' lives, Gordon Gerould says that there is "no English prose before the latter part of the 9th century."⁶⁷ Also, Rosemary Woolf, commenting on the origin of Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives, argues that Latin prose lives which arrived in England during the seventh century provided the sources, and that poetic lives were being produced "towards the end of the eighth century." Further, she suggests that "It is not at all astonishing that a leap should have been made from Latin prose to Old English poetry . . . verse was the vernacular medium for storytelling."⁶⁸ This statement may imply that what was left over was Anglo-Saxon prose.

Thus, both Anglo-Saxon poetry⁶⁹ and Anglo-Saxon prose share the same source, Latin prose saints' lives; but they must be viewed as independent creations which did not initially draw upon one another.

Independent of each other, also, are the critical approaches to the literary and stylistic merits of the prose saints' lives and the poetic saints' lives.

Speaking of prose lives, Gordon Gerould states "The prose legend took its own course, following in somewhat pedestrian wise the well travelled roads of hagiography."⁷⁰ This statement sums up two critical commonplaces regarding Anglo-Saxon prose saints' lives.

Granting its dependence on Latin models, the prose life "took its own course." It became English and thus distinctive. But that course was "pedestrian." What exactly "pedestrian" signifies is difficult to understand, but the term is hardly one of unqualified praise. This attitude is tempered, however, when critics investigate individual works. Aelfric's work has provided a good example. Critics investigate Aelfric's arrangement of his sources, his omissions, condensations, his purpose as stated in his preface and perhaps, above all, his remarkable rhythmic prose. In these areas, critics such as those cited above, find much to praise. Of the prose lives, as a whole, there is only the implied awareness that they are in the hagiographic tradition. Gerould says it was an "attitude of mind on the part of their authors that makes the genre a definite literary type."⁷¹

Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives are involved in very different critical traditions. The bulk of

scholarship on the poetic saints' lives can be roughly divided into three categories. First, there are a large number of studies that deal with one poem and some of its aspects. Second, there are studies that deal with groups of poems.⁷² Third, there are studies of certain aspects of Anglo-Saxon poetry that cite relevant parts of various lives.⁷³

In the first category, one finds an approach that has tended to discourage comparisons and encourage contrasts. The critics who focus on one poem find their chosen work somehow distinct from all others. The Guthlac poems present a good example of this tendency. In writing about Guthlac A, Laurence Shook⁷⁴ concludes that the poet had "discovered the beauty and effectiveness of what later poets would call the symbolic mode."⁷⁵ As well, Frances R. Lipp⁷⁶ states that Guthlac A is "not a typical member of its genre,"⁷⁷ and later that the "poem's overt and obtrusive didacticism sets it apart from saints' lives and from apocalyptic writings."⁷⁸

James L. Rosier,⁷⁹ in his discussion of Guthlac B, explains "within the medieval tradition of hagiographical narrative, both Latin and vernacular, the poem Guthlac B is an unusual, in large part an exceptional, text."⁸⁰

Claims of differences can be easily found in scholarship on other Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives. In her edition of Juliana, Rosemary Woolf stresses

uniqueness in the style of the poem: "Apart from certain stylized passages, such as the opening section, the diction and syntax of Juliana are more nearly those of prose than in any other Old English poem of this type."⁸¹

David Hamilton⁸² in analyzing Andreas says "The Andreas poet uses both of these devices (i.e. forceful repetition of a few words and phrases that unfold metaphorically as a poem progresses, and second, an extended structure of dramatic irony that conveys and highlights the figurative language) more insistently than any other Old English poet."⁸³

In his edition of Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles, Kenneth Brooks separates The Fates of the Apostles from the recent critical view that Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives are sophisticated literary art when he concludes "The poem has no literary merit, for its subject and plan would hardly permit this: it belongs to the class of memorial verse."⁸⁴

These critics have chosen to concentrate on one poem and explore a part of it which is, or may be, distinct. In an attempt to understand and comment on the special characteristics of one work, they assume a uniformity in the tradition from which their chosen work deviates.⁸⁵ Their emphasis on differences has tended to obscure similarities among poetic saints' lives both in areas which they do not consider and in

areas which they do.

The second category of criticism, those studies which deal with groups of poems, would seem to be the place for lively comparisons. Yet, here again, it is often primarily differences that are stressed. For example, in a discussion of three Anglo-Saxon poems, Andreas, Judith, and Exodus, Arthur G. Brodeur contrasts both the poems and the poets.⁸⁶ Of Judith, he says "Judith exhibits an intensity of feeling and an eloquence in conveying it unmatched in any other Anglo-Saxon poem";⁸⁷ and of the poet of Judith, Brodeur states:

No other Anglo-Saxon poet had so superb a gift for evoking images and scenes so that they stand out before our eyes as if we were onlookers. His style is astonishingly individual, and his power of description and of evocation are, in the main, quite independent of the inherited wealth of formula which, in his work, is decidedly secondary to his own genius for detailed and powerful expression.⁸⁸

Of the poet of Exodus, he says "his language, at least in many points, is different from that of other Anglo-Saxon poets,"⁸⁹ and of the poem, "Exodus is, in its diction and style, unique among Anglo-Saxon narrative poems."⁹⁰ Brodeur's conclusions indicate his interest in the individual aspects of the three poems: "The three poems . . . are all highly individual in style. Each exhibits clear evidence of its author's gift of original expression."⁹¹ His search has been for

"original expression" and not for those aspects of the poems that relate them to one another.

Other writers who deal with groups of poems are also quick to perceive differences. Rosemary Woolf, in her discussion of poetic saints' lives says "In poetic quality, Guthlac B stands out very clearly from the rest of Old English saints' lives";⁹² and in his critical history, Stanley B. Greenfield remarks "As a saint's life, Elene is somewhat unusual, treating not of a passion and death but of a series of revelations, outward miracles being matched by inner illuminations."⁹³

In an early study (1907), A. R. Skemp⁹⁴ remarked "Indeed, scriptural motives and conceptions are illustrated in greater or less degree, by almost every Old English poem which touches on religious subjects."⁹⁵

But, five pages later, Skemp excludes one poem:

"Juliana stands apart through the nature of the story there reproduced."⁹⁶ Skemp's study does point out basic similarities which he finds in "almost every Old English poem which touches on religious subjects," but those similarities are derived from his understanding of Anglo-Saxon poetic practices and Anglo-Saxon society and not from similarities that force a recognition of hagiographic practices. For example, Skemp suggests that the Anglo-Saxon poet modified his scriptural material in three ways, first by "elaboration of genial passages" (congenial with the subject matter of

non-scriptural poems); second, by "addition of detail native in character" (native to non-scriptural material); and third, by "vivid dramatic realization, characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon storyteller, of scene and event."⁹⁷

The second half of Skemp's essay deals with Anglo-Saxon society and its effects on scriptural material. He says:

Anglo-Saxon poetry, like Teutonic poetry, generally centered around the deeds of heroes, to whom the other figures are subordinated, and it was from this standpoint that the persons and incidents of the scriptural stories were regarded. Prophet, patriarch and apostle were thus concerned with the attributes of the Teutonic warrior, and their deeds were celebrated in the familiar heroic spirit.⁹⁸

Later, he adds, "The persons of the Old Testament stories are thus endowed with the qualities of the Anglo-Saxon warrior or king."⁹⁹

Skemp's appreciation of the heroic aspects of saints' lives and scriptural poetry is no doubt just; however, he does not ask if such a natural predilection for heroes and heroic acts became part of a new method of poetic characterization rather than remaining a predictable application of old ideas to new material. One major notion of this study argues that, over the three hundred years of its development, the poetic saint's life incorporated and "naturalized" the native

elements until they became native to the material itself. J

Talking of the poet's ability to "realize events-- to imagine the minutiae which give vividness to a scene,"¹⁰⁰ Skemp comments "The dramatic imagination which adds these vivid details produces an attempt to realize the persons as well as the scenes described."¹⁰¹ This desire and ability to create character is also a defining characteristic of the hagiographic style. As Skemp suggests, the idea and the ability come from Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry. This study argues that, like the emphasis on heroic acts, the interest in character realization became a natural aspect of Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiography.

Another article which deals with a number of poems is Roberta Frank's "Some Uses of Paronomasia in Old English Scriptural Verse."¹⁰² Frank concentrates on "the importance and meaning of etymological or pseudo-etymological wordplay (paronomasia) in Old English scriptural verse."¹⁰³ She deals with Genesis, Exodus, Judith, and Daniel in her study, but separates the poems as follows:

The sporadic presence of this second style in two Old English scriptural paraphrases, Daniel and Judith, is probably related to the Anglo-Saxon attitude towards these Old Testament books; they seem to have been regarded as exemplary histories, as Hebrew saints' lives, and not, like Genesis and Exodus, as the words of God set down by Moses.¹⁰⁴

Frank perceives the emphasis that the poets place on beginnings and endings of poems:

Just as the Anglo-Saxon illustrator adorned the initial capitals of a poem and the capitals of each major structural division within the work, so the Old English scriptural poet seems to have concentrated his most elaborate paronomastic constructions within prologues and epilogues, as well as arranging them so as to frame in a kind of envelope pattern particularly dramatic or elevated passages in the body of his work.¹⁰⁵

Her interest here, of course, is limited to the use of word play in the various sections; she is concentrating on the idea that "the rhetorical framework is dominant in the poet's mind, the verse-unit secondary."¹⁰⁶

Her work suggests that the poets paid special attention to the beginnings and endings of their poems and that they were involved in a rhetorically sophisticated literary form. In an earlier discussion (1966), Jackson J. Campbell¹⁰⁷ also concluded that many of the Anglo-Saxon poets worked in a learned tradition. For example, he says "Like Cynewulf, many of the poets who wrote the poems that make up our corpus of Old English poetry had a Latin education."¹⁰⁸

Although these writers are considering several poems, they are also contributing to the critical approach which rests on the importance of difference or individuality. Their interest in separating the poems in question from each other and from the overall

tradition from which they come may derive, in part, from the influence of critical approaches to prose hagiography, both Latin and Anglo-Saxon, which stress the many conventional similarities found among the works. When the Anglo-Saxon poems do not show similar conventional approaches, they are seen as coming from an existing tradition¹⁰⁹ but as having escaped its limiting bonds by virtue of unique, poetic qualities.

The third group of critics concentrate on finding similarities of a very specific nature. For example, George Clark identifies a popular theme in his article "The Traveler Recognizes his Goal: A Theme in Anglo-Saxon Poetry."¹¹⁰ Clark finds this theme in Andreas, Beowulf, Genesis, Judith, and Solomon and Saturn. Leonard H. Frey discusses Andreas, Guthlac B, and Christ and Satan in his article "Exile and Elegy in Anglo-Saxon Epic Poetry."¹¹¹ Thomas B. Hill, in his article "The Tropological Context of Heat and Cold Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry,"¹¹² finds evidence for his ideas in Elene, Seafarer, Andreas, Solomon and Saturn, Judgment Day I, and Beowulf. Fredrik J. Heineman, in his article "Judith 236-291a: A Mock Heroic Approach-to-Battle Type Scene,"¹¹³ identifies approach-to-battle scenes in Elene, Exodus, Finnsburgh, Genesis A, Maldon, Andreas, Beowulf, Daniel, and Judith.

In these and many other studies, the critics concentrate on particular themes, topoi, or other facets

of Anglo-Saxon poetry as a whole.. It is not a part of their intention to perceive larger similarities among the various works with which they deal.

A consideration of what these critics have done is important in a study of Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives. They have encouraged the examination of the poems as both good poetry and as complex, even sophisticated art. Often their method is based on the separation of the poem in question from the "tradition" into which all the works not under discussion are placed, and on the elucidation of the unique and praiseworthy qualities of that poem. This method has led critics who deal with these poems to ignore or even denigrate the basic tradition of the poetic saints' lives.

A serious problem related to an understanding of the tradition of Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives is the dearth of extant material from which to create a definition for the poetic tradition itself. Rosemary Woolf identifies six extant lives: Elene, Juliana, Fates of the Apostles, Guthlac A and B, and Andreas.¹¹⁴ The titles alone indicate the wide range of specific subject matter: Juliana recounts the martyrdom of the beautiful, virginal Christian Juliana. Elene is a narrative about the conversion of Constantine, the search for the True Cross by Elene and the conversion and miracle-working of Judas-Cyriacus. Fates of the

Apostles briefly discusses the death of each of the Apostles and each man's happy eternal life. Guthlac A and B deal with parts of the life and death of an English saint. Andreas recounts the adventures of Andrew and Matthew in the land of Mermedonia. No doubt the diversity of subject matter somewhat obscures traditional and conventional aspects of these works.

Four other poems, however, Daniel, Judith, Genesis A, and Exodus, may be identified as a special category of saint's life. They all deal with Old Testament figures and have been grouped together in the past as scriptural poetry.¹¹⁵ Judith and Daniel are more obviously in the category of saints' lives than are Genesis A and Exodus; the traditionally assigned names of these poems help as much as any other factor¹¹⁶ in the acceptance of the notion that two of the poems are primarily concerned with individual figures while two are not. In spite of the fact that more than half of the poem is devoted to Abraham, Genesis A remains, in critical estimation, a paraphrase or versification of a section of the book of Genesis.¹¹⁷

Exodus, which recounts the escape of the Israelites and concentrates on Moses "domas," stands between Judith and Genesis A when its hagiographic characteristics are considered. Moses and his people occupy the entire poem, yet critical theory finds the poem highlighted by the Crossing of the Red Sea and illuminated

by the significance of that act. Thus, it is not difficult to understand why differences rather than similarities are stressed when the Anglo-Saxon poetic saint's life is under consideration. When a hagiographic tradition is mentioned in the various critical approaches to the poems, it seems to be the prose tradition rather than a distinctly poetic one that is applied.

There are, however, areas of similarity or comparison which have been brought forward in various critical approaches to the poetic lives. For example, the heroic aspects of the lives, generally defined from a study of Beowulf, have been noted.¹¹⁸ The search for heroic concepts becomes a journey of recognition. What is recognized often are passages of description, the preparations for and fighting of battles, the beasts of battle, and dramatic, detailed ocean voyages. The explanation for the inclusion of such scenes relates traditional and conventional heroic ideals to hagiographic practices. At its most basic, the notion is expressed as a combination of two traditions. The Anglo-Saxon poet uses his native heroic poetic tradition to decorate or make more enjoyable to his audience a work which is basically a product of the Latin prose hagiographic tradition.

In The Guest-Hall of Eden, Alvin Lee¹¹⁹ also stresses similarities when he defines the writers' desires to explain heavenly joy in earthly terms. He,

too, separates heroic concepts from the hagiographic tradition and finds an accommodation between Latin source and Anglo-Saxon poem.

Comparisons are also made when critics speculate on the purpose of poetic saints' lives. Frances Lipp¹²⁰ says that the "didactic purpose put (Guthlac A) in a tradition of popular preaching and suggests that the poet has the needs of an unsophisticated audience in mind . . . (the) poem includes only simple teachings relevant to a popular audience."¹²¹ This attitude is similar to that of J. D. M. Ford,¹²² who notes that prose vernacular lives composed in France were designed for a more literate audience than the versified lives. The versified lives were meant for the layman who was beguiled and convinced by the miracles of the saints presented in his favourite form of story telling, the heroic poem.¹²³

That heroic characteristics are shared by all the saints' lives has been well demonstrated and is important to an overall understanding of their power and impact. That the lives function as exempla as well is clear. Just as the Latin prose and the later Anglo-Saxon prose lives are, the poetic lives are concerned with the teaching, through example, of key Christian lessons. The lessons, well learned, should affect the behaviour of all Christians who strive to improve their own lives.¹²⁴

There is one more area of comparison that in fact separates the lives. In this area, scholars attempt to assign authorship of various poems to either Caedmon or Cynewulf. The "Caedmon-poems" are the easiest to point out. Accepting Bede's statement¹²⁵ that Caedmon versified parts of the Bible, some critics have looked hopefully to the first three poems in the Junius manuscript and have tried to attach them to the elusive shepherd-poet. More recent critics have tended to limit his extant work to the Song of Creation, or to view him as a charming legend, and to carry on with whatever other approach to a given poem they choose. Earlier critics did consider the possibility that Caedmon composed Genesis A, Exodus, and Daniel with the following results. First, the poems were dated within the period of Caedmon's life, and second, they had to be viewed as the product of a divinely inspired, illiterate cowherd. Thus, no complex pattern of "learned" thought was acceptable, neither in terms of Christian exegesis or in terms of Anglo-Saxon poetic sophistication.¹²⁶ This restricted view did not always explain the material found in the poems, and it rendered unacceptable critical approaches based on learned practices.

As the search for Caedmon lost popularity and figural and allegorical approaches to the poems gained support, the poems were appreciated as more complex literary art, were assigned to later dates, and were

more open to a greater variety of scholarly approaches.

The search for Cynewulf, the other named Anglo-Saxon poet, has caused similar problems. Critics have attempted to establish Cynewulf's total body of extant work. Not only the signed poems, but also other works that for one reason or another were thought to be like Cynewulf's signed poems were separated from the non-Cynewulfian poems and compared with one another.¹²⁷ A special category was created for these works, and critics tried to perceive the hallmarks of an individual style in the poems that they considered Cynewulfian.

This search for authorship is an intriguing one, but it has created a problem. That problem is one of separation or isolation. Poems are examined to determine if they show features that would mark them as Caedmonian or Cynewulfian and are then seen as unrelated to the other non-Caedmonian or non-Cynewulfian poems if they possess the key features. The result is the lack of a delineation of poetic traditions that are characteristic of the poetic saints' lives, that are hagiographic rather than heroic in nature, and that are not seen as the typical hallmarks of an individual style.

The wide range of subject matter in the lives that have survived and the lack of numerous examples make the identification of the poetic hagiographic traditions difficult. This study attempts to identify a

hagiographic style common to the ten extant poems that can be defined as saints' lives in whole or in part. It does not take issue with the observations regarding individual poems made by previous scholars but rather will employ many of their conclusions to support the idea that the poetic saints' lives are composed with hagiographic stylistic features in mind.

The popularity of St. Guthlac, evidenced in the numerous extant manuscripts of his life, provides an opportunity to explore basic differences between the style of Latin prose hagiography and Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiography. Style, in this discussion, is not based on the essential differences between Latin prose and Anglo-Saxon poetry, but rather on the choices made by an author who deliberately fashions a work according to a certain genre whose roles and conventions are clear and desirable to him.¹²⁸

The Latin Life of St. Guthlac is typical of its genre.¹²⁹ It displays the key conventional aspects of Latin prose hagiography already discussed, including the blending of native English and continental elements, as well as the clear purpose of the Latin prose lives. The two Anglo-Saxon poems are also typical members of their genre.¹³⁰ These three lives provide a natural contrast of Latin and Anglo-Saxon hagiographic practices. Since the two Anglo-Saxon poems are generally held to have been based on Felix's Latin Life,¹³¹ they also

provide an instance of the adaptation of a subject from Latin prose to Anglo-Saxon poetry.

The purpose of Chapter II is to investigate the differences in style that are found when the two forms, Latin prose hagiography and Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiography, are placed side by side. The subject of these lives, Guthlac, remains constant; but the treatments of his story vary; examining this variance is the first step in the identification of the hagiographic style in Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Notes

¹ For example, see Gordon H. Gerould, Saints' Legends (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1916); Hippolyte Delehaye, Les Légendes Hagiographiques (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1973); Bertram Colgrave, Felix's Life of St. Guthlac (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956); Charles William Jones, Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968); Rosemary Woolf, "Saints Lives," in Continuations and Beginnings, ed. Eric G. Stanley (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1966); René Aigrain, L'Hagiographie (Paris: Bloud and Gay, 1953); and Hippolyte Delehaye, Sanctus (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1927).

² Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1963). In this study Latin poetry is treated as an adjunct to Latin prose hagiography.

"Antiquity did not conceive of poetry and prose as two forms of expression differing in essence and origin. On the contrary, both fall within the inclusive concept 'discourse.' . . . It has heretofore remained almost unnoticed that a large part of early Christian poetry is a continuation of the antique rhetorical practice of paraphrase. We first find books of the Bible recast in hexameters . . . The procedure could also be applied to lives of the saints. The vita of St. Martin by the Aquitanian Sulpicius Severus (ca 400) was versified in the second half of the fifth century by Paulinus of Périgueux, who calls his work a 'translatio' or 'transcripta oratio' (IV, 1 and V, 873); it was again versified in the sixth century by Fortunatus. But it was possible to go still further, and turn a versified version into prose afresh . . . This practice of double versions had many disciples among the Anglo-Saxons (Aldhelm, De Virginitate; Bede's vita of Cuthbert; Alcuin's vita of Willibrord) . . .

The practice shows us that metrical and non-metrical discourse were felt to be interchangeable arts." (pp. 147-48)

³ Cf for example, Stanley B. Greenfield, A Critical History of Old English Literature (New York: New York University Press, 1968), p. 13.

"The pattern for the saint's life was set by Evagrius' Latin translation of the Life of St. Anthony in the late fourth century . . . From Sulpicious Severus' Life of St. Martin (c. 400) comes the self-deprecatory topos of the Prologue, which became almost universal in the later Latin lives, and the catalog of the saint's virtues . . . The Anglo-Latin lives generally follow the pattern-with-variations--Anthony in his desert becomes Cuthbert on his isle of Farne, for example, or Guthlac in the East Anglian fens."

⁴ Woolf, "Saints' Lives," p. 37.

⁵ Jones, p. 58.

⁶ Jones, p. 58.

⁷ Cf for example, Jones, Chapter IV for a discussion of convention in saints' lives.

⁸ Cf for example, Curtius, p. 160:

"Included among the 'inexpressibility topoi' is the author's assurance that he sets down only a small part of what he has to say (pauca e multis). This procedure is especially frequent in the vita sancti--a genre which at first appeared in the fifth century and which had an enormous need for panegyric phraseology, since the saint must have performed as many miracles as possible. Such lives of saints are frequently made up of traditional clichés. 'Not only the themes of many narratives passed from hand to hand,' says Wilhelm Levison, 'but very many turns of phrase were repeated word for word again and again, and more than one vita is to a greater or less extent pieced together, like a mosaic, from fragments intended for the portraits of other saints.'"

⁹ Bertram Colgrave, "Earliest Saints' Lives Written in England," PBA, XLIV (1958), 35-60.

- 10 Colgrave, "Earliest Saints' Lives," p. 46.
- 11 Colgrave, "Earliest Saints' Lives," p. 39.
- 12 Colgrave, "Earliest Saints' Lives," p. 39.
- 13 Jones, p. 73.
- 14 Farrar, p. 83.
- 15 Farrar, p. 83.
- 16 Farrar, pp. 83-84. There are, for example, fourteen topoi common to the lives of confessors: 1. Author Writing at Another's Request, 2. Author Laments Rhetorical Shortcomings, 3. Authority of What Is Said, 4. Portents Surrounding Birth, 5. Calling Manifested Early, 6. Catalogue of Virtues, 7. Miracles Involving Saint, 8. Prophecies or Visions, 9. Struggles Against Devils, 10. Reluctance to Accept Office, 11. Death, 12. Death Speech or Farewell, 13. Incorrupt Body, 14. Miracles After Death. Farrar, pp. 90-91.
- 17 Farrar, p. 87.
- 18 Farrar, p. 87.
- 19 See Thomas D. Hill, "Figural Narrative in Andreas: The Conversion of the Meremedonians," NM, 70 (1969), 273.
- 20 For example, Jones argues that the purpose of the "repetition" is "to make clear the literary form" (p. 60). He finds borrowing at the "most prominent points, the prologue, transitions, climax, epilogue" (p. 60), and argues that "the listener received from such passages, read orally, the pleasure of recognition, anagnorisis, cultivated by ancient rhetoric" (p. 61).
- 21 See Chapter II for a more detailed discussion.
- 22 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 86-87.
- 23 Cf. for example, Jones, p. 62. Jones cites the following section from the Dialogues of Gregory:

"Peter: The things you report be strange and much to be wondered at: for in making the rock to yield forth water, I see Moses; and in the iron, which came from the bottom of the lake, I behold Heliseus; in the walking upon the water, I perceive

Peter; in the obedience of the crow,
I contemplate Helias; and in
lamenting the death of his enemy,
I acknowledge David. And therefore,
in mine opinion, this one man was
full of the spirit of all good men.

Gregory: The man of God, Benedict, had the
spirit of the one true God."
(Dialogi II, 8, ed. Gardner, p. 67)

or cf Farrar, pp. 86-87:

"Aelfric uses St. Stephen to typify forgive-
ness of injuries since Stephen's final words
echo those of the crucified Christ.

Such echoes come from a deeper level of
representation--that of imitatio Christi.
The saint always functions with Christ as
archetype; and his miracles . . . are
'modelled on scriptural events, in the desire
of the writers to force a parallel to the
glory of their spiritual masters . . .'
The saint, whether historical or not, is a
quasi-allegorical figure, manifesting some
aspect of the Christian life."

or cf. Eric Auerbach, Scenes from the Drama of Euro-
pean Literature, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York:
Meridian Books, 1959), "Figura."

24 Cf for example, Eric Auerbach, Literary
Language and its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in
the Middle Ages, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York:
Pantheon Books, 1965); and Jackson J. Campbell,
"Learned Rhetoric in Old English Poetry," MP, 63 (1966),
189-210. On page 192, Campbell says:

"This education, as we easily learn from
Isidore, Bede, and Aldhelm, consisted even
as early as the eighth century of a thorough
study of grammatica before proceeding to
rhetorica. Even the student who progressed
no further than grammatical studies, however,
would have acquired much knowledge of Latin
poetry, including a thorough mastery of
rhetorical figures."

Cf also Curtius.

Jean Leclercq, The Love of Learning and the
Desire for God, trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York:
Fordham University Press, 1961), p. 187:

"In the middle ages, as in antiquity, no writing is done without 'composition': the stylistic material is arranged in a certain order. Authors conform to ways of writing and types of composition, each of which has its own rules."

More specifically on hagiography, Leclercq says (p. 199):

"Fr. Delehaye has pointed out that what defines a document as hagiographical is not its being the account of a life, but it is the fact that the narrative is intended to edify. This intent, generally stated in the prologue, determines the structure, the methods of composition--laudatory or doctrinal digressions-- and the style itself as well as the themes and reminiscences."

Richard McKeon, "Rhetoric in the Middle Ages," Speculum, XVII (1942), 1-31:

"Christianity had grown up in the environment of a culture which was preponderantly rhetorical: indeed the chief differences between Greek and Latin Christianity may be derived from the difference between the Latin rhetoric of the Republic and early Empire . . . and the Greek rhetoric of the Empire."

Gussie Hecht Tanenhaus, "Bede's De Schematibus et Tropis--A Translation," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLVIII (1962), 239:

"This work is also the first treatise in the field of stylistic rhetoric composed by an Englishman. Between the eighth and the fifteenth centuries, stylistic rhetoric seems to have been more popular in England than the full Ciceronian formula of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery (or combinations of two or more of them)."

²⁵ Curtius, p. 75 and Auerbach, Literary Language, pp. 33-66.

²⁶ Auerbach, Literary Language, p. 55.

²⁷ For a discussion of the development of the concept that character may be read in the countenance, cf, for example, G. Misener, "Iconistic Portraits,"

Classical Philology, XIX (1924), 194-205; E. C. Evans, "Description of Personal Appearance in Roman History and Biography," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology; XLVI (1935), 43-84 ("Cicero himself in the De Oratore emphasizes the fact that all powers of action proceed from the mind, and that the countenance is the image of the mind" p. 46); E. C. Evans, "The Study of Physiognomy in the Second Century A.D.," Transactions of the American Philological Association, LXXII (1941), 96-108.

28 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 78-79.

29 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 84-85.

30 Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 84.

31 Speaking of convention in the lives, Jones says "Cuthbert, whom Bede no doubt saw in person, is indistinguishable from, let us say, St. Martin of Tours, St. Paul of Thebes, or a hundred other saintly men" (p. 54).

32 Speaking of uniformity, Jones says "hagiography attained its form from the panegyric, which was based on sophisticated rhetoric . . . The epideictic form, as it was conceived by the sophists, who were the masters of our orators, tended to wipe out personal and concrete traits and to replace them by abstract qualities" (p. 59).

33 Cf Tanenhaus, p. 238. Regarding Bede's De Schematibus et Tropis: "Bede departed from the work of his predecessors in the field of rhetoric in that he omitted specific references to pagan authors. With the exception of a line from the Christian poet Sedulius and another hexameter line probably also from a Christian poet, all his illustrative material comes from Holy Writ."

34 Gerould, Saints' Legends, p. 99. See also George K. Anderson, The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 219-20 (for a discussion of Aldhelm's prose and metrical versions of his treatise on virginity).

35 Leclercq, pp. 187-233.

36 For example, see Bertram Colgrave, The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby (Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1968). "He (the anonymous monk) may be said to have based his on Gregory's Dialogues" (p. 49).

37 For example, Clinton J. Albertson, Anglo-Saxon Saints and Heroes (New York: Fordham University Press, 1967), cites the following borrowings: in the Life of St. Wilfrid, the apology is copied from the Preface to the Anonymous Life of St. Cuthbert; Bede uses the Life of Ceolfrith by a Monk of Wearmouth in his Lives of the Abbots; and Felix borrows from Bede's prose Life of Cuthbert for his Life of Guthlac.

38 J. D. A. Ogilvy, Books Known to the English 597-1066 (Cambridge: Medieval Academy of America, 1967).

39 Ogilvy, p. 150.

40 C. Grant Loomis, "The Miracle Traditions of the Venerable Bede," Speculum, XXI (1946), 404-18. "Faced with the task of selection, and fully aware of the miracle traditions of the Celts, he turned for guidance to the Dialogues of Gregory, whose authority and fame, both as the progenitor of English Christianity and as an unimpeachable historian of Church lore, were incontestably established" (p. 418).

41 F. M. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 27f.

42 The translation is generally thought to have been done by the Mercian Waerfrith. The date of the translation is placed at 891 (Colgrave, Greenfield) or 890 (Stenton).

43 Farrar, pp. 83-93.

44 See Greenfield, A Critical History, pp. 10-15.

45 J. D. M. Ford, "The Saint's Life in Vernacular Literature of the Middle Ages," Catholic Historical Review, 17 (1931), 270.

46 Woolf, "Saints' Lives," p. 40.

47 Gerould, Saints' Legends, p. 111.

48 W. W. Skeat, ed., Aelfric's Lives of the Saints. EETS 76, 82, 94, 111 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1881-1900).

49 Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 47. Greenfield gives the following dates: Lives of the Saints, 1002 and Catholic Homilies, 989 and 992.

50 Woolf, "Saints' Lives," pp. 39-40.

- 51 Hurt, p. 234.
- 52 G. I. Needham, ed., Aelfric: Lives of Three English Saints (London: Methuen Old English Library, 1966), p. 13.
- 53 Needham, p. 15.
- 54 Needham, p. 17.
- 55 Needham, p. 17., cf Preface, ll. 46-52.
- 56 Dorothy Bethurum, "The Form of Aelfric's Saints' Lives," Studies in Philology, XXIX (1932), 519.
- 57 Bethurum, p. 532.
- 58 R. Morris, ed., The Blicking Homilies, EETS Orig. Series 58, 63, 73. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. v-vi. Morris dates the manuscript in 971.
- 59 Gerould, Saints' Legends, p. 112.
- 60 Kenneth R. Brooks, ed., Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. xiv. See also Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 59.
- 61 Brooks, ed., p. xiv.
- 62 Bethurum, p. 519.
- 63 Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 60.
- 64 Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 60. See also George Philip Krapp, ed., The Vercelli Book, ASPR II (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. xx.
- 65 See Bethurum, "it seems that content and not style usually dictated his (Aelfric's) choice of method" (p. 519), and "perhaps the most outstanding thing about Aelfric's renderings is his indifference to the many displays of virtuosity of style in his sources" (p. 520).
- 66 Ford, p. 277.
- 67 Gerould, Saints' Legends, p. 109.
- 68 Woolf, "Saints' Lives," p. 38.

69 Dating the extant poetic saints' lives is not a simple task, but most critics agree that although the extant manuscripts date (roughly) at the year 1000, the poems which they contain were composed earlier (eighth to ninth century) (Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 78). The poems are found in the four major collections of Anglo-Saxon poetry: Andreas and Fates of the Apostles are in The Vercelli Book; Judith in the Beowulf Manuscript; Daniel in The Junius Manuscript; Guthlac A and B in The Exeter Book.

George Philip Krapp, ed., The Junius Manuscript, ASPR-I (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. x and xxvi.

Krapp, ed., The Vercelli Book, p. xvi.

George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, eds., The Exeter Book, ASPR III (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), pp. xiii-xiv.

Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, ed., Beowulf and Judith, ASPR IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), pp. lxii-lxiv.

70 Gerould, Saints' Legends, p. 94.

71 Gerould, Saints' Legends, p. 143.

72 Cf for example, Woolf, "Saints' Lives"; Greenfield, A Critical History, Chapter Six; Gerould, Saints' Legends; Alvin A. Lee, The Guest-Hall of Eden: Four Essays on the Design of Old English Poetry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972); T. A. Shippey, Old English Verse (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1972), chapters five and seven; Michael D. Cherniss, Ingeld and Christ (The Hague: Mouton, 1972).

73 Cf for example, George Clark, "The Traveler Recognizes His Goal: A Theme in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," JEGP, LXIV (1965), 645-59; Leonard H. Frey, "Exile and Elegy in Anglo-Saxon Christian Epic Poetry," JEGP, LXII (1963), 293-302; Thomas D. Hill, "The Tropological Context of Heat and Cold Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," NM, 69 (1968), 522-32; or Fredrik G. Heineman, "Judith 236-291a: A Mock Heroic Approach-to-Battle Type Scene," NM, 71 (1970), 83-96--all cited below and many more.

74 Laurence K. Shook, "The Burial Mound in Guthlac A," MP, LVIII (1960), 1-10.

75 Shook, "The Burial Mound," p. 10.

76 Frances R. Lipp, "Guthlac A: An Interpretation," Medieval Studies, 33 (1971), 46-62.

- 77 Lipp, p. 46.
- 78 Lipp, p. 58.
- 79 James L. Rosier, ed., "Death and Transfiguration: Guthlac B," in Philological Essays (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), pp. 82-92.
- 80 Rosier, p. 82.
- 81 Rosemary Woolf, ed., Juliana (London: Methuen's Old English Library, 1955), p. 17.
- 82 David Hamilton, "The Diet and Digestion of Allegory in Andreas," Anglo-Saxon England, I (1972), 147-58.
- 83 Hamilton, "The Diet," p. 148.
- 84 Brooks, ed., p. xxx.
- 85 Cherniss, p. 9:
- "Scholars have either contented themselves with making simple statements about the 'mixed' or 'hybrid' nature of Old English Poetry or if, . . . they have actually examined the ways in which the elements of 'paganism' are used in the Christian poetry, they treat this poetry as a single, uniform body, and do not attempt to distinguish between individual poems."
- 86 Arthur G. Brodeur, "A Study of Diction and Style in Three Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poems," in Nordica et Anglica: Studies in Honor of Stefan Einarsson, ed. Allan H. Orrick (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), pp. 97-114.
- 87 Brodeur, p. 105.
- 88 Brodeur, p. 109.
- 89 Brodeur, p. 110.
- 90 Brodeur, p. 112.
- 91 Brodeur, p. 113.
- 92 Woolf, "Saints' Lives," p. 58.
- 93 Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 114.

94 A. K. Skemp, "The Transformation of Scriptural Story, Motive, and Conception in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," MP, 4 (1907), 423-70.

95 Skemp, p. 423.

96 Skemp, p. 428.

97 Skemp, p. 450.

98 Skemp, p. 451.

99 Skemp, p. 455.

100 Skemp, p. 477.

101 Skemp, p. 447.

102 Frank, pp. 207-26.

103 Frank, p. 208.

104 Frank, p. 222, cf footnote 39.

105 Frank, pp. 224-25.

106 Frank, p. 225.

107 Campbell, "Learned Rhetoric," pp. 189-201.

108 Campbell, "Learned Rhetoric," p. 192.

109 Cf for example, Woolf, ed., Juliana, p. 17.
"Cynewulf's treatment of the legend in fact shows all the confidence and the poise of a skillful poet working in an established tradition."

110 Clark, pp. 645-59.

111 Frey, "Exile and Elegy," pp. 292-302.

112 Hill, "The Tropological Context," pp. 522-32.

113 Heineman, pp. 83-96.

114 Woolf, "Saints' Lives," p. 38.

115 Cf for example, Geoffrey Shepherd, "Scriptural Poetry," in Continuations and Beginnings, ed. Eric G. Stanley (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1966), pp. 1-36; or Greenfield, A Critical History, Chapter VIII: Old Testament Narrative Poetry.

116 Cf for example, Frank, p. 222:

"The sporadic presence of this second style in two Old English scriptural paraphrases, Daniel and Judith is probably related to the Anglo-Saxon's attitude towards these Old Testament books; they seem to have been regarded as exemplary histories, as Hebrew saints' lives, and not, like Genesis and Exodus as the words of God set down by Moses."

Cf Shippey, p. 16. "It is worth remembering that no Old English poem has a title in the manuscripts . . ."

117 Cf Chapter VI.

118 Cf for example, Frey, "Heroic Narrative Technique"; Skemp, cited above.

119 Cf Lee.

120 Lipp, p. 62.

121 Lipp, p. 62.

122 Ford, pp. 268-77.

123 Ford, p. 269. See also S. C. Aston, "The Saint in Medieval Literature," Modern Language Review, 65 (1970), xxv-xlii, especially xxxviii-xxxix.

124 or who want to do good. Cf Farrar, p. 87: "Christian life is a matter of doing as well as believing. Quite simply, faith demands good works."

125 Bede, A History of the English Church and People, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (Baltimore: Penguin, 1962), p. 247. "He sang of the creation of the world, the origin of the human race, and the whole story of Genesis. He sang of Israel's departure from Egypt, their entry into the land of promise, and many other events of scriptural history . . ."

126 Cherniss, pp. 253-54.

127 Cf for example, Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 108:

"Cynewulf's name, spelled this way, appears near the ends of the poems known as Juliana, and Elene; spelled without the e, it is woven into the conclusions of Christ II and

the Fates of the Apostles. Although other poems were for long also considered part of the Cynewulf canon, the stylistic studies of such scholars as S. K. Das and Claes Schaar have convincingly demonstrated that only the four signed poems can be so assigned."

128 Style cannot be described totally in terms of linguistic form. As Gradon, Form and Style, remarks in the conclusion:

"If anything emerges from this study of aspects of form and style in Old and Middle English, it is confirmation of the truism that style is choice . . . For style is the creation of a structure related to, but distinguishable from, the linguistic form. The distinction is the distinction between a casual photograph and a painting. And the difference is just that personal vision which creates patterns and relationships."
(p. 382)

The languages, Latin and Anglo-Saxon, and the kinds of choices that are made in the creation of Latin prose and Anglo-Saxon poetry are significant in any study of style, but they are not the only aspects of the works properly called stylistic. Gradon says: "This is not to say that linguistic features are unimportant, . . . But these matters are not stylistics, but what might be called proto-stylistics . . . A grammar of an author's language is not a study of his style" (p. 383). See also, Introduction, footnote 1.

129 See Chapter II.

130 As mentioned earlier, critics have viewed each poem as hagiography, as unlike other members of its genre, and, in the case of Guthlac B, as possibly Cynewulfian.

131 Cf for example, Gordon H. Gerould, "The Old English Poems on St. Guthlac and their Latin Source," MLN, XXXII (1917), 77-80; Rosier, ed., pp. 82-92; and Thomas D. Hill, "The Middle Way: Idel-Wuldor and Egesa in the Old English Guthlac A," RES, XXX (1979), 186-87. But see Claes Schaar, Critical Studies in the Cynewulf Group (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1949), pp. 39-41.

Chapter II

The Lives of St. Guthlac

The Life of St. Guthlac survives in a variety of accounts from a variety of periods of time.¹ It is available in a Latin prose version written by Felix in the eighth century;² it is also extant in two Anglo-Saxon poems, Guthlac A and Guthlac B both found in The Exeter Book.³ From these works, a comparison can be made between Latin prose hagiographic practices and Anglo-Saxon poetic ones.

This chapter concentrates on four areas of hagiographic style: first, the form and content of the introductory sections; second, the treatment of the saint, in this case, Guthlac, both as the protagonist of the work and as a literary symbol; third, the use of epithets for the saint; fourth, the form and content of the concluding sections of the works. In these four areas, the reader may observe the different authors making stylistic choices; and the purpose of this chapter is to discover those choices made by Anglo-Saxon poets that are not based on Latin prose hagiography and its practices and conventions. The survival of two

distinct poems and a full Latin prose life about St. Guthlac provides a fortunate natural comparison. Both poems depend, at least in part, on Felix's Vita Guthlaci;⁴ yet each poet had his own approach to the available material.

This three-way comparison, between Felix's Vita Guthlaci and Guthlac A and Guthlac B, has two major functions. First, it will show differences between Felix's Latin prose life and the two Anglo-Saxon poems in the four areas cited above. Second, similarities in these areas shared by the poems will indicate stylistic features potentially common to Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiography.

Felix's Latin Life of St. Guthlac, probably composed between 730 and 740,⁵ is a typical member of the genre of Latin prose hagiography.⁶ The progression of the story from portents before the birth of the saint to miracles effected after his death is the regular one.⁷ As well, it shows the influence of the popular Life of St. Anthony of Egypt, translated into Latin by Evagrius. It borrows from Bede's prose Life of St. Cuthbert, from Sulpicious Severus' Life of St. Martin, and from the Life of St. Fursey.⁸ These borrowings often involve word by word copying of passages from other works. For example, C. W. Jones notes,

The climatic incident in the narrative is the discovery of Guthlac's incorrupt body when it was taken from the sepulchre. The miracle was witnessed by "the brothers, priests, and other ecclesiastical officials," some of whom Felix must have consulted in preparing his narrative not twenty years later, for he would not wish to be discovered in a fraud. Yet the whole account is copied word for word from Bede's Life of St. Cuthbert, written by the most widely circulated author of the day about the most renowned saint in Britain.⁹

The Life follows Guthlac from his birth, which was heralded by appropriate miracles, through his youth, to his entrance into the monastery at Repton. At the monastery, Guthlac performs well. He learns what is necessary in the proper spirit of humility and never wavers from his pure practices. Finally, he sets out for the fen. Guthlac's relationship with St. Bartholomew¹⁰ is mentioned early when Felix relates that the saint arrives at the fen on St. Bartholomew's Day (August 25) and returns later on the same day.¹¹ Guthlac builds his hut and is ready for the series of temptations that will follow.

He is tempted to despair by means of a poisoned arrow that enters his mind. St. Bartholomew arrives to help. Next, two devils try to sway the saint from his fasting. The singing of a psalm routs them at once. Third, Guthlac is taken to the jaws of hell and is threatened by devils. Again, Bartholomew arrives in time to rescue Guthlac. He orders the devils to return Guthlac to his fen. Devils, this time disguised as

Britons (Brittones¹²) again torture Guthlac, but they are forced to flee when the saint sings a psalm.

Guthlac next demonstrates his earthly abilities. He reads minds (Beccel's), controls animals (herds of cattle, a crow), frees a wretched man from an evil spirit, predicts the future (the widow's house), is aware of events taking place beyond his sight and hearing (the flasks of beer), and is, of course, aware of the circumstances surrounding his own death.¹³

At Guthlac's death, examples of his blessedness are manifest. Guthlac had confessed to Beccel that he had been regularly in conversation with an angel; the smell of honey-laden blossoms is apparent; a fiery radiance in the house and a tower of fire reaching to the sky signal the soul's departure. Angels sing, and the fragrance of spices is evident as Guthlac leaves this earth for his place in heaven. The story does not end with the saint's death. His body is found incorrupt after a year has passed. Guthlac himself appears to his grieving friend, Aethelbold; and salt blessed by Guthlac restores the sight of a blind man. /

In general, Guthlac performs the familiar acts required of a saint. Also, he is handsome, dedicated, cheerful, forgiving, and friendly.¹⁴ Felix, too, has performed the familiar task of the Latin prose hagiographer; he understands the purpose and the style of Latin prose hagiography and adopts them for his own.

In the Prologue, he writes "Quoniam igitur exegisti a me, ut de sancti Guthlaci conversatione tibi scriberem, quemadmodum coeperit, quidve ante propositum sanctum fuerit, vel qualem vitae terminum habuerit," ("Since therefore you have required of me that I should write for you about the career of St. Guthlac, I have described how it began, what his manner of living was before his holy vow, and how his life ended").¹⁵

Felix sets out to tell the birth, life, vocation, and death of the saint, and that is what he does. That he makes this statement in the words of Evagrius' translation of the Life of St. Anthony only serves to reinforce the spirit of the tradition in which Felix is working. Colgrave notes that only the words Sancti Guthlaci, tibi, and vel are missing from the Vita Sancti Anthonii.¹⁶

Further, Felix states that "ad huius utilitatis commodum hunc codicellum fieri ratus, ut illis qui sciunt ad memoriam tanti viri, nota revocandi fiat, his vero, qui ignorant, velut late pansae viae indicium notescat." ("I considered that this little book should be composed for this useful purpose that, for those who know, it may serve as a sign to call them back to the remembrance of so great a man, and for those who do not know may be an indication to direct them on a wide open way.")¹⁷ Felix's remarks, taken in part from the Prologue of Bede's prose life of St. Cuthbert¹⁸ indicate

the purpose for which this life, as well as the others, should be put. Those who know the saint might refresh their memories with the re-telling of his exploits, and those who did not know Guthlac, or indeed know of him, might learn of and use his life as a model or an incentive for their own. Felix has adopted the traditional purpose as his own.¹⁹ His free use of his sources indicates further that the author consciously places himself in the old tradition of prose saints' lives. It will be his task, undertaken at the urgent request of others, to illustrate saintly virtues with Guthlac's life and experiences. If necessary, he must borrow the recorded experiences of others to illustrate this exemplary life.

Guthlac's life is full of little incidents that demonstrate his worthy human qualities as well as his saintly virtues and his special relationship with God. Felix's purpose behind the method he adopts is clear: he will provide an example worthy of emulation, of how a good Christian life can be lived.

As mentioned, Felix's Vita Guthlaci is the source of all or part of the two Anglo-Saxon poems found joined together in the Exeter Book.²⁰ The Anglo-Saxon poets, however, do not adhere strictly to the model provided by Felix. A study of Guthlac A, for example, convinces scholars like Laurence K. Shook,²¹ Frances R. Lipp,²² and Paul Reichardt²³ that a highly specific thematic

structure informs the poem.

Shook feels that the "barrow dominates the Anglo-Saxon poem in a way foreign to the Latin source."²⁴ He concludes that the poet has "discovered the beauty and effectiveness of what later poets would call the symbolic mode." The "barrow has come to stand for all that is significant in the spiritual life of the good Christian."²⁵ Responding to Shook's reading, Paul Reichardt accepts the idea of a "symbolic mode," but argues against the reading of "barrow" for beorg. For Reichardt, beorg translates "mountain," a word rich in "symbolic associations" of its own. He says, "The beorg of Guthlac A is as much a symbol of interior spiritual achievement as a geographical location in the fens of Crowland. It may be seen as representing a degree of ascetic perfection which in fact sets Guthlac apart from non-eremitic monastics as well as from mankind in general."²⁶ Guthlac's mountain is analogous to the "mount of saintliness," and the "description of Guthlac's single-mindedness and devotion corresponds to the aims of the eremitic life as defined in the Conferences of John Cassian, an extremely influential document in the history of Christian monasticism."²⁷

Frances Lipp also disagrees with Shook's reading and argues that the poet was "far more concerned with ethical teachings than with facts about demons and angels."²⁸ Lipp feels that "positive arguments for

confidence in God's help in this life and for the expectation of heaven in the next"²⁹ dominate the poem. Further, Lipp concludes that the "didactic approach puts (Guthlac A) in a tradition of popular preaching and suggests that the poet had the needs of an unsophisticated audience in mind."³⁰

These three scholars disagree in specific instances but agree about two overall interpretations. All three assert that the poet has freely adapted the material found in the Latin Life of St. Guthlac in order to meet specific goals in his work. Also, Shook, Lipp, and Reichardt all find a highly specific theme in the poem, a theme which is carefully and purposefully developed. Lipp argues that the "confrontation between the temptations to despair and the affirmation of God's love for man and of the promise of eternal life is the poem's ideological center," and that the poet was "sensitive to the danger of the temptation to despair."³¹ Thus, Lipp asserts that the poet composed his poem for the didactic purpose of encouraging the audience to rely on God's love and the rewards of heaven and to turn away from the temptation to despair.

Reichardt's logic is similar, although his conclusion is different. He feels that "the message of Guthlac A (is) essentially one of example and exhortation deriving much of its significance from a vocabulary and setting whose symbolic potential is rooted in a received

tradition of monastic instruction."³²

Guthlac B has also been examined in terms of thematic design. James L. Rosier³³ says "Guthlac B might as readily be termed a poem on the subject of death, or the coming of Death, as a poetic account of the last days of a particular saint."³⁴ Rosier continues his argument with a discussion of "death as a separation of soul from body," an idea which he finds developed in a variety of ways in the poem.³⁵

That the poems differ from the Latin prose model provided by the Vita Guthlaci is obvious, but the significance of the difference is not easily explained. The critics noted above suggest that the poets had a specific theme in mind when they composed their poems; but what that theme was is debatable.

Some of the differences between the lives are related to omissions from the prose. For example, the long series of earthly miracles is missing from both Guthlac A and Guthlac B. The saint's childhood is also omitted, but the temptations by the various devils are not only presented in Guthlac A but lovingly dwelt upon. Greenfield³⁶ points out that the second poem, Guthlac B, follows Felix's account of the saint's death carefully; but he also mentions that the lord-thane relationship, a popular Germanic theme, is developed "gradually as the poem proceeds, culminating in the end."³⁷ The prose life pays little attention to the

thane except in his role as reporter of the evidences of Guthlac's sainthood.

An interest in thematic development leads the reader first to the introductory sections of the poems. It is in these opening lines that one expects to find the first and perhaps the clearest statement of theme. It is also in the introductory lines to the poems that one begins to define the hagiographic style in Anglo-Saxon poetry.

The first twenty-nine lines of Guthlac A may or may not belong to the poem. Some interpreters felt, for a variety of reasons,³⁸ that this section might be a fragment inserted at the end of Christ or at the beginning of Guthlac A. The section has been accepted by other scholars as a reasonable introduction to Guthlac A and thus a part of the poem.³⁹ These lines present a picture of the blessed soul's reception into eternal bliss. The poem promises heavenly security ("þaer naefrehreow cymed, / edergong fore yrmþum")⁴⁰ and adds that the eternal joys wait for anyone who knows and follows Christ's law and praises Him ("þa þe her Cristes ae / laerað ond laestað, ond his lof raerað;" ll. 23-24).

Shook sees in these lines the beginning of the contrast between earthly and heavenly dwellings which is a "dominant theme" of the poem. He also notes that lines fifteen to seventeen ("He him ece lean / healded

on heofonum, þær se hyhsta / ealra cyninga cyning
 ceastrum wealded") relate nicely to lines 811 to 813
 found near the end of Guthlac A. ("Him þæt ne hreowed
 aefter hingonge / ðonne hy hweorfað in þa halgan
 burg, / gongað gegnunga to Hierusalem"). These lines
 he calls the "General Prologue."⁴¹

From line 30 to line 92, the poem presents a
 second introduction. In this section, the poet des-
 cribes the sorry conditions of the world at present
 ("Woruld is onhrered, / colaþ Cristes lufu, sindan
 costinga / geond middangeard monge arisene. . ." ll.
 37-39). These bad signs suggest that one need not look
 for improvement in this world, but should consider that
 God is watching all the ranks of men and will choose
 those who will be saved, ("He fela findað; fea beoð
 gecorene" l. 59).

Next, the poet discusses the lives of the aescetics
 who dwell in the desert or wilderness by their own
 choice. ("Sume þa wuniað on westennum, / secað ond
 gesittað sylfra willum / hamas on heolstrum," ll. 81-83).
 This section is certainly appropriate to the life of
 the hermit Guthlac which follows. The poet tells how
 the evil spirit tempts the hermits with visions of both
 terror and splendor, ("eaweað him egsan, hwilum idel
 wuldor," l. 86), and brings out the heavenly protection
 that God provides for the good man. ("Fore him englas
 stondað, / gearwe mid gaesta waepnum, beoþ hrya geoca

gemyndge, / healdad haligra feorh, witon hyra hyht mid dryhten," ll. 88-90). The section concludes that God will never neglect those who serve him with love ("se naefre þa lean aleged þam þe his lufan adreoged" l. 92).

Line ninety-three begins the introduction of Guthlac himself, but before dealing with Guthlac, I would like to reflect on the two introductory passages. Whether or not they both belong to the poem, one can see that the poet had devoted considerable space to his introductory remarks (either sixty-three or ninety-two lines). He begins with one or two passages that set the prominent theme which the life itself will exemplify. Setting aside the first thirty lines as tempting but debatable, one can notice the recurring idea that God is constantly aware of both good and evil on earth and that He will offer aid and reward to those who try to do the good, following through lines thirty to ninety-two. The poet stresses the number of ranks of people in the world and the fact that all are eligible for God's reward. But things are not that simple. The poet warns that God is watching constantly. He knows what all men are doing whatever their roles in life: "God sees where they dwell those who hold his law; he sees the laws each day wane and change (depart) from the world's law that he set through his own word. He shall find many, but few shall be chosen" (ll. 54-59).

Later, after recounting the deeds of the pious, the poet concludes, "He hyra daede sceawað;" and after assuring the audience that angels protect the good ascetic from the snares of evil, the poet adds that the angels are assured of their reward from God, who never holds back a reward from the faithful (l. 92). It is after this statement that the introduction to Guthlac himself begins. The poet reminds his audience that God is aware, always, of what is happening with all manner of men, and that he will provide help to those who struggle against evil. This heavenly protection will be demonstrated on several occasions in the incidents of Guthlac's life. The audience is warned, or assured as Lipp prefers, that God watches and provides aid for those who deserve it. These lines provide a thematic introduction for Guthlac A. They also provide a significant departure from the openings often found in the prose lives, which are composed of dedications, modest disclaimers, and citations of authority.⁴²

The introduction to Guthlac B also concentrates on the development of a theme. Guthlac himself is not mentioned until line 879 which is sixty lines into the poem. These introductory lines tell of the creation of Adam and Eve and their fall from God's grace. The poet adds that there were some who tried to do God's will and then begins his account of Guthlac's life and death ("Us secgað bec / hu Guðlac wearað furh godes willan /

eadig on Engle," ll. 878-80).

Guthlac B concentrates on the saint's death; it follows Felix's life of the saint, but the introductory lines are original and significant in the way that poetic introductions are significant to their poems. Along with Biblical authority, there is a thematic indication. The poet concentrates, as Rosier suggests, on the idea of death in these sixty lines. At first, when Adam is in paradise, death is not a problem:

ne deaðes cyme,
ac he on þam lande lifgan moste
ealra leahtra leas, long neotan
niwra gefeana. ðaer he no þorfte
lifes ne lissa in þam leohtan ham
þurh aelda tid ende gebidan,
ac aefter fyrste to þam faerestan
heofonrices gefean hweorfan moston,
leomu lic somud ond lifes gaest,
ond þaer sippan a in sindreamum
to widan feore wunian mostum
dryhtne on gesihðe, butan deaðe forð,
gif hy halges word healdan woldun
beorht in breostum, ond his bebodu laestan,
aefnan on eðle. (ll. 830-44)

Death, in its ordinary sense, arrives with the fall of Adam and Eve. The devil's trick brings death, and the poet uses death words throughout the remainder of the introduction: deaðberende (l. 850), swylte (l. 851), deaðes cwealm (l. 858), morpres (l. 861), Deað (l. 863), Deað ricsade / ofer foldbuend (ll. 871-72). The question of death is central to Guthlac B. The death of the saint occupies the main part of the poem, and the death of a good man--not to say a saint--is a problem

central to the Christian message. Guthlac's death and his own attitude toward it provide a clear example of how one's mortal end ought to be met. The saint suffers various dreadful torments for 372 lines. Felix's prose life is far more restrained in this matter.⁴³ Yet, through it all, Guthlac is resigned to the suffering and overjoyed at the prospect of entering the heavenly kingdom.

When the first awareness of imminent death is made known to the saint, the poet says, "Waes se bliþa gaest / fus on forþweg" (ll. 944-45). Later, after God "Let his hond cuman" (l. 951), the saint again is filled with hope and joy: "Hyht waes geniwad, / blis in breostum" (ll. 953-54). The poet continually contrasts the awful physical sufferings (ll. 942-44, 954-57) with the joy within the saint's spirit. Guthlac is always aware that with his death comes his eternal joy; God does not neglect to inform the saint of his forthcoming reward (ll. 950-53).

The lengthy, happy death of Guthlac relates to the introductory discussion of Adam and Eve and the origin of earthly death. The poet returns to an explicit reminder that Adam and Eve were responsible for the bitterness of death and that the "fiend" was behind the original sin.

Bryþen waes ongunnen
 þaette Adame Eue gebyrme
 aet fruman worulde. Feond byrlade
 aerest þaere idese, ond heo Adame,
 hyre swaesum were, siþþan scencte
 bittor baedeweg þaes þa byre siþþan
 grimme onguldon gafulraedenne
 þurh aergewyrht, þaette aenig ne waes
 fyra cynnes from fruman siððan
 mon on moldan, þaette meahte him
 gebeorgan ond bibugan þone bleatan drync,
 deopan deadweges, ac him duru sylfa
 on þa slidnan tid sona ontyned,
 ingong geopenað. (ll. 980-83 and 993b-99 not
 quoted.)

There is no question that death is a gruesome battle against the torture of the devil; but at the end of death, for the good man, is great, everlasting joy. Here is the poet's major theme. The nature of death and its real meaning for the Christian, in this case the Christian saint, is at the heart of the poem.

As has been mentioned, the prose life includes the final illness of the saint and some reflections from the author on the inevitable nature of death. Felix recounts the painful illness that suddenly strikes the saint ("quadam die, cum in oratorio suo orationibus vacans perstaret, subito illum intimorum stimulatio corripuit, statimque ut se subita infirmitate diri languoris vir Dei arreptum persensit, confestim manum Domini ad se missam cognovit").⁴⁴ But Felix does not create a cosmic battle between the forces of death and the saint's body. Colgrave notes that much of Felix's account is borrowed from Bede's Life of St.

Cuthbert, a fact which, he feels, injures the tender and poignant sentiments.⁴⁵ The Anglo-Saxon poet,^a likewise, borrows from Felix the actual details; but he expands the painful illness into the central action of the poem. The saint's resigned and hopeful attitude toward his own death serves as a model for all people, and the rewards which the saint confidently anticipates are likewise a model to be anticipated with hope.

The poet remarks that God has no intention of prolonging the saint's suffering (ll. 945-50), because He is aware of Guthlac's pious life. Here is a message for all who fear the pains of death. Yet even the best of men suffer; so too Guthlac who spends one week in the grasp of a war-like disease.

The image of the death struggle pervades the poem. The introduction, as has been shown, prepares the audience for the attention to be given to death,^b and the poem itself glories in the final battle that man fights.

Both poets employed the "facts" found in Felix's life, although final proof in this matter cannot be brought forward. Neither poet displays a felt need to record all the material, and both poets choose where to place the greatest emphasis. The poet of Guthlac A, for example, emphasizes the temptations that the devils inflict on Guthlac and the ever-watching God, who never fails to protect and regard the truly good man. He

does not neglect the saint's death, but he does not dwell upon it either: "Swa waes Guðlaces gaest gelaeded / engla faedomum in uprodor, / fore onsyne eces deman / laeddon leoflice" (ll. 781-84).

In a similar manner, the poet of Guthlac B mentions the saint's activities before his final illness strikes (ll. 881-932). He touches briefly on the "wundra geweorc" (l. 882) of the saint and mentions that both men and animals came to Guthlac for aid which they, of course, received. "Symle frofre þær / aet þam godes ceman gearwe fundon, / helpe ond haelo" (ll. 888-90). Also, the saint was often bothered by evil spirits: "Oft to þam wicum weorude cwomun / deofla daedmaegen dugupa byscyrede / hlofum þringan, þær se halga þeow / elnes anhydig eard weardade" (ll. 894-97).

The evil spirits, whether they appeared as wild beasts (wilde deor, l. 907) or as human beings (mennisc hiw, l. 909), or as serpents spewing venom (on wyrmes bleo . . . attre spowdon, ll. 911-12), always found Guthlac ready for them. "Symle hy Guðlac gearene fundon" (l. 913). The poet of Guthlac B does indeed seem familiar with the facts that Felix recounts, but he telescopes them into comparatively few sentences. Rosier calls this section "an epitome of Guthlac's virtues and victories which the poet culled from earlier chapters of the Vita."⁴⁶ He goes on to point out the

various chapters from which the incidents may be taken. The poet avoids any particular adventures whereas Felix produces as many particularizing details as possible.

The answer to this apparent lack of interest in all the details of the saint's life relates to the choice of theme that each poet made at the outset. The poets, in effect, mine their source, preserving the golden illustrations of their themes and discarding the leaden extraneous details. They have each a major point to make, and anything that might distract the audience is reduced or omitted entirely. One cannot help but wonder if the omission of Guthlac's early martial successes, for example, might have given a momentary pang to an Anglo-Saxon poet who was undoubtedly well skilled in the recounting of battle adventures.

But in the poetic saint's life, the theme is of first importance; and it must dominate the narrative. That idea or dominant theme is introduced by the poet with the requisite Biblical authority at the beginning of the poem before the particular saint is even mentioned. The introduction informs the audience of how the saint himself will demonstrate desirable behaviour and Christian virtues. The prose life has no such particular interest and proceeds rather to amass the maximum amount of information in keeping with its own requirements of form and composition.

The second area of comparison in this study concentrates on the character of the protagonist in the three versions of Guthlac's life. All three versions share a basic awareness that, as a saint, Guthlac must possess certain qualities and engage in certain symbolic actions. In her translation of Gregory's Life of St. Benedict, Myra L. Uhlfelder⁴⁷ says,

The episodes in the life of the saint . . . are often modelled on Scriptural example. The process is somewhat reminiscent of the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament as prefiguring fulfillment in the persons and events of the New . . . in the Vita sancti the earlier event is primary in importance and confers added venerability upon the saint both by providing an unimpeachable sanction for his miracles through the Scriptural precedent and by proving that he, like patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, is the recipient of extraordinary divine grace. The life and acts of the saint manifest the continued participation of God in human history and make the Biblical past a part of the living present.⁴⁸

One can expect both Felix and the Anglo-Saxon poets to assert that Guthlac's life is a reflection of Christ's life and His message to mankind.

Uhlfelder suggests that the hagiographer was also aware of the need to create a saintly character recognizable as human and imperfect:

To the extent that the vita presents a pattern for the yet uncommitted to adopt as his own ideal, there is great psychological validity in depicting the saint's temptations and human frailties as well as his extraordinary strength. Only an imperfect creature

could be an object of emulation to the man of still unsanctified life, who saw reflected in him some likeness of himself and his own condition.⁴⁹

The idea that the depiction of human frailty is an integral part of the saint's life is particularly significant in perceiving the style of the Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiographer. Working from the Latin prose tradition, the Anglo-Saxon poet developed a concept of the humanity of the saint into a major, defining aspect of his work.

To observe the differences in the treatment of the saint as a literary character, I will contrast the Guthlac of Felix's Vita Guthlaci with the Guthlacs of Guthlac A and Guthlac B.

The traditional Latin prose life begins at or before the birth of the saint, chronicles a great variety of triumphant activities, records the death of the saint, and by presenting miracles performed after the saint's death,⁵⁰ assures the reader that saintly virtue, like Christ's, transcends death and time. Felix's Vita Guthlaci conforms to this pattern. As mentioned above, Felix states his method and his purpose in the Prologue to the life. He will tell what he was able to discover about the great man from reliable witnesses;⁵¹ he also suggests that there are many other miracles to be discovered and recorded, possibly in another book.⁵²

From such statements, one can expect that Guthlac's activities will be at the centre of every part of the prose account. It is the model that his actions create that Felix is most concerned to present. Guthlac himself is to be described and observed. He is described as soon as he is no longer an infant;⁵³ and once he receives the tonsure, he is described again.⁵⁴ In short, Guthlac manifests an impressive array of virtues, but he is not content to rest upon his natural endowments. Felix adds that the saint studied to improve himself: "et ut brevius dicam, omnium in omnibus imitabatur virtutes," ("To put it briefly, he imitated the virtues of all of them in all things").⁵⁵ Guthlac appears to understand the importance of imitation. He follows good models about him, perhaps never suspecting that he himself will become just such a model. One assumes that St. Anthony, on whose life the section is based, was likewise unaware of his own admirable virtues.⁵⁶

The Latin life describes the saint along the rhetorical lines which not surprisingly influenced the earlier writers from whom Felix borrowed. Guthlac is given the physical attributes that identify his virtuous spirit as well as his attractive appearance. Felix is not interested in reproducing a likeness of the man. We do not know, for example, the details of Guthlac's countenance, his hair or eye colour, any distinguishing

marks. In fact, we do know that Felix borrowed the second series of descriptive phrases from the Life of St. Fursey.⁵⁷

Guthlac's adventures cover a wide range of incidents, considering that the saint led a retired life in an almost deserted fen. All the natural aspects of the fen are taken advantage of--birds and animals both tease and obey the saint. Visitors are foretold and healed when necessary, and the deserted fen provides a lonely and eerie setting for the attacks of the devils. Guthlac's isolated setting also makes borrowings from the Vita Anthonii and Vita Cuthberti most appropriate. Guthlac takes his place in the great tradition of desert ascetics.

Felix describes Guthlac and narrates the experiences that prove his good qualities as well as his saintly powers. The saint himself serves as the turning point in each chapter. It is his strong faith or his special power which saves the day in all of his adventures, except one. St. Bartholomew is required in Chapter XXXII to finish the rescue of the saint from the jaws of Hell. Yet even here, the saint is in no real danger. Before St. Bartholomew arrives, Guthlac says, "Vae vobis, filii tenebrarum, semen Cain, favilla cineris. Si vestrae potentiae sit, istis me tradere poenis, en praesto sum; ut quid falsivomis pectoribus vanas minas depromitis?" ("Woe unto you, you sons of

darkness, seed of Cain, you are but dust and ashes. If it is in your power to deliver me into these tortures, lo! I am ready; so why utter these empty threats from your lying throats").⁵⁸ Bartholomew completes the rescue, but the saint's powerful faith has already assured the outcome. Guthlac is always ready to prove his powers. There is no tension but rather calm certainty in Felix's style and in Guthlac's actions.

The adventures from Chapter XXVIII on give a sense of circular balance. Each is given a few words of introduction:⁵⁹ "Contigit itaque in diebus Coenredi Merciorum regis," ("Now it happened in the days of Coenred, King of the Mercians");⁶⁰ "Post non multum temporis," ("a short time afterwards");⁶¹ "Erant igitur in supradicta insula," ("Now there were in this same island");⁶² "Libet etiam . . . explicare," ("It is also pleasant to describe . . .").⁶³ A few words follow which set the scene, and then Guthlac is called upon by circumstances to act. He may be attacked by demons; he may need to call upon his powers of prophecy or his ability to know what is happening in another location; or he may need to perform a miraculous healing. Once the action is performed, Felix moves right along to the next event. Guthlac remains posed and waiting for the next test; he is not only the hero of the work but also the major principle of organization that binds the work together.⁶⁴ The poet ends his work in the same

manner in which it has progressed. The final miracle cited occurs after the saint's death, and there is no epilogue or concluding remark on Guthlac himself.

Each adventure confirms the saint's faith in God and the essential rightness of that faith. Guthlac is the central and unchanging figure about which the narrative revolves. His success is assured, and Felix often remarks on the completeness of his victory over evil: "Ex illo enim tempore numquam zabulus adversus illum desperationis arma arripuit, quia ab illo semel infracta contra illum ultra praevalere nequiverunt" ("From that time never indeed did the devil seize the weapon of despair to use against him, because once Guthlac had broken it, it could never more prevail against him"),⁶⁵ or "Exin vir Dei inmundorum spirituum fantasmata, percepto ubique certandi bravio, contempsit" ("Thereafter the man of God despised the phantoms and foul spirits, having obtained everywhere the prize in the fight").⁶⁶ Guthlac's adventures constitute a series of proofs; no power can injure his faith, and with the help of God, all kinds of good acts are possible.

The two Anglo-Saxon Guthlac poems, as has been noted, are far more concerned with the development of themes than with an exposition of Guthlac's many abilities and virtues. Yet both poems treat the saint in a surprisingly personal manner. The poets dispense with

the lengthy lists of attributes that Felix faithfully reproduces, and they condense or eliminate various incidents and miraculous occurrences. Rather they concentrate on certain particular incidents and the emotions and decisions that fill the saint's heart and spirit. By omitting the predictable series of descriptive phrases, the Guthlac poets produce, perhaps inadvertently, a powerful sense of the internal and external struggles that occupy the saint.

Guthlac emerges from both poems not only with his saintly virtues but also with a clear sense of the struggle involved in obtaining and maintaining those virtues. The emotions of the saint, of course, are indicative of the quality of saintliness. One expects and finds patience, humility, obedience, and confidence in God in Guthlac. But there is more to Guthlac's character. More like a martyr than a hermit, Guthlac is full of courage--often expressed as the absence of terror. He is also full of joy and full of wisdom. As he demonstrates the proper life and the proper death, Guthlac lives an array of virtues that are not easily acquired. His struggles are brought out in the poetic language and in the loving detail with which both poets recount them.

In Guthlac A, for example, the saint is introduced at the point in his life when he makes the enormous decision to put away the often wicked pleasures of the

earth and seek the spiritual joys of a life devoted to God. "Gudlac his, in godes willan / mod gerehte"

(ll. 95-96). The saint receives a new kind of joy when he gives up the earth and turns his thoughts to heaven

(ll. 98-105). In order, perhaps, to emphasize the difficulty of the choice, the poet next reminds his audience that such a choice was new to Guthlac, who had enjoyed rather thoroughly the wicked pleasures of this world.

Once the choice for God is made, there can be no wavering; but there can be all varieties of tests which will demonstrate the ever-growing virtues of the man. Before his conversion, Guthlac was a daring if sinful adventurer. His physical courage is never in question; in fact, Guthlac later uses his warrior-like courage to reinforce his determination to serve God. The wicked will never terrify Guthlac, but somebody else now will. He must have a healthy fear as regards the Lord.⁶⁷ The poet says "Him waes godes egisa / mara in gemyndum þonne he menniscum / þrymme aefter þonce, þegan wolde"

(ll. 167-69). These lines are found at the end of a section in which the poet describes the fiendish torments, of which Guthlac was not afraid. The two kinds of fear, one a sign of spiritual weakness, the other a proof of spiritual good sense, are reinforced through

Guthlac A: "No þy forhtra waes / Gudlaces gaest"

(ll. 201-2); "Nis min breostsefa / forht ne faege"

(ll. 309-10); "No him fore egsan earmra gaesta / treow
getweode" (ll. 339-40).

At one point in the incident at the gates of Hell,
the poet does give the fiends the power to terrify the
saint: "Hy hine bregdon, budon orlege, / egsan ond
ondan arleaslice, / frecne fore, swa bið feonda þeaw, /
þonne hy soðfaestra, sawle willað / synnum beswican
ond searocraeftum" (ll. 564-68). The moment of fiendish
glory passes almost at once, and the saint responds
with a lengthy speech which affirms his patience and
humility as well as his abiding trust in God (ll. 590-
684).

Guthlac's courage is also displayed as a reminder
and emulation of Christ's courage in the face of His
persecutors. The poet remarks:

Hwaet, þaet wundra sum
monnum þuhte, þaet he ma wolde
afrum onfengum earmre gaestas
hrinan leton, ond þaet hwaefre gelomp!
Waes þaet gen mara, þaet he middangeard
sylfa gesohte, ond his swat ageat
on bonena hond; ahte bega geweald,
lifes ond deaðes, þa he lustum dreag
eadmod on eorðan ehtendra nið. (ll. 517-25)

The poet often expresses the terrifying nature of a
situation and the remarkable courage of the saint by
commenting on lack of fear within Guthlac's spirit. His
emotional response as well as the action he takes in a
specific situation is of great interest to the Anglo-
Saxon poet.

Guthlac also displays other virtues necessary for a saint to possess; and the poet of Guthlac A emphasizes these virtues by telling of them himself and by having Guthlac speak of them. For example, Guthlac is always full of hope and joy. The poet says "Cempa wunade / bliþe on beorge, waes his blaed mid god" (ll. 438-39), and "Guðlac sette / hyht in heofonas" (ll. 434-35). Guthlac himself says "Is min hyht mid god" (l. 318). Both poet and saint assert that hope and joy come from heaven; and even in the face of rather unpromising circumstances, Guthlac's spirit remains full of hope and happiness.

Perhaps more difficult virtues for the ex-warrior saint to cultivate are patience, humility, and obedience. Yet Guthlac excels in these areas as well. The poet says "He waes on elne ond on eadmedum" (l. 328), and "oft his word gode / þurh eadmedu, up onsende" (ll. 775-76). Guthlac says "Hu sceal min cuman / gaest to geoce, nemne ic gode sylle / hyrsumne hige" (ll. 366-68), and "Eom ic eadmod his ombiehthera, / þeow gefyldig" (ll. 599-600).

Guthlac is also given the gift of wisdom by God as a reward for the sufferings he endured.

Da waes agongen þaet him god wolde
 aefter þrowinga þonc gegyldan
 þaet he martyrhad mode gelufade,
 sealde him synttru on sefan gehygðum,
 maegenfaeste gemynd. (ll. 470-74)

This wisdom enables Guthlac to speak truthfully about important spiritual matters, and to speak the truth is of great significance to Guthlac.⁶⁸ Speaking to the demons who have tried to drive him from the fen, Guthlac says "Ic eow soð siþþon secgan wille" (l. 494). He goes on to tell them the truth about youth and age and sin and goodness (ll. 495-512); and by so doing, he easily defeats the evil spirits. Guthlac uses this gift of wisdom to counter the repeated attacks of the demons. No matter what devilish tricks they attempt, they find the saint assured and easily able to comprehend and dismiss their plots.⁶⁹

The final gift is, of course, a special grace. The poet says "Geofu waes mid Guðlac, in godcundum / maegne gemeted" (ll. 530-31).

None of these virtues is unusual. The difference between Felix's work and Guthlac A is the emphasis on the saint's personal struggle for and victory in achieving them. The poet uses both narration and dialogue to make clear that Guthlac is actively and consciously involved in achieving a life of virtue and obedience to God. Felix, on the other hand, groups the virtues into a list and presents them as conventional accomplishments.⁷⁰ The results achieved by the two techniques are not the same. Felix has created a successful saintly figure, but the poet of Guthlac A has added an extra dimension of humanity to his successful

saint. The poet's Guthlac is a courageous and determined human being who learns every day and with every temptation the enormity of evil and the sure success offered by the greater power wielded by God.

Guthlac B, which is even more restricted in terms of incidents than Guthlac A, contains more material on the emotional responses of the saint than either Guthlac A or Felix's Life. The central action of the poem, the lingering death of the saint, is the only action in which Guthlac participates. The saint faces his own death with undiminished courage, no sorrow, and naturally enough, with humility, patience, hope, and joy.

Commentators on Guthlac B note that the Anglo-Saxon poet has much expanded the material found in Felix's Chapter L. One particularly interesting expansion consists of the typically Anglo-Saxon responses to his master's death of Guthlac's servant, a man called Beccel in Felix's work and nameless in the poem. Beccel responds to Guthlac's death with a sorrowful lament (ll. 1348-79)⁷¹ addressed to Pega, the sister of the saint. In Chapter L, Felix says "Deveniens quoque ad sanctam Christi virginem Pegam,³ fraterna sibi mandata omnia ex ordine narravit" ("and finding the holy virgin of Christ Pega, he told her in order all her brother's commands"). The servant's speech in Guthlac B is clearly not taken from Felix's account. It is, rather,

reminiscent of other elegaic moments in Anglo-Saxon poetry:

For example, lines 1351-54,

þaet wat se þe sceal
aswaeman sarigferð, wat his sincgiefan
holdne biheledne. He sceal hean þonan
geomor hweorfan.

remind the reader of lines twenty-two to thirty in

The Wanderer:

sippan geara iu goldwine minne
hrusan heolstre biwrah ond ic hean þonan . . .
Wat se þe cunnað,
hu slifen bið sorg to geferan.⁷²

However, Beccel's response is more than a traditional Anglo-Saxon response to the death of a beloved leader. What Beccel feels in this situation, Guthlac does not feel--sorrow, despair, fear, a concern for one's own position on earth. The poet presents a contrast between saintly confidence and the uncertainty of ordinary human beings.

Felix makes this point directly. He says "Tantae ergo fidei fuit, ut mortem, quae cunctis mortalibus timenda formidandaque videtur, ille velut requiem aut praemium laboris iudicaret" ("So great was his faith that death, which seems something to be feared and dreaded by all mortals, he considered to be, as it were, a rest and reward for his labour").⁷³

The poet of Guthlac B makes the idea clear by contrasting the responses of Guthlac and Beccel. Guthlac's speech in lines 1064-93 provides a summary of the saintly, and hence, ideal Christian approach to death. The saint says that he is being consumed by disease: "Ne beo þu unrot, deah þeos adl me / innan aeles" (ll. 1064-65). He adds that it is not dreadful to suffer for God (ll. 1065-67). He is not sad ("ne ic þaes deaðes hafu / on þas seocnan tid sorge on mode," ll. 1067-68), and he is not afraid ("ne ic me herehlode' helle þegna / swiðe onsitte," ll. 1069-70). He also has no fear of the devil (ll. 1070-76).

Guthlac then encourages his servant. He wants him to understand that he is en route to his reward in heaven and that he is eager to go ("Ic eom siðes fus . . ." ll. 1077-93). Guthlac's remarks on the eternal joys of heaven are the standard ones. He will see the Lord of victories (l. 1080), have peace and joy (l. 1082), and the joy of the just ("domfaestra dream," l. 1083). Twice in this speech, Guthlac reiterates the idea that he is not grieving about his own death. In line 1081, he says "Nis me wracu ne gewin, þaet ic wuldres god / sece swegelcynning" (ll. 1081-82). Later, he says, "Nis þes eþel me / ne sar ne serg" (ll. 1091-92). The poet is interested in emphasizing this point. Although it is apparent that the saint is suffering dreadful physical pain, it must be understood that his soul is

not suffering, not afraid, not without hope but actually eager and full of joy. When Guthlac is first afflicted, the poet concludes, "Hyht waes geniwad, / blis in breostum" (ll. 953-54).

Guthlac's emotional response demonstrates the strength of his faith and his sainthood; Beccel's response demonstrates human sorrow at the death of a loved one. He grieves for his dying friend and simultaneously demonstrates his own lack of sainthood when he sorrows for his own leaderless state. In his sorrow, Beccel neglects Guthlac's promise to hold faith with him, and he forgets briefly just who his leader really is. His incomplete speech to Guthlac's sister is a good survey of his emotional state.

First, he says that courage is necessary in times of sorrow. ("Ellen biþ selast þam þe oftost sceal / dreogan dryhtenbealu, deope behycgan / þroht þeodenge-dal" ll. 1348-50). Beccel recounts his sadness with typical Anglo-Saxon images (ll. 1351-79). The sorrowing thane departs in lonely exile ("He sceal hean þonan / geomor hweorfan" ll. 1353-54). Hardships abound; joy is gone; and the body of the loved one dwells in its bed of death ("wunað waelraeste," l. 368).

Beccel mentions Guthlac's sure place in heaven (ll. 1362-66), but he does not seem to take comfort in Guthlac's own words of comfort to him, spoken before the saint's death ("nelle ic laeten þe / aefre unrotne-

aefter ealdorlege / meðne modseocne minre geweordan, /
 soden sorgwaelmun. A ic sibbe wiþ þe / healdan wille"
 ll. 1259-63). Beccel can be seen as a proper sorrowing
 Germanic warrior, a pitiable human being, or a poetic
 counter-balance. While Guthlac demonstrates the proper
 resolution of the problem of death to the Christian
 audience, Beccel represents the terrible pain suffered
 here on earth because of a death. Hopefully, Beccel
 will see his error and return to a secure sense of
 faith. Guthlac had revealed to Beccel an important
 secret that must be told to Pega, and Beccel's delivery
 of the message suggests that he will not forget the
 significance of his leader's life.

There are potentials for re-affirming Beccel's
 faith in the story of Pega's response to the death of
 her brother and their return to his isolated home.
 This is dangerous speculation; but even without a
 secure and serene Beccel, one can observe that balanced
 view of death that the poet has created. Guthlac, as
 a proper saint, exemplifies the courageous, eager death
 of a Christian; Beccel shows the potential dangers into
 which human beings fall. The emotional power of his
 suffering notwithstanding, the retainer is forgetting
 the significance of Guthlac's death; and his perceptions
 are contradicted by the saint's actions.

Again, as seen in Guthlac A, the poet of Guthlac B
 concentrates emotional responses and achieves a power

that the prose life lacks. Guthlac's assertions of joy and courage in the face of death are inspirational evidence of the successful struggle taking place inside the mind of the saint. Physically, Guthlac does little more than stagger to his feet or prop himself up against a wall--but within his soul, he is the mighty warrior he has always been. His body has grown weak, but his soul has grown wise and full of eager joy.

The cool untroubled efficiency with which Felix's Guthlac performs a succession of miracles contrasts with the active struggle for perfection and the emphasis on the difficulties involved, even for a chosen man, in fulfilling the challenges of a good Christian life which are found in both Guthlac A and Guthlac B.

A third stylistic area, the use of epithets for the saint, increases the strength of the contrast between the Latin prose life and the Anglo-Saxon poetic lives. The use of epithet is common to both forms and is based upon historical precedent. Traditional Latin rhetoric includes the use of epithet as a trope,⁷⁴ and traditional Anglo-Saxon poetic technique includes variation which can take the form of epithet. As R. F. Leslie says, "From a structural point of view, probably the most widespread stylistic feature is 'variation,' a term not always unambiguously used, but by which I mean simply the repetition of an idea in a

different word or group of words" ⁷⁵ Here the two traditions meet at an interesting stylistic point. ⁷⁶

Jackson J. Campbell relates the two traditions; he says that "many of the poets who wrote the poems that make up our corpus of Old English poetry had a Latin education" and that "Even the student who progressed no further than grammatical studies, however, would have acquired much knowledge of Latin poetry, including a thorough mastery of rhetorical figures." ⁷⁷ Thus, one can argue that the Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiographer had two reasons for employing epithets for a saint. First, Latin rhetorical tradition supplied the idea of expansion through the use of epithet; and second, Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition leaned on variation, which includes the use of epithet as a device for expansion. ⁷⁸

The combination of the two traditions in Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiography produces a defining characteristic of the hagiographic style. One can expect both Felix and the Guthlac poets to employ epithets as natural facets of their works. The differences observed in the use of epithets, both in terms of quantity and quality, help to separate the two traditions and to define the functions of epithets in Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiography.

The prose life contains 158 epithets, or names, for the saint. They can be reduced, however, to seven predominant ideas which the majority of the variations

convey. The most popular word used to identify the saint is vir. Guthlac is variously the man of holy memory (twelve times), the man of God (fifty), such a great man (or either "such" or "great") (eleven), the blessed or holy man (nine), the venerable man (six), the aforesaid man (three), and simply the man (three). Perhaps Guthlac's humanity is stressed in this recurring use of the word man (ninety-four times); perhaps the writer is merely using the handiest neutral term to employ with the more significant words in the epithets. Twelve times Felix reminds his readers that Guthlac is a man of holy memory, fifty times that Guthlac is a man of God, and thirty-one times that Guthlac is holy or blessed.

Guthlac is also called the servant (famulus) of God and Christ eleven times. The third most popular term is miles which occurs six times in combination with God or Christ. The use of military terms in saints' lives is discussed by Marguerite Delmastro in her dissertation "The Military Analogy in Early Anglo-Latin Hagiography." In this work, she points out that the comparison of the life of a saint to the life of a warrior can serve as a "metaphor for the Christian experience."⁷⁹ Felix, she adds, pushed the military terms out of the "metaphoric to the literal."⁸⁰ The saint "engaged in literal warfare against spiritual forces physically present," but Guthlac's weapons were

"purely spiritual."⁸¹ Thus, the use of military terms for Guthlac is traditional in the Latin saints' lives and, according to Delmastro, derives from Pauline origins and Benedictine development as early as the Earliest Life of St. Gregory.

Guthlac is also addressed as dominus (four), pater (five), and by his own name (five).⁸² It is difficult to evaluate the significance of the epithets. They do not add much to the character of the saint, and the number of repetitions of the term vir Dei suggests that the writer is placing the epithets on a similar plane with the pronoun ille⁸³ which he also uses often.⁸⁴

A limited comparison between Felix's Life of St. Guthlac and Guthlac B makes a good beginning to a discussion of qualitative and quantitative differences in epithet usage since many scholars agree that Guthlac B is based almost entirely on the material found in Chapter Fifty of Felix's work.⁸⁵

There are eighteen epithets for the saint in Felix's Chapter Fifty. The most popular is vir Dei, which occurs ten times, once in combination with the saint's name. Next in frequency is famulus, which occurs twice. The first occurrence is a complex epithet, dilectus Dei famulus Guthlac, and the second, famulum suum. Two other epithets occur twice each. They are terms used by Beccel when he addresses the saint: Domine (mi) and pater (mi). Felix speaks of Guthlac as

beati viri once and refers to Guthlac as Pega's brother, fraterna sibi. With the exception of this last epithet, the others are all familiar to the rest of the life.

In the poem, there are sixty-seven epithets, including thirty-four different terms. The most popular word is dryhten which occurs nine times. Other repeated terms include eadig (five), wer (four), þeow (three), halga (three), hleō (three), frea (three), wyn (three), and þeoden (five). From these terms alone, one notes that military warrior-like language is popular, that wer is used less frequently than vir is used in the prose life and always in combination with halga or eadga, and that the poet is emphasizing relationships between the saint and those about him on earth. Guthlac is the "lord" of Beccel in particular. He is also the protector of his friends and their joy here on earth.

Guthlac is described with a great variety of terms that occur only once in the poem but that may be considered formulaic in Anglo-Saxon poetry. He is, for example, from folctoga, glaedmod gode leof, rof runwita, and heard hygesnotter.⁸⁶ With such terms, the poet emphasizes Guthlac's earthly qualities.

By comparing those two parts of the Guthlac story, one can see that Felix employs recurring terms that identify the saint as a man of God and His servant. The poet of Guthlac B uses a variety of epithets in

order to explain Guthlac's relationship both with God and with men. The variety of attributes given to the saint help the reader to form an image of his character which, in the Latin prose, is portrayed in a series of adventures.⁸⁷ The poet omits all but the barest outline of the adventures and depends on epithets possibly in their stead.

The poet of Guthlac A also employs traditional Anglo-Saxon variation in the form of epithets. Studies on the use of variation indicate a variety of purposes to which poets put the technique. Leonard Frey, talking about the epithets in several poetic lives, points out that the epithets may open a discussion of a characteristic of the person integral to the action of the poem: "It must be noted that variations may involve more than epithet or apposition. Often, an epithet may suggest an idea relevant to it, so to speak, and the idea its own variations."⁸⁸ The idea is then developed in a series of clauses. "The clauses depend on the epithets to get them started, then they develop their own variations."⁸⁹ Frey's ideas support the notion that poets work carefully and consciously with even commonly used epithets. Guthlac A is a good example of just such purposeful development of ideas through the use of epithet.

In Guthlac A, there are thirty epithets for the saint. They cover several broad concepts. The most

popular term for Guthlac is cempa, which occurs ten times; three times alone, and in combination with Cristes (one), wuldres (three), meotudes (one), dryhtnes (one), and halig (one). There is another military title, oretta, which occurs four times, twice alone and once each with eadiq and godes. That Guthlac is described as a champion or warrior is not at all surprising. As noted above, M. Delmastro points out that military terms and images were often found in Latin saints' lives. Further, the tradition of warrior-like behaviour in heroes is common to Anglo-Saxon poetry.⁹⁰ The saint is God's hero or champion on earth; and he, quite naturally, takes on God's enemies on earth. The first use of cempan, in line 153, provides a good example of Guthlac's role: "ac þæt lond gode / faegre gefreoþode, siþþan feond oferwon / Cristes cempa" (ll. 151-53).

Lines 401-403 provide a similar example, including both oretta and cempa: "An oretta ussum tidum / cempa gecyðeð þæt him Crist fore / woruldlicra ma wundra gecyðde."

The second descriptive area expresses Guthlac's relationship to God in very different terms. Four times the saint is called a þeow: se halga þeow (one), dryhtnes þeow (two), and þeow gepyldig (one). The first use of þeow occurs in line 157: "þæt se halga þeow / elne geeode, þa he ana gesaet / dygle stowe"

(ll. 157-59). Guthlac himself notes this relationship: "Ic eom dryhtnes þeow" (l. 314). This speech (ll. 296-322) suffices to drive away the enraged devils. They know that God, the perfect lord, protects His earthly servants. The saint also calls himself the Lord's ombiehthera (l. 599).

Two more terms, each occurring only once, express the special relationship of Guthlac to God. In line 514, the poet calls Guthlac se martyre: "Swa hleoþrade halig cempa; / waes se martyre from moncynnes / synnum asundrad" (ll. 513-15). The use of this term is, at first, surprising; Guthlac does not suffer death at the hands of his tormentors. Rather, he triumphs easily and repeatedly over their evil snares. Yet the term is one that the poet has developed logically and cleverly in its context. In lines 470-74, the poet explained that God rewarded the saint with wisdom because of his attitude toward the sufferings that he underwent for Him. The poet uses the word martyrhad (l. 472) to describe the tortures. With this wisdom, Guthlac routs his enemies in a speech (ll. 478-512). The poet then calls Guthlac both a holy warrior and a martyr and relates the saint's sufferings to the terrible sufferings endured by Christ (ll. 517-25). The epithets connect Guthlac's acts to Christ's, reinforce the saintliness of the man, and as Frey suggests, develop an idea over a series of lines.

The other term, foregengan (l. 533), suggests that Guthlac is a messenger from God, in this case, to the evil spirits who learn that they cannot injure his clean soul ("his sawl weard / claene," ll. 535-36).

The third area stresses the saint's humanity, an important concept as regards the instructional function of the lives. Twice Guthlac is called a man, wer, but never just a man. The first epithet for Guthlac is se halga wer ("Hwaet we hyrdon oft þæt se halga wer / in þa aereþstan aeldu gelufade / frecnessa fela!" ll. 108-10). Later, in line 590, the poet says "Him se eadga wer ondswarode."

Guthlac is also called bytla, builder, twice. This term is unusual but entirely appropriate to Guthlac. He in fact builds a sanctuary for God amidst the fiends in a previously hidden spot ("Waes seo londes stow / bemipen fore monnum, oppaet meotud onwrah / beorg on bearwe, þa se bytla cwom" ll. 146-48). This sentence continues to say that Guthlac raised a home in this secret place not because he was greedy but because he intended to defend the place for God against the fiend.

Thus, Guthlac is a warrior, a servant and a working man. He is also blessed. The epithet is often used to make this vital point. We have seen Guthlac as warrior and servant of a powerful Lord. These descriptions might apply to Beowulf or Wiglaf, but Guthlac has a characteristic unique to the saints. He is blessed,

holy, chosen by God. The poet calls Guthlac eadig in line 736 ("eadges eftcyme") and uses an adjective to indicate Guthlac's condition on five other occasions: se halga þeow (l. 157); se halga wer (l. 108); halig cempa (l. 513); se eadga'wer (l. 590); and eadig oretta (l. 176).

The relationship of the saint to God has been made in the warrior and servant epithets. Guthlac is called variously God's warrior (l. 596), the Lord's warrior (ll. 576, 727), and Christ's warrior (l. 153), and the holy servant (l. 157). The blessedness of the saint is made clear in the epithets making the point that Guthlac is also a man.

Other epithets for the saint include betran hyrdes (l. 217), halig husulbearn (l. 559), se leofesta gaest (ll. 689-90), and se fryma (l. 773).

There are many more epithets for the saint in Guthlac B. As mentioned above, there are sixty-seven epithets in the 560 lines of the poem. The most popular component in the epithets is dryhten. The nine dryhten epithets can also be used to illustrate the uses to which the poet of Guthlac B puts the epithets. The first dryhten epithet occurs in line 1007. The poet is describing the moment when Guthlac's servant discovers the ailing saint. He says "Fonde þa his mondryhten." The servant begins to question Guthlac. "Hu gewearð þe þus, winedryhten min" (l. 1011). Ten lines later, he

concludes, "Wast þu, freodryhten, / hu þeos adle scyle ende gesettan?" (ll. 1021-22).

At the end of the poem, the servant tells Guthlac's sister "Eac þe abeodan het / sigedryhten min, þa he waes siþes fus" (ll. 1374 ff). The poet calls Guthlac his mondryhten four times; the servant calls Guthlac winedryhten min, freodryhten, and sigedryhten (the poet uses winedryhten in line 1202, "to his winedryhtne"). The frequent use of dryhten explains the relationship between Guthlac and his servant.

Both the poet and the servant employ a variety of other names as well. For example, the servant addresses Guthlac with terms such as faeder, frofor min (l. 1211), and frea min (l. 1222) while the poet calls him se wuldormaga (l. 1094 and l. 1293) and leofestan laræow gecorene (l. 1004).

The reader of Guthlac B sees two sides of the saint. First, there are the observations of the poet who knows that Guthlac is a saint and therefore speaks of him as holy or blessed. Second there are the observations of Guthlac's faithful servant who is, in the action of the poem, learning that Guthlac's sainthood is real and glorious.⁹¹ The servant speaks to and of Guthlac in loving, obedient, and yet human terms. This double view of the saint produces interesting results. The saint retains his heroic, human qualities, but this identification does not come directly from the poet's choice of

epithets but from Guthlac's servant's choice. Thus, one notes the poet's use of mondryhten when he refers to the relationship between Guthlac and Beccel. Beccel has his own series of terms for his master which indicate the heroic lord-thane relationship familiar in Anglo-Saxon poetry and the blessed-father-teacher and grateful pupil relationship that the audience who know of Guthlac's sainthood will recognize as hagiographic in origin.

For example, Beccel's first speech to Guthlac, cited above (ll. 1011-22), abounds in epithets. There are five in the eleven lines: winedryhten min, faeder, freonda hleo, geoden leofesta, and freodryhten. These terms demonstrate both the lord-thane relationship and the father-pupil relationship. Immediately before this speech, the poet explains what is happening. He uses seven epithets in ten lines: epelbodan, leofestan, lareow gecorene, eadgum, halges, mildes, his mondryhten, and his magu. One notes that the poet stresses the sainthood of Guthlac. He also expresses the relationship between Guthlac and Beccel which is illustrated by Beccel's subsequent speech.

Beccel's last speech to Guthlac's sister recapitulates the warrior-thane relationship. Guthlac is called sincgiefan holdne, hlaford min, beorna bealdor, se selesta, werigra wraþu, winemaga wyn, winiga hleo, and sigedryhten min (ll. 1348-79).

The poet of Guthlac B employs many epithets for the saint. Some, such as þeow, mondryhten, eādiġ, halga, and hleō, are repeated several times; some occur only once. One series of related words expresses the saint's wisdom. The use of "teacher" has already been mentioned. The poem also calls Guthlac rof runwita in line 1095 in combination with se wuldormaga. Later, in line 1109, Guthlac is heard hygesnotter. Guthlac's wisdom is important not only because he is a teacher of God's word, but also because it comes directly from God through the agency of Bartholomew, Guthlac's visitor and guardian. This wisdom is unlike that heroic wisdom which allows the hero to guide his kingdom intelligently. It is evidence of Guthlac's chosen state. It is also, of course, the authority necessary to give Guthlac's teachings the ring of absolute truth.

Other epithets stress Guthlac's holy state. He is called gaesta halig (l. 1060), gode leof (l. 1062), and mildes (l. 1007). His noble, warrior-like qualities are stressed in from folctoga (l. 902), and his allegiance to God in se dryhtnes þegn (l. 1135). Aefelne (l. 1287), eorl ellenheard (l. 1165), and haeleſa leofost (l. 1203) show the poet's interest in the two sides of Guthlac's character.

The epithets in the poem have a function that goes beyond ornamentation. They identify the key characteristics of the saint and add the weight of repetition to

the central actions that the saint performs. They also develop an understanding of the saint as a human being as well as a chosen messenger of God (foregengan, l. 533).

Key characteristics of Guthlac found in both poems are the warrior-like qualities that enable the saint to do battle with the devil and defend God's word on earth, the wisdom given by God to the saint that makes possible the saint's exemplary life and his teaching, and the blessed state of the saint himself.

A fourth area of contrast between Felix's Life and the poetic versions of Guthlac's life can be found in the conclusions to the different works. The conclusion to Felix's Life of St. Guthlac is simply the end of a chapter.⁹² Chapter LIII recounts a miracle performed at the site of Guthlac's grave. Salt, previously blessed by Guthlac, is added to water and dripped into the eyes of a blind man. His sight is immediately restored, and the story ends with the cured man giving thanks to God ("grates Deo persolvens dignas, quas nullus reddere nescit").⁹³

Unfortunately, the conclusion to Guthlac B is missing. There has been discussion about how much is missing, but there is no convincing evidence to suggest how much more might have been there. Guthlac B breaks off in the speech given by Beccel to Pega, Guthlac's sister. There is no such speech in Felix's Chapter L.

Chapter L does continue the story with Pega's fainting at the news. The next day both Pega and Beccel return to Guthlac's body, observe the heavenly odour; and three days later, they bury the saint's body in his oratory.⁹⁴ Whether or not these details were included in Guthlac B cannot be confidently decided. But, Krapp and Dobbie note that there are many possibilities that must be considered regarding how much has been lost, from as little as six verse lines to as much as all or part of a now lost gathering.⁹⁵

There is, however, a conclusion to Guthlac A. The last difficulty that Guthlac bears in the poem is his nerve-wracking trip to the mouth of Hell. Bartholomew arrives to order the devils to return Guthlac to his home, which is described in glowing terms (ll. 742-48). At line 748, the poet begins the conclusion to the poem. He asks if anything fairer is known to men, a purely rhetorical question. He adds, "Hwaet, we þissa wundra gewitan sindon! / Eall þas geeodon in ussara / tida timan" (ll. 752-54). This statement is important in that it reminds the audience that the miracles associated with Guthlac have occurred in "modern times," a concept also important to Gregory in his Dialogues. The poet adds that God allows these miracles to help weaker men remain firm in their faith (ll. 754-59). He continues in this manner for eleven lines (ll. 760-71) and finally returns to Guthlac. He says that

Guthlac was always faithful, that he often prayed, and that when he died, his soul was led to its eternal reward in heaven.

Swa waes Guðlāces gaest gelaeded
engla faednum in uprodor,
fore onsyne eces deman
laeddon leoflice. (ll. 781-84)

Again the poet generalizes. For the next twenty-eight lines, he explains the qualities of the righteous souls which, like Guthlac's soul, will receive eternal bliss in heaven. Those of "sodfaestra sawla" perform God's teaching; they earn eternal life while on earth; they have faith, hope, clean hearts; they honour the Lord, have wise thoughts, are eager to join God, and perform many other virtuous acts. The poet ends the action of the poem seventy lines before the end.

These last seventy lines end Guthlac's life and explain in general terms what lessons are to be drawn from the preceeding story. This passage of rewards reminds the reader of the opening lines of the poem. Here the poet takes pains to inform his audience of God's care and attention regarding the lives of men. He always knows the truth and rewards those deserving of reward. At the end of the poem, one also knows that Guthlac has deserved the joys enumerated by the poet. Felix shows no such interest in thematic recapitulation.

When Felix's Life of St. Guthlac is compared with Guthlac A and B, several significant differences are found which contrast the practices of the Latin prose hagiographer and the Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiographer. The first major difference involves the opening passages of the works. The prose writer leans on the well-established prose conventions: he cites his reasons for writing, usually the urgent request of others, bemoans his own inadequacy for the task, and cites his authorities.

The poets create a very different pattern. They express, often with Biblical precedents, the ideas around which the poem revolves. They are in no hurry to begin the life of the saint, but prefer to devote considerable space to preparing the audience for a clear understanding of the material at hand.

A second contrast can be seen in the use of the saint as a literary character. Felix's Guthlac is a stationary figure, imbued with all the virtues and acting always with prompt, efficient goodness. The various incidents which prove his sainthood flow by him; he almost seems a bystander in his own story. Felix's Guthlac, always cheerful and capable, seldom reminds his reader that a virtuous life on earth requires continual striving after that goodness. The poets' approach to the character of the saint is different. They both stress the challenges of the saint's life and

dwell with, perhaps, heroic zest on the internal emotional battle that the saint fights and wins.

A third area of contrast relates to the method employed by the Anglo-Saxon poets in defining the character of the saint. Felix, as has been mentioned, employs incidents, meaningful actions, which display such qualities as wisdom, foreknowledge, and faith. The poets have both sacrificed the string of brief incidents. They depend on the technique of variation, particularly in the epithets employed for the saint, to inform their audiences of Guthlac's true nature.

The conclusions to the works are the fourth area of contrast. Felix ends his life with the end of a chapter devoted to a post-death miracle. There is no interest in recapitulation and apparently no need to say more. The poet of Guthlac A, in contrast, recapitulates the thematic content of the work. At both beginning and end, then, the two forms differ significantly.

Chapter III applies these four areas of difference found in the lives of Saint Guthlac to other Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives. The purpose is to discover if the approaches taken by the Guthlac poets in these four areas are common to other Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives.

7

Notes

- ¹ Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 15-46.
- ² Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 19. "One might suggest a date somewhere between 730 and 740."
- ³ Krapp and Dobbie, eds., date the manuscript by the handwriting: "The date of the handwriting of the Exeter Book is evidently to be placed in the second half of the tenth century" (p. iii).
- ⁴ Krapp and Dobbie, eds., p. xxxii.
- ⁵ Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 19.
- ⁶ See Albertson, p. 165. Albertson comments that the life is atypical in that it was commissioned for a royal rather than a monastic audience and thus the style is elaborate and rhetorically adorned.
- ⁷ Cf, for example, the Life of St. Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus, Chapter One and Chapter Sixty-Eight.
- ⁸ Albertson, p. 167.
- ⁹ Jones, p. 55; see also pp. 213-14 on the conventionality of borrowing.
- ¹⁰ For a discussion on the appropriateness of the choice of St. Bartholomew, see A. P. Campbell, "Physical Signs of Spiritual Cleansing in Old English Poetry," Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, 43 (1975), 382-91. "Guthlac is rescued by the Lord, who sends a messenger, no less than the apostle Saint Bartholomew, who by this time in Old English letters and tradition has a special reputation as a devil chaser" (p. 383).
- ¹¹ Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 179.
- ¹² Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 108.
- ¹³ These are conventional abilities associated with many saints; see Gregory's Life of St. Benedict or Bede's Life of St. Cuthbert for example.

- 14 See Chapter I, pp. 17-18.
- 15 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 62-63.
- 16 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 62-63.
- 17 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 64-65.
- 18 Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 64.
- 19 Cf for example, Myra L. Uhlfelder, trans. Dialogues, Book II: Saint Benedict (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), p. 15. "Peter: What remarkable accomplishments you are telling about! They will be a useful example to many people. The more I hear of that good man's miracles, the keener my appetite becomes to hear more of them."
- 20 Krapp and Dobbie note that the first line of the first introduction to Guthlac A is written in capital letters and that at line 518 a "major break" occurs which signals the beginning of Guthlac B. See p. xxxi.
- 21 Shook, "The Burial Mound," pp. 1-10; and Laurence K. Shook, "The Prologue of the Old English Guthlac A," MS, XXIII (1961), 294-304.
- 22 Lipp, pp. 46-62.
- 23 Paul Reichardt, "Guthlac A and the Landscape of Spiritual Perfection," Neophilologus, 58 (1974), 331-38. (See also, Hill, "The Middle Way," pp. 182-87.)
- 24 Shook, "The Burial Mound," p. 4.
- 25 Shook, "The Burial Mound," p. 10.
- 26 Reichardt, p. 335.
- 27 Reichardt, pp. 332, 336.
- 28 Lipp, p. 47.
- 29 Lipp, p. 47.
- 30 Lipp, p. 62.
- 31 Lipp, pp. 52, 57.
- 32 Reichardt, p. 338.

- 33 Rosier, ed., pp. 82-92.
- 34 Rosier, ed., p. 84.
- 35 Rosier, ed., pp. 84-88.
- 36 Greenfield, A Critical History.
- 37 Greenfield, A Critical History, pp. 121-22.
- 38 Krapp and Dobbie, eds., pp. xxx-xxxi.
- 39 Cf Shook, "The Burial Mound," General Prologue, p. 1; Lipp, Introduction, p. 52, ll. 1-92; Gerould, "The Old English Poems," p. 79; and Shook, "The Prologue," p. 304.
- 40 Krapp and Dobbie, eds., pp. 51. All citations from Guthlac A and B are taken from Krapp and Dobbie, eds., The Exeter Book, already cited.
- 41 Shook, "The Burial Mound," p. 1.
- 42 Cf for example, the first chapters in both the anonymous Life of St. Cuthbert and Bede's Life of St. Cuthbert. Bertram Colgrave, ed., Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), pp. 60-63 and 142-47.
- 43 Colgrave, Felix's Life, Chapter L.
- 44 Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 152.

"So on a certain day, while he lingered in his oratory engaged in prayer, a spasm of his inward parts suddenly seized him and, as soon as the man of God felt himself attacked by a sudden illness and by a dreadful faintness, he at once recognized that the hand of God had been laid upon him." (p. 153)
- 45 Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 192.
- 46 Rosier, ed., p. 83.
- 47 Uhlfelder.
- 48 Uhlfelder, pp. xix-xx.
- 49 Uhlfelder, p. xx.

50 There is particular significance in the after-death miracles which the saints perform. The power of a local saint is established when one demonstrates that the saint is able to continue his miraculous career from his place in heaven. Thus, the public honour of the saint increases. Second, the power of the saint's earthly remains indicates the viable quality of his faith. Third, the actions of the saint in heaven once again parallel Christ's actions. That Guthlac or Swithin or Cuthbert can and will intervene on earth to aid in the problems of the faithful affirms the idea that Christ can and will do the same.

51 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 64-65:

"Non enim sine certissima inquisitione rerum gestarum aliquid de tanto viro scriberem, nec tandem ea, quae scripsi, sine subtilissima indubiorum testium sanctione libratim scribenda quibusdam dare praesumpsi, quin potius diligentissime inquirens, quantacumque scripsi, investigavi a reverentissimo quodam abbate Wilfrido et a presbitero purae conscientiae, ut arbitror, Cissan, vel etiam ab aliis, qui diutius cum viro Dei conversati vitam illius ex parte noverant."

("For I would not write anything about so great a man without an exact inquiry into the facts; nor have I at length presumed to hand my notes to anyone to be written in the form of a book without taking scrupulous care to have them confirmed by credible witnesses: nay, rather, it was with most diligent inquiries that I sought information about whatever I wrote from a certain most reverend Abbot Wilfrid and from a priest Cissa, a man, I believe, of pure conscience, as well as from others who for any length of time had dealings with the man of God and know his life in part.")

52 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 64-65.

"Sed ut tanti viri tanti nominis relatio compleatur, prout ubique miracula illius fulserunt percunctamini, ut, singulis quae novere referentibus, sequentis libelli materia adgregetur."

("But in order that the story of so great a man may be completed, you should, inasmuch as his miracles shone forth everywhere, make

further inquiries so that when each one has related what he knows, the material for an additional book may be gathered together.")

- 53 See Chapter I, pp. 17-18.
- 54 See Chapter I, pp. 17-18.
- 55 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 86-87.
- 56 Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 86.
- 57 Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 84.
- 58 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 106-7.
- 59 This technique can be found in other lives; see for example, Bede's Life of St. Cuthbert: Chapter XX ("Libet etiam quoddam . . ."); Chapter XXIV ("Alio item tempore . . ."); Chapter XXVIII ("Non multo post tempore. . ."); Chapter XXIX ("Quadam autem die . . .") or the anonymous Life of St. Cuthbert: Chapter I ("Postquam igitur . . ." Book IV); Chapter VII ("Nec silentio praetereundum existimo, quod quidam . . ." Book IV); Chapter XI ("Igitur post duos annos . . ." Book IV); Chapter XIII ("Postquam ergo . . ." Book IV). Colgrave, Two Lives.

- 60 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 108-9.
- 61 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 110-11.
- 62 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 118-19.
- 63 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 120-21.
- 64 As Gradon, Form and Style, p. 21 says,

" . . . in regard to narrative works. These may be regarded as consisting of a number of episodes, each episode being bounded by a framework of time and space; that is to say, an episode is an action. . . . in which people are set within a limited and common context. It is the organization of these episodes that constitutes the structure of the work in question. It is to be noted that the smallest units, the episodes, must be in some degree an imitation of an action, in so far as they must involve the spatial and temporal contiguity of the persons involved. Thus when, for example, critics use the term 'episodic' as a term of disapprobation they

refer, not to the existence of episodes, without which there could be no narrating structure, but to the way in which these episodes are put together."

And later,

" . . . if the episodes were not thematically related, we could have a structured whole if (the episodes) were linked by the existence of a common central character."

65 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 98-99.

66 Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 100-1.

67 Leclercq, pp. 94-95:

"Now, in the Bible, the names of the virtues take on a meaning that they do not have anywhere else. Thus, for example, fear is very often the same thing as charity; it is not at all like fright, or terror. There is a biblical conception of the fear of God which is in no wise fear of God or terror of punishment. This word fear is a biblical Hebraism. It continues to be used, therefore, in a completely different sense from that given to it by secular authors. This loving fear is rather reverence, or respect. It is accompanied by confidence; it engenders peace; it is on a par with charity and with the desire for Heaven . . . Understood in this way, fear is, like charity, the root of all virtues: Initium sapientiae timor Domini. This singularly rich conception of the fear of God comes from the Old Testament, and it is repeated in the New."

68 See line 295: "cuðe him soð genog," and line 243: "Ic eow fela willa / soða gesecgan."

69 Cf ll. 590 ff (Guthlac's speech to the demons when they threaten to throw him into hell is confident and assured).

70 See Chapter I, pp. 17-18 for the descriptive passages about Guthlac. See also Colgrave, Felix's Life, Chapter XIII for a list of things that Guthlac does not do.

71 The poem breaks off at line 1379.

⁷² See also, Beowulf, ll. 2236-66 (the speech of the last survivor).

⁷³ Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 154-55. Colgrave notes that a part of this passage depends on Gregory's Dialogues, I, Pro.

⁷⁴ Cf Tanenhaus, pp. 237-53. (See particularly pp. 246-47 for definitions of Antonomasia and Epithet.)

⁷⁵ R. F. Leslie, "Analysis of Stylistic Devices and Effects in Anglo-Saxon Literature," in Essential Articles: Old English Poetry, eds. Jess B. Bessinger and Stanley J. Kahrl (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1968), p. 257.

⁷⁶ As Gradon, Form and Style, pp. 16-19, says:

" . . . there is another way in which an author can exploit linguistic resources. This is by the exploitation of lexical sets. This I shall call the texture of a work. The use of a number of words in the same semantic field, or of words which overlap in meaning, can create a close texture or lexical cohesion; a number of words from different semantic fields, or with little semantic density, can create a loose texture . . . we can exploit lexical sets to create a close-textured style. This close-textured style is characteristic, both of Latinate styles, and of styles such as that of Old English poetry, which are rich in near synonyms."

⁷⁷ Campbell, "Learned Rhetoric," p. 192.

⁷⁸ See also Frey, "Heroic Narrative Technique," p. 64. "The condition of Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse would indeed favor an expansion of statement through variation of epithets; . . . variational development is the obvious basis for the elaboration of Christian matter."

⁷⁹ Marguerite Lucy Delmastro, "Military Analogy in Early Anglo-Latin Hagiography," Diss. Fordham University, 1973, p. 289.

⁸⁰ Delmastro, p. 239.

⁸¹ Delmastro, p. 292.

⁸² In this case, Guthlac is used alone, without other epithets either preceding it or following it.

⁸³ Colgrave, Felix's Life, pp. 130-31. For example, Chapter XLf: "Ille autem, more suo eximiae caritatis ardore ferverens, sese coram illis obtulit;" ("But he, as was his custom, burning with the flame of most excellent charity, presented himself before them").

⁸⁴ Frey, "Heroic Narrative Technique," p. 63 notes a similar lack of interest in epithets in Latin versions of Juliana and Elene: "The Latin prose sources for these poems (Juliana and Elene) are by contrast spare and utterly matter-of-fact in naming people, places and things. A saint is usually called by name with no accompanying epithet."

⁸⁵ Rosier, p. 82.

⁸⁶ All of these words, for example, are found in Beowulf (Klaeber, ed.) except hygesnattor (although both hyge and snottor are present). They are not found in the combinations used in Guthlac, however.

⁸⁷ Cf for example, Colgrave, Felix's Life, Chapters XXV-XLIX.

⁸⁸ Frey, "Heroic Narrative Technique," p. 64.

⁸⁹ Frey, "Heroic Narrative Technique," p. 64.

⁹⁰ Cf Skemp, "Anglo-Saxon poetry, like early Teutonic poetry generally, centered around the deeds of heroes, to whom the other figures are subordinated; and it was from this standpoint that the persons and incidents of the scriptural stories were regarded" (p. 451). And, "the lives of the apostles and saints . . . gave an opportunity for the development of the heroic element" (p. 463).

⁹¹ Cf ll. 1203-23 where the servant questions Guthlac about the mysterious evening visitor who calls upon Guthlac and learns that it is an angel, and ll. 1269-1326 where the servant witnesses the glorious death and leave-taking of Guthlac's soul with all the attendant miracles.

⁹² See Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 171 for a variant reading.

⁹³ Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 170.

94 Colgrave, Felix's Life, p. 160.

95 Krapp and Pobbie, eds., p. xxxi.

Chapter III

Andreas, Fates of the Apostles, and Juliana

This chapter deals with three Anglo-Saxon poems that are, after Guthlac A and B, most obviously saints' lives. Andreas recounts an adventure in the career of the apostle St. Andrew; Fates of the Apostles gives brief accounts of the "acts and martyrdom of each Apostle";¹ and Juliana concentrates on the trial and martyrdom of that saint. These works will be examined in relation to the four areas of differences found between the prose and poetic versions of the life of St. Guthlac in Chapter II. They are, first, the use of the introduction; second, the role of the saint; third, the epithets given to the saint; and fourth, the use of the conclusion. This examination will determine whether or not these three poems show characteristics similar to those observed in Guthlac A and B.

Andreas, the first poem under consideration, has been examined in the past in terms of its source, its relationship to Beowulf, its re-casting of a popular story, and its possible allegorical and figural

implications. No direct source has been found although several Latin versions of the tale have been shown to have features in common with the poem.² No Latin or Greek manuscript has yet been discovered, however, that matches the poem in enough detail to allow its assignment as a source.

The second critical area concerns the relationship or lack of relationship of Andreas to Beowulf.³ The notion that the poet of Andreas borrowed not only words but also heroic concepts in his telling of Andreas' story has been strong in the criticism of Andreas. Once again, no definitive evidence has been brought to bear on the problem. That similarities between the poems do exist is easy to demonstrate. That these similarities are examples of purposeful borrowing is not easily proved. Kenneth Brooks, for example, agreed with Dorothy Whitelock that "the formulaic and traditional nature of Old English verse makes it practically impossible to say that the author of one poem knew another specific one."⁴

The Beowulf comparisons have also been used as a kind of excuse for passages in Andreas that seem out of place. The winter storm (ll. 1255-62), for example, that appears incongruous in the hot dry climate of Mermedonia, is a section that has driven critics to search out possible sources for such a passage in other poetic works. The rather heroic vessel that

transports Andreas is found in another difficult passage that has caused critics to look for parallels in Beowulf (ll. 360 ff).⁵

The third area of research has to do with the material of the tale. The legend of Andrew's rescue of Matthew in the land of the savage Mermedonians is a story which is both apocryphal and popular:

. . . in the second century there arose the legend of the Sortes Apostolorum, according to which the Apostles determined by lot whither each of them was to go, and then dispersed each to his province. . . . This was the beginning of a great apocryphal tradition according to which each Apostle became the subject of a comprehensive history; such "lives" were usually very popular in tone, and were devised in order to disseminate heretical doctrines.⁶

The fourth area of research attempts to discover in Andreas instances of allegory and figural narration. Thomas D. Hill⁷ leads the figural interpreters. He suggests, for example, that the "conversion of the Mermedonians is not presented in realistic terms, but rather in terms of figuration. That is, the poet is less concerned with the literal history of this conversion than with the spiritual realities which in his view underlie this history."⁸ He feels that a figural interpretation resolves the problem of apparently awkward moments in the poem.

Penn Szittya⁹ continues in the same vein, concluding that lines 706 to 810 of Andreas deal with

"mystically and allusively those events at the end of Christ's life which are doctrinally at the center of the medieval Catholic faith: the establishment of the rock of the Church, and the Resurrection of Christ . . ."¹⁰ David Hamilton¹¹ argues that repetition and dramatic irony function in Andreas in order to develop a symbolic motif, that is, the spiritual hunger of the Mermedonians. He resolves some of the unusual action in Andreas in terms of allegorical concerns: "all the action adheres to an open and consistent allegorical progression."¹²

In "The Harrowing of Mermedonia: Typological Patterns in the Old English Andreas,"¹³ Constance B. Hieatt follows the theory that Andreas can be read on several levels. She says, "The primary effect of the crucially placed passage naming Moses, Joshua and Tobias is to strengthen the typological association of Andrew with Christ . . . In some sense, the life of any Christian saint is, of course, an imitatio Christi; but the events of the Andreas can be seen to be so in an essentially schematic way."¹⁴ Hieatt concludes her argument by tying together mythic and typological elements: "We should also recall that the context in which Abraham and Isaac were last mentioned is that of the Harrowing of Hell. This myth is as central to the poem as the concept of Andrew as a subfulfilment of Christ, for Andreas is not just a verse romance in the

heroic mold, but a mythic and typological narrative poem of great coherence and depth."¹⁵

Until recently, much of the work done on Andreas has been done in an apologetic tone.¹⁶ Reasons have been searched out to resolve difficulties in the poem, but whether Andreas can be interpreted as a poem depending heavily on Beowulf or depending heavily on the tradition of figural narrative, or on some other motif, one must not fail to consider the poem as a saint's life. Yet critical commentary on the poem as hagiography is very limited.

Rosemary Woolf¹⁷ discusses Andreas in terms of its Latin source and its relationship to Beowulf. She adds "Andreas may at first sight seem a disconcerting mixture of epic and romance."¹⁸ She concludes her discussion with an almost condemnatory statement: "It is best, therefore, to enjoy Andreas as a good story, without too much solemnity of judgment either from the religious or literary point of view."¹⁹

Gordon H. Gerould,²⁰ usually a gentle observer of Anglo-Saxon saints' lives, says of Andreas, "The imperfect adaptation of Germanic traits to epic structure . . . is at once the charm and the weakness of Andreas."²¹ Gerould responds to the "charm" of the poem, but he feels it necessary to qualify that response with the idea that the poet has been able to adapt his native tradition only "imperfectly." A

number of other critics have been charmed by Andreas but not so charmed that they fail to comment on the weaknesses of the poem. For example, David Hamilton, talking once again about relationships between Beowulf and Andreas says "Still, these passages suggest a poet who, by his verbal echoes of Beowulf, shows that he tries to write in the heroic style but sometimes muddles it."²²

Andreas is an attractive poem in many respects; but it has vulnerable aspects that these and other scholars have pointed out. In so doing, they have generally overlooked or minimized the fact that Andreas is not an epic, or a romance, or an exercise in figuration. It is poetic hagiography and should be praised or blamed for what it is, rather than what it is not.

The qualities of poetic hagiography are not well discussed in treatments that compare the poems with other types of literature such as prose hagiography, epic or romance. Rather, those qualities are submerged in the attempt to bring resemblances to other literary forms to the surface. This problem is well illustrated in Andreas scholarship. The scholars cited above have seen Andreas as an imperfect epic, a faulty romance, a partially ill-constructed figural narrative; but much more can be said in Andreas' favour when it is viewed as poetic hagiography.

Andreas is limited to one great adventure in the apostle's life. Andreas, sent by God, travels miraculously to Mermedonia, where he rescues the imprisoned St. Matthew, suffers torture at the hands of the enraged Mermedonians, and ultimately converts the wet and repentant pagans to Christianity. The tale does include some references to events that Andrew participated in while he was with Christ and briefly touches on the saint's approaching death. Along with the heroic action, the poem also provides a moral lesson. When God first asks Andreas to undertake the rescue, the saint is not confident that he can manage the long journey.²³ He suggests that God dispatch an angel on the mission (ll. 189-201).²⁴ God replies that for Andreas to doubt his own ability to perform the task is tantamount to doubting God:

Eala Andreas, þæt ðu a woldest
 þæs siðfaetes saene weorðan!

Ne meaht ðu þæs siðfaetes saene weorðan,
 ne on gewitte to wac, gif ðu wel þencest
 wið þinne waldend waere gehealdan,
 treowe tacen. (ll. 203-214)

Andreas recovers immediately from this doubting, places his confidence with God, where it belongs; and God protects and assists Andreas throughout the adventure.

To examine Andreas as poetic hagiography, one looks first for a thematic introduction. This section, if it agrees with the model seen in the Guthlac poems,

will propose a reasonably specific idea that the action of the poem will illustrate. The idea, one directly relevant to Christian teaching, will be exemplified by the struggles of the incipient saint and will compare his actions with those of Christ Himself while He struggled to save the sinful men on earth.

The first thirteen lines of Andreas contain a general, fairly typical introduction to the poem.²⁵

These lines remark on the valor and glory of the apostles ("twelfe under tunglum tireadige haeled,"

ll. 2). They relate the familiar story of the dispersal of the apostles at the Lord's command (ll. 3-6). Most important, these lines reinforce the idea that the apostles were famous warriors who engaged in mighty battles:

paet waeron maere men ofer eorðan,
 frome folctogan ond fyrðhwate,
 rofe rincas, þonne rond ond hand
 on herefelda helm ealgodon,
 on meotudwange; (ll. 7-11)

One reads next that Matthew was one of these glorious warriors. The poet supplies a bit of information on Matthew (ll. 12-14) and then begins to describe that terrible island where the natives eat human blood and flesh. They blind their victims and poison them with a magic drink that destroys the intellect (ll. 14-39).

Lines 40 ff inform us that Matthew came there and was taken prisoner. The immediate action of the poem begins here. The poet has given an introduction to the apostles and has mentioned their role as warriors for God. He has explained the terrible nature of the island where Matthew must go and has recounted the arrival of the apostle. One can expect then that this poem will stress the warrior role played by the apostles and that wicked tricks and horrible practices will be put forth.

Andreas is not mentioned in this part of the poem, a fact which relates the structure of the introduction to Andreas to those of Guthlac A and B. Andreas is first mentioned at line 110 in a speech in which God assures the imprisoned Matthew that he will be rescued by Andreas ("Ic ꝥe Andreas aedre onsende / to hleo ond to hroðre," ll. 110-11). The second reference to Andreas occurs on line 169, where the poet finally brings Andreas himself into the action.

One can see, therefore, the first 160 lines of the poem as an extended introduction to Andreas' task and his problems. The first thirteen lines set the overall theme, the heroic battle-adventures of the apostles. The next 147 lines give the background: the nature of the Mermedonian island, the capture and torture of Matthew, and God's promise to send Andreas to help.

God's promise is significant in that it motivates the central action of the poem. Although Andreas hesitates to accept the task, he quickly regains his sense of faith and duty and follows the orders of his heavenly Lord. Matthew's behaviour in the introductory lines sets the pattern that Andreas will follow. Matthew asks for God's help (ll. 63-87), and reaffirms his willingness to perform the Lord's will: "A ic symles waes / on wega gehwan willan þines / georn on mode" (ll. 64-66).

Matthew's acceptance is the ideal that Andreas must achieve just as Andreas' behaviour sets an ideal for all men. Much of the later action of the poem concerns Andreas' fulfilling of his mission. The task is not simple. For example, Andreas is not allowed to recognize Christ when He is disguised as a sailor, and he must suffer at the hands of the Mermedonians until God releases him. The lengthy introduction to Andreas proposes the idea that complete belief in God's word and obedience to His commands assures salvation and that this perfect faith is difficult to obtain and to sustain in the fallen world of men. Andreas will endeavour and succeed; he will also learn: "In Andreas, the hero grows in awareness as his testing progresses, and he becomes by stages a wiser and holier man."²⁶ He is a model for all Christian men to follow and from whom to take hope.

Andreas' role in the poem-as a literary character is a rich one; he performs a lengthy series of meaningful actions over the course of the story. The introduction displays him in the act of undertaking a difficult mission for God. As soon as God upbraids Andreas for his slowness in accepting the mission, Andreas accepts the task with courage and enthusiasm. Andreas' moment of weakness provides a splendid opportunity for a moral lesson. If Andreas, who had the opportunity to be with the living Christ, could doubt even for a moment, then modern man's ability to fail briefly in God's work becomes readily understandable. Andreas' sterling example of spiritual and physical courage provides the model for all men to follow. After his fear, Andreas resolves courageously to do God's will. He affirms his faith by encouraging his followers with stories of Christ's work on earth.. He accepts the torments meted out by the wicked Mermedonians. Andreas also demonstrates his ability to forgive his ignorant enemies. With God's help, he saves them from destruction and converts them to belief in God.

In one short section of the poem, Andreas performs the role of teacher. The teaching of the events of Christ's life is of special interest to the poet. He puts the request for teaching into Christ's own mouth, and Andreas willingly obliges. First, Andreas tells

of a miracle performed by Christ when he calmed an angry sea that was terrifying His fellow passengers (ll. 429-60); this story is highly appropriate in the circumstances. Andreas ends the tale with words of assurance: "Forþan ic eow to soðe secgan wille, / þæt naefre forlaeted lifgende God / eorl on eorðan, gif his ellen deah" (ll. 458-60). Andreas next answers questions put to him by the Lord in disguise.

The answers that Andreas gives demonstrate his knowledge of the various miracles that Christ performed (ll. 572-821). The situation seems highly ironic.²⁷ Andreas is telling stories about the miracles that Christ performed while Christ in disguise urges him on. There is, however, an appropriateness in the situation. The allusions to miracles that Andreas relates are familiar: sight is restored to the blind, lepers are cured, water is changed to wine. In the best developed story, Christ, accused of being a charlatan, displays His power by calling down a stone and sending it to awaken the patriarchs who will testify for Him. This tale is analogous to Andreas' own further adventures. He too will be called an evil sorcerer or magician by Satan. He will call upon a stone to persuade the people; this stone creates the flood which convinces the recalcitrant Mermedonians that both Andreas and Christ are worthy of belief. One must also recall that Christ's questions concerning

the problems of converting the Jews inspire Andreas to tell this significant tale. If nothing else, this episode prepares the audience to draw the parallels between Christ's actions and those of Andreas. It also shows Andreas as teacher which will be his final role with the Mermedonians.

The actual battle in which Andreas engages takes place after Matthew and the other prisoners are safely out of Mermedonian reach. God has warned Andreas what to expect. He will be severely tried by the Mermedonians; Christ explains that He Himself also had suffered in enemy hands. But, just as His crucifixion did not destroy Him, so Andreas' wounds will not bring about his death. Andreas eagerly goes forward to meet his trial. Andreas' fate reminds the reader of the crucifixion, and the poet makes very sure that the parallel cannot be overlooked. Andreas says "hwaet forlaetest ðu me?" (l. 1413) and "Biððe ic, weorða God, / þaet ic gast minne agifan mote, / sawla symbelgifa, 'on þines sylfes hand" (ll. 1415-17).

Andreas' words echo Christ's, and his sufferings, like Christ's, lead to salvation, in this case, for the Mermedonians. In the midst of Andreas' torments, God assures him of the outcome and directs his glance behind him (ll. 1429-49). Andreas beholds a flowery miracle.²⁸ Where the saint's blood has been shed, blossoming trees have sprung up. Upon seeing this

proof of God's power, Andreas immediately offers praise to his Lord (ll. 1450-57).

In the battle section, Andreas is the heroic, Christian warrior. Each day, angry Mermedonians attack him. They wear battle dress, and their approach is military. For example, lines 1201 to 1205 display the battle preparations:

ða waes beacen bodeh burhsittendum;
 ahleoþon hildfreme heriges brehtme,
 ond to weallgeatum wigend grungon
 cene under cumblum corðre mycle
 to þam orlege, ordum ond hordum.

Andreas fights with his faith and trust in God, weapons which eventually produce victory.

Finally, Andreas rescues the besieged Mermedonians, converts them, leaves, returns for an additional week, and departs. These later adventures occur rapidly, without amplification. In fact, only 244 lines are used to recount all of these adventures. Of these lines, thirteen are devoted to the poet's generalizing about the story.

Andreas struggles against his own human nature and against the evil of the Mermedonians. He is always the perfect warrior and the hard-working and loyal Christian. By his example, the poet illustrates the difficulties of this life and assures the audience of the final, worthwhile reward.

Andreas is an active figure, shown in a variety of challenging situations. He is a vigorous warrior, a gentle and patient teacher, and a chosen man endeavouring to overcome his own human weaknesses in order to obey his Lord. Andreas succeeds and enjoys a complete victory, not only a military one but also an even more important spiritual one. He not only rescues Matthew and defeats the wicked Mermedonians; he saves those same evil doers.

The Andreas poet employs the traditional Anglo-Saxon poetic device of variation in epithets to add information regarding the character of his hero. There are 155 instances in the poem where the hero is named. He is called by sixty-three different names; of these, twenty occur more than once, and forty-three only once. Of those names that do occur more than once, the most popular is "Andreas" itself. Thirty times the poet calls the saint by his name. The second most frequently used epithet is halga which occurs seventeen times (and se halga wer, three times). The use of these terms is common in the prose lives, but the Andreas poet also demonstrates the poetic technique of using numerous and meaningful epithets in order to explain the qualities and characteristics of the saint.

There are nine epithets, other than Andreas and halga, that occur three times or more in Andreas:

þegn (seven), aedele (seven), haeled (seven), cempa (six), beorn (five), ar (four), wine (four), hleor (three), and eorl (three). These words are used singly and in combination, occasionally with each other. For example, Andreas is called "aedelum cempa," "halig cempa," "leoflic cempa," and Andreas and Matthew are referred to collectively as "cempa-coste." Andreas is called "haeled" once and "wis haeled" once. Satan calls him "haeleda gewunnon," and both Andreas and Matthew are called "haeled higerofe."

The epithets define Andreas as a nobleman, a warrior, or champion, a protector of his men, and a messenger bearing God's word:²⁹ Andreas is called ar (one), halgan ar (one), se ar Godes (one), and aepelcynings ar (one). This last epithet is particularly relevant to Andreas' role as converter of the Mermedonians. The role of Andreas as a nobleman-warrior is both typically heroic and typically hagiographic. Andreas has a difficult battle with which to deal. He must defeat the battle-hardened Mermedonians not in hand to hand combat, of course, but by spiritual persuasion. He also must battle his own human nature. To both battles, the saint brings his noble courage and his champion's skill; and the poet uses the epithets to keep Andreas' stature as a warrior in the audience's mind.

The poet employs forty-three epithets one time only. These terms help support Andreas' role as teacher-learner, and as rescuer-victim. Various, Andreas is called "heard ond higerof," "nales hildlata," "wise on gewitte," "magoraedendes," "leof lareow," "swaesne geferan," "widerfeohtend" (by Satan), "anhagan," "gleawmode Gode leof," "se modiga," "cyninges craeftiga," and many more. These epithets fill out the various situations in the poem. Andreas is called "hlafordlease" during his troubles, is maligned by Satan with "synninge" and is described finally by the poet as "se leod fruma" and "wigan unslawne," a fitting summation of Andreas' work. The great number of epithets once again define those key qualities that exemplify Andreas' sainthood. The poet repeats several terms and enlarges upon the ideas which they convey with individual epithets that clarify the meaning of Andreas' actions.³⁰

Like the introduction, the conclusion to Andreas is long and filled with incidents. The thematic development of the poem comes to its logical conclusion at line 1477. At this point, Andreas has been rescued from the Mermedonian tortures; his spilled blood has been made flowering trees, and his clothing and wounded body repaired. Andreas has succeeded at this task; Matthew is safe, and God has restored Andreas to his place of virtue and honour. At line 1478, "the

poet interrupts his narrative with a comment of his own, which has no support from the prose versions; he seems to be making a rhetorical disclaimer that he does not know the whole story of St. Andrew in order to condense his poem."³¹

The poet continues after this fourteen line comment to discuss the flood that convinces the Mermedonians (ll. 1492-1642), the conversion of these heathens (ll. 1643-51), Andreas' leave-taking and return, his last week with the newly converted Mermedonians, and his final leave-taking (ll. 1706-22). These incidents confirm Andreas' powers. He can, with God's help, perform miracles. He can teach the truths of Christianity, and he goes eagerly off in the end for his next trial:

Saegde his fusne hige,
 þaet he þa goldburg ofgifan wolde,
 secga seledream ond singgestreon,
 beorht beagselu,* ond him brimpisan,
 þaet seas faroðe secan wolde. (ll. 1654-58)

Andreas is so anxious to undertake the next mission that he leaves too soon; God must send him back for another week (ll. 1661-71).

The beginning and end of Andreas set the themes; both sections are long and full of incidents. The Andreas poet says little in a philosophic vein. Rather, he demonstrates the proper behaviour. First, Matthew exhibits the loyalty and faith that not only apostles

but all Christians should have. Andreas falters, regains his faith, and at the end of the poem demonstrates those same virtues that Matthew showed in his ready acceptance of God's commands. The poet "interrupts" his narrative to condense the remainder of his work as Brooks suggests, but it is not the desire for brevity alone that causes the interruption. The main theme of the poem is finished, and the poet is ready to conclude. By breaking the action with his disclaimer, he draws attention to the use of the later information. This last set of exploits is used to recapitulate the idea that faith and loyalty to God give a kind of spiritual power. Andreas ends with the prayer of the Mermedonians, no small instance of Andreas' abilities. They praise God, these same people who devoured all strangers and accepted no outside authority. The prayer is a striking proof of Andreas' success.

Fates of the Apostles is an ignored poem. When comment is made, it is generally less than complimentary: "The poem has no literary merit, for its subject and plan would hardly permit this: it belongs to the class of memorial verse, and as Schaar says, 'would hardly have attracted attention if Cynewulf's acrostic had not been attached to it.'"³² Further, in spite of scholarly interest, no true source for Fates of the Apostles has been discovered although Brooks notes

several lists that have similarities to the poem.³³

Warren Ginsberg³⁴ adds "When critics speak of the Fates of the Apostles, they usually discuss its sources, for literary merit they agree is either absent or not the purpose of the poem."³⁵ And Robert C. Rich³⁶ begins his article on the poem with the following: "For most of the century and more since this poem was first published critical opinion has been almost unanimously unfavorable about its literary merit and until recently scholarly attention has been limited mainly to textual and source investigations"³⁷

Cynewulf's runic signature has occasioned interest, but the question usually investigated is whether it represents early Cynewulf or late Cynewulf and not whether it is relevant to the theme of the poem.³⁸

Recent work, however, has found more to praise in the poem. Constance B. Hieatt,³⁹ for example, responding to approaches to the poem taken by Alvin A. Lee⁴⁰ and James L. Boren,⁴¹ argues that the poem "is obviously far more meaningful and rich than it has been given credit for being."⁴² She also sees much merit in the "despised and misunderstood epilogue."⁴³ In like fashion, Warren Ginsberg discovers hidden subtlety in the poem. He turns to onomastics to find an explanation for the shape of the poem and for Cynewulf's signature as well. "Prompted by the paradigm of the Apostles, Cynewulf has thus found in

his name a meaning for man's condition and conduct on earth."⁴⁴ Examining the poem as a "penitential exemplum," Robert C. Rich concludes "the Fates . . . is a penitential meditation in which the glory of the apostles is used as a bright background against which the darkness of the poet's--and, by extension, the reader's--spiritual condition and uncertain fate stand out in painful clarity."⁴⁵

When Fates of the Apostles is examined as Anglo-Saxon hagiography, an interesting picture emerges. It is still a small and perhaps undistinguished poem, but it is acceptable in literary terms when its hagiographic possibilities are explored.

The introduction to Fates of the Apostles, like the poem itself, is brief. There are $10\frac{1}{2}$ lines of introduction which are then followed by $8\frac{1}{2}$ lines of examples.⁴⁶ The poet poses two contrary states in the first sentences of the poem that express the major idea of the work. He is "sidgeomor" (l. 1), and "on seocum sefan" (l. 2), while the apostles are "torhte ond tireadige" (l. 4); "daedum domfaeste dryhtne gecorene" (l. 5); and "leofe on life" (l. 6). Both the poet and the apostles in this work are hastening towards their own deaths; yet, only the "halgan heape" (l. 9) are doing so in proper courageous Christian terms. The weaker man, the poet, is seeking help on his journey. That help will come from two directions.

First, reassurance comes from the belief that after terrible martyrdom, the apostles are granted eternal joy. Second, the poet asks for prayers from those who have studied his song ("hu[ru] ic freonda beþearf / lida on lade," ll. 91-92).

The poet expresses his weary, troubled state in the first two lines. He will fortify his own courage with stories of the heroic deaths of the apostles. Also, he will reiterate his belief in their faith that eternal reward awaits those who gladly suffer death.

The twelve apostles are treated very briefly in the poem. Each man's story occupies only a handful of lines. Thomas' tale occupies thirteen lines, the most, and James receives only four lines, the least. The apostles all share an heroic attitude toward their own deaths. Andreas, for example, risked his life ("aldre genedde," l. 17). He did not hesitate before the power of any earthly king ("ne þreodode he fore þrymme deodcyniges / aeniges on eorðan," ll. 18-19); and he chose eternal life ("ac him ece geceas / langsumre lif," ll. 19-20). Thomas, too, boldly ventured into India ("þriste genedde / on Indea," ll. 50-51). Simon and Thaddeus were quick into battle ("Naeron ða twegen tohtan saene, / lindgelaces," ll. 75-76).

In seven instances of the ten, a reference is made to the joys of heavenly reward that each apostle

receives. Philip, for example, sought eternal life through death on the cross ("þanon ece lif / þurh rode cwealm ricene gesohte," ll. 38-39). To Bartholomew came the joys of glory ("him waes wuldres dream, / lifwela leofra þonne þas leasan godu," ll. 48-49). James receives eternal life with God as a reward for his struggle ("Hafað nu ece lif / mid wuldorcining wiges to lean," ll. 73-74). Simon and Thaddeus too were to earn eternal joy through earthly strife ("aedele sceoldon / durh waepenhete weorc þrowigan, / sigelea secan ond þone soðan gefean, / dream aefter deaðe," ll. 79-82).

The apostles are used as examples of a single idea in Fates of the Apostles. They all demonstrate the courageous attitude toward death that belief in Christ allows. The deaths of the apostles and their attitudes toward death contrast with the weary, frightened attitude of the speaker. He is seeking spiritual sustenance, and the heroic deaths of the apostles provide it.

Twice the poet makes a comparison between the temporary rewards of earth and the permanent joys of heaven (ll. 49-50 and 81-84). These lines are reminders that the apostles knew where to seek true worth and that they welcomed death. The apostles are not developed characters in any sense. They are names attached to fragments of the same story--that of the

death of a virtuous Christian. That the full stories were familiar to the audience is generally accepted.⁴⁷ But it is not the stories of the apostles that dominate the poem. Rather, the reader is balancing the sorrowful speaking voice against the triumphant tales throughout. Both the poet and the audience are asked to resolve the difficult problem of anticipating death with courage, joy, and optimism.

Brooks sees the poem in the English epic tradition: "the mission of the apostles is represented as the struggle of brave warriors against hostile rulers, and their final death is regarded as the tragic but glorious end of loyal thanes."⁴⁸ The word "tragic" is out of place here. The poet stresses the villainy of the apostles' murderers not to make the deaths tragic but to make them heroic. Over and over, he relates the joyful endings to the stories. These men choose to suffer death. They are not, like Beowulf, for example, at all distressed by the prospect of the final struggle. They are full of faith and joy. This state of serenity is the poet's literary goal.

When the poet talks about the apostles, he employs various epithets to aid in his explanation of these holy men. He uses seven different terms to describe the group: "aedelingas forht ond tireadige" (two); "halgan heape" (two); "ƿeodnes (or "wuldres") ƿegnas" (two); "daedon domfaeste" (one); "dryhtne gecorne" (one); "leofe on

life" (one); and "twelfe tilmodige" (one).

The three terms that are repeated recur in a particular fashion. Each of the three first occurs in the introduction: "aefelingas" (l. 3); "peodnes þegna" (l. 8); and "halgan heape" (l. 9); and they are repeated in the closing lines: "aefelingas" (l. 85); "wuldres þegnas" (l. 87); and "halgan heape" (l. 90).⁴⁹ These epithets are a definition for the apostles. They are the noble, holy thanes of the Lord.

Further, epithets repeated only once add that they are chosen, bright and glorious, beloved while they live, and righteous in their actions. In this poem, their actions all involve their heroic deaths.

Individual epithets are scarce in the poem. Each apostle is called by his name, and three receive no other designation. Of the nine other apostles, seven receive only one epithet each. Peter and Paul are "frame fyrðhwate" (l. 12); John is "se manna" (l. 25); James, "his (John's) broðor" (l. 33); Bartholomew, "beaducraeftig beorn" (l. 44); Thomas "se halga" (l. 60), and an adjective describes him as "collenferð"; James, "eadig" (l. 73), and an adjective describes him as "stiðmod."

Somon and Thaddeus, the last apostles in the poem, receive three epithets: "siðfreme" (l. 77); "beornas beadurofe" (l. 78); and "aefele" (l. 79). These final three are a good summary for all the apostles. They

are all "ready" for a journey in two senses. The apostles all journey to teach the words of Christ; they are all equally anxious for the heavenly journey home. They are also ready for battle against all the wicked devil-inspired enemies of God; and they are all nobles.

The epithets together complete a picture of either an apostle or anyone who strove successfully to pattern his life after the apostles and thus after Christ. Only James' epithet, "his brodor" (l. 33), is restricted to the individual. The warrior-like attitude of the apostles contrasts strongly with the weary, sad-minded voice of the narrator. One must look to the conclusion of the poem for a resolution of this contrast.

If any part of Fates of the Apostles has attracted attention, it is the runic signature which occupies lines 96 to 106. Rosemary Woolf says "Cynewulf's naming of himself in the epilogue to Juliana, Elene, Christ II and The Fates of the Apostles is of remarkable interest from the literary-historical point of view, for it marks the full recognition of a new conception of the poet and the poem in Anglo-Saxon England. It proves the passing of the old anonymous poetry."⁵⁰ However, attention to Cynewulf and discussion on whether this signature is adapted from Juliana or whether it indicates early Cynewulf or late Cynewulf have obscured the fact that the signature is

only a part of the conclusion to the poem. The action of the poem stops with line eighty-seven. The poet here sums up the glorious hopes of the martyred apostles (ll. 85-87).

Next, he requests help from anyone who enjoyed the poem. That help should take the form of prayers to the "halgan heap." The poet is still fearful of that last long lonely journey into death (ll. 91-95). In this section, he dwells on the destruction of the body in its earthly grave (ll. 94-95).

The runic signature follows. It, too, is concerned with the brief and unsure life on earth. The eleven lines contain two statements to the effect that the author's name is revealed in the lines. The runic passage itself lists several instances of earthly things passing away. After this passage, the poet repeats his request for help. Again, he asks those who loved the subject of the poem to ask for help for him. He repeats the notion that he must depart on a journey, the destination of which is unsure (ll. 109-12). But the idea of a journey has taken on a special meaning in this poem. We have heard of the glorious journeys of the apostles as they travelled the world and, more importantly, travelled to their eternal home. The poet remembers this eternal example of hope: "Swa bið aelcum menn, / nemþe he godcundes gastes bruce" (ll. 113-14). There is no need to be uncertain, but there

is a need to follow the example of the apostles and place one's faith in God.

The final seven lines of the poem reveal a changed atmosphere. These lines state that we should pray more earnestly to God that we may enjoy all the joys of heaven: "þær is hihta maest, / þær cyning engla clænum gilded / lean unhwilen" (ll. 118-20). The last sentence is an affirmation of God's might and glory: "Nu á his lof standeð / mycel ond maere, ond his miht seomað, / ece ond edgiong, ofer ealle gesceaft" (ll. 120-22). These final lines represent the resolution of the contrasting points of view put forth by poet and apostles. Their courage and steadfast conviction provide consolation and courage to the poet. And he ends his poem with a strong affirmation of faith. The use of edgiong, renewed with youth, reminds the reader that the poet had previously stressed his own weariness with life ("siðgeomor," l. 1). That weary voice has been renewed by the examples of the apostles' faith and courage.

Fates of the Apostles, like Guthlac A and B and Andreas, is a poem with a message. The overriding importance of the theme is illustrated by the proportion of the poem given over to introducing and concluding it. Of the 122 lines, $10\frac{1}{2}$ are introductory and thirty-four conclude the work. Seventy-seven lines are left to recount the martyrdoms of all twelve

apostles. The resolution of the poet's fears and uncertainty takes place at the very end of the poem in conventional terms; the examples of the apostles as they faced death have rejuvenated the poet. He praises God in the final lines as the apostles themselves had done.

The apostles are briefly treated. The poet uses them as a group rather than as individuals. They are joined here in terms of their courage and optimism at the moment of their deaths. The poem expresses the proper stance one takes toward death, that of a courageous optimistic Christian warrior. The changing attitude of the narrating voice represents first, the fear and uncertainty with which men contemplate death and finally, the joyous confidence that fills the heart of a man who understands and follows the lessons of the apostles.

Another of Cynewulf's signed poems, Juliana, appears to be a "typical" saint's life; Greenfield comments "This saint's life and passion follow a typical hagiographical route."⁵¹ Juliana herself is certainly a typical virgin martyr. She is beautiful and religious. When she objects to a marriage arranged for her, she is dragged away and tortured. She remains steadfast, survives several ordinarily fatal and extraordinarily fiendish tortures, captures a devil, and finally dies a martyr's death by the sword. She

receives divine aid and overcomes the hellish evil of both Eleusius and the devil.

A Latin prose source for Juliana has been suggested. The Acta actore anonymo ex xi veteribus mss printed in the Acta Sanctorum, February II,⁵² has been shown to share similarities with Cynewulf's poem.⁵³ Although proof positive is not available, the Latin life is certainly like the source if it is not the source itself. Critics have discussed the poem with guarded praise. In her edition, Rosemary Woolf comments that the poem "has the defect of these virtues (ie. clarity and directness, simplicity and smoothness), a uniformity verging on monotony."⁵⁴ Later in her introductory material, Woolf concludes "Thus whilst it is a mistake to regard the poem as scholars have done hitherto, as merely of philological and antiquarian interest, it cannot be denied that its smooth competence is achieved at the expense of a certain thinness and lack of vigor and variety."⁵⁵

Another facet of Juliana has been the subject of some interest. In the areas of source study, it has been noted that Cynewulf has changed a few bits of material, changed, that is, if he was employing the Vita. The most significant change is the addition of the motive for Juliana's rejection of Eleusius found in lines 22 ff. The poet adds that Juliana was not interested in marriage as she wishes "to lead a life

dedicated to God."⁵⁶ This motive, not found in the Acta Sanctorum version, creates an apparent inconsistency when the second motive is presented on lines 46 ff, that she will not marry a heathen.

Woolf also notes that Cynewulf has employed an original treatment of Eleusius: "In accordance with the typical Anglo-Saxon preference for villains to be utterly bad, Cynewulf has considerably blackened the prefect's behavior."⁵⁷ She also feels that Cynewulf has given his poem a "dramatic shape and texture not possessed by the Vita."⁵⁸ Specifically, Cynewulf concentrates on Juliana's confrontation with the devil and omits "some of the excessive detail of his original."⁵⁹

Woolf suggests that Cynewulf has altered the material of the Latin prose Vita in order to shape his poem; Gordon Gerould proposes a similar idea: the "great importance of Juliana resides . . . in the extent of its departure from the method and manner of Latin legends."⁶⁰ These departures from Latin prose hagiography make Juliana a good poem to examine in terms of the hagiographic style in Anglo-Saxon poetry. The first aspect of the hagiographic style to seek is the use of a thematically based introductory section.

The introduction to Juliana occupies the first thirty-seven lines of the poem. The poem begins with a conventional formula: "Hwaet! We ðaet hyrdon

haeled eahtian . . ."⁶¹ It continues to relate some facts about Maximian's rule. From line two through line seventeen, Cynewulf lists the atrocities committed by Maximian's soldiers. Fierce warriors ("þegnas þryðfulle," l. 12) raised idols ("hofon hæþengield," l. 15), killed saints ("halge cwelmdon," l. 15), destroyed the learned ("breotun boccraeftge," l. 16), burned the chosen ("baerndon gecorene," l. 16), and persecuted God's warriors with spear and fire ("gaeston Godes cempan gare 7 lige," l. 17). This list of persecutions is relevant to the rest of the poem for all these wicked acts will appear in Juliana's story.

The poet next narrows the scope of persecutors to one wicked person: "Sum waes aehtwelig aefeles cynnes / rice gerefa . . ." (ll. 18-26). Eleusius is rich, noble, powerful, and very heathen. The poet has told us what to expect from Eleusius in his opening description of pagan acts (ll. 4-17). Why Eleusius will be enraged enough to begin committing these atrocities is explained next. Eleusius loves Juliana, but "Hio in gaeste baer / halge treowe, hogde georne / þaet hire maegðað manna gehwylces / fore Cristes lufan claene geheolde" (ll. 28-31). Thus the battle lines are drawn. Eleusius, with wealth and power and heathen thoughts, will try to sway Juliana, who has already decided to reject earthly suitors and dedicate

herself to Christ.

The next six lines recapitulate the problem.

Juliana is betrothed to Eleusius by her father; but Eleusius does not yet know what he must face ("wyrð ne ful cupe, / freondraedenne hu heo from hogde / geong on gaeste," ll. 33-35). Further, the audience is told that "Hire waes Godes egða / mara in gemyndum þonne eall þæt mappungesteald / þe in þæs æþelinges æhtum wunade" (ll. 35-37). This familiar sentiment⁶² makes plain Juliana's virtue.

The confrontation becomes one between earthly power and steadfast knowledge of and faith in God. The major theme of Juliana can be stated as the triumph of faith over all earthly temptation, including wealth and earthly power. Eleusius, we are told, loves Juliana; and he is rich, noble, and powerful. He would make the perfect husband. Unfortunately, he is a pagan; and his bride-to-be has already dedicated her life and virginity to Christ. Juliana is tempted in two ways: not only is she in fear of her life, but also she is in danger of giving in to many wicked earthly delights. The devil's speech (ll. 382-417) helps to illustrate her plight. The devil admits that he cannot harm a warrior of God ("Metodes cempan," l. 383) but that he can harm a weaker man ("ellenleasran," l. 394) in spite of his intention to be good. Juliana is faced with a powerful temptation; a rich, noble man

wishes, with her father's blessing, to marry her. Her decision to remain chaste and die indicates her ability to resist the temptation to enjoy a successful earthly life and to avoid torture and execution.

The action of the poem begins on line thirty-eight. Eleusius brings things to a head by insisting on a speedy marriage, and Juliana refuses. The stage is set for the lengthy confrontations. Eleusius will attempt to sway Juliana with both kind words and harsh ones. The devil will also try to trick Juliana into accepting Eleusius and earthly success. The saint will remain steadfast.

Juliana has a difficult role to play. She is young, beautiful, and innocent; yet she is involved in an epic struggle against the forces of evil, portrayed by her father, her suitor, and a genuine devil. Thematically Juliana is an example of the steadfast force of Christianity pitted against a variety of temptations. It is Juliana's job to resist, heroically if necessary, the temptations put before her. She successfully resists the temptation to marry a rich and powerful pagan who loves her. She resists the temptation to submit to her father's pleas and threats. She resists the temptation to give in to fear of earthly torments. She resists the snare laid for her by the devil. She resists the temptation to put aside her fear of the Lord and to succumb to a fear of

powerful mortals.

Juliana's role sounds somewhat negative and it is. Her actions are all negative in terms of earthly action, but positive in terms of spiritual action. The poet develops his idea of steadfast resistance through Juliana's immobility. He also gives her a kind of literary personality at the same time. Juliana is static on the outside but very active on the inside. She has no difficulty in resisting her father and Eleusius, but she does have trouble when the devil first arrives. This scene allows the poet to express the struggle taking place in Juliana's spirit.

When the devil first addresses Juliana, she is not afraid ("seo þe forht ne waes," l. 258). When the devil answers her question "where do you come from" with a huge lie, "Ic eom engel Godes ufan siðende . . . > to þe sende" (ll. 261-62), Juliana becomes frightened. "Ða waes seo faemme for þam faerspelle / egsan geaclad" (ll. 267-28). At once, she resolves her fear by calling on God for help: "Ongan þa faestlice ferd stapelian, / geong grondorleas, to Gode cleopian:" (ll. 270-71). Juliana knew how to remain firm; God answers her and tells her how to deal with this devil. Juliana is never afraid again, not even at the announcement of her death. The poet says:

Ða weard þære halgan hyht geniwað,
 > þæs maegðnes mod miclum geblissad,
 siþþan heo gehyrde haeled eahtian
 inwitrune, þæt hyre endestaef
 of gewindagum weorþan sceolde,
 lif alysed. (ll. 607-12)

He mentions her happiness that her "days of struggle" are about to be over. Juliana has had many struggles, and her courage has never failed. At the news of her own approaching death, she reacts in a truly saintly manner. The line "Ða weard þære halgan hyht geniwað" reminds the reader of St. Guthlac's feeling when he was struck by his fatal illness. The Guthlac B poet says "hyht waes geniwað" (l. 953) on that occasion as well.

The poet uses set speeches which are common to the accounts of virgin martyrs⁶³ to build a kind of suspense into the story and to reveal Juliana's thoughts. There is no doubt that Juliana will resist painful tortures, but there can be a momentary question about the reaction of a dutiful daughter to her father's requests, or the reaction of a lovely young girl to an ardent and powerful suitor. Juliana survives all temptations with ease; her spiritual strength is always sufficient and her audience comes to depend on her power as the story progresses.

Juliana plays the role of a teacher as well as a martyr. Her teaching is traditional; the lovely image of the secure house safe from the "ferblaedum windas"

(ll. 649-50). highlights the passage. This message itself is the resolution of Juliana's struggles against temptation. She, like the secure house, has withstood the winds and is going to her death as innocent and pure as she had been before the trials began.

Woolf has remarked that Cynewulf made the dialogue the heart of the poem. This emphasis on speech-making further reduces the need for actions and defines the major action as one taking place in Juliana's mind and being expressed in words. Her triumph is the triumph of the righteous over the wicked; it is presented as a series of temptations to be overcome by words, with the help of steadfast faith in God.

There are eighty-one epithets for Juliana which help to explain her character and her situation in the poem. Three are predominant and the others tend to occur from three times to once only. The most popular word for Juliana is faemme, which occurs sixteen times; maegc, a word with a similar meaning, occurs twice alone, once in "seo wuldres maeg," once in "eadhredig maeg" (and once in the disputed eadmaegden, l. 352). Bryd, a word reasonably close in meaning, occurs once. Thus Juliana is described twenty-two times as a maiden (virgin, bride).

The second most frequently found epithet is halig (and eadig). Juliana is called the holy one or saint

twelve times. She is also called eadge three times, bringing the total to fifteen. The third most used name is Juliana, which occurs ten times.

No other epithets occur more than three times. Those occurring three times are geong, dohtor, and eadge, which is counted above. The epithets occurring three times or less fall into ten categories based on concepts and are better described in those categories. The most popular concept is that Juliana is pure, innocent, and without sin. Seven epithets make this idea clear. Juliana is called "claene gecorene," "synna lease," "butan scyldum," "leahtra lease" (two), "facnes claene," and "geong grondorlease." Her purity is, of course, a natural condition for a virgin martyr. It is also a clear contrast to the character of Eleusius and that of the devil.

Five times epithets occur which indicate that Juliana is loved. Her father, before he loses his temper, says "Pu eart . . . seo dyreste / > seo sweteste in sefan minum, / ange for eorþan, minra eagna lecht, / Iuliana" (ll. 93-96). She is the "dearest and the sweetest, the light of my eyes." His opinion changes radically when Juliana refuses to obey his commands.

The devil, in trying to trick Juliana into making pagan sacrifices, calls her "seo dyreste, / > seo weorþeste Wuldorcyninge, / Dryhtne ussum" (ll. 247-49).

This address is ironic, for Juliana will soon demonstrate to the devil that she is indeed dear and precious to God. Juliana is loved by her father and by Eleusius, but their love does not survive. God loves Juliana and offers her the great reward of martyrdom and thus eternal life.

There are five concepts which are each expressed with three epithets. The first is Juliana's relationship to Affricanus. Three times the saint is called daughter (min, pin, and the term is used alone). In similar fashion, her youth is expressed three times (twice simply by the use of the term geonge and once as Geong grondorleas).

Three times Juliana's bravery is cited. She is called "seo unforht," "se fe forht ne waes," and "anraed > unforht." Her lack of fear is necessary in light of the threats and tortures that she must undergo.

Juliana is also beautiful. Her beauty is expressed on three occasions in two comparisons. She is called "seo wlitescyne wuldres condel" (l. 454), the beautiful candle of glory. And twice her beauty is like sunshine; "min se swetesta sunnan scima" (my sweetest splendor of the sun, l. 166) says Eleusius when he first confronts Juliana. Juliana is called "seo sunsciene" (l. 229) which Woolf glosses as "radiant as the sun." In this case, the poet calls

Juliana "radiant" as she is hanging by her hair from a tree. Her beauty is bright as a heavenly candle, or as the sun itself.

The fifth concept has to do with the saint's inner thoughts. Three times the poet comments on her mind and heart. She is "on hyge halge," "breostum inbryded," and "milde modsefan." These three epithets support the saint's general virtue. She is blessed, inspired, and gentle.

Three other categories of epithets occur twice each. The first reinforces Juliana's nobility. She is called "se aefele maeg" and "aefele mod." The first epithet joins the most popular term, maiden, to the idea of nobility; and the second adds nobility to the saint's mind.

Juliana is also called a leader twice; once by the devil whom she captures, "hlaefdige min," and once in regard to her place among women, "maegga bealdor," a particularly relevant title if one considers Woolf's idea that the poem was written for a convent of nuns.⁶⁴

The third area pertains to Juliana's relationship to Christ. She is called "Criste gecweme" and "Criste gecorene." Two other epithets are employed that do not quite fit into the above categories. Juliana is once called "wife" (l. 600). The word probably means "woman" here, and appears to be selected for

alliterative purposes. The full line reads "wifes willan. Waes seo wuldres maeg."

The final epithet is "gleaw > Godeleof." Juliana is given this epithet on line 131. She is telling her father that she will never lie and likewise never turn away from the praise of Christ. This wise answer outrages Affricanus and precipitates Juliana's torments and death.

The epithets for Juliana express her condition in a variety of ways. First, she is a maiden, next a blessed saint. She also possesses the necessary collection of virtues. She is brave, noble, a leader, without sin. Her thoughts are pure; she is chosen by Christ, loved by God, and blessed with wisdom. Personally, she is beautiful, young, and the daughter of a pagan, wherein lies the cause of her troubles.

The action of Juliana is restricted to her refusal of Eleusius, capture, trial, and death. The poet employs the epithets in place of "further adventures" to display the full range of the saint's abilities and gifts. In all, thirty epithets occur only once; but they generally fall into ten groups. Each group expresses one of Juliana's virtues or her condition on earth.

The conclusion to Juliana actually begins before the action ends. The deaths of Juliana and Eleusius (ll. 669-96) and the results of those deaths form the

evidence for the summarizing statements at the end of the poem. Juliana's soul, freed by a sword blow, is led away to "langan gefean" (l. 670). Eleusius and his men "helle sohton" (l. 682). The poet adds several details about the sorry plight of the dead villains. "They had no joys in hell: no treasures in the wine hall / Far otherwise was Juliana's lot."

There are two alternatives that Cynewulf is worried about in the final passage of the poem. Will he, like Juliana, receive eternal joy? Or will he, like Eleusius, lose all joy and be cast into eternal sorrow? (ll. 696-703).

Cynewulf also asks for help from two sources in his final passage. Twice he hopes that the saint will intercede for him with God, and once he asks that everyone who recites his song will remember his name and pray to God for him. He is worried that he has neglected to repent for his sins in time (ll. 712-15), and ends the poem with a statement about the rewards in store for all men on the day of judgment: "scrideð bi gewyrhtum / meorde monna gehwam" (ll. 728-29).

The major notion throughout Juliana is the need for steadfast faith, shown through virtuous actions. Juliana herself displays the virtue of firm belief when faced with a variety of temptations. Her reward, which will be the reward of all devoted Christians, is eternal joy with God and no worries on the day of

judgment. Her chief antagonist, Eleusius, exemplifies the fate of the wicked unbeliever. He is directed to hell, where there is no hope or joy and where the prospects of the approaching day of judgment bring only a further shudder of fear.

The poet is between the extremes of virtue and evil. Like Juliana, he knows of the power and goodness of God; but, like Eleusius, he has sinned. Like all Christian men, he knows about God's mercy and the value of repentance, but probably like most men, he fears that he will delay his repentance too long. The conclusion to Juliana affirms the theme of the poem and relates it directly to the lives of living men who, like the saints, must endeavor to live a good Christian life.

Andreas, Fates of the Apostles, and Juliana, the most easily identified Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives, share the four key stylistic aspects noted in Guthlac A and B. They all depend on introductory passages to set the major themes to be explored in the example that follows. They all concentrate attention on the human struggle taking place within the saint or group of saints. They all depend on the use of variation in the epithets for the saint rather than on a string of brief adventures to develop the character and qualities of the saint. They all return the reader's mind to the major poetic themes in conclusions

which echo the introductory passages.

Elene, omitted in this discussion, belongs with the group of poems generally accepted as saints' lives; it is treated in the next chapter.

Notes

- ¹ Brooks, ed., p. xxx.
- ² See Brooks, ed., pp. xv-xviii for a discussion of possible Latin and Greek versions and George L. Hamilton, "The Sources of the Fates of the Apostles and Andreas," MLN, XXXV (1920), 385-95 for a discussion of Anglo-Irish connections to Syro-Greek sources.
- ³ See Brooks, ed., pp. xxii-xxvii for a general discussion of the scholarly trends and Leonard J. Peters, "The Relationship of the Old English Andreas to Beowulf," PMLA, LXVI (1951), 844-63. Peters concludes: "the evidence offered by the parallels . . . does not sufficiently support the usual statement that the Andreas poet used Beowulf as a model" (p. 863). David Hamilton in "The Diet," pp. 147-58 develops Arthur Brodeur's statements "that the Andreas poet was familiar with Beowulf and sometimes reproduced its phrasing" but that Beowulf was not a model for Andreas. Hamilton expands this notion by developing essential differences between epic and allegory. (See also, David Hamilton, "Andreas and Beowulf: Placing the Hero," in Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation for John C. McGalliard, eds., Lewis E. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 81-98.)
- ⁴ Brooks, ed., p. xxvi.
- ⁵ See Brooks, ed., p. xxiv.
- ⁶ Brooks, ed., p. xxvii.
- ⁷ Thomas D. Hill, "Figural Narrative in Andreas: The Conversion of the Meremedonians," NM, 70 (1969), 261-73; Hill, "The Tropological Context," pp. 522-32; Thomas D. Hill, "Two Notes on Patristic Allusion in Andreas," Anglia, 84 (1966), 156-60; Hill, "Hebrews, Israelites, and Wicked Jews: An Onomastic Crux in 'Andreas' 161-67," Traditio, 32 (1976), 358-61.
- ⁸ Hill, "Figural Narrative," pp. 264-65.

⁹ Penn Szittya, "The Living Stone and the Patriarchs: Typological Imagery in Andreas LL. 706-810," JEGP, 72 (1973), 167-74.

¹⁰ Szittya, p. 174.

¹¹ Hamilton, "The Diet."

¹² Hamilton, "The Diet," p. 158.

¹³ Constance B. Hieatt, "The Harrowing of Mermedonia: Typological Patterns in the Old English Andreas," NM, 77 (1976), 49-62.

¹⁴ Hieatt, "The Harrowing," pp. 51-52.

¹⁵ Hieatt, "The Harrowing," p. 62.

¹⁶ See, for example, Greenfield, A Critical History, pp. 103-8. "There is excess here to be sure, but the passage strikes me in context as not without merit" (p. 106).

¹⁷ Woolf, "Saints' Lives."

¹⁸ Woolf, "Saints' Lives," p. 50.

¹⁹ Woolf, "Saints' Lives," p. 53.

²⁰ Gerould, Saints' Legends.

²¹ Gerould, Saints' Legends, p. 89.

²² Hamilton, "Andreas and Beowulf:" p. 83.

²³ Hieatt, "The Harrowing," p. 57. "The saint's initial hesitation is understandable, . . . It is also possible that this hesitation, which is only momentary, may be seen as parallel to the agony of Jesus at Gethsemane (Mark 14:36)." See also Cherniss, pp. 174-79.

²⁴ Brooks, ed., p. 7. All citations from Andreas are taken from Kenneth R. Brooks, ed., Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles, already cited.

²⁵ Brooks, ed., p. 61.

²⁶ Hamilton, "Andreas and Beowulf:" p. 95.

²⁷ See Hamilton, "Andreas and Beowulf:" p. 96: "Consequently the audience, the poet, and the pilot share a superior level of awareness, and Andrews'

success depends upon his attaining our point of view. When Andrew discovers the truth, the dramatic irony collapses and Christ disappears."

28 See Campbell, "Physical Signs," pp. 382-91. For a discussion of the significance of the change in the physical setting of Mermedonia, see pp. 386-88.

29 See Chapter II, p. 100 for the use of forqangan in Guthlac A.

30 See Hieatt, "The Harrowing," p. 61:

"A number of the verbal aspects of this complexity has already been mentioned, but it is, unfortunately, notable that modern readers often look no further than the 'literal' meaning of the verbal surface. . . . But helm--here translated 'helmet'--is one of several clues that this translation obscures. Consider some of the epithets for Christ in the poem: aedelinga helm (277b, 623b, 655b), helm aelwihta (118b). In 506a, Andrew addresses the Helmsman with the similar epithet wigendra hleo, and in 567a he describes Christ's mission to men as 'to hleo and to hrodre'; compare God's promise to Matthew (110-111a): 'Ic þe Andreas aedre onsende to hleo and to hrodre,' and note that at the end God calls Andrew wigendra hleo (1672b). The heroic vocabulary, then, is no ill-adapted hand-me-down garment: like the eucharistic imagery, the typological echoes of the passion, and the structural parallels between sections, it is carefully chosen to illuminate what is central to the poem--Andrew's re-enactment of the role of Christ."

31 Brooks, ed., p. 112.

32 Brooks, ed., p. xxxi. All citations from Fates of the Apostles are taken from Kenneth R. Brooks, ed., Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles, already cited.

33 Brooks, ed., p. xxx.

34 Warren Ginsberg, "Cynewulf and His Sources: The Fates of the Apostles," NM, 78 (1977), 108-114.

35 Ginsberg, p. 108.

36 Robert C. Rich, "The Penitential Motif in Cynewulf's Fates of the Apostles and in his Epilogues," in Anglo-Saxon England, 6, eds. Peter Clemoes et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 105-21.

37 Rich, p. 105.

38 Brooks, ed., p. xxxi.

39 Constance B. Hieatt, "The Fates of the Apostles, Imagery, Structure and Meaning," PLL, 10 (1974), pp. 115-25.

40 See Lee.

41 James L. Boren, "Form and Meaning in Cynewulf's Fates of the Apostles," PLL, 5 (1969), 115-22.

42 Hieatt, "The Fates," p. 125.

43 Hieatt, "The Fates," p. 125.

44 Ginsberg, p. 114.

45 Rich, p. 112.

46 Hieatt, "The Fates," argues for fifteen lines of what she calls the "prologue" (p. 122). She feels that Peter and Paul belong in the introduction as she argues that they function as prototypes, example setters. Her reasoning is based on numbers of lines devoted to each apostle. "Their treatment here suggests further, that they are being regarded in precisely this light: why else would these two, the most celebrated of all, be allotted only three lines between them, when the number of lines devoted to the other apostles in the poem comes to an average of seven lines to each person" (p. 122). This argument is interesting but not completely commanding; and as Hieatt remarks, her desire for mathematical coincidence may suggest the choice (see pp. 122-23).

47 See Brooks, ed., pp. xxx-xxxii.

48 Brooks, ed., p. xxx.

49 One is tempted to add "twelfe" (l. 4) and "twelfe tilmodige" (l. 86) to this list as well.

50 Woolf, Juliana, p. 8.

51 Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 111.

- 52 Woolf, Juliana, p. ii.
- 53 Woolf, Juliana, p. 13.
- 54 Woolf, Juliana, p. 17.
- 55 Woolf, Juliana, p. 19.
- 56 Woolf, Juliana, p. 14.
- 57 Woolf, Juliana, p. 15.
- 58 Woolf, Juliana, p. 15.
- 59 Woolf, Juliana, p. 16.
- 60 Gerould, Saints' Legends, p. 65.
- 61 Woolf, Juliana, p. 21. All citations from Juliana are taken from Rosemary Woolf, ed., Juliana, already cited.
- 62 See Chapter II, p. 83.
- 63 See Farrar, p. 84.
- 64 Woolf, "Saints' Lives," p. 145.

Chapter IV

Two Saints in Elene

The Vercelli Elene has been placed in a special position in relation to the other Anglo-Saxon saints' lives. It is praised as "Cynewulf's most successful poem"¹ and damned in what Thomas D. Hill calls "a century of negative scholarship"² because "the conflict at its center seems simplistic and forced."³ Thus, the poem has fared better than many of the saints' lives but has not received unqualified approval, not, that is, until the critics of the 1960's and 1970's began seeking structural and sapiential interpretations of it.

Approaches to Elene before the late 1960's have centered on the source of the poem,⁴ the contrast between good and evil that characterizes Cynewulf's work ("One may see, in fact, the struggle between good and evil that pre-occupied Cynewulf here [in Elene] presented thematically as a contrast between darkness and light, both on a physical and a spiritual level"),⁵ and the date, especially in relation to the identity of Cynewulf.⁶

The approaches to Elene after 1968 have been more varied and more laudatory. The critics explore areas of structure and theme and conclude similarly, albeit for different reasons, that Elene is a far more satisfactory, even sophisticated, work than has been admitted: "What we have then in Elene is not a collection of heroic martial and sea passages surrounding a middle section composed of 'rather tedious dialectic'; but a complex and sophisticated poem which is unified in theme and structure around a repeated series of verbal motifs";⁷ "Internal analysis reveals that Elene is a poem consciously and thematically developed and that the epilogue is an integral part of the poet's statement";⁸ "But Cynewulf in his treatment of the source shows conscious and sophisticated artistry and a clear awareness of the figural nature of this narrative";⁹ "The Old English Elene is a strangely neglected treasure; one which proves to be, on closer examination, a highly wrought piece of poetry in which Cynewulf articulates a creed that explains both his art and his religion";¹⁰ "Although more and more readers have come to recognize the literary sophistication of some Old English poems, only a very few have discussed Cynewulf's Elene in terms of this sophistication . . ."¹¹

The consensus of current critical opinion finds Elene complex, carefully constructed, aesthetically

pleasing and capable of a variety of interpretations. The recent critics who praise the poem in this manner offer a number of different arguments for its success.

Stepsis and Rand, who in part began the change in attitude from what Hill calls "lukewarm" appreciation from Stanley B. Greenfield¹² to moderately hot approval, argue that the poem builds up a "complex series of contrasts"¹³ to present "a theological reflection on the nature of Christianity and the meaning of Christ and His symbolic representation, the cross."¹⁴ The poem presents, then, the conversion to Christianity of the man who "gives up the darkness . . . and enters into the light where he can see God. This conversion takes place through the agency of the Cross . . ."¹⁵

In 1970 John Gardner examined the internal structure of the poem to argue that "The theme of the poem, explicitly presented in the epilogue, is the contrast between the universal Christian ethic and the so-called heroic ethic."¹⁶ He felt that Cynewulf did not work from a single lost source that contained all the material found in Elene but rather that his method "was, as he tells us in his epilogue, a careful sorting and organizing of diverse materials 'swa ic on bocum fand' (1254b), in other words, inventio of a high order."¹⁷ Thus, Gardner sees Cynewulf placing Constantine, Judas and himself in a series--each changed

by the cross and each discovering the meaning of "personal salvation."¹⁸

Thomas D. Hill approaches the poem, as he approached Andreas,¹⁹ in terms of figural narrative. "It is concerned with finding the Cross in a literal and immediate sense, but it is also concerned with 'finding the Cross' as an immediate metaphor for conversion."²⁰

In 1972 Daniel Calder discussed the thematic structure of Elene. Calder sees four main sections in the poem: the battle involving Constantine, a bridge section discussing Elene's voyage, the debate between Elene and Judas, and the author's confession.²¹ In them, he finds thematically and literally strife, revelation, and finally conversion.²² He concludes "There is in Elene more than one saint, for each of the characters becomes, through Cynewulf's art, 'a sign of God for his own generation and for all generations to come.'"²³

In 1972 as well, Earl R. Anderson discussed the structure of Elene. He divides the poem into fifteen fitts and perceives a design in them.²⁴ "The symmetrical design of Elene is the most significant outcome of Cynewulf's manipulation of his source materials."²⁵ Anderson argues that Cynewulf manipulated his source purposely in order to place the "debate" between Judas and Elene at "the structural

center of the story" as it is, he feels, "the thematic center of the poem."²⁶

One final critic, Catharine Regan, examines Elene as the carefully produced end result of the "poet's meditation on the Acta Cyriaci, not merely as a versification of his Latin source."²⁷ She argues that "an understanding of the nature and contemporary function of hagiography can provide a broader view of Elene,"²⁸ and that "when ~~one~~ realizes that Cynewulf is primarily concerned with the spiritual meaning of the Invention of the Cross legend, Elene becomes a poem about the church and its mission to lead men to salvation through acceptance of the Cross, the symbol of the redemptive act."²⁹

These critics have opened the poem to scrutiny from a variety of points of view. They have variously interpreted the actions and characters but have uniformly praised the artist behind the work. As well, Elene remains an aesthetically pleasing, sophisticated poem when viewed as an example of the hagiographic style. Elene contains a typical example of an Anglo-Saxon poetic saint's life. It is found in the section of the poem devoted to the "debate" between Elene and the Jews, the trial of Judas, his conversion, and the ultimate recovery of the cross and the nails. The saint is Judas-Cyriacus, however, and not, as the title of the poem might suggest, Elene herself. Rather, the

treatment of St. Helen provides an example of a saint who is not treated in the hagiographic style. Contrasting the treatments of Judas and Elene will further define the characteristics of the hagiographic style itself.

Like Guthlac A and B, the Judas section is derived from its Latin source,³⁰ but it is modified considerably as it becomes Anglo-Saxon poetry. The hagiographic style requires a thematic statement which informs the subsequent activities of the saint. That statement precedes the main action and in this poem makes clear the necessity of telling the truth, especially the truth about the Christian message. Cynewulf does not provide a succinct statement of this theme; instead, he develops the idea through the repeated confrontations between Elene and the Jews.

Elene commands that the men who could speak by true law ("rihte ae," l. 281)³¹ should gather. Three thousand arrive, and Elene harangues them. Her accusations center on their rejection of wisdom ("Hwaet, ge ealle synttro unwislice, / wraðe wiðweorpon," ll. 293-94). She tells them that they reviled Christ and, condemned Him and concludes that they mixed up lying with truth, light with darkness, malice with mercy ("Swa ge modblinde mengan ongunnon / lige wið soðe, leoht wið þystrum, / aefst wið are," ll. 306-8). Elene adds that this behaviour has resulted in a curse

7
 ("wergðu," l. 309).

Elene sends the three thousand to find the wisest among themselves who can explain the law ("þa ðe eowre æ aedelum craeftige / on ferhdsefan fyrrest haebben" ll. 315-16).

This speech enunciates the theme of the hagiographic section (ll. 288-319). Even though some of the Jews are wise in their law, they are foolish as regards God's truth. They have exchanged lying for the truth. One of them, in particular, clings to this poor exchange, even though he knows the pure truth.

One thousand wise men are next presented to Elene (ll. 320-31). Elene attacks them with a series of references to prophetic words (ll. 333-76) and sends them away to find their wisest spokesman. Five hundred return. They are the wisest "forþsnottera / alesen leodmaega, þa ðe leornungcraeft / þurh modgemynd maeste haefdon, / on sefan synttro" (ll. 379-82). But, of course, they are not going to tell the truth. The five hundred are again attacked by Elene, and once again she stresses their rejection of "truth and right" ("ond ge widsocn soðe ond rihte," l. 390; and, "peah ge þa æ cuðon, / witgena word, ge ne woldon þa, / synwyrcente, soð oncnawan" ll. 393-95).

The Jews say that they have no idea why Elene is angry with them (ll. 396-403), and at least one of them is lying. Elene again sends them away, and they

take counsel nervously together. Judas (it is only here that he is named, l. 418) tells them the story of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, of St. Stephen's martyrdom, and the conversion of St. Paul. The Jews are amazed at the wisdom Judas displays (ll. 417-546) and decide that he must make his own decision as to what to tell Elene. Judas has been shown to be wise, but he is not wise in a Christian sense and he is still a liar.

The queen's messenger interrupts the excited conversation. His message reiterates the important ideas here. The queen expects a truthful answer from a wise mind ("Eow þeos cwen laþaþ, / secgas to salore, þæt ge seonoddomas / rihte reccen. Is eow raedes þearf / on meðelstede, modes synttra" ll. 551-54).³²

The Jews oppose Elene still ("noldon þæt geryne rihte cyðan," l. 566). In anger, Elene threatens them:

Ic eow to soðe secgan wille
 ond þaes in life lige ne wyrðeð,
 gif ge þissum lease leng gefylgað
 mid faecne gefice, þe me fore standaþ,
 þæt eow in beorge bael fornimeð,
 hattost heaðowelma, ond eower hra bryttað,
 lacende lig, þæt eow sceal þæt leas
 apundrad weorðan to woruldgedale. (ll. 574-81)

The terrified Jews immediately elect Judas to deal with the threats of the angry queen. They said he was remarkably wise ("saegdon hine sundorwisne," l. 588). Further they said that he could tell Elene

the truth ("He þe maeg soð gecyðan," l. 588). The praise of Judas continues with the assurance that he knows all the secrets and is very wise. All true.

Elene asks for the truth about the cross (ll. 600-3). Judas is threatened with the choice of life or death. He is, almost ironically, truly chosen.

Judas lies again, and Elene finally charges him personally and directly with his lies ("Widsaecest du to swide soðe ond rihte / ymb þæt lifes treow, ond nu lytle aer / saegdest soðlice be þam sigebeame / leodum þinum, ond nu on lige cyrrest," ll. 663-66).

Finally, she again threatens him with death, this time by starvation (ll. 685-90).

After seven days of hungry solitude, Judas repents his folly ("þeah ic ðær mid dysige þurhdrifen waere / ond ðæt soð to late seolf gecneowe," ll. 707-8). It is not too late, of course; and Judas now tells the truth and believes in the truth. He is at once rewarded with a clear manifestation of the truth of God's power. The cross is revealed after Judas prays for guidance.

This section can hardly be said to contain a clear brief statement of theme. It does provide, however, a complex elaboration of a theme. The section begins when Elene, having completed her voyage, first calls the Jews together; and it extends to the discovery of the cross (l. 802). In these 526 lines,

Cynewulf sets out the real nature of Judas' sin: knowing the truth, he prefers to take refuge in lies. It is the truth and the celebration of it that is important; and once Judas begins to speak the truth, he can work miracles.

The attacks that Elene makes on the Jews center around their failure to believe in the revealed truth about Christ. The hiding of the cross is hardly mentioned. What Elene attacks the group about is their loss of God's favour and their stupid denial of obvious truth. She quotes patriarchs to support her case and cites the Trojan war when the Jews try to argue that they do not remember events so far in the past.³³ She is determined to have the truth; and when she finally obtains it from Judas, she has opened the door of salvation for him.

Instead of stating the theme in rather general terms, Cynewulf develops it from the exchange of conversation between Elene and the Jews. This exchange eventually narrows down to Elene and Judas, and then the action of this section of the poem begins. Judas is the sinner turned Christian leader. In a real way, his story parallels that of St. Paul which Judas himself cites (ll. 489-510). He is a leader of the wicked until a miracle convinces him of the truth. Once convinced, he undergoes a change of name as well as heart and becomes a leader of the faith.

Elene's arrival and her insistence on the truth begin the process of Judas-Cyriacus' conversion. He is not at all anxious to reveal the truth to Elene, or to himself. He undergoes considerable torment before he finally gives in to Elene and at once receives direct proof in the form of a miracle that his choice is the right one. The finding of the cross leads to another complication. Three crosses are recovered, but not even Judas-Cyriacus knows which is the one on which Christ died. Judas takes command in this situation, performs a test which establishes the identity of the true cross, and demonstrates his new, Christian wisdom in so doing.

Immediately, Judas faces another difficult test. No sooner is the true cross identified than the devil appears bemoaning the unfairness of the situation. Judas-Cyriacus vanquishes the devil, and even Elene marvels at his ability.

Sefa waes þe glaedra
 þæs þe heo gehyrde þone hellesceapan
 oferswidedne, synna bryttan,
 ond þa wundrade ymb þæs weres snyttro,
 hu he swa geleafful on swa lytlum faece
 ond swa uncyðig aefre wurde,
 gleawnesse purhgoten. (ll. 955-61)

Also at Elene's behest, Judas uncovers the hiding place of the nails which fixed Christ on the Cross. His part in the poem is almost over when he uncovers the nails. There is another passage that mentions a

succession of petitioners who come to Cyriacus for aid and assures the reader that help was always forthcoming (ll. 1212-17).

Judas' role in the poem is the subject of much recent critical speculation. Thomas D. Hill, for example, sees Judas as "a typical figure representing the Jewish nation outside the church rather than simply as an individual Jewish wise man who was forcibly converted."³⁴ He feels "that Judas is presented typologically" and argues "that the debate between Elene and the Jews which culminates in the conversion of Judas is presented in terms of the sapiential theme of the contrast between the letter and the spirit (of the law)"³⁵

Also viewing the section under discussion typologically, Catharine Regan states that "Elene's relationship with Judas is emblematic of the relationship of the Church with its members. There is mutual need."³⁶ She continues "the importance of Judas cannot be underestimated. But neither character can be understood thematically when he is considered individually. Judas is clearly the poem's most complex character."³⁷

John Gardner adds the notion that Judas is "the dramatically central character in the poem."³⁸ For Gardner, Judas provides an example for all to follow, including the poet himself. "As Judas faced the intransigent Elene, who (only in Cynewulf's version)

threatened fire and death (574-584), so every man must face the intransigent final Judge, who threatens ultimate fire and death."³⁹

Stepsis and Rand point out Judas' importance as a figure of Christ. "Graphically, and a trifle comically, Judas imitates Christ, since he is cast in a pit for seven nights and emerges willing to reveal the hiding place of the cross. Less graphic but more important symbolically, is Judas' conversion to Christianity . . ."⁴⁰

All of these critics agree that Judas' role is a symbolic one and that narrative difficulties are easily overcome when one considers the second or other meaning within Judas and his actions. The critics do not all share a single opinion of the essence of the other meaning however. Along with his elusive symbolic role, Judas plays a role familiar in terms of the hagiographic style. He is the sinner chosen for conversion, ultimately like St. Paul but also like St. Guthlac.

His task in this poem is threefold. First, he must overcome his own sinful nature and turn his thoughts and faith to God. Second, as do all the saints, he must provide an example for all men to imitate through his own imitation of Christ. Third, he must recover the Cross and the hidden nails. These three tasks make Judas-Cyriacus the elusive, complex character

that he is. He often demonstrates one task while performing another. For example, Judas' prayer to God (ll. 725-801) reveals his new found faith (and considerable wisdom) and the hidden Cross. Later in the poem, Judas-Cyriacus demonstrates that he, like Christ, can vanquish the devil and that faith can provide wisdom so stunning that even Elene marvels at it (ll. 900-66).

In all his tasks, he is portrayed as a spiritually active figure confronted with terrible tests and dangerous challenges. Ironically, many of Judas-Cyriacus' early dangers originate during his confrontation with the other saint in the poem, Elene. After a challenging struggle with himself, he responds by placing his trust in God; and immediately he finds that he can overcome all dangers. Judas-Cyriacus has to be starved into recognizing God's power and truth; but as soon as he turns to God, he enjoys predictable saintly success.⁴¹ His successful overcoming of the devil, so familiar in the saints' lives, marks him as truly chosen and beloved by God.

The epithets attached to Judas-Cyriacus help to explain the saint's personal qualities and his attitude toward the challenges that he must face. Cynewulf himself had a difficult challenge in describing Judas-Cyriacus. At first, he is very evil, yet somehow worthy. He rejects the truth, yet he knows it; and

he comes from a family distinguished by the presence albeit anachronistically of St. Stephen. Judas-Cyriacus must be a suitable adversary for Elene, yet he must be in the literal sense redeemable. Cynewulf employs several series of epithets to convey the intricacies of Judas-Cyriacus' character.

There are seventy-seven epithets for Judas-Cyriacus in Elene. Of these, the name, either Judas or Cyriacus, occurs twenty times (Judas, fifteen; Cyriacus, five). In this study, Judas-Cyriacus is treated as one name. There are, as well fifty-two different terms.

The most frequently repeated terms after the saint's name is weres (three) with beornes (two), gidda gearusnoter (two), bisceop (two), stidhycgende (two) following. The other terms occur only once each. There are patterns in the epithets that are best examined by dividing them into categories based on subject.

The most popular idea associated with Judas-Cyriacus is wisdom. Judas is always wise, even when he is wrong. There are twelve terms that express Judas-Cyriacus' wisdom, five of them employing gleaw. Judas is called gidda gearusnoter (two), fyrngidde frod, aegleaw, gleaw in gepance, rihtes wemend, fyrhdgleaw on faedme, deophycgende, gleawhydig, wisdomes ful, and boca gleaw. He is also called the son of a prophet,

witagan sunu.

Judas-Cyriacus' wisdom is central to the poem. First, he must be wise in the old law so that Elene will choose him as her best chance to discover the truth. She demands the wisest and most learned, and the Jews deliver Judas to her. Once Judas discovers the new truth, he must also be wise. His new wisdom, a surprise even to Elene, is entirely appropriate for a bishop to display. That Judas' wisdom is a special gift directly from God is displayed when Elene, a saint in her own right, must come to Judas-now-Cyriacus for help in locating the hidden nails.

After wisdom, the most important qualities possessed by the saint are those of nobility and leadership. There are twelve epithets that express Judas-Cyriacus' nobility and his qualities of leadership. Judas-Cyriacus is called haeleð min se leofa, haeleð, pegn, aedeles cynnes, haeleð hildedeor, eorla hleo, se freond, bisceope (two), bisceope paes folces, bisceope para leoda, and latteow. These heroic qualities are necessary both before and after his conversion. He must always be a noble hero, a protector of his people; and finally he achieves the position of bishop. This position he achieves only with God's help, but the poet has made sure that his audience is aware that Judas merits the trust and love that God shows him.

The third group of epithets deals with Judas-Cyriacus' saintliness. There are seven terms that indicate Judas-Cyriacus' special relationship with God. He is called eadiq, tireadiq, gesaeliq, Criste getrywe, lifwearde leof, ar selesta, and se halga. Logically enough, these terms do not begin to occur until the finding of the Cross. The first term, eadiq, occurs along with aeqleaw on line 805 as Judas-Cyriacus first sees the smoke rise up to signal the location of the true Cross. His holiness is mentioned from this moment on.

There are five epithets that express the saint's boldness and courage. He is called bold on medle, stichycgende (two), elnes oncydig (a disputed passage), and elnes anhydig. Judas-Cyriacus is bold both before and after his conversion. When he is first called bold on medle (l. 593), he is being handed over to an irate Elene, who is determined to get the truth from this lying pagan. Judas needs his boldness, but he also needs the truth. As long as he persists in lying, refusing the truth, his boldness will not save him. It will, however, make him a worthy adversary for Elene.

As well, Judas-Cyriacus is called resolute (elnes anhydig, l. 828) when he digs into the ground to

recover the crosses. These warrior-like attributes are necessary; the Anglo-Saxon saint, as seen in poetic hagiography, is always a heroic figure as well as a blessed one. Cynewulf uses the epithets to stress Judas-Cyriacus' wisdom, his blessedness, and his courage.

There is also a series of terms used for Judas-Cyriacus before and after his conversion that describe various unhappy states into which Judas-Cyriacus falls. These five epithets are specific to particular situations. Judas-Cyriacus is called þam anhaȝan (l. 604) at the time when he stands alone before Elene. He is most clearly alone at this point, not only because his friends have bought their freedom with his life, but also and more importantly, because Judas-Cyriacus has not yet turned to God for much needed help.

Two terms are used for Judas-Cyriacus when he finds himself starving in the pit: heanne fram hungres genidlan (l. 701) and hungre gehyned (l. 720). It is certainly reasonable to assume that Judas was, quite literally, very hungry in the pit. But his hunger is symbolically important as well. Judas-Cyriacus himself concludes that his hunger has allowed him to receive the truth ("þeah ic aer mid dysige þurh drifen waere / ond ðaet soð to late seolf gecneowe," ll. 707-8). This fast, as has been noted by several critics,

parallels the temptation in the wilderness that Christ Himself suffered.⁴² Judas-Cyriacus' hunger is both spiritual and physical; it is the saving of him, and thus it is enhanced by the use of epithets.

An interesting title is given to Judas-Cyriacus by the devil. The devil calls him elpeodig (l. 907), foreign, when he bemoans the loss of souls that the finding of the Cross and the subsequent conversion of the Jews effects. Judas has been a "native" of the devil's country, but now his citizenship has been changed. The devil mourns the loss of a fellow evil-doer.

The final unhappy term does not describe a truly unhappy state. Line 1128 describes Judas-Cyriacus as egesan geacloð, frightened by fear, when he finds the hidden nails. Perhaps this fear is that perfectly proper, even saintly, fear shown by other saints when they consider the power and glory of God.⁴³

There are other categories of epithets. There are, for example, six occurrences of rather neutral words meaning man: beornes (two); manna, weres (three).

Three terms, all occurring after the conversion, indicate that the saint is joyful or provides joy:

wilfaegen, glaedmod, and hira will gifan. Two epithets, found early in the poem, mention the saint's youth in connection with the information he received from his father about the crucifixion. Judas is called guma

ginga and hyse leofesta.

Judas-Cyriacus has a gift of intellect that makes his information believable and makes him the likely candidate to battle verbally with Elene. Twice, in the early stages of the confrontation, Judas-Cyriacus is called eloquent: wordes craeftig and wordcraeftes wis. This gift, as has been discussed, is of great significance.

Two other epithets are found in the poem. They share a similarity in construction: sede aer feala tida lecht gearu and se de to bote gehweart purh bearn Godes. The first epithet is incomplete and its meaning is a matter of conjecture.⁴⁴ The second epithet is a good summary of Judas-Cyriacus' life. He is the man who has turned to repentance through the Son of God.

The epithets for Judas-Cyriacus reinforce the major theme: the need for wise men to tell the truth about the Christian message. They testify to his wisdom and "learning." As well, the epithets establish the various states of mind that Judas-Cyriacus must experience as his conversion changes him from pagan to bishop. Epithets provide the proper noble, leaderlike credentials for the saintly bishop and strengthen the feelings both of struggle and joy.

Finding a true conclusion to Cyriacus' life is not a simple task. The poem has two other, obvious,

conclusions. The final conclusion is Cynewulf's runic signature contained in an epilogue which is, obviously enough, not found in the Acta Cyriaci. Miss Gradon argues that the conclusion need not be thought of as autobiographical or unique:

These were sentiments common when Cynewulf wrote, and there is no reason to suppose that the epilogue is autobiographical. Moreover, there is a precedent in Christian literature even for the combination of an epilogue with a narrative for a personal epilogue following a hagiographic narrative is found in the Vita Sanctae Mariae Meretricis of Ephraim of Edessa.⁴⁵

This passage, which is eighty-five lines long, begins with Cynewulf's comments on his own "discovery" of the cross.⁴⁶ He says that he was in a sinful state until God comforted him and taught him how to compose songs on the subject of the cross.

The remainder of the epilogue deals with the day of judgment. Cynewulf divides the people into three groups: the righteous (sodfaeste, l. 1289), the sinful (synfulle, l. 1295), and the cursed sinners (awyrgeðe womsceaðan, l. 1299) and describes the rewards and torments of the judgment day. The poem ends with a lovely picture of the joys of heaven which will be presented to the members of the first two groups.

The second conclusion ends the story of the finding of the true Cross, the action about which the

narrative revolves. This conclusion extends from line 1228 to line 1235. It is a statement offering a blessing to all men who remember the festival of the cross ("Sic para manna gehwan / behliden helle duru, heofones ontyned, . . . þe on gemynd nime / þaere deorestan daegweordunga, / rode under roderum," . ll. 1228-34). This blessing forms an entirely appropriate final statement for a narrative on the finding of the Cross.

Going further back into the poem, one can find a conclusion to Cyriacus' life. This conclusion begins at line 1196 and extends through line 1217.

There are eleven lines between this conclusion and the next which serve as a transition from Judas-Cyriacus' story to the promise of eternal life for those who celebrate the invention of the Cross. In these lines, Elene gives treasure to Judas-Cyriacus, is called eager to return home, teaches the men and women to honour the famous day on which the Cross was found; and the poet adds that the season is spring, almost summer.

The poet is summarizing at the beginning of this conclusion. Elene orders the creation of the bridle and sends it to her son. She calls together the best of the Jews in the city. She teaches them to obey Christian rules and to obey Cyriacus, their teacher (latteow, l. 1209), who is learned in books (boca

gleaw, l. 1211). The poet continues that the bishopric was well established (faegere befaested, l. 1212) and goes on to list the petitioners who came to Cyriacus--the lame and maimed, the infirm, halt, wounded, leprous, blind, the sad, and wretched--all receive salvation, always, from the bishop.

Cyriacus' role as wise teacher of his own people is important here. Judas-Cyriacus was always learned, but he has true wisdom only after his conversion, the kind of wisdom that is always efficacious. The Latin life mentions Cyriacus' abilities ("daemones per orationes ejus effigaret, et omnes hominum sansaret infortitates"), but does not remark on his wisdom or his teaching. Cynewulf has molded the section on Judas-Cyriacus into a thematic statement on truth and wisdom versus lying and ignorance (here, disbelief). He concludes Judas-Cyriacus' life with a comment on all of his abilities, but it is his wisdom and learning now directed in a good cause that are emphasized, in the hagiographic manner, with an epithet.

One cannot end a discussion on the poem called Elene without commenting on Elene herself. She is very much a part of the narrative, but Cynewulf does not treat her as a typical Anglo-Saxon saint. She is more force than character; and, significantly, she must appeal to Judas-Cyriacus when help from God is needed. Elene is so steadfast in her mission, imposed on her

by her son, incidentally, and not by God, that she does not display the characteristic struggle of the saint found in Anglo-Saxon-poetic saints' lives. She is often angry, but is always the confident teacher of Christian truths.

When Thomas B. Hill considers the poem from the point of view of figural narration, he suggests that Elene might be "presented typologically as a figure of the Church."⁴⁷ Hill adds, "This is a difficult question . . . There are, however, a number of details in the poem which would contribute to such an understanding of the figure of Elene."⁴⁸

Daniel Calder, arguing that thematic concerns, particularly the themes of strife, revelation, and conversion, are central to an understanding of Elene, suggests that "Elene, the gudcwen (254a), is the Christian saint striving against the forces of evil."⁴⁹ As noted above, he concludes "There is in Elene more than one saint, for each of the characters becomes, through Cynewulf's art, 'a sign of God for his own generation and for all generations to come.'"⁵⁰

Both of these views take note indirectly of the difficulty of dealing with Elene as a character in a narrative. Clearly, she is a saint; equally clear is her involvement in the action of the poem: the discovery of the Cross and the conversion, first of Judas-Cyriacus and ultimately of all the recalcitrant

Jews. Without her arrival and insistence on the truth, the Cross would remain hidden and Judas-Cyriacus and his fellows would remain unconverted.

The difficulty occurs when the commentators attempt to comment on Elene as a person, alive and functioning, in her own poem. In general, the critics find very little to say. Hill notes, for example, that "The conclusion of the narrative is fundamentally a denouement in which those hitherto static figures, Elene and the unbelieving Jews as a group, are brought within the movement of the poem. In this part of the poem, the narrative concerns the spiritual advancement of Elene and the conversion of the Jews by means of the miraculous discovery of those nails which pierced Christ at the passion."⁵¹

It is particularly significant that Hill calls Elene "static." Literally, she is no more static than Judas-Cyriacus. She travels an appreciable distance, confronts thousands of wicked unbelievers, challenges and defeats their spokesman, and is on hand at the discovery of the Cross. Yet, at the same time, she is static, spiritually static. Elene arrives convinced of the truth; she undergoes no spiritual struggle, faces no dangerous temptations, in short, displays none of those characteristics so typical of the Anglo-Saxon saints.

Calder's remark that Elene is "the Christian saint" is indeed apt. She is the Christian saint, but not really a Christian saint, one who becomes saintly as opposed to one who merely is saintly. Cynewulf uses Elene as the force that changes Judas-Cyriacus. She may well represent the Church or the saint, but she does not receive the same literary treatment afforded to Judas-Cyriacus, or for that matter, Guthlac, Juliana, or Andreas. She is not as alive as they are, and thus, she presents no clear face for her students to study:

The contrast in treatment is instructive as well. Observing the difference between Elene and Judas-Cyriacus, one discovers, by contrast, the familiar definition of the hagiographic style. The saint is introduced by means of a thematic statement which reveals the problem that he must solve within himself in order to achieve his proper relationship with God. Judas-Cyriacus' introduction takes place in a lengthy debate which concentrates on truth and wisdom versus lying and dark deceit. In contrast, Elene is introduced as Constantine's mother and dispatched on her errand (l. 214 ff, "ond þa his modor het . . .") without thematic comment.

Judas-Cyriacus undergoes a great spiritual struggle which he must suffer in order to be ready, in this case, for the truth. He is unwilling to involve

himself at the outset, and only slowly and painfully does the truth overtake him. Elene, in contrast, is eager to undertake her son's mission (l. 219 ff). She experiences no doubts, no fears. The character, personal qualities, and spiritual development of Judas-Cyriacus are made clear with a variety of epithets. This complex series of defining words makes Judas-Cyriacus the complex character of whom the critics speak. Elene, who is not given the benefit of character-defining epithets, remains "static," an example of "the Christian saint."

Finally, Cynewulf returns his audience's minds to the original problem faced by Judas-Cyriacus in order to reinforce the saint's successful handling of it. Elene, too, has had to solve a problem; but it was always totally outside her own spiritual commitment. Her sainthood is not demonstrated in the same human terms as was that of Judas-Cyriacus. Her task of discovery and hence conversion may well make her a figure of the Church, but Cynewulf does not dwell on her success at the end of the poem.

There are two saints acting in Elene, but Cynewulf does not handle them in the same manner. One, Judas-Cyriacus, is developed along the lines familiar as the hagiographic style; the other, Elene, is not. Possibly, Elene is not well titled. Some critics have suggested that the poem would be better represented if it were

called The Invention of the Cross; in either case, the poem provides examples of what the hagiographic style is and what it is not.

Whatever Cynewulf's intentions were, to tell of Elene, the Cross, conversion, truth conquering deceit, the acts of Judas-Cyriacus, I suggest that when he found himself working on that section of the poem which was like a saint's life, he fell easily into the hagiographic style: thematic treatment amplified by carefully chosen epithets and elucidated by introductory and concluding remarks. As usual, the saint is locked in a cosmic struggle, against himself, the devil, and the danger involved, in this instance, of denying the truth.

The attention given to Judas-Cyriacus, particularly the comments on the various states of his mind, becomes less an awkward amplification and more an appropriate and reasonable portrayal when the hagiographic style is recognized. Judas-Cyriacus is the typical saint of the Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives. The elusive quality of Elene is better explained when one notes that she seems her most force-like and static when she is compared with Judas-Cyriacus, as is usually the case. Judas-Cyriacus has had the benefit of the hagiographic style, which concentrates on the human difficulties and possibilities which challenge

and assist those who strive for a truly Christian
life. ~~Elehe~~ has not.

Notes

¹ Thomas D. Hill, "Sapiential Structure and Figural Narrative in the Old English 'Elene'," Traditio, 27 (1971), 159-78.

² Hill, "Sapiential Structure," p. 159. See also, James Doubleday, "The Speech of Stephen and the Tone of 'Elene'," in Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation for John C. McGalliard, eds. Lewis E. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975) pp. 116-17.

³ Hill, "Sapiential Structure," p. 159.

⁴ See especially, P. O. E. Gradon, Cynewulf's Elene (London: Methuen and Co., 1966), pp. 15-27; Gordon Whatley, "Cynewulf and Troy: A Note on Elene 642-61," N and Q, 20 (1973), 203-5; Gardner, The Construction, pp. 86-87; Doubleday, "The Speech," pp. 116-17.

⁵ Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 114.

⁶ "The evidence, in fact, plainly suggests that Cynewulf was a West Mercian poet writing in the first half of the ninth century" (Gradon, Cynewulf's Elene, p. 23). See also Albert S. Cook, "The Date of the Old English Elene," Anglia, 15 (1893), 9-20.

⁷ Robert Stepsis and Richard Rand, "Contrast and Conversion in Cynewulf's Elene," NM, 70 (1969), 280.

⁸ John Gardner, "Cynewulf's Elene: Sources and Structure," Neophilologus, 54 (1970), 66; and Gardner, The Construction, pp. 86-87.

⁹ Hill, "Sapiential Structure," p. 161. As well, "If these suggestions seem generally tenable, Elene emerges as a more sophisticated and aesthetically satisfactory poem than critics have realized" (p. 177); and "I have argued that the Old English Elene is in some ways a rather sophisticated poem" (p. 177).

¹⁰ Daniel G. Calder, "Strife, Revelation and Conversion: The Thematic Structure of Elene," ES, 53 (1972), 201.

¹¹ Catharine A. Regan, "Evangelicalism as the Informing Principle of Cynewulf's Elene," Traditio, 29 (1973), 27.

¹² Hill, "Sapiential Structure," p. 159.

¹³ Stepsis and Rand, pp. 273-74.

¹⁴ Stepsis and Rand, p. 281.

¹⁵ Stepsis and Rand, pp. 281-82.

¹⁶ Gardner, "Cynewulf's Elene," p. 66.

¹⁷ Gardner, "Cynewulf's Elene," p. 65.

¹⁸ Gardner, "Cynewulf's Elene," p. 74.

¹⁹ Hill, "Figural Narrative," pp. 261-73.

²⁰ Hill, "Sapiential Structure," p. 177.

²¹ Calder, p. 201.

²² Calder, p. 202.

²³ Calder, p. 210.

²⁴ Earl R. Anderson, "Cynewulf's Elene: Manuscript Divisions and Structural Symmetry," MP, 79 (1974), 112.

²⁵ Anderson, "Cynewulf's Elene," p. 115.

²⁶ Anderson, "Cynewulf's Elene," pp. 120-22.

²⁷ Regan, p. 29.

²⁸ Regan, p. 28.

²⁹ Regan, p. 29.

³⁰ See Gradon, Cynewulf's Elene, pp. 15-32 and Whatley, pp. 203-5.

³¹ All citations from the text of Elene are taken from George Philip Krapp, ed., The Vercelli Book, already cited.

32 The Acta Cyriaci contains a significantly shorter message: "Venite vocat vos Regina" (co 1451). The extra ideas in the Anglo-Saxon message reinforce the intelligence of Judas and the need for truth.

33 See Whatley for a discussion of the significance of the Jews as historians.

34 Hill, "Sapiential Structure," p. 164.

35 Hill, "Sapiential Structure," pp. 164-65.

36 Regan, p. 31.

37 Regan, p. 34.

38 Gardner, "Cynewulf's Elene," p. 70.

39 Gardner, "Cynewulf's Elene," p. 73.

40 Stepsis and Rand, p. 279.

41 See Hill, "Sapiential Structure," pp. 163-73 for a discussion of Judas as a type of Christ.

42 See Hill, "Sapiential Structure," pp. 171-73 for a discussion of types for Christ-in-the-wilderness.

43 See, for example, Guthlac A, "him waes godes egisa / mara in gemyndum . . ." (ll. 167b-169).

44 Krapp, The Vercelli Book, p. 147.

45 Gradon, Cynewulf's Elene, p. 21.

46 See Gardner, "Cynewulf's Elene," pp. 72-75 for a discussion of the relationship of the runic signature to the theme of the poet. "The parallels between the Elene story and the poet's own spiritual story are worked out in the epilogue" (p. 72).

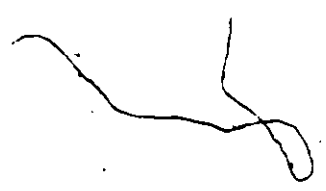
47 Hill, "Sapiential Structure," p. 166.

48 Hill, "Sapiential Structure," p. 166.

49 Calder, p. 203.

50 Calder, p. 210.

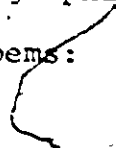
51 Hill, "Sapiential Structure," p. 176.



Chapter V

The Hagiographic Style in Old Testament

Poems: Judith and Daniel



Both Judith and Daniel belong to a group of Old Testament figures whose acts and the significance of those acts have made them "Old Testament saints."¹ They serve as prefigurations, and their lives are seen as Old Testament demonstrations of Christian ideas. Judith, for example, "as a quasi-canonical figure was subject to the exegetical law which provides that each Old Testament figure is a type whose meaning is revealed through the New Law; that is, Judith represented certain Christian truths."²



The two Anglo-Saxon poems, Judith and Daniel, however, have not been identified as saints' lives; rather, they have been called "scriptural poetry"³ and "Old Testament narrative poetry"⁴ and have often been treated as poetic paraphrases of their Biblical sources.

This study identifies in both poems the characteristics of the hagiographic style. Taken together, the two poems demonstrate the use of this style in the telling of the key acts of Old Testament figures. Also,

the two poems suggest the early development and the lasting nature of the hagiographic style. Daniel, "the last piece of Book I of MS Junius '11,"⁵ is probably a combination of two poems. Lines 279 to 361 seem to be an "inserted passage . . . that differs in style from the rest."⁶ Greenfield dates these parts of Daniel as follows: "As to date, Daniel A is probably Caedmonian, about 700, while Daniel B and Azarias are later, possibly ninth century."⁷ Brennen, citing the linguistic criteria used to determine the date of Daniel, concludes, "It is not unlikely that the poem was written toward the end of the seventh century or early in the eighth, that is, sometime between 675 and 725."⁸ Judith, the final poem in the Beowulf manuscript, is considered late in date. Timmer places the date of the composition at around 930 and Dobbie in the last half of the tenth century.⁹ Therefore, one can identify the hagiographic style in poems composed in the seventh and in the tenth centuries.

The two poems also share a difficult critical problem. Judith and Daniel both depend on books of the Bible for their sources. In each case, the poem appears to represent only part of the source, but the apparent selectivity may result primarily from the fact that in their present state, both poems are incomplete. The opening section of Judith is missing as

is the closing section of Daniel. These missing sections cause the critical questions regarding the quantity of lost material and the subjects treated in the missing lines. This question, how much and what was lost, also poses a problem in the recognition of the hagiographic style. The saints' lives examined earlier in this study share a principle of purposeful selectivity. Poems like Guthlac A and B and Juliana were composed around certain major themes that influenced the use of available material.

Some of the commentators¹⁰ on Judith and Daniel apply similar arguments of selectivity to their understandings of the poems. They argue that the poets have chosen the best material to suit their needs and have ignored other incidents or characters from the sources. Such arguments depend finally on the original size and content of the poems; and unfortunately, no compelling proof has been brought forward to settle the question of length and content of either poem.

The fragmentary nature of Judith has been the subject of a number of critical studies. R. J. Timmer feels that "the complete poem may be estimated at about 1,344 lines."¹¹ Timmer arrives at this conclusion from two different processes. First, he accepts the section numbering, x, xi, xii, and extrapolates from "the average number of lines in the last three sections the length of the complete poem."¹² Also, he

argues, "one arrives at the same result by computing the whole from the length of what is lost in the original source; the first eleven chapters from the first part of the poem, so about three quarters are lost."¹³

The source that Timmer mentions is "the Apocryphal Book of Judith chapters xii.10 to xvi.1 (The poet will have known the apocryphal book in the Latin translation of St. Jerome of Stridon)."¹⁴ Regarding that source, both Timmer and James F. Doubleday¹⁵ note that the poet has taken a reasonably free hand. Both observe that several characters have been omitted: "the poet has reduced the number of the characters, for the eunuch Vagao is not mentioned by name, nor are Nebuchadnezzar, Achior and Ozias. Moreover, the poet has only taken the main incidents . . ."¹⁶ Doubleday confines his interest in the poet's freedom to two more differences: the addition of the sword-flashing battle between the Jews and the Assyrians and what he calls a "new emphasis on irony."¹⁷

As mentioned above, Timmer is aware that the poet has selected certain events from the source for his poem, the "main events." Further, he says, "Some details are faithfully taken over from the source . . . There are, however, some points of divergence."¹⁸ He concludes, "But apart from these two cases (the appearance of Judith at the feast and the battle) the

poet followed the original story, concentrating on the main incidents, but altering the order of events."¹⁹ Arthur G. Brodeur²⁰ appears to accept Timmer's conclusion: "in the 350 lines which we possess (a mere fragment of the original work) . . ."²¹

A 1975 article by David Chamberlain²² re-asserts the theory that Judith is a fragment of a long poem. Chamberlain is well aware that his view remains controversial: "Considerable disagreement now exists over the original structure of the Old English Judith since several influential critics are contending that the poem is virtually complete in the 349 lines that have survived."²³ Nevertheless, he contends that "there is abundant evidence that the original poem was long, and strongly political."²⁴ To support this understanding, he poses several arguments based on both internal and external evidence.

As Chamberlain noted, there is another school of thought about the missing part of Judith. Rosemary Woolf²⁵ examines with care the theories arguing for a three-quarter loss of Judith. She rejects the notion that the sectional numbers indicate a loss of more than eight sections of Judith and accepts the view that the numbers indicate "suitable breaks in the story, where the hearers might momentarily rest their attention,"²⁶ a view put forth by Gollancz. Further, she argues that it is "by no means necessary"²⁷ to

consider the numbering a part of the poet's work.

Her final argument for the essential completeness of Judith is based on a study of the poem itself. First, from the events recounted in the poem, she concludes "That the Anglo-Saxon poet's approach was very similar to Aldhelm's (in de laudibus virginitatis) is indisputable . . . and it is therefore not improbable that he would choose the same point at which to begin his narrative."²⁸ Turning to the impact of the poem, she concludes, "It is this intensity and compactness which suggest very strongly that, apart from some lines relating a few details concerning Judith's identity and her motive for visiting the camp of Holofernes, none of the poem is missing."²⁹

Scholarship on Judith is not extensive, but it is most often laudatory. Often Judith is examined with other works and serves as an instance of a poetic theme such as "the hero on the beach" or "the approach to battle type scene."³⁰

Some interesting details in the poem have excited comment. The netting over Holofernes' bed, for example, is discussed by Carl Berkhout and James F. Doubleday.³¹ When Judith is discussed, it is generally praised: "It has been lavishly praised from the days of Sharon Turner down to the latest edition of Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader where the poem is called 'one of the noblest in the whole range of Old English poetry.'"³²

Timmer, having remarked on the "conventional side" of the poem, attributes the praise to the poet's portrayal of "Judith as a human being and to the vividness of the descriptions."³³ Judith's "humanity" and the reader's perception of it hint at the hagiographic style. Judith, if she is treated in that style, will live a challenging adventure, will need God's help, and will impress her audience as a human being working diligently to achieve her enviable position.

Alain Renoir, in "Judith and the Limits of Poetry"³⁴ studied the "descriptive technique whereby a poet can in certain respects reach what Lessing calls the limits of poetry,"³⁵ and concludes that the battle between the Jews and the Assyrians is a splendid example of the "cinematographic" technique which allows the audience to "see" the actions and wander freely in time and space. His high regard for the poem is as visible as the technique he describes.

Jackson J. Campbell examined Judith³⁶ and concluded that "the story as a whole is told to minimize the unique and to emphasize the typical."³⁷ He explores the theme of the poem, "That theme, of course, was neither new or original." It dealt with the necessity for strength, fortitude and, above all, faith when faced with the threat of spiritual evil which can corrupt and kill.³⁸ Campbell bases his concentration on the theme on his study of the "exegetical

tradition of the Judith story which was current in the 9th and 10th centuries"³⁹ which leads him to view Judith as a symbol for the church--full of true faith and locked in a struggle with the forces of evil.⁴⁰

Bernard F. Huppe⁴¹ sees Judith as "a moving typological portrait of heroic virtue."⁴² He sees the action of the poem in symbolic terms. For example, when considering the battle, he finds it "reminiscent of the highly symbolic battle of Abraham against the five kings in Genesis A . . . (the) battle is purely symbolic . . . the spiritual triumph of faith."⁴³ Judith's role in the poem is the "characteristic role of the Old Testament figure typifying the New."⁴⁴

Alvin A. Lee,⁴⁵ developing a concept of "biblical or Christian mythology" throughout the extant Anglo-Saxon poems,⁴⁶ fits Judith into his scheme after Exodus and before Daniel since it deals with the Babylonian captivity.⁴⁷ He sees Judith as:

. . . an exemplar of faith (89, 344), wisdom (13, 14, 41, 55, 125, and others), beauty (14, 58, 128), spiritual power, and bravery (109, 146), and she emerges as the beloved leader and deliverer of her enslaved people . . . Her would-be molester, Holofernes, also is described in terms of the absolute categories of hagiography. He is an exemplar of all that is wicked in the worldly dryht, as seen by evangelical Anglo-Saxon Christians.⁴⁸

Lee recognizes the traditions of hagiography in Judith: "The conventional depiction of the heroine

owes a good deal to the traditions of hagiography, that early antecedent of what we now call melodrama."⁴⁹ He does not, at this point, find the character or indeed any of the other saints, "lifelike:" "Consistently they function as agents of heaven; . . . Most of the time their stance is negative and renunciatory in relation to this world, to the point where they do not impress us as human figures so much as bizarre patterns made of human forms."⁵⁰

Timmer agrees that Judith has hagiographic aspects: "In spirit Judith belongs to the religious epics, especially those dealing with the life of a female saint, such as Elene and Juliana."⁵¹

Greenfield concurs: "Judith is a martial Christian saint, like Juliana and Elene before her, and even prays for guidance and aid to the Trinity (l. 86a)."⁵²

For John P. Hermann,⁵³ the importance of the martial aspects of Judith extends beyond the character of the protagonist. He argues,

. . . that the theme of spiritual warfare is a controlling principle underlying several aspects of the characterization and selection of narrative elements in the Old English Judith. The curious battle scene which the Old English poet constructed is not an example of technical incompetency, but signals the need for the story of the Assyrian downfall to be understood sub specie allegoriae rather than merely according to the letter.⁵⁴

Hermann accepts the idea that Judith can be seen symbolically as the Church: "The poet's emphasis on the gleaw lar, 'wise teaching,' given by Judith shows that the heroine exemplifies a particular attribute of Ecclesia, the Church as teacher . . .".⁵⁵

Whether Judith is read as an allegorical work or not, the poem demonstrates the characteristics of the hagiographic style with the necessary exception of the missing introduction.⁵⁶ The remaining introductory passage, ll. 1 to 7a, shows thematic importance for the rest of the poem. The six lines (ignoring tweode or ne tweode) present the virtue that predominates in Judith's character. God helps Judith in such a startling and real way because "heo ahte trumne geleafan / a to þam aelmihtigan" (ll. 6-7).

The idea of Judith's unshakable faith (trumne geleafan) is reiterated throughout the poem. When she prays for God's help to kill Holofernes, she says "Forgif me, swegles ealdor, / sigor ond soðne geleafan" (ll. 88-89). The poet adds that "Hi ða se hehsta dema / aedre mid elne onbryrde, swa he deð anra gehwylcne / herbuendra, þe hyne him to helpe seceð, / mid raede ond mid rihte geleafan" (ll. 94-97). The conclusion to the poem, discussed below, likewise concentrates on Judith's "soðne geleafan" (l. 344).

The introduction to Judith's victory over Holofernes could occupy any number of lines and could occur

well into the total poem as does the introduction to the hagiographic section of Elene. Whatever its original size and placement, it probably concentrated on the need for true belief in God and the fact that Judith had, and is about to demonstrate, such belief.

Judith's role in the poem is that of an embattled saint, not unlike the role played by Juliana. Her battle, similarly, does not take place in the typical Anglo-Saxon blood covered field. Her opponent is Holofernes, but he is not traditionally battle-ready at the time of their confrontation. Judith's real challenge is to find her courage and to hold firm in her belief in God under trying situations. When God answers her prayer (ll. 94-98), the poet says, "þa weard hyre rume on mode, / haligre hyht geniwod" (ll. 97-98).⁵⁷

The expression "hyht geniwod" (l. 98) is familiar. Guthlac, for example, felt his hope renewed when his final illness struck him; and Juliana, hearing of her martyrdom, is described as full of renewed hope.⁵⁸ The expression indicates a re-affirmation of the saint's steadfast hope in God. Displays of God's power, in this case the renewal of Judith's courage, fill the saints with a sense of security.

Judith's role in the poem changes after her defeat of Holofernes (ll. 122-23). She becomes the strong military leader, charging her troops before

battle (ll. 176-98) and receiving tributes after the victory (ll. 334-41). She is a champion who has defeated her chief adversary and has thus cleared the way for traditional military victory.

Judith and Holofernes perform roles similar to those of Juliana and Eleusius. Both saints, in danger of defilement, overcome the evil plans of the devil's representatives. To make clear his power and his evil nature, two facts about Holofernes' personality are stressed when he is first introduced. He is first a powerful leader of men: se gumena baldor (l. 9), se rica (l. 20), egesful eorla dryhten (l. 21), goldwine gumena (l. 22). Second, he is evil: se inwidda (l. 28), nida geblonden (l. 34), and nergende lað (l. 45). The two qualities are comparable to Judith's major personal attributes. She becomes as powerful a military leader as was Holofernes, and she opposes his evil with her undeniable good.

Judith suffers no failure in her faith, but she does need God's direct intervention to achieve her victory. His gift of courage allows Judith to slay her foe, to inspire her army to sensational victory, and to demonstrate her unshakable belief.

The poem concentrates on Judith's courageous act and its excellent consequences. The "vivid detail" remarked on earlier is made more vivid by the underlying knowledge of Judith's success. Her army's rout of the

blundering Assyrians further illustrates God's overwhelming power and His willingness to use it on the side of right. The battle, as well as being typically Anglo-Saxon in technique, is a re-statement of the triumph of good over evil, right over wrong.⁵⁹

Judith's personal qualities and her attitudes are developed in the epithets used by the poet. As usual, he amplifies and elucidates the character of the saint and the key thematic interests at the same time. As the reader sees and understands Judith, he also understands the example that she provides for all Christians.⁶⁰

There are forty epithets for Judith in the 349 lines of the poem plus five terms which cover Judith and her handmaiden together. Eight times the name, Judith, is used; seven times alone and once in combination with seo aedele (l. 256).

Nineteen times the poet uses a word to indicate that Judith is a female: wif (one) ides (six), maegð (nine), meowle (two), and þeowen (one) (handmaid). In each case, the word is found in combination with other descriptive terms. The other terms fall into six categories. Four times Judith is called wise, four times the Lord's, four times bright (plus the combined epithet Nergendes þeowen þrymful, ll. 73-74), three times holy, three times brave, and once beautiful (aelfscinu).

To the four occasions when Judith is called a wise woman can be added four other epithets commenting on Judith's wisdom: gleaw on gedonce (l. 13), seo gleawe (l. 171), gearoponcolre (l. 341), and ferhdgleawe (l. 41). Thus, eight times the poet concentrates on Judith's wisdom. She is wise of course in one key matter. She holds true belief in God and relies on his power and her belief to accomplish, in this case, victory over both evil and the Assyrians.

Looking at the Book of Judith, one finds her wisdom there resides not only in her belief in God and her fear of Him but also in her knowledge of her people's history (Chapter VIII: 10-34). Her comments on Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses are not included by the poet (Chapter VIII: 22-23). Perhaps this aspect of Judith's wisdom is not central to the poet's development of Judith's faith in God. Jackson Campbell is very much aware of the poet's obvious interest in Judith's wisdom. He says "he (the poet) quite consciously introduced at many junctions an emphasis on Judith's wisdom," and later "It seems that the poet has abstracted the sapientia from her speeches, making it clear that her wisdom stemmed from faith and devotion, and has explicitly made it her chief characteristic."⁶¹ Campbell, of course, is developing a conclusion that Judith bears a symbolic role in the poem--that of the Church--and thus her wisdom and true

faith are as important as characteristics of the Church as they are of her personal qualities.

Judith is characterized three times as being regally attired. She is beagum gehlaeste (l. 36), hringum gehrodene (l. 37), and golde gefraetewod (l. 171). She is also twice wundenlocc (ll. 77 and 103). Adding these descriptions to the idea that she is beautiful, one sees a rather clearer picture of Judith than one ordinarily gets of a saint. These details are faithful to their source. The Apocryphal Book of Judith describes her careful dressing to entice Holofernes, even her braiding of her hair ("discriminavit crinem capitis sui," X:2) in Chapter Ten. Judith's beauty is as useful to her as a warrior's sword. In some senses, it is her best weapon, albeit a diversionary one.

Judith is also called leof (l. 147) in regard to her people. Other terms identify her holy, noble nature: seo halige (l. 160), haligre (l. 98), and seo aedele (l. 176).

With the epithets, the poet is bringing out the reasons that Judith can and will succeed. Above all, the lady is wise, a common quality among saints. She is brave, holy, and a servant of the Lord; she has the necessary qualities to confront and defeat her enemy. Finally, bright and beautiful, she has the capacity to weaken the evil wisdom of her opponent. Judith's

story, whether it is intended to parallel a Danish invasion or not,⁶² illustrates that with true faith, the "underdog" can triumph.

The conclusion of Judith, unlike the introduction, is apparently intact. The action of Judith stops abruptly in line 346. The poem closes with four lines celebrating God's glory, and the poet reminds us that God created all Creation in his mercy ("ðurh his sylfes miltse," l. 349) which is not at all an unusual statement in the saints' lives. If one looks back into the poem a bit further, one can see a combination of story-closing and re-capitulation. Lines 334 to 341 recount the sharing of treasure with Judith. She receives the property looted from Holofernes' tent. Judith receives these treasures as a reward (mede, l. 334) for her wise counsel (cleawe lare, l. 333). She, however, immediately attributes her success and theirs to God ("Ealles ðæs Iudith saegde / wuldor weroda dryhtne, þe hyre weorðmynde geaf, / maerde on moldan rice, swylce eac mede on heofonum, / sigorlean in swegles wuldre, þæs ðe heo ahte soðne geleafan / a to ðam aelmihtigan" (ll. 341-45). The last lines closely parallel lines six to seven and express, for the final time, the major lesson in Judith. Judith has won not only earthly reward but also heavenly reward because she possessed true faith.

The poet adds "huru aet ðam ende ne tweode / þaes leanes þe heo lange gyrnde" (ll. 345-46). This sentiment is also typical in the saints' lives. For example in Guthlac B, one finds these lines: "gaest hine fýsed / on elne gearð, utsipes georn / on sellan gesetu" (ll. 1266-68).

Taken as one section, lines 334 to 349 tie up the ideas presented in the poem. They end the battle with the distributing of treasure and the placing of the earthly success in a heavenly perspective. As wonderful as Judith's earthly reward is, her heavenly one will be better. As wise as she is, it is as a true believer that Judith is blessed.

Judith is a heroic adventure, and Judith is treated much as Juliana was as Timmer has said. The poet has employed, in an efficient manner, the devices of the hagiographic style. His introduction, or rather what is left of it, hints that it is Judith's true belief that is of paramount importance. The saint struggles in the sense that when the moment of "battle" arrives, she must pause to implore God to strengthen her courage. Her victory (and His) is then reflected through the blazing battle between the advancing Jews and the retreating Assyrians.

The poet uses a variety of names for the saint to enrich his treatment of her. They explain her unearthly beauty which is necessary to distract the

evil but clever Holofernes; and they remind the reader of her wisdom and her relationship with God.

In the conclusion, the poet returns to the ideas found at the outset and relates the heroic adventure and its success to the possession of true belief.

The poet of Judith has an economical tendency that leads him to combine and order his observations. He "reduces" his conclusion by incorporating it into the lines ending the action of the poem. (Woolf calls this economic tendency "intensity and compactness.")⁶³

Accepting the idea that Judith is treated in the hagiographic style, one can make several observations about the poem. First, the missing portion of Judith need not be a re-telling of all the material omitted from the Biblical account. As is seen in Guthlac A and B, for example, the poet is free to discard or ignore any material not essential to the development of the theme with which he is working. Second, the vivid human quality of Judith observed by various commentators is in keeping with, and perhaps the best example of, the poets' interest in the human nature of the saints as they, colloquially speaking, earn their wings. Third, the similarity between Elene, Juliana, and Judith⁶⁴ can be extended. Judith is also like Guthlac and Andreas. They are all characters engaged in the battle for faith and the affirmation of God's power on earth.

To study Daniel and Judith together is reasonable, as mentioned above, but it is also difficult. In some ways the poems are not comparable. Daniel does not occupy a position similar to Judith's. He is hardly the major figure in his own poem. Francis C. Brennen⁶⁵ commenting on the missing leaf at the end of Daniel says "The secondary role of Daniel throughout the whole poem suggests that the poet need not have intended to include the story of Daniel in the lion's den."⁶⁶ As well, Brennen feels that "The centre of gravity is the dynamic and commanding figure of Nebuchadnezzar."⁶⁷ He goes on to pose the poet's interest in Nebuchadnezzar as the "artistic purpose" that "may help to explain why the poet has deliberately disassociated Daniel from the three youths."⁶⁸ Brennen also states "The minor importance of Daniel is striking particularly in a narrative to which modern scholarship has given his name."⁶⁹ Another critic, Neil D. Isaacs,⁷⁰ considers Daniel as "an episodic-narrative exemplum on the sin of pride and the virtue of humble obedience."⁷¹

Robert Farrell,⁷² looking at the poem and the five chapters of the Old Testament book, reaches the conclusion that "the poet did intend to limit the subject matter of his poem to the first five chapters of the Old Testament book, those narratives which deal with the struggle of Daniel and the three children as

protagonists, with Nebuchadnezzar and Baltassar as antagonists."⁷³ It is the "conflict between these principals which is," according to Farrell, "the real source of the structure of Daniel."⁷⁴ The idea of limiting the amount of a source employed in a poem is, by now, a familiar adjunct to the hagiographic style.

In his study, Farrell notes that "the first 32 lines (of the poem) . . . have no source in the Bible."⁷⁵ These lines, he feels, introduce "several major themes in the course of the first 32 lines of the poem."⁷⁶ These themes, Farrell feels, are developed with "weighted words" whose "frequent use gives specific semantic importance, a limited and particular meaning."⁷⁷ Farrell is looking for principles of unity in Daniel and concludes that the poem is "no mere translation and even the title of 'paraphrase' is not correct when applied to his work. The Daniel poem is a careful conscious re-working of the first part of the Old Testament Book of Daniel, and its author was endowed with considerable originality and poetic skill."⁷⁸ Farrell almost defines the hagiographic style here. He points out that the introduction to the poem is both original and of thematic importance. He mentions key words whose repetition reinforces the key ideas of the poem (such as gleaw, raed, sod, snotor, wis, wisdom, and lar), words that express the law and the Covenant (ae and waer), and

words for skill (craeft) as applied to the devil or God.⁷⁹ Farrell finds these words throughout the poem and does not limit his search to those words applied to the saintly figure, but he does assert the notion that such words reflect purposeful choices on the part of the poet.

Alvin A. Lee⁸⁰ puts Daniel in its place both in terms of its location in the Junius manuscript and in terms of its basic theme. He also suggests that very little of the poem need be missing:

Daniel can be read as both lineal continuation of the narratives of Genesis A and B and Exodus and as a symbolic recapitulation of the motifs established in them. Where Genesis A shows the beginning of Israel, on the basis of Abraham's fidelity, and Exodus describes the same Israelite faith in one of its most decisive tests, Daniel picks up the story and reverses the order of the narrative

Genesis A and B, Exodus and Judith (at least the fragment we have) move toward high points in their respective actions-- Abraham's triumph of obedient faith, Israel's arrival on the far shore of the Red Sea, and the deliverance of the Bethulians. Daniel, on the other hand, begins with the vision of the transformed Israelite dryht in the midst of hall-joys in Jerusalem and shows this society, first, seized by wlenco (pride) and devilish deeds at the wine-drinking, and then driven into the exile of the Babylonian captivity. Although the manuscript text apparently is fragmentary and we cannot know, therefore, the complete poem, it is unlikely that there was more in the missing part than Daniel's interpretation of the writing on the wall and the account of the slaying of Belshazzar.⁸¹

Bee sees Daniel's function as "that of an angelic intelligence commissioned to explain the mind of God to worldlings."⁸²

The date of Daniel has been of interest to several commentators. The poem, in fact, has two dating problems. "Where the Daniel cannot be dated with exactitude, most of the available evidence indicates that it is a relatively early composition."⁸³ "It is not unlikely that the poem was written toward the end of the seventh century or early in the eighth, that is, sometime between 675 and 725. Most critics agree that Daniel B should be regarded as somewhat later."⁸⁴

The section of the poem called Daniel B, lines 279 to 356a, which treats the prayer of Azariah for deliverance and an account of the miracle, is generally seen as an interpolation added, perhaps, in the wrong place. "The Prayer should have been inserted after line 241, but the interpolator placed it after the first account of the miracle and then continued his interpolation too far, thus including a second account of the miracle."⁸⁵ Thus, $77\frac{1}{2}$ lines of the poem may have been added later in a slightly awkward manner.

Harry J. Solo⁸⁶ disagrees with this view of the interpolation and argues that the interpolated section (if, indeed it can be called such) "is by no means a clumsy and inept insertion, but rather a skillfully

contrived and integral part of the Old English Daniel."⁸⁷ He finds "two complete recountings of the miracle of the fiery furnace told from two radically different points of view."⁸⁸

Solo feels that Daniel "personified the judgment of God, one who discloses mysteries discerned by a wise mind" and that "The three children, as their names imply . . . represent the forces of good that endure even in the face of adversity, prefiguring God's saints who willingly give up their bodies to be persecuted for the good of their souls."⁸⁹

In speaking of the interpolated lines in his introduction, Krapp⁹⁰ suggests that,

These lines constitute a kind of lyric interlude in the general narrative course of the poem . . . The first of these two lyric passages, that is, ll. 279-361, Gollancz regards an (sic) an interpolation and as the work of some other poet. He believes that the poet of DANIEL intentionally omitted this passage from his paraphrase, and that somebody else made good the omission by inserting here a version of the Prayer already extant in an Anglo-Saxon poem.⁹¹

The interpolation does more than provide a scholarly puzzle. It shifts the emphasis of the poem. At present, Daniel is 764 lines long. Critics speculate that one leaf, the final one, is missing. Brennen feels that a maximum of "about 35 lines of verse are missing from the conclusion of Daniel,"⁹² assuming that the leaf contained no blank space which it may well

have done ("of the 40 pages containing Daniel, only 8 show a full 26 ms lines of text. Three of the pages are completely blank, and all the others show blank spaces varying from one fourth to three fourths of a page").⁹³

Accepting for a moment the notion that some thirty-five lines are missing and that they probably would have continued to its conclusion Daniel's speech and provided a conclusion to the whole poem, one can see a somewhat different emphasis in the total. Daniel A.

If one removes the $76\frac{1}{2}$ line interpolation and adds thirty-five lines of conclusion, the poem becomes $652\frac{1}{2}$ lines long. The first thirty-two of these lines constitute an original introduction not found in the sources.⁹⁴ The next seventy-five lines describe Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and his training of the three wisest youths.⁹⁵

Then comes Nebuchadnezzar's first dream and Daniel's interpretation of it (ll. 107-67). Nebuchadnezzar refuses Daniel's teaching in this section and in the next erects a brazen idol (ll. 168-224). In this section as well, the three youths categorically refuse to worship the idol, and Nebuchadnezzar is not pleased.

The next section, excluding the interpolation, is 193 lines in length (ll. 224-78 and 356b-495). It covers the fiery furnace incident, the angel, the

prayer (or hymn), and Nebuchadnezzar's temporary conversion. In this section, as well, Nebuchadnezzar says "Cud is þæt me Daniel dyglan swefnes / soð gesaede, þæt aer swiðe oðstod / manegum on mode minra leoda, / forþam aelmihtig eacenne gast / in sefan sende, snyttro craeftas" (ll. 481-85) which reminds the reader that Daniel's wisdom is at the heart of the poem, and Nebuchadnezzar's steadfast refusal to act upon Daniel's wisdom is its major conflict.

Lines 495 to 611 deal with Nebuchadnezzar's second dream and Daniel's interpretation of it. Lines 612 to 674 recount Nebuchadnezzar's punishment, his recovery and return, and Daniel's role as teacher in Babylon. Lines 675 to the present end tell of the feast, the crimson writing on the wall, and Daniel's interpretation of it. The poem breaks off with Daniel's speech.

Daniel's role in Daniel A is more significant than it has appeared to some readers. He is the final authority interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and coming into Nebuchadnezzar's mind as he tries to understand the fiery furnace miracle. At the end of the poem, Daniel is shown bringing wisdom to the ignorant once again. Removing the interpolation restores balance to the sections in terms of Daniel's place in the poem.

Daniel is present or mentioned in five of the eight sections.⁹⁶ He is not mentioned in the introduction, a fact which is not unusual in the poems about the saints. He is apparently deliberately omitted from the section on Nebuchadnezzar's training of wise youths, and he is absent in the section describing the brazen idol and the youth's refusal to worship it.

Looking thus only at Daniel A, the reader can recognize the four main elements of the hagiographic style. In the first thirty-two lines, which Farrell identifies as the introduction, one finds a discussion of the dangers of pride. The poet recounts the history of the Hebrews and their mighty kingdom, mentioning both Moses ("siddan þurh metodes maegen on Moyses hand / weard wig gifen," ll. 4-5) and Abraham ("heira faeder waere," l. 10). He attributes their fall to the sin of pride ("odpaet hie wlenco anwod aet winþege," l. 17). Pride caused the people to forsake the law ("þa hie aecraeftas ane forleton / metodes maegenscipe, swa no man scyle / his gastas lufan wið gode dælan," ll. 19-21). They also lost God's help and protection, but not immediately.

In lines twenty-five to twenty-seven, the poet says that God provided the wayward people with special counselors to teach them the truth: "Oft he þam leodum to lare sende, / heofonrices weard, halige gastas, / þa

þam werude wisdom budon" (ll. 25-27). The people listened and believed but could not seem to remain faithful to the truth: "Hie þære snytro soð gelyfdon / lytle hwile, oðpaet hie langung beswac / eorðan dreamas eces raedes, / þaet hie aet siðestan sylfe forleton / drihtnes domas, euron deofles craeft" (ll. 28-32).

The problems of temporary belief are amply illustrated in Nebuchadnezzar's behaviour, and Daniel of course represents the "halige gastas" whom God provides. The poet has also made a generalizing statement in these lines: "swa no man scyle / his gastas lufan wið gode ðaelan" (ll. 20-21). Thus, there is a contemporary lesson in the poem. Not only should Nebuchadnezzar attend to Daniel's wisdom; but also we, the audience, should attend to those sent to teach us. Daniel's task, like that of his successors, is not a simple one. Nebuchadnezzar is a slow study, and the final scene of the poem suggests that his grandson has totally forgotten the truth.

If the introduction sets the major theme of the poem and suggests the qualities of the saint that will be developed, then Daniel will show himself to be wise, a teacher of God's truth, and possibly as patient as God has clearly been with man.

Scholars have noted that Daniel plays a secondary role in the poem. This study suggests that the role,

while small, is not well described as secondary.

Daniel arrives three times in the poem to succeed at a task that has baffled the experts. It is only Daniel who can interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and only Daniel who can decipher the crimson handwriting. Daniel is, of course, wise and honest (æccraeftig ar);⁹⁷ but he is, perhaps more significantly, chosen by God to deliver the truth about perplexing situations.

In his first appearance (ll. 149-67), Daniel successfully interprets Nebuchadnezzar's first dream. He does not manage this feat alone but rather with the help of an angel: "þæt him engel godes eall asaegde" (l. 156). Brennen notes that the angel does not appear in the Biblical account.⁹⁸ After successfully expounding on the meaning of the dream, Daniel becomes well respected among the wise: "Ða haefde Daniel dom micelne, / blaed in Babilonia mid bocerum," (ll. 163-64). Daniel's wisdom and power are recognized by the learned around him; Nebuchadnezzar seems to be the exception. He will not accept the truth about God's power and his own pride.

The angel who fills Daniel with wisdom is a sign that Daniel has been chosen by God to teach the truth: "se waes drihtne gecoren," (l. 150). After the miracle, the poet tells us that Daniel achieved power and success ("dom . . . blaed," ll. 163-64); and later, after the second dream and its dramatic validation,

Daniel is again said to be teaching in Babylon:

"siddan in Babilone burhsittendum / lange hwile lare
saegde, / Daniel domas," (ll. 659-61). At this point,
Nebuchadnezzar is fully repentant and is in fact
preaching the truth himself.

In spite of Daniel's faithful and honest teaching,
the lesson does not seem to last. In Daniel's third
major appearance, he is once again confronting the sin
of pride, this time in the person of Balthassar. Once
again, wisdom is given to Daniel by God: "Ðam waes on
gaste godes craeft micel," (l. 737). Daniel, refusing
the offer of money, tells the terrified sinners the
reasons for the frightening event.

Isaacs sees the scenes of Daniel as "set pieces
and tableaux,"⁹⁹ and it is difficult not to agree.
The action, an unsuccessful gathering of wise men who
are trying to interpret something beyond their know-
ledge, seems to freeze in space and time at Daniel's
arrival. Next, Daniel, strengthened by God, delivers
a speech and the poet comments on Daniel's teaching and
wisdom. Yet there is an underlying struggle taking
place in each case. Daniel is trying to teach
Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar refuses to learn.
The saint knows the terrible truth, terrible to
Nebuchadnezzar; and he cannot convince the proud king
in spite of the powerful examples that the dream
provides. This same struggle takes place in the

incident of the youths in the fiery furnace. Impressed by the miracle he is witnessing, Nebuchadnezzar is reminded of Daniel's teaching: "Cud is .paet me Daniel dygla swefnes / soð gesæde . . ." (ll. 481-85). Once again, the same lesson does not stay in the king's arrogant mind. With the patience of a saint, Daniel endures the king's disbelief and presents true wisdom whenever he is requested to do so. Daniel is setting an example here for all Christians in that he firmly believes that God will support him in his attempt to grasp the truth. He is also setting an example for those entrusted with the task of teaching God's truths to the difficult and backsliding. Daniel is wise and powerful; he has unshakable confidence in God and endless patience with man. The static quality of the scenes which involve Daniel's teaching reinforces Daniel's role as the patient teacher of timeless truth.

The epithets used for Daniel also reinforce his role as a chosen teacher. There are only twenty-three terms used for the saint, and, of these, the saint's name occurs eleven times. There are nine other terms used for Daniel: drihtne gecorene, snotor and soðfaest, and godes spelboda each occur twice. The repetition of two of these terms occurs when Daniel is introduced on the occasion of Nebuchadnezzar's first dream and at the Feast of Balthassar:¹⁰⁰ "se waes drihtne

"gecoren, / snotor and soðfaest," (ll. 150-51); and "drihtne gecoren, / snotor and soðfaest," (ll. 735-36). The other terms, witga, ordfruma earmre lafe, se wisa, aecraeftig ar, aecraeftig, gleaw gedances, occur once each.

The poet tends not to elaborate Daniel's qualities with extensive variation as he does with the three youths. There are, for example, twenty-six epithets for the youths between lines 188 and 271. Of these, eight different terms are employed.¹⁰¹ Rather, he concentrates on a few key concepts. Daniel is wise and chosen by God; he knows the truth and speaks God's truth. If one compares the number and kind of epithets employed in each of Daniel's adventures, a similarity emerges. Each of the three times Daniel appears, he is called by name, a reference is made to his being selected to give God's message: 1. drihtne gecoren, 2. godes spelboda, 3. drihtne gecoren and godes spelboda. And he is described as a prophet or wise man: 1. witga, snotor and soðfaest, 2. se wisa, aecraeftig ar, 3. aecraeftig and gleaw gedances and snotor and soðfaest.

The repetition of the terms strengthens the ideas. Daniel's character is as straightforward as are his actions. The poet, who can vary terms when he chooses, appears to simplify his description of Daniel by repeating, in the same words, the key ideas.

The four characteristics of the hagiographic style cannot all be observed in Daniel since the conclusion to the poem is missing. How much there was originally cannot be determined, but the consensus of scholarly opinion tends toward the single leaf theory.¹⁰² Because of the spaces in the manuscript, one cannot say, even having accepted the single leaf idea, how many lines originally were included. Brennan feels that the poem might have ended with the "rest of Daniel's speech" and "an appropriate conclusion by the poet."¹⁰³ Farrell, too, feels that the poem is essentially complete.¹⁰⁴ The poet may well have ended his poem in a few lines; there is no evidence to suggest that he intended to narrate the rest of Daniel's story.

Discerning the hagiographic style in Daniel A adds evidence which supports a number of current critical opinions. First, in terms of the hagiographic style, it is entirely appropriate that the poem open with an original introduction and that the introduction announce an idea that the subsequent actions of the characters will illustrate and elaborate. Second, it is also reasonable, even common, that the poem recounts only part of the material available in the source. As Guthlac A and B and the Judas-Cyriacus section of Elene demonstrate, the poetic saints' lives concentrate on the development of a human character, albeit a

saintly one, and not on a series of meaningful adventures.

Third, the hagiographic style requires a conclusion that echoes or reinforces the key ideas set forth in the introduction. The final speech of Daniel (ll. 741-64) may well be such a conclusion, or a part of one. Farrell hints at the notion that the poem is complete, and the requirements of the hagiographic style support such a suggestion.

In his speech, Daniel explains the significance of the mysterious words which no one else can interpret. Daniel tells his startled audience that their pride (anmedlan, l. 747 and gylp, ll. 751, 754) and their refusal to be true to the law (ae, l. 750) that God granted to them have caused their downfall. They have forgotten that God is the only true ruler and that all earthly bliss and power come directly from Him.

The speech parallels the opening of the poem (ll. 8-24) which also states that God granted power and bliss to the people while they remained loyal to the covenant ("hiera faeder waere," l. 10). As well, the introduction makes clear that it was through pride that the people disobeyed.¹⁰⁵

Thus the final moments of the poem fulfill the ideas of the introduction. The problem, pride and its effects on man, is the same; and what is promised in the introduction is fulfilled in the conclusion. The

introduction states that God sent special teachers to the wayward people (ll. 25-27). In the last scene of the poem, Daniel, one of the "halige gaſtas" (l. 26), is seen teaching the truth--again--to frightened but skeptical people.

The introduction has prepared for the repetitive nature of Daniel's task: "Hie ƿaere snytro soð gelyfdon / lytle hwile" (ll. 28-29). It may well be a reasonable variation on the hagiographic style for the poet to end his poem with a picture of the saint fulfilling his task.¹⁰⁶

Daniel A and Judith then, show the characteristics of the hagiographic style. In both poems, the poets are interested in developing selected qualities of their protagonists. Judith's faith and dependence on God are manifested in two situations: first, her "defeat" of Holofernes, and second, her acceptance of the rewards given to her as a result of her heroic advice. Daniel's wisdom and knowledge of God's power are displayed twice when he interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream and once again when he reads the mysterious writing.

The poets emphasize the key moments of struggle and triumph and employ epithets to expand the qualities of the saint. The introduction to Daniel A, not found in the source, sets the theme and reminds the audience that they too are involved in the truth behind

the story. The brief conclusion to Judith reiterates the underlying great truth that rewards in heaven, available to all, are earned on earth and granted by the God of Creation. The conclusion of Daniel A provides a picture of the chosen teacher of God's wisdom and power at work.

Identifying the hagiographic style in Judith and Daniel suggests that Old Testament saints are handled in the same manner as New Testament figures, virgin martyrs, and even English hermits.

Notes

¹ Cf for example, Frank, pp. 207-26:

"The sporadic presence of this second style in two Old English scriptural paraphrases, Daniel and Judith is probably related to the Anglo-Saxon's attitude towards these Old Testament books; they seem to have been regarded as exemplary histories, as Hebrew saints' lives and not, like Genesis and Exodus as the words of God set down by Moses." (footnote 39, p. 220)

² Huppé, The Web of Words, p. 140, and later, "Judith thus typifies the congregation of the faithful, the Church" (p. 169).

³ Shepherd, pp. 1-36.

⁴ Greenfield, A Critical History, Chapter VIII.

⁵ Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 159. All citations from Daniel are taken from George P. Krapp, ed., The Junius Manuscript, already cited.

⁶ Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 160.

⁷ Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 160.

⁸ Francis Brennen, "The Old English Daniel," Diss., University of North Carolina, 1966, p. xxx.

⁹ B. J. Timmer, ed., Judith (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966), p. 13. All citations from Judith are taken from Dobbie, ed., Beowulf and Judith, already cited.

¹⁰ See below, for example, Rosemary Woolf, "The Lost Opening to the Judith," MLR, 50 (1955), 168-72; James F. Doubleday, "The Principle of Contrast in Judith," NM, 72 (1971), 436-41; and Brennen.

¹¹ Timmer, p. 2.

¹² Timmer, p. 2.

- 13 Timmer, p. 2.
- 14 Timmer, p. 13.
- 15 Doubleday, "The Principle of Contrast," p. 436
ff.
- 16 Timmer, p. 14.
- 17 Doubleday, "The Principle of Contrast," pp.
436-38.
- 18 Timmer, p. 14.
- 19 Timmer, p. 14.
- 20 Brodeur, pp. 97-114.
- 21 Brodeur, p. 305.
- 22 David Chamberlain, "Judith: A Fragmentary and
Political Poem," in Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in
Appreciation for John C. McGalliard, eds. Lewis E.
Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Freese (Notre Dame:
University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 135-59.
- 23 Chamberlain, p. 135.
- 24 Chamberlain, p. 159.
- 25 Woolf, "The Lost," pp. 168-72.
- 26 Woolf, "The Lost," p. 169.
- 27 Woolf, "The Lost," p. 170.
- 28 Woolf, "The Lost," p. 170.
- 29 Woolf, "The Lost," p. 171.
- 30 For example, Donald F. Fry, "The Heroine on the
Beach in Judith," NM, 68 (1967), 168-84. The theme can
also be found in Beowulf, Exodus, Elene, and Guthlac.
Or Heineman, pp. 83-96, where ll. 236 to 291a of
Judith are compared to lines in Andreas, Beowulf,
Daniel, Elene, Exodus, Genesis A.
- 31 James F. Doubleday, "The Net in Judith, 46b-
54a," NM, 74 (1973), 630-34.
- 32 Timmer, p. 12.
- 33 Timmer, p. 12.

- 34 Alain Renoir, "Judith and the Limits of Poetry," ES, 43 (1962), 145-55.
- 35 Renoir, "Judith," p. 146.
- 36 Jackson Campbell, "Schematic Technique in Judith," ELH, 38 (1971), 156-72.
- 37 Campbell, "Schematic Technique," p. 155.
- 38 Campbell, "Schematic Technique," p. 172.
- 39 Campbell, "Schematic Technique," p. 159.
- 40 Campbell, "Schematic Technique," pp. 159-65.
- 41 Huppé, The Web of Words.
- 42 Huppé, The Web of Words, p. 148.
- 43 Huppé, The Web of Words, p. 173.
- 44 Huppé, The Web of Words, p. 141.
- 45 Lee.
- 46 Lee, p. 6: "The total argument of the book is an attempt to demonstrate how the extant Anglo-Saxon poetic corpus has as its major function in Anglo-Saxon England the re-creation, in poetic terms, of the biblical vision of human life."
- 47 Lee, p. 48.
- 48 Lee, p. 49.
- 49 Lee, p. 49.
- 50 Lee, p. 116. See also Chapter One.
- 51 Timmer, p. 11.
- 52 Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 162.
- 53 John P. Hermann, "The Theme of Spiritual Warfare in the Old English Judith," PQ, 55 (1976), 1-9.
- 54 Hermann, p. 2.
- 55 Hermann, p. 7.

⁵⁶ The possible length of the missing introduction has occasioned a number of critical speculations. One argument, presented although not supported by David Chamberlain, p. 137, relates the practices of Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiographers discussed earlier in this study with those of the Judith poet:

" . . . the existing numbered poems strongly imply that at least ninety lines or so of Judith have been lost . . . The existing sections of Judith consist of 107, 108, and 113 lines, or an average of 112 lines . . . Subtracting the opening 14 lines from the average of 112, then, we get a likely approximation of 98 lines that are missing from the opening of Judith . . . But one hundred lines of addition really would not pose an aesthetic challenge to the unity of form and theme that critics see in the present 349 lines. The Judith poet could certainly have added an excellent 100 lines that would not have jeopardized the present unity, but in fact, improved it."

The one hundred or so lines could have presented a thematic introduction not unlike those observed in Guthlac A and B (see Chapter II); Chamberlain, pp. 135-59.

⁵⁷ Timmer, p. 19, "she felt a great relief," or see R. K. Gordon, trans., Anglo-Saxon Poetry (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1962), p. 322, "hope was renewed to the holy one."

⁵⁸ Guthlac B, ll. 953-54; Juliana, l. 607.

⁵⁹ For a discussion of the spiritual nature of the battle, see Hermann, pp. 1-9.

"The theme of spiritual warfare is a controlling principle underlying several aspects of the characterization and selection of narrative elements in the Old English Judith. The curious battle scene which the Old English poet constructed is not an example of technical incompetence, but signals the need for the story of the Assyrian downfall to be understood sub specia allegoriae rather than merely according to the letter."
(p. 2)

60 Huppé, The Web of Words, pp. 164-65 discusses the importance of the epithets for both Judith and Holofernes.

61 Campbell, "Schematic Technique," p. 156.

62 Campbell, "Schematic Technique," p. 156.

63 Woolf, "The Lost," p. 171.

64 Timmer, p. 7.

65 Brennen.

66 Brennen, p. xxxvi.

67 Brennen, p. xxxvi.

68 Brennen, p. xxxviii.

69 Brennen, p. xvii.

70 Neil D. Isaacs, Structural Principles in Old English Poetry (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1968).

71 Isaacs, p. 145.

72 Robert Farrell, "The Structure of Old English Daniel," NM, 69 (1968), 533-59. See also Robert Farrell, "A Reading of Old English Exodus," RES, 20 (1969), 401-17. Farrell says there that "Daniel also deals with the theme of Help of God . . . both stories (ie Exodus and Daniel) are developed as conflicts between Old Testament heroes and their heathen enemies ending in the triumph of those who are the possessors of a special kind of counsel (raed) because they were steadfast and loyal to God in the face of adversity" (p. 417).

73 Farrell, "The Structure," p. 541.

74 Farrell, "The Structure," p. 541.

75 Farrell, "The Structure," p. 541.

76 Farrell, "The Structure," p. 556.

77 Farrell, "The Structure," p. 543.

78 Farrell, "The Structure," p. 559.

79 Farrell, "The Structure," pp. 543-56.

- 80 Lee.
- 81 Lee, pp. 50-51.
- 82 Lee, p. 52.
- 83 Brennen, p. xxv.
- 84 Brennen, p. xxx.
- 85 Brennen, p. xix.
- 86 Harry J. Solo, "The Twice Told Tale: A Reconsideration of the Syntax and Style of the Old English Daniel," PLL, 9 (1973), 347-64.
- 87 Solo, p. 348.
- 88 Solo, p. 363.
- 89 Solo, p. 362.
- 90 Krapp, The Junius Manuscript.
- 91 Krapp, The Junius Manuscript, p. xxxii.
- 92 Brennen, p. xii.
- 93 Brennen, p. xii.
- 94 Farrell, "The Structure," p. 541.
- 95 Brennen feels that Daniel is deliberately omitted from this group: "The poet has deliberately disassociated Daniel from the three youths. In the biblical account, Daniel is included along with Ananias, Azarias, and Mishaël among those who are educated at Nebuchadnezzar's expense . . ." (p. xxxviii).
- 96 I. Introduction (32 lines)
 II. Training (75 lines)
 III. Dream and Daniel's interpretation of it (60 lines)
 IV. Brazen Idol (56 lines)
 V. Furnace (193 lines)
 VI. Second Dream and Daniel's interpretation (116 lines)
 VII. Nebuchadnezzar is punished and returns; Daniel's teaching (62 lines)
 VIII. Balthassar's feast, Daniel's interpretation (89 lines)
- 97 Brennan's suggestion is "skilled in the law," p. 107.

98 Brennen, p. 85.
 99 Isaacs, ed., p. 146.

100 Brennen, p. 114.

101 Epithets for the three youths:

þry . . . eorlas Israela
 aedelum god
 waerfaeste .
 cnihtas cynegode
 þegnas
 hæftas hearan
 gingum
 weras Ebrea
 guman
 hyssas
 cnihta
 godes spelbodan
 hyssas
 beornas geonge
 freobearn
 aefaeste
 leofum
 halgum
 hyssas
 eorlas Ebrea
 guman
 freobearn
 maecgum
 halgan cnihton
 hyssas
 ealle aefaeste dry

102 Brennen, p. xxxv.

103 Brennen, p. xxxvi.

104 Farrell, "The Structure," p. 541, "this missing portion, if indeed the work is incomplete, is very probably of no great length."

105 Both sections suggest that the prideful law-breakers were under the influence of strong drink when they broke away from God (druncne gedohtas, l. 18; and windruncen gewit, l. 751).

106 See also Chapters VI and VII for a similar approach in Genesis A and Exodus.

Chapter VI

The Hagiographic Style in Genesis A

In the previous chapters, I have proposed a number of ideas basic to a discussion of Genesis A as an example of the hagiographic style. First, I have argued that Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives are better understood when they are separated from the prose lives in both Latin and Anglo-Saxon, separated not in intent but in execution.

Second, the poetic saints' lives, such as Guthlac A and B, Andreas, Fates of the Apostles, Juliana, and Elene, can be compared in four major areas which define a style common to them and distinct from Latin and Anglo-Saxon prose saints' lives. Investigation of these four areas of comparison yields the following results: The poetic saints' lives are characterized by a selective process of source utilization. Each poet chooses, from the available material, only those key incidents relevant to the major idea he wishes to develop in his poem. The major theme can be found first in the introductory portion of the various poems. Breaking with the prose tradition, the poets use the

introduction to set forth a major idea or ideal of Christian living that the hero or heroine will exemplify. In presenting the relationship between particular saint and Christian ideal, the poet develops the character of the saint along human, heroic, and saintly lines. While no real tension exists regarding the ultimate success of the saint's mission, the poets nonetheless devote considerable attention to the human struggles that ~~take~~ place within the minds of their heroes as they reach for Christian perfection.

Allied to the idea of the humanity of the saint is the poets' use of a major Anglo-Saxon poetic device, variation, to help make clear their emphases. The variation employed in naming the saint allows the opportunity for expanding the character of the hero without recounting the series of illuminating adventures common to the prose lives. The use of epithets for the saints is to be expected in an Anglo-Saxon poem, but the epithets do more than provide variety. They expand the character of the saint without breaking the limited view of him that the poet employs to elucidate the theme of his poem. Finally, the conclusions to the saints' lives recapitulate the main theme and reinforce the appropriateness of the particular saint as an example of that theme.

Third, I have argued that an examination of Judith and Daniel, two poems which concern Old Testament figures and are called biblical narratives, shows them to have been constructed along similar lines. The characters of Judith and Daniel are created with the aid of the hagiographic style, and their common function is that of example of Christian perfection in pre-Christian times.

This chapter will deal with the four characteristics of the hagiographic style as they appear in Genesis A, a poem not usually identified as a saint's life and not usually seen as one concentrating on a single figure. Several critics have noted, however, that Abraham's various adventures occupy about half of Genesis A,¹ and Abraham himself occupies a significant place in salvation history. His personal exile is interpreted symbolically, and his willingness to sacrifice his beloved son is a key Old Testament prefiguration of the sacrifice of Christ. Further, Abraham's steadfast loyalty and obedience to God and his keeping of the covenant are a clear moral lesson.² Abraham is the saintly figure on whom this chapter concentrates. I intend to argue that the Genesis A poet creates Abraham as a character in the same way that other poets have created Guthlac, Andreas, and Judas-Cyriacus; that Abraham illustrates by his behaviour the major theme of the poem; that he engages in the

noble and difficult human struggle which characterizes the achieving of sainthood; that the poet expands Abraham's character and the audience's understanding of it through a series of significant epithets; and finally that the conclusion to the poem presents a vivid picture of Abraham's triumphant fulfilling of the major theme, man's right and duty to praise God.

The history of critical commentary on Genesis A, which lays the groundwork for an examination of the hagiographic style, can be divided into two parts. Earlier criticism on the poem tended to stress the superiority of Genesis B over what was considered the rather pedestrian Genesis A.³ Such commentators held with Greenfield that Genesis B, "A poem that in conception and poetic power has often been compared with Paradise Lost,"⁴ was well worth the reading, while Genesis A was interesting only in its apparent faithfulness to the Bible, in its fragmentary state, and as a document which might shed light on the Anglo-Saxon view of the book of Genesis and on Anglo-Saxon values themselves.⁵

Early study did not overlook the relationship of source to poem, but commentators did not attach great importance to the differences. In keeping with the view that Genesis A was intended to be a faithful paraphrase, some critics speculated on the "lost" ending to the poem, how much was lost, and whether or

not the lost section completed the book of Genesis. Of late, commentators have considered the possibility that the poem actually does end with the sacrifice scene.⁶

Lurking behind early Genesis A commentary was the tantalizing question of authorship.⁷ The Junius Manuscript, or rather, the first three poems in the manuscript, reminded commentators of the works cited by Bede as the work of Caedmon.⁸ As critics agreed that the three poems were not all created by the same poet, only Genesis A remained as a possible candidate for Caedmonian authorship. But this idea, while undeniably attractive, is handled cautiously and with clear reservations: "One would also like to believe, with Ten Brink, that possibly Genesis A represents 'a fragmentary and imperfectly transmitted work of Caedmon.' The weight of evidence, however, is against this theory."⁹

The thrust of critical commentary on Genesis A changed after 1959 with the publication of Bernard F. Huppé's discussion of the poem in Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry.¹⁰ Huppé was not interested in whether or not Caedmon wrote Genesis A: "But whether or not Genesis A is by Caedmon is unimportant for the purpose of checking the hypothesis that the Augustinian theory of literature aids in the study of Old English Christian poetry."¹¹

He was interested in probing the poem for evidence of "the thematic purpose"¹² revealed through figural interpretation. After a careful discussion, Huppé concludes that:

. . . the analysis of the poem has shown in detail how the poet has grounded his work firmly on the Bible, more precisely, on the underlying, spiritual meaning of the Bible which the Fathers had explored, developed, and set forth. Genesis A has a theme wrested out of the very structure of Genesis, out of the patristic understanding of the basic prophetic meaning of the first book of the Bible.¹³

After Huppé's study, the second part of Genesis A criticism begins. This phrase is typified by thematic exploration based on figural interpretation. Critics after Huppé also show interest in sources other than the Bible, for Genesis A. Aaron Mirsky, for example, cites a number of literary sources such as "the Talmud, contemporary exegetical writings called Midrashim and ancient Hebrew liturgical poems."¹⁴

Still other critics have examined details in the poem for their possible patristic sources. Paul Salmon¹⁵ and Thomas D. Hill¹⁶ argue for a number of sources of the northern or north-western location of Lucifer's throne.

There is another school of thought operating in the post-Huppé period. Bennet A. Brockman¹⁷ argues that "we err likewise if our eagerness to expand the

range of possible implications of Old English literature blinds us to its possible central appeal, causing us to ignore, in this case, the poet's concrete human interest in legendary material as we explore a much less pronounced abstract, intellectual interest in theological allegory."¹⁸ Brockman finds a "secular, social orientation" in "the whole episode"¹⁹ of Cain and Abel. While he disagrees with Huppé in this particular episode, he does accept the role of exegetical works and techniques in the poem.

While exegesis may well have determined the larger structural pattern of Genesis A, just as it apparently did in Bede's In Genesim, the Cain and Abel episode suggests that it does not govern the immediate resonance, the central implications of this and perhaps other poetic moments which constitute the whole; nor does it seem likely to have been predominant in the audience's response to this portion of narrative sequence.²⁰

Another commentator, Alvin Lee, discusses the significance of myth in Genesis A:

Genesis is, to some extent, an epic or narrative of heroic action and is a coherent, intelligible poem on the level of literal narrative, but it cannot be understood on this level alone. It is myth and like all true myth has its unity in its interlocking structure of metaphorical identities, consolidated by means of traditional typological connotations attached to the human figures and events.²¹

A number of doctoral dissertations have considered the poem in the past few years. Larry Neil McKill's "A Critical Study of the Old English Genesis A,"²² a study which relies on Lee's approach, argues for a new view of structural and thematic unity. He feels that typology and references to the liturgy are not sufficient to explain the shaping of the poem. Rather, McKill discovers two chains of men, the good and the evil, to be at the heart of the poem. The audience is exhorted to join the good and avoid the dire consequences that befall the evil. .

Alger N. Doane, in "Paraphrasis Poetica: The Integration of Traditional Art and Traditional Learning in the Old English Poem Genesis A,"²³ considers the poem to be shaped in structure and meaning by the Bible, as it was perceived through traditional exegesis. Doane also feels that the poet adds extra detail to the Vulgate story either to clarify the narrative or to take account of the familiar exegetical treatments.²⁴

James R. Hall includes Genesis A in an article, "The Old English Epic of Redemption: The Theological Unity of MS Junius 11,"²⁵ which is based on his 1973 dissertation. He argues that the Junius manuscript was compiled along discernable theological lines based ultimately on the Augustinian tradition of salvation history:

The treatment of salvation history in Augustine's De catechizandis rudibus, however, provides an interpretation of the redemption which goes far in explaining the unity of the manuscript. . . . It is quite possible that the editor of Junius 11 was directly acquainted with De catechizandis rudibus and, within the range of his choice of material, compiled the manuscript accordingly.²⁶

Thus, Genesis A has been a victim of critical fashion. It has progressed from being an incomplete paraphrase--a pebble among the surviving pearls of Anglo-Saxon poetry--to being a cornerstone of symbolic literature. Huppé, for example, asserts that "Genesis A stands at the beginning of the great medieval literature that, with the symbolic meaning of the Bible always at the center of consciousness, was to extend the imagination beyond the structural limitations of biblical commentary in such works as the Divine Comedy and Piers Plowman."²⁷ It is now being mined by scholars for figural moments, evidence of source use, typical Anglo-Saxon ideals, and, in this study, for evidence of the hagiographic style.

Huppé and the post-Huppé critics have commented on many aspects of the hagiographic style, although none have identified it as such. For example, if the view that the poem is complete in its present form is correct, a new emphasis is placed on Abraham. Instead of viewing Abraham's adventures as part of the total narrative of Genesis, one must consider whether or not the poet is deliberately placing Abraham in a thematic

spotlight as, perhaps, the best example of his theme. If so, Abraham's actions, his ultimate successes, may illustrate a Christian idea lying at the heart of the narrative. The Biblical account provides the authoritative source for what happened, and other sources may be consulted for the meanings of these actions; but one must also consider the significance of these interpretations for the lives of later men. In this view of the poem, Abraham plays a familiar role, the blessed man involved in God-affirming actions.

The first evidence of the hagiographic style is found in an introductory passage which sets out a clear statement of theme, a theme which informs the remainder of the poem and which will be most clearly shown in the behaviour of the saintly protagonist.

That Genesis A contains a discernible introduction has been remarked upon by several students of the poem. Bernard Huppé, for example, is quick to perceive a special significance in the first hundred or so lines of Genesis A.

Whatever the first hundred or more lines of Genesis may be, they are not a 'mere paraphrase' of Genesis Actually the beginning of the poem develops one aspect of the underlying meaning of the first verse of Genesis--a development that is perhaps to be explained by the absolute importance of that verse to Christian faith.

The first lines of the poem, furthermore, propose the same theme as in Caedmon's Hymn, man's duty to sing the praises of his Creator, the sum of man's primary duty.²⁸

Huppé feels that man's duty to praise God is "the theme that we might expect from a poem on Genesis."²⁹

He provides a wealth of evidence from other poems and commentaries to support the interpretation of Genesis A as a work that "not only describes man's folly but forecasts his redemption as well."³⁰

Huppé's careful study of the poet's use of the biblical text follows and supports his contention that the poet eliminates or amplifies his source at will and adds original material in order to reinforce the central theme.

In his critical edition, David Wells also identifies the first 112 lines of the poem as a prologue.³¹ Citing Honncher, he accepts the influence of Gregory the Great's work on lines 12b to 91 and 92 to 111.³² Whatever his sources may have been, the poet has included material not found in the biblical account. Also, he has placed this material in a position of unquestionable importance and, in this study, of major thematic significance.

The first 111 lines of Genesis A contrast the joys of the faithful angels and the torments of the unfaithful ones. At first, all the angels were blessed and joyful: "Haefdon gleam and dream, / and heora ordfruman, engla preatas, / beorhte blisse. Waes heora blaed micel!" (ll. 12b-14). Lines fifteen to twenty-one show the angels praising God and doing

nothing but good. At line twenty-two, trouble erupts; the wicked angels turn away from God through pride ("oferhygde," l. 22) and plot evil. These angels anger God ("þa weard yrre god," l. 34) and suffer a terrible punishment for their disobedience ("him þæs grim lean becom!" l. 46). Huppé points out that the contrast between the joys of the good angels and the sorrows of the evil ones gives "convincing proof that . . . it is very right to praise the Ruler of Heavens."³³ The lines also support the idea that pride can disrupt the loyalty that is owed to God; and once fallen from that proper relationship with God, one can expect to suffer grim rewards.

After a passage on the sufferings of the fallen angels (ll. 65-78), the poet again contrasts the two states, grace and damnation, with a passage on the restored bliss in heaven ("þa waes soð swa aer sibb on heofnum, / faegre freoþoþeawas, frea eallum leof, / þeoden his þegnum," ll. 78-80). Lines eighty-six to ninety-one mention the empty thrones in heaven left vacant by the recent unsuccessful rebellion. Huppé feels that:

The image of the empty thrones of heaven suggests that the poet's purpose in retelling the story outlined in the opening lines of the poem is to give prominence to the theme of contrastive wrath and mercy. The fall of the angels serves as a dreadful warning to man, but the thrones they left empty give

promise to man of citizenship in heaven if, through obedience, he proves himself worthy.³⁴

The empty thrones also suggest the high standards for which man must strive in order to be "worthy." His potential seat in heaven is literally angelic.

The poet next describes God's decision to create a better group ("selran werode," l. 95) to settle in the available homeland ("eðelstaðolas," l. 94). God begins, as well, to consider the creation of the world. Lines 103 to 111 elaborate the present emptiness of the world ("ac þes wida grund / stod deop and dim," ll. 104-5) which remains until God's word brings it into living-being "odpaet þeos woruldgesceaft / þurh word geweard wuldorcyninges," ll. 110-11). At this point, the poem begins to follow the creation story as it appears in Genesis.³⁵

The hagiographic style depends on an introduction that presents an idea important to Christian living. The introduction to Genesis A, as Huppé has pointed out, contains the conventional explication of the "underlying message" of Genesis. It presents two courses of action open to all men: praise God, avoid pride, and ultimately live in joy; or turn away from God, indulge in pride, and live in eternal damnation. This idea will be illustrated by a variety of individuals, Adam, Seth, Noah, and Lot; but the best example

will be Abraham. Sent by God into almost perpetual exile, Abraham will remain good and loyal. Sorely tried by his wife's inability to bear a child, Abraham will continue to be guided by God and God's promise of success. Abraham will keep faith with God; he will not revolt against Him. When totally outnumbered by a formidable enemy, he goes into battle with 318 men³⁶ and emerges victorious. And finally, Abraham holds faith with God when God demands the sacrifice of Isaac, a terrible test in any event, but one particularly terrible for Abraham who had waited many years for the birth of this promised son. Abraham is a member of the "better band" of line ninety-five, who were created to deserve places on the vacant thrones of heaven. He is also an example of human potential; man can remain true to God in spite of apparently overwhelming odds, and God never abandons such a man. His promise is eternally valid.

This study argues that Abraham plays a special role in Genesis A. He is more than another example of goodness; he is the key example. Huppé, while not asserting this degree of importance for Abraham, states:

. . . the poet's emphasis in introducing Abraham serves to mark the transition to the next large episode in the underlying spiritual drama which the poet seems to be suggesting behind the surface of the biblical story. In the building of the tower, Augustine saw 'the City of the Unjust made visible,' in the story of Abraham, 'the first manifestations

of the City of God' . . . in Abraham is symbolized the regenerative power of faith. His story is symbolically the story of the road back, of Christ's redemption.³⁷

Larry McKill puts the idea forward with more strength: "Abraham, whose story occupies slightly more than half the extant poem" is "the model par excellence of right action and praise in Genesis."³⁸

The theme of the introduction, man's right, privilege, and duty to praise God and thus ensure the salvation of his own soul, influences the telling of Abraham's story and the creation of Abraham as a character in the poem. Abraham does not enter the poem until line 1706; and he is not called by name until line 1710. Huppé notes that the poet "briefly summarizes" the "long genealogical account, in verses 11: 10-25."³⁹ This abbreviated treatment is not without purpose. "By omitting the details of the generation of Shem and thus emphatically introducing the figure of Abraham, the poet connects closely the kinsmen Abraham and Lot with Heber and the generations of the faithful, as against Nimrod and the generation of the faithless."⁴⁰ Aaron's son Lot is next introduced along with Sarah, Abraham's wife (ll. 1719-24); Abraham's adventures begin at this point and continue until the end of the poem.

The most striking facet of Abraham's character is his faith in God's commands. Whatever God commands,

Abraham carries out; and again and again, he is tested. On several occasions he journeys into alien lands at God's command. He is always in fear of his life as he places himself in hostile hands. Twice he protects himself by refusing to admit that the beautiful Sarah is his wife; twice she is taken from him, and twice God intervenes to protect Abraham's interests. Huppé cites lines 1837 to 1843 as evidence that the poet wishes "to emphasize Abraham's faith."⁴¹ In these lines, Abraham tells Sarah that if God chooses, the deception will save his life ("swa þu minum scealt / feore gebeorgan, gif me freoðo drihten / on woruldrice, waldend usser, / an aelmigtig, swa he aer dyde, / lengran lifes" ll. 1837-41). As Huppé points out, these lines are not taken from the Bible. They are the poet's own thinking⁴² and provide an additional "example of Abraham's faith and trust in God."⁴³

Abraham's faith is also demonstrated by the five altars he builds to make sacrifice to God. Always an active figure, Abraham never fails to offer appropriate praise to God. The first altar and sacrifice are built just after God gives Abraham land at Canaan (ll. 1787-93). The poet says "þa se rinc gode / wibed worhte and þa waldende / lifes leohtfruman lac onsaegde / gasta helme" (ll. 1790-93).

The epithets for God, waldende, lifes leohtfruman, gasta helme, reflect Abraham's steadfast belief as

clearly as does the altar itself. The second altar is built almost immediately. Abraham travels into his promised land and immediately renders the proper thanks to God: "Abraham þa oðere siðe / wibed worhte. He þaer wordum god / torhtum cigde, tiber onsaegde / his liffrean, (him þaes lean ageaf / nalles hneawlic þurh his hand metend), / on þam gledstýde gumcystum til" (ll. 1805-10. The lines about God's reward are not found in the Bible (cf. Genesis XII:8) but serve here to reinforce both Abraham's faith in God and God's faithful keeping of the covenant.

Abraham also builds an altar after Sarah is returned to him and he journeys from Egypt. This altar is built near the previous one. "Weras on wonge wibed setton / neah þam þe Abraham aeror raerde / his waldende þa westan com. / þaer se eadga eft ecan drihtnes / niwan stefne noman weorðade; / tilmodig eorl tiber onsaegde / þeodne engla, þancode swiðe / lifes leohtfruman lisse and ara" (ll. 1882-89).⁴⁴

Both Abraham and God are aptly described in this brief passage in the poem. Abraham is "se eadga" and "tilmodig eorl" while God, in response, is "his waldende," "ecan drihtnes," "þeodne engla," and "lifes leohtfruman." Again the poet has expanded his source to reinforce the bond of faith between Abraham and God and Abraham's active awareness of his role in the keeping of the covenant.

The altar and sacrifice, willingly made by Abraham and willingly received by God, function as a visible sign of the covenant between the two.

Abraham never neglects his duty to God, and God never neglects Abraham in times of trouble.

The fourth altar is built after Abraham and Abimelech agree to be friends and God provides a dwelling place for Abraham. In that place, Abraham builds a city and an altar.

Ðaer se halga heahsteap reced,
burh timbrede and bearo sette,
weobedd worhte, and his waldende
on þam glædsteðe gild onsaegde,
lac geneahe, þam þe lif forgeaf,
gesaeliglic swegle under (ll. 2840-45)

Again the Bible (Genesis XXI:33) does not discuss the altar and sacrifice saying simply "Abraham vero plantavit nemus in Bersabee, et invocavit ibi nomen Domini Dei aeterni." Again the hero's relationship with God is emphasized when the poet calls Abraham "se halga" and reminds that God gave Abraham "lif."

The fifth altar is the one God commands Abraham to build in order to sacrifice Isaac. This is the great test of Abraham's faith and his obedience to God. The use of this altar is also the culminating event of the poem. Huppé mentions that the last five lines of the poem, ll. 2932-36, are "without counterpart in the biblical text."⁴⁵ They tell the story of the actual sacrifice made by the grateful Abraham.

"Abraegð þa mid þy bille, brynegield onhread, /
 reccendne weg rommes blode, / onbleot þæt lac gode,
 saegde léana panc / and ealra þara saelda þe him sið
 and aer, / gifena drihten, forgifen haefde" (ll.

2932-36). This is a triumphant moment for Abraham;
 the poet lends extra drama to the biblical account to
 create, perhaps, a striking picture of the triumph of
 Abraham's faith.

The sword is brandished, the altar smokes with
 the blood of the sacrifice; and in the midst of all
 this action, Abraham gives thanks to God for all the
 gifts that he has been given. The added lines do
 provide a striking picture with which to end the poem
 and a clear demonstration of Abraham's continuing
 faith in God. The poet has added information to
 several of the altar building incidents not found in
 the Bible. With these additions, Abraham's altars
 become a continuing symbol of his faith in and loyalty
 to God; Abraham is always the faithful servant of his
 God.

He plays another role in Genesis A as well.

Abraham is a general leading a successful army in
 battle.⁴⁶ Huppé feels that the battle section requires
 symbolic interpretation:

Yet the poet's intention will be missed if
 patristic commentary is not considered; for
 there the battle between the five kings and
 the four was considered to be an important

symbol of the conquest over the five senses, represented by the defeated kings, by four states of sinful living, represented in the four northern kings . . . In turn Abraham's battle against the four kings signifies the battle of the virtues and the vices. It is, in short, the first psychomachia.⁴⁷

Huppé sees proof for Abraham's role as "an ideal of Christian living"⁴⁸ in the scene that takes place between Abraham and Melchisedech which the poet amplifies: "Melchisedech was considered by the Fathers to represent Christ and the apostolic succession . . . This traditional symbolism explains the poet's epithet (2103) for Melchisedech, leoda bisceop, the bishop of the peoples, a phrase not suggested by the biblical text."⁴⁹

There is more to be interpreted in Abraham's role as a leader of men. Huppé regards Abraham's reply to the king of Sodom, for example, as a passage of symbolic importance: "Abraham's reply is of equal effectiveness, but its appeal is to eternal values . . . Abraham's answer to the king of Sodom, the biblical text of which the poet lovingly elaborates, is, according to Bede, 'diligently to be observed,' for it is 'an example of the moral life.'"⁵⁰

It is also observable that the poet produces a recognizable Anglo-Saxon battle scene (ll. 2045-80) and a considerable expansion of Genesis XIV:14-15. Abraham leads his tiny band to victory and makes a traditional pre-battle speech in this section. That

speech, however, is not traditional in content. Abraham makes no comment on courage and fate. The poet says, "cwaed þaet him se halga, / ece drihten, eade mihte / aet þam sperenide spede laenan" (ll. 2057-59). Abraham exhorts his men to believe that God can and will effect a victory. Later in the battle, God's direct intervention can be seen. "Him on fultum grap / heofonrices weard" (ll. 2072-73). Abraham is behaving well in two roles when he makes this brief speech. He is giving courage to his outnumbered band as is proper for a military commander to do. He is also affirming his complete faith in God. In his every action--symbolically or literally interpreted--Abraham provides an example of loyalty and faith.

Abraham's chief difficulty with his faith resides in his lack of an heir. God has promised Abraham a son, but He does not choose to fulfill the promise for many years. While Abraham never doubts God's promises, there is one scene which suggests a brief hesitation in Abraham's perfect faith.

God, in this scene, has told Abraham to set the "sigorestacn" (l. 2313) on all his people. He assures Abraham that he will indeed have his son ("þu scealt sunu agan, / bearn be bryde þinre," ll. 2327-28). Abraham responds by placing his face on the earth ("Abraham ða ofestum legde / hleor on eorðan," ll. 2338-39) and considering God's words. He does not believe

that he and Sarah can produce a child; both are far too old. He answers God by asking God's blessing for Ishmael, the son he already has.

God responds to Abraham's skepticism in a gracious manner. ("Him þa faegere frea aelmihtig, / ece drihten, andswarode," ll. 2353-54) and Abraham does as he was told ("Abraham fremede swa him se eca bebead," l. 2370).

In this passage, the poet remains fairly close to those parts of the story he chooses to relate. He omits many details found in Genesis XVII:9-27. For example, he does not mention the changing of Abraham's name from Abram (XVII:5), nor the process of circumcision (XVII:11), nor the changing of Sarah's name (XVII:15). He adds a passage (ll. 2377-81), in which he states that God increased Abraham's glory on earth and that Abraham did what God wanted him to do ("A his tir metod, / domfaest cyning, duggedum iecte / on woruldrice; he him þaes worhte to, / siððan he on faere furdum meahte / his waldendes willan fremman," ll. 2377-81). In short, in spite of the momentary difficulty Abraham experiences in believing this particular promise, he will continue to keep the covenant and so will God.

Huppé and others have pointed out that the poet of Genesis A alters his source in order to make clear an underlying idea. In so doing, he alters the character

of Abraham. Abraham is humanized⁵¹ and sanctified in the poet's amplifications and by his omissions. The Abraham of Genesis A is involved in his own story. He never seriously falters in his faith, but he does expend great effort in order to maintain it. The poet humanizes Abraham when he explains Abraham's reasons for calling Sarah his sister; he sanctifies him when he devotes additional space to describing the dramatic scene in which the ram is sacrificed and Isaac is spared. He humanizes Abraham when he places him in a traditional Anglo-Saxon battle scene; he sanctifies him in his conversation with Melchizedech. He humanizes him when he notes Abraham's difficulty in believing his own and Sarah's ability to produce a son; he sanctifies him by reminding the audience that Abraham and God never fail to keep their covenant.⁵²

The poet's treatment of Abraham's role is faithful to the biblical source. Huppé points out that the poet is faithful, as well, to the exegetical tradition that grew up around the biblical material. The poet is also faithful to the hagiographic style. He takes the opportunity to remind his audience that goodness, even for God's chosen, is a struggle. Obedience, even for a saint, can involve terrible sacrifice.

The creation of a human being actively accepting the challenge of perfection is a major function of

the hagiographic style. I have argued that poets alter and arrange their source material to emphasize the struggle and the difficulty of such a struggle here on earth. In so doing, they create characters who are active and alive rather than stereotypic and static. The poets reveal the personalities of these characters without blurring the clear focus that relates each character and his actions to the major theme of the poem by employing variation, especially in the epithets used to identify the major character.

The epithets that the Genesis A poet chooses for Abraham support a double view of Abraham as an ordinary human being and as a member of God's chosen group. In the epithets, the poet has a measure of choice not available to him in the narrative elements of his work. There are very few epithets in the biblical material that he might reproduce; he is free to expand and refine the character of Abraham in keeping with the development of his own major theme.

There are 198 epithets for Abraham in the 1230 lines of Genesis A in which he plays a part; eighty-five of these are simply the name Abraham. Of the rest, sixteen are epithets that include Abraham and either Aaron or Lot. These epithets stress the kinship of the two in question (eaforan, l. 1706; cneowmaegas, l. 1733), their roles as young warriors (haeled higerofe, l. 1709; frumgaran, l. 1708; eorlum, l. 1710;

magorincas, l. 1714; drihtweras, l. 1798; rincas, l. 1895) and in the case of Abraham and Lot, their faithfulness to God's rules and promise (aefaeste men, l. 1802; arfaeste, l. 1894; and waerfaestra wera, l. 1897).

The other 112 epithets for Abraham can be divided into six general categories. In thirty-eight instances,⁵³ Abraham is described as a warrior or leader of people; twenty-three times, Abraham is called blessed or chosen by God; twenty times, Abraham's character or emotional state is clarified; eleven times the poet places Abraham in relationship to his people or family; nine times the poet calls him wise. The final category contains four epithets that, in effect, call Abraham a human-being (bearn, twice; guman, se wer). There are three other epithets for Abraham all used by Abimelech when he addressed Abraham that explain their relationship (ellpeodig; faele freond, twice).⁵⁴

The twenty epithets that are explanatory of Abraham's character are particularly important to an understanding of his human nature. As noted above, Larry McKill responds to Abraham's humanity in his study of the poem. He feels that the poet pays special attention to the development of the human struggle involved in Abraham's obedience to God: for example, "by indicating Abraham's genuine compassion and human feeling in the Ishmael episode, the poet can emphasize

his hero's perfect obedience in the account of the Offering of Isaac without making Abraham appear heartless and unconcerned to sacrifice his child,"⁵⁵ and later, "with consummate artistry, the poet dramatically shapes his story to emphasize Abraham's obedience, yet at the same time, he creates a character even more human in his fatherly affection for his son than in the scriptural version."⁵⁶

McKill adds that the poet stresses the human relationship between Abraham and both Ishmael and Isaac by calling both his agen bearn.⁵⁷ McKill's observations are just, but there is another device at work which constantly reminds the reader that Abraham is still a man as we watch him struggle to fulfill his Lord's commands. The poet uses twenty terms to express Abraham's emotional or intellectual state:

gumcystum god (2), excellently good⁵⁸
til
swidfeorm and gesaelig, rich and happy
bearn blidemod, happy man (prince)
tilmodig eorl, good earl
tilmodigne (2), good
dome and sigore, with authority and victory
arna gemyndig, mindful of honours
ara gemyndig, mindful of honours
waere gemyndig, mindful of the covenant
peawfaest and gefyldig, honourable and patient
feasceaft, miserable
waerfaest (2), truth-fast
freonda feasceaft, destitute of friends
ellpeodigne, foreigner
gesaelig, happy
arfaest, honour-fast
side spedig, prosperous in travel

By reading this list, one can follow the fluctuations in Abraham's fortunes, and arrive at an understanding of his life and character. He is good and honourable, a man worthy of trust; but his life swings from joy to misery, from wealth to destitution; and as a character, Abraham is always aware of his own joyful or sorrowful state. He is gemyndig, mindful, of what he receives and of what he owes.

Abraham's wisdom, an intellectual state, is treated separately in this study. Wisdom is a complex attribute when described in the hagiographic style. There can be, first, the human wisdom that allows for success on earth, and the venerable Abraham indeed displays this quality. As well, there is a second kind of wisdom which does not come from experience on this earth but rather comes from God. It is the special wisdom granted, for example, to Judas-Cyriacus after his conversion. In Elene, it was so powerful an attribute that Elene herself was astonished when she recognized the quality in the converted Judas-Cyriacus.⁵⁹ The second type of wisdom is also present in Abraham's character, and the poet presents both saintly and worldly wisdom with epithets. There are ten epithets in Genesis A which assert Abraham's wisdom. He is wishydig, wishydig wer (three), daegrime frod, missarum frod, gleawe mode, frod frumgara,⁶⁰ god and gleaw, and wintrum frod.

The first two instances occur within eight lines. Abraham is called wishydig when, responding to the famine, he leads his family into Egypt. The second instance, wishydig wer (l. 1823), occurs as Abraham instructs Sarah to tell the dangerous Egyptians that she is his sister. Abraham explains, in an extra-biblical passage, that she must tell this lie to protect his life. McKill adds, "The poet's parallel diction (ll. 1825 and 1847b-48) supports Abraham's conjecture and gives evidence of the patriarch's wisdom, an attribute not given him in the corresponding biblical verse, Genesis 12:11."⁶¹

Abraham is called wishydig wer (l. 2053) again when he delivers his battle strategy to the outnumbered band who will rescue Lot. The key to Abraham's victory and his wisdom lies in his awareness of God's power: "se halga . . . eade mihte . . . spede laenan" (ll. 2057-59). God does easily effect victory in the battle.

Daegrime frod, wise in length of days (l. 2174), occurs when Abraham complains to God about his lack of an heir, and God responds with His promise of a son. Wishydig wer (l. 2257) occurs again when Abraham tells Sarah to deal with Hagar in her own way. Abraham is responding to Sarah's complaint that Hagar has become insolent and her remark that God shall judge between them. Missarum frod (l. 2347) occurs when Abraham asks

God to bless Ishmael. At this point, Abraham appears to hesitate to accept God's promise of a son "by your wife." Wintrum frod (l. 2355), wise in winters, occurs when God answers Abraham's request for a blessing for Ishmael. Before agreeing to bless Ishmael, God repeats the promise that Sarah will give a child to Abraham.

Gleaw on mode (l. 2375) occurs when Abraham, following God's instruction, sets the victory-sign on all his people.

Frod frumgara (l. 2579) is used when Abraham looks upon the ruins of Sodom. He stands alone gazing at the smoke, and the poet reminds his audience that the reason for the destruction is, ultimately, pride.

God and gleaw (l. 2658) are adjectives used by God to describe Abraham when He speaks to Abimelech in a dream. In his speech, God is making very clear the relationship that exists between Abraham and Himself. He tells Abimelech that his troubles will not end unless Abraham prays for him.

Abraham is wise, then, when dealing with the problems of his life: surviving in foreign places, dealing with his army, mediating between his wife and concubine, obeying God's command to circumcise his people, and understanding God's punishment of Sodom. He is wise, in the sense of being old and experienced in the ways of the world, when he has difficulty

accepting the ultimate truth of God's promise of a son. But Abraham's practical wisdom is not enough; God does fulfill that promise. His stratagems succeed on earth because he is wise enough to place his trust in God. Abraham's wisdom, which comes from his faith in God, never fails.

The poet uses a variety of terms to emphasize the two types of Abraham's wisdom. He presents the saintly patriarch as a man aware of the realities of his world and as a man gifted with the wisdom to hold faith with God in all circumstances.

Along with Abraham's humanity, the poet stresses his special status. Twice, Abraham is called chosen by God, seven times loved by God, and fourteen times holy or blessed. Here is the familiar emphasis on the blessed condition of the protagonist common to all the Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives. The poet uses se eadga (wer) and se halga (wer) a total of twelve times in the poem; four of these occurrences are found in the last seventy-three lines of the poem in the section dealing with the Offering of Isaac. In fact, the poet reminds his audience of Abraham's blessed status with a repetition of terms within three lines: "þa se eadga Abraham sine / nihtreste ofgeaf. Nalles nergendes / hease wiðhogode, ac hine se halga wer . . ." (ll. 2863-65). When Abraham, Isaac, and their two companions reach the place of sacrifice,

Abraham recognizes the appointed hill. At that point, the poet refers to him as "se eadega wer" (l. 2877). Finally, the poet calls Abraham "se eadega" (l. 2926) when he sees the ram waiting to be sacrificed.

Abraham is also often described as a leader or prince or a warrior (thirty-six times). These terms reinforce his position as the leader of his people on their various jounies and his position as military leader. The role of an Anglo-Saxon saint as a warrior is a common one;⁶² the battle for virtue and obeqience is described in terms of a military encounter in such poems as Guthlac A and B, Juliana, Judith, and Andreas. The biblical account of Abraham's wandering life includes a real battle which the poet expands and elaborates in lines 2018 to 2160. In the views of two commentators, Bernard F. Huppé and Larry McKill, Abraham behaves very properly in the expanded account. McKill says "the poet wisely expands the brief biblical account of the battle to make concrete Abraham's superiority."⁶³ Huppé feels that "Abraham's victory is important because it exemplifies the symbolic victory of the Christian soldier over worldly temptation."⁶⁴ Huppé and McKill do not agree in their interpretations of the battle. Huppé sees that the "intended effect on the audience . . . was to arouse with dramatic immediacy and through the use of the ancient poetic idiom the remembrance of basic Christian

doctrine."⁶⁵ McKill argues that "far from scorning the values celebrated in heroic verse, the poet exploits the tradition so that Abraham becomes the hero par excellence."⁶⁶

Both critics, however, see Abraham as a hero, Christian or Germanic; and it is his heroism that is significant in the hagiographic style. Abraham is both and simultaneously a successful general and a successful servant of God. On earth, he demonstrates his abilities in earthly terms; in heaven, after his successful victory over evil, he will live the perfect heavenly heroic life.

The struggle for perfection, which is at the heart of the development of a character chosen by God, must be shown in recognizable terms; the clearest and most readily comprehended is the battle. That battle may be difficult to understand by "modern" realistic standards; but it must be understood as a real battle, occurring on earth, culminating in the triumph of the hero-saint.

The numerous epithets for Abraham express the human and the saintly aspects of his character; with them the poet draws a detailed picture of Abraham. The various terms that explain his thoughts and actions expand the audience's understanding of the chosen man without destroying the thematic emphasis of the poem. Abraham becomes a living figure, thinking, planning, and

remaining loyal; as well, he remains an example of the success granted to those who praise God and faithfully perform their duty.

As a number of commentators have mentioned,⁶⁷ the Offering of Isaac and its happy conclusion constitute a proper ending for a poem that begins with the idea that it is right and proper for people to praise God. For example, speaking of the final lines of the poem, Larry McKill identifies an echo of the introduction:

Coming after a scene of great tension and drama, the closing words of the poem recall the narrator's opening exhortation, "Us is riht micel ðæt we rodera weard, / wereda wuldorcining, wordum herigen, / modum lufien . . ." ll. 1-5. The poem's beginning and ending with praise to God lends partial support to arguments for unity . . . But the unity of Genesis A does not reside in this one structural tie any more than does Beowulf's unity depend upon its beginning and ending with a funeral. The important episode of the Offering of Isaac follows a long sequence of scenes of sacrifice and thanksgiving . . . The Offering of Isaac episode is pre-eminent among other scenes of sacrifice, and in terms of its dramatic and climatic effect suitable for a conclusion.⁶⁸

The hagiographic style requires that the basis of the conclusion to a poem be a recapitulation of the major theme. The Genesis A poet follows this method. The conclusion to Genesis A actually begins on line 2834. Abraham has made his agreement with Abimelech and settles down to live in yet another stranger's land. Abraham is safe in this new land, but he is "alone

among strangers," "feasceaft mid fremdum," l. 2837.

Of course, Abraham is never really alone.

In this new place, which Abraham inhabits for a long time (lange þrage, l. 2836), he builds a "lofty hall" (heahsteap reced, l. 2840), a castle (burh, l. 2841), a grove (bearo, l. 2841), and an altar (weobedd, l. 2842). Everything is prepared for a long life of comfort and virtue.

Suddenly, God decides to test Abraham, not to find him wanting, but rather to confirm his virtues:

"cunnode georne / hwilc þaes aedelinges ellen waere," (ll. 2847-48). The test is the most difficult one that could be found for Abraham. Having sent Ishmael away at Sarah's request, Abraham finds himself with only one precious son. God demands that the child be offered as a sacrifice. God is very specific, even graphic, in his instructions:

"Gewit þu ofestlice, Abraham, feran,
lastas lecgan and þe laede mid
þin agen bearn. Þu scealt Isaac me
onsecgan, sunu dinne, sylf to tibre.
Siddan þu gestigest steape dune,
hrincg þaes hean landes, þe ic þe heonon getaece,
up þinum agnum fotum, þær þu scealt ad gegaerwan,
baelfyr bearne þinum, and blotan sylf
sunu mid sweordes ecge, and þonne sweartan lige
læofes lic forbaernan and me lac bebeodan."
(ll. 2850-59)

Abraham, most unlike the proud angels of the introduction who refuse to obey God and plot self-determination, immediately agrees. Abraham agrees

because he fears and loves God, that very proper combination of love and fear that characterizes saintly understanding: "Him waes frean engla / word ondrysne and his waldend leof," (ll. 2861-62).

The events of the offering pass quickly as God had ordered. Several times, the poet stresses the speed of these events: sona (l. 2860), fysan (l. 2861), fus (l. 2870), efste þa swiðe and onette (l. 2873), and aedre (l. 2905).

In fact, Abraham does not stop until the angel calls to him (ll. 2908-10). At that point, Abraham stops and waits: "He still gebad / ares spraece . . ." (ll. 2910-11). Abraham's motionless stance is made all the more dramatic coming as it does after the hurrying of the previous lines. God now tells Abraham not to kill his own child (ll. 2914-16) and promises him rewards (ll. 2917-20).

God also explains why Abraham merits these lavish gifts. The reason is simple and important. God rewards Abraham because to Abraham, God's peace and favour (sibb and hyldo, l. 2922) are more important than the life of his own son ("þe wile gasta weard / lissum gyldan þæt þe waes leofre his / sibb and hyldo þonne þin sylfes bearn," ll. 2920-22).

To end his poem, the poet picks up the speedy pace of the story again. The fire is still lit; Abraham sees the ram and makes his sacrifice with great

haste (ofestum miclum, l. 2931) and renders thanks to God (saegde leana þanc, l. 2934). Abraham thanks God not only for His last minute rescue of Isaac (leana), but also for the constant stream of blessings that God has offered Abraham ("saegde leana þanc / and ealra þara saeldā þe he him sið and aer, / gifena drihten, forgifen haefde," ll. 2934-36).

The poem ends here. The ending need not be considered abrupt if the tactics of the hagiographic style are employed. The ending of Genesis A, like the possible ending of Daniel,⁶⁹ is made up of a series of key actions all of which demonstrate the abstract notions that inform the poem and are expressed in the introduction.

Genesis A begins with the traditional notion expressed in the Praefatio to the Mass,⁷⁰ that is, that it is the right thing to praise God with words and to love Him with one's heart since He is the ruler of all creation. Abraham and the other heroes in Genesis A all demonstrate the rewards granted and the challenges that must be faced in order to fulfill this good advice. Noah, Seth, and others, like Abraham, hold faith with God and receive His grace. But the poet also concentrates on how very difficult it is to hold to the true path.⁷¹ While displaying the difficulty of the challenge, the poet always asserts the potential for success. Abraham is, of course, his best example and

the one most fully developed.

As we last see Abraham, he is hastening both to obey God (to sacrifice the ram) and to thank God for all his many blessings. The poem ends at a triumphant moment, one to which the poet has been carefully building.⁷² The poet has added the dramatic details of the smoking, blood stained altar to intensify the visual aspects of the narration; he leaves us with a clear picture of Abraham fulfilling his covenant with God as all men should.

We see the hero, in this case, the Old Testament saint, in his greatest moment. This almost visual technique is possibly employed in Daniel and probably employed in Exodus.⁷³ In the three poems, the poets leave their audiences with pictures of ideas in action. The themes of the poems are expressed both at the beginning of the poems and in the conclusions; but in those conclusions, the key ideas are brought to life. Daniel teaches right from wrong; Abraham offers thanks to God for his faithful keeping of the covenant between them; and Moses teaches his people the meaning of their miraculous escape.

The audience can be expected to know the importance of such figures as Daniel, Abraham, and Moses; the poets simply show them in their most characteristic moments. They can feel secure that their audiences will understand the significance of the scenes.

Abraham in Genesis A is a good example of a biblical figure brought to life by means of the hagiographic style. From the thematic statement made in the introduction to the poem, the reader knows exactly what to expect from Abraham. This clear focus makes Abraham's actions purposeful and readily understandable.

The difficulty of his tasks is clarified by Abraham's thoughts on his own condition expressed in a series of epithets as well as by the actual events in which he participates. As a result of this treatment, Abraham emerges from the narrative line of Genesis A as larger and more significant than the other characters in the Genesis story.

Several critics have remarked that Abraham is the central figure in the poem. Huppé and McKill, for example, have noted the expansions and deviations from the source and have supplied exegetical and heroic explanations.⁷⁴ Considering the hagiographic style, one finds another explanation for Abraham's major role in the poem.

The saintly figure in a poem such as Andreas, Juliana, Guthlac, or Genesis A must achieve his perfection by means of a successful internal struggle between his own fallen human nature and the wisdom and blessedness freely granted to him by God.

This struggle is a great challenge for both saint and poet. It is often expressed in terms of a battle; Guthlac, Andreas, Judith, and Judas-Cyriacus are all called upon to fight in unusual battles by their poets in order to show their victories over human weaknesses and devilish plots. Abraham, too, has battles to win. He has both an easier and a more difficult struggle; easier because God is right there to tell him what to do, more difficult because Abraham is asked to remain patient, to disbelieve earthly wisdom, and to cling to God's promises. The poet's task is to develop the human side of Abraham so that we may understand how very difficult the keeping of the covenant, and thus winning the battle, was even for Abraham.

The cheerfully blazing battle in which Abraham defeats the kings and restores Lot and his family to freedom shows Abraham's ability to fight victoriously on earth; the conversations with God, the promises, and the five altars show Abraham's willingness to try to succeed in the spiritual battle as well. The speed and drama of the Offering Scene provide a glorious picture of Abraham's ultimate success.

The poet has drawn Abraham's character in very human terms. He stands out in the poem not only because his story occupies the greatest number of lines, but also because the poet is at pains to show Abraham

as a human being. The epithets carry a good deal of the burden. With them, the poet can explain Abraham's personal characteristics as well as his "professional" saintly ones. The epithets remind the reader that Abraham is a thinking, human being, one who is often "mindful" of his own problems and triumphs.

As an adjunct to the humanizing of Abraham, the dehumanizing of Abraham's adversary Abimelech can be seen. McKill remarks "only the poet's overall aim of emphasizing Abraham's heroic nature, compared with those outside the covenant, can adequately explain the added blackening of Abimelech's character and account for his restructuring the narrative."⁷⁵ Earlier in his argument for the two chains of men, the good and the evil, McKill argues:

So strong is the poet's sense of the contrast between those dear to God and those hated by God, that it leads to a major structural change in the episode relating Abraham's dealings with Abimelech . . . In the Vulgate, Abimelech, king of Gerara, sends for Sarah for himself, not realizing that she belongs to Abraham . . . In Genesis A, however Abimelech's character is blackened, similar to the narrator's characterization of Pharaoh and the Egyptians previously . . . Like Belshazzar in Daniel and Holofernes in Judith, Abimelech is castigated for his satiated state after banqueting."⁷⁶

McKill could well have added other examples of the blackening of the characters of those who oppose the saints. Eleusius in Juliana⁷⁷ and Pharaoh in Exodus⁷⁸ are certainly eligible for this dubious

distinction. I think that the changes in the characters and actions of these adversaries are directly related to the amplification of the characters and actions of their hero opponents. The hero becomes more heroic as his opponent grows more wicked. His triumph becomes more dramatic and more readily understandable. The contrast drawn by the poet is between Good and Evil, and the victory of the hero or heroine over a particular adversary becomes symbolic of all victories of good over evil. The villain is so wicked that the reader is tempted to relate him directly to the devil himself and thus immediately strengthen the opposite relationship, that between the hero and God.

Abimelech becomes another potential destroyer of the good man, in this case Abraham. He can have no real success; God not only protects Abraham but also punishes Abimelech.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the villain must be presented as a powerful force that will call upon the courage and faith of the hero. The hagiographic style enhances the potential for human goodness by developing an awareness of the humanity of the hero. Simultaneously, it enhances the potential for human wickedness in the person of the adversary.

As the changes in Abimelech's character and actions relate to the poet's creation of Abraham, so also may the changes in the genealogies from Adam to Noah's sons (ll. 1128-45) relate to the poet's interest

in Abraham and his life. This section is clearly based on the biblical section; yet, it too has been altered. McKill finds the section particularly useful in his argument that the poet concentrates on the good men and their rewards as opposed to the evil men and their punishments:

Although the genealogies of Cain and Seth provide little room for imaginative treatment, the Genesis-poet nevertheless structures them to bring out his theme of God's special favor and blessings to the chosen remnant who remain faithful to Him, and His wrath towards the faithless. The dominant imagery of the heroic life in the hall versus exile reinforces the poet's intention to show the special blessedness in terms of prosperity and long life for Seth's heirs. Whereas the biblical source gives a very matter-of-fact and mechanical account of Seth's descendants, the Old English poem emphasizes the enjoyment of long life and of treasure in the world. Because Seth lives sodfaest 'firm in truth' (1106a), he is eadiġ 'blessed' (1107a) and gesaelig 'prosperous' (1138a), leof gode 'dear to God' (1146a) . . .

In place of the terse and mechanical biblical account of Seth's descendants, the poem's genealogy celebrates the enjoyment of long life in the world by employing the positive values of the heroic pattern: treasure, gold, land, glory, heroic deeds, prosperity. The heroic imagery both enlivens the bare and lifeless biblical account and serves to underscore the poet's theme of God's favor and blessing to all who, like the faithful heirs of Seth, keep the covenant.⁸⁰

McKill's observations about alterations and additions can also be extended to relate the genealogies to the poet's treatment of Abraham. The individual items in the genealogies follow the basic biblical pattern. The figure is named; his age at the time of

his first son's birth is given; the rest of his successful and happy life is characterized, and finally, his death is stated along with his age at the time of his death. Seth, for example, is named in line 1128: "Him on laste Seth leod weardode"; his age at the birth of his first children is given in lines 1130 to 1132, "Wintra haefde / fif and hundteontig þa he furdum ongan / his mægburge men geicean"; his happy life is mentioned in lines 1138 to 1140, "Seth waes gesaelig; siððan strynde / seofon winter her suna and dohtra / and eahtahund"; his age at his own death ends the section, lines 1140 to 1142, "Ealra haefde / XII and nigonhund, þa seo tid geweard / þaet he fridgedal fremman sceolde."⁸¹

McKill points out the poet's expansion of the happy earthly life of each figure. As well, the poet characterizes each figure with epithets. From Seth to Noah (ll. 1128-45), the poet uses eighteen epithets to describe the position or condition of each person. As McKill notes, these are among the additions which the poet makes to his source.

The list of epithets reveals a familiar choice of ideas. Fourteen of the terms (underlined below) are used of Abraham. Of the four which are not duplicated in the section on Abraham, all present ideas expressed in other forms in the section. For example, wisa and aldor are not used of Abraham, but he is called a

leader or counselor twenty-six times. The epithets and the figures to whom they are applied are as follows:

Seth	<u>gesaelig</u> (l. 1138)
Enos	<u>leof gode</u> (l. 1146) <u>gleawferhd haeled</u> (l. 1152)
Cainan	<u>aldordema</u> (l. 1156) <u>weard</u> and <u>wisa</u> (l. 1157)
Mahalaleel	<u>frumgara</u> (l. 1169)
Jared	<u>eorl waes aedele</u> (l. 1182) <u>aefaest haeled</u> (l. 1182) <u>frumgar</u> , <u>freomagum leof</u> (l. 1183) <u>wine frod</u> (l. 1194)
Enoc	<u>freolic frumbearn</u> (l. 1189) <u>gleawum . . . leofum rince</u> (ll. 1195-96) <u>folces wisa</u> (l. 1198) <u>hyrde</u> (l. 1200)
Mathusal	<u>frod haele</u> (l. 1222)
Lamech	<u>se eorl</u> (l. 1228) <u>werodes aldor</u> (l. 1231)
Noah	<u>aedelinga aldorwisa</u> (l. 1237)

The familiar terms relate Abraham to this list of famous ancestors, but they all enjoyed the rewards of their faithfulness in a manner temporarily denied to Abraham. They produced their all important heirs and then went on to enjoy God's generous earthly gifts. Abraham's situation is different. He was denied the joy of an heir for many years; nevertheless, he continued to love and praise God in the same faithful manner common to the descendents of Seth.

The additions to the genealogies remind the reader of Cynewulf's additive technique in Fates of the Apostles.⁸² The Genesis A poet may be using the additional information in the genealogies as Cynewulf "used" the heroic deaths of the apostles. That is, the cumulative effect is of central importance, and the poet builds his idea with one example after another in order, in Fates of the Apostles, to create a contrast of moods between the happy apostles who embrace the knowledge of their own deaths and the unhappy speaker who fears his own death, and, in Genesis A, between the early happy descendents of Adam who have both children and earthly joy and Abraham who temporarily lacks the former and thus cannot fully enjoy the latter. Although the Bible provides the basic structure for the entries in the genealogy, the poet provides the extra details that stress the definition of happiness for these early chosen people.

Considering the hagiographic style, one may see the extra material in the genealogies as serving an additional purpose. The epithets foreshadow Abraham's character and his position in relation to the world and to God. The situations of these early figures define earthly happiness, that is the possession of an heir and of earthly treasures and distinction. These situations also set up a contrast with Abraham's life. The importance of what he lacks, a legitimate heir,

becomes clear when one remembers this long line of successful ancestors.

More than Abraham's character and plight is expanded when the genealogy is examined in relation to the hagiographic style. Poets employ the hagiographic style to present an important idea for Christian living. The theme of the poem is of central importance, and the saint is the clearest and most fully developed example of it. The genealogy foreshadows Abraham and simultaneously reinforces the main theme of the poem, man's right and duty to praise God (and the generous rewards that come to those who heed this valuable advice). From Seth to Noah, the figures in the genealogy do just what Abraham does. The poet emphasizes this idea with his choice of epithets. These men, like Abraham, are noble leaders, wise men loved by God who give what is right and receive the endless generosity of God. The genealogy, then, reminds the reader of the central message of the poem and prepares him to understand more fully Abraham's achievement of faith.

Recognition of the hagiographic style in Genesis A also lends support to the argument that Genésis A is substantially complete in its present form. Disagreeing with earlier arguments that the poem might have contained the whole of the Genesis story, scholars of the 1960's and 70's accept the poem as reasonably

complete and argue various concepts of unity to support their ideas.⁸³ The techniques of the hagiographic style, observed at work in the poem, also suggest that the poem is reasonably complete and structurally unified.

The theme of the poem, stated in the introduction, man's right and duty to praise God, has been well exemplified by the incidents of Abraham's life and his response to them. The moment of Abraham's greatest triumph, of his greatest obedience, and of God's greatest generosity makes the best example of the rewards that one receives when following this lesson. In this moment of joy, Abraham does not neglect his duty. He offers thanks to God for this and all the other blessings he has enjoyed. The poet sends his audience away with the sound of Abraham's thanksgiving ringing out. The scene is dramatic; the action has moved quickly; and in a section not found in the Bible, the poet has described the smoking altar hot with the blood of the ram. Above all the action, the sound of Abraham's prayer brings the poem to its conclusion.⁸⁴

This scene reminds the reader of the final passages of both Daniel and Exodus. As discussed in Chapter V, Daniel ends with a description of Daniel, recalled to interpret the mysterious handwriting on the wall, teaching the proud and sinful the meaning of God's message. Modern critics suggest that only a

single leaf is missing from the poem, and that leaf could contain the end of the scene and the poet's concluding remarks.⁸⁵ Exodus concludes with a scene of great rejoicing as the Israelites contemplate their victory over Pharoah's army and listen to Moses' wise words.⁸⁶ All three poems close with a demonstration presented in a highly visual form of their major themes. The recapitulation or demonstration of the major theme of the poem in the conclusion is a defining characteristic of the hagiographic style.

This study of the poem demonstrates that the Genesis A poet employed the techniques characteristic of the hagiographic style to shape his poem and to create the character of Abraham. It suggests, therefore, that Genesis A is better discussed as a special kind of Anglo-Saxon poetic hagiography and that Abraham is better understood as an Old Testament saint involved in the proving of his special blessed state here on earth.

Notes

¹ See for example, Larry M. McKill, "A Critical Study of the Old English Genesis A," Diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1974, pp. 178-79. "The long account of Abraham's life, close to half of the extant lines of Genesis A . . ."

² See Bernard F. Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry (New York: State University of New York, 1959), p. 207. "It is on Abraham, as a figurative character, that the poet chiefly concentrates. In Abraham, particularly in his victory over the world, is reflected the way of the just man."

³ McKill, pp. 1-11, for example, see p. 1: "Genesis A, the first poem of the Junius Manuscript, has fared poorly in literary criticism, largely because of the greater immediate appeal of the interpolated Genesis B (lines 235-851) which suits more readily the modern predilection for psychological realism."

⁴ Greenfield, A Critical History, p. 150.

⁵ See McKill, pp. 1-11 and David M. Wells, "A Critical Edition of the Old English Genesis A with A Translation," Diss., University of North Carolina, 1969, pp. liv-lv.

⁶ For example, see Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, pp. 204-5 and McKill, pp. 25-29.

⁷ Wells, pp. xxv-xl.

⁸ Bede, p. 247.

⁹ C. W. Kennedy, The Caedmon Poems, (London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1916), p. xiii.

¹⁰ Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry.

¹¹ Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 132.

- 12 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 137.
- 13 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 209.
- 14 Aaron Mirsky, "On the Sources of the Anglo-Saxon Genesis and Exodus," ES, 48 (1967), 385.
- 15 Paul Salmon, "The Site of Lucifer's Throne," Anglia, LXXXI (1963), 118-23.
- 16 Thomas D. Hill, "Some Remarks on 'The Site of Lucifer's Throne'," Anglia, 87 (1969), 303-11.
- 17 Bennet A. Brockman, "'Heroic' and 'Christian' in Genesis A: The Evidence of the Cain and Abel Episode," MLQ, 35 (1974), 115-28.
- 18 Brockman, p. 117.
- 19 Brockman, p. 122.
- 20 Brockman, p. 127.
- 21 Lee, pp. 40-41.
- 22 McKill.
- 23 Alger N. Doane, "Paraphrasis Poetica: The Integration of Traditional Art and Traditional Learning in the Old English Poem, Genesis A," Diss., University of Toronto, 1971.
- 24 For a similar exegetical treatment, see Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, pp. 147-48.
- 25 James R. Hall, "The Old English Epic of Redemption: The Theological Unity of MS Junius 11," Traditio, 32 (1976), 185-208. (See also James R. Hall, "The Old English Book of Salvation History: Three Studies on the Unity of MS Junius 11," Diss., University of Notre Dame, 1973.)
- 26 Hall, "The Old English Epic," p. 191.
- 27 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 209.
- 28 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, pp. 133-34, 137-38.
- 29 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 134.
- 30 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 135.
- 31 Wells.

32 Wells, p. xlv: "Lines 12b-91 on the happiness of the angels and the rebellion and fall of a portion of them echo material in one of the homilies of Gregory the Great in his Moralia . . . For ll. 92-111 on God's desire to fill the places of the fallen angels with a new race of creatures, Honncher follows Bouterwek in citing Gregory's Moralia."

All citations from the text of Genesis A are taken from Krapp, ed., The Junius Manuscript, already cited.

33 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 139.

34 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 140.

35 See Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 142: "With line 112 . . . the poet begins his free paraphrase of the biblical account of the works of the days (Gen: 1-2:14). He stays fairly close to the biblical text . . ."

36 A symbolic number representing redemption according to Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 197.

37 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, pp. 187-88.

38 McKill, p. 50.

39 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 186.

40 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 187.

41 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, pp. 188-89.

42 Along common patristic lines, Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 189.

43 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 189.

44 The Biblical account, Genesis 13:4, does not mention the building of a new altar and has brief reference to Abraham's prayer. "in loco altaris quod fecerat prius, et invocavit ibi nomen domini."

45 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 204.

46 See also Chapter VII for Moses' role as a military leader.

47 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 197.

48 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 197.

- 49 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 198.
- 50 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 199.
- 51 See, for example, McKill, pp. 193-225.
- 52 Both God and Abraham are called waerfaest by the poet. See waerfaest metod (l. 2901), and waerfaest haeled (l. 2026) for example.
- 53 There are also two other epithets which contain this idea but which are counted in another category.
- 54 As well, there are four epithets concerned with numbers: fewera sumne, uncer twega, bu tu, and feorda sylf.
- 55 McKill, p. 223.
- 56 McKill, p. 225.
- 57 McKill, pp. 222-25.
- 58 Translations from Wells' edition and translation.
- 59 See Elene, ll. 900-66.
- 60 Frod frumgara is counted in the category of leadership.
- 61 McKill, p. 72.
- 62 and common in Anglo-Latin hagiography as well. See Delmastro.
- 63 McKill, p. 196.
- 64 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, pp. 197-207.
- 65 Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 197.
- 66 McKill, p. 196.
- 67 See for example, Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, pp. 204-5 and Lee, p. 40.
- 68 McKill, pp. 25-27.
- 69 See Chapter V.

70 See McKill, p. 28 ff and Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 134 and L. Michel, "Genesis A and the Praefatio," MLN, 62 (1947), 545-50.

71 Cf the familiar stories of Noah's drunkenness (ll. 1561-97), Lot's wife (ll. 2561-71), and Abraham's hesitation when he asks God to bless Ishmael while God is reminding him that He intends to keep His promise (ll. 2304-70).

72 Cf McKill, pp. 83-90.

73 See Chapter VII.

74 Cf Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, Chapter Five and McKill, Chapter Three.

75 McKill, p. 220.

76 McKill, pp. 78-80.

77 Woolf, Juliana, p. 15.

78 Cf for example, John F. Vickery, "'Exodus' and the Tenth Plague," Archiv, 210 (1973), 41-52.

79 McKill, p. 82: "Even more striking, the narrator relates this new demonstration of God's wrath after Abraham and Abimelech have reconciled instead of before, as in his biblical source."

80 McKill, pp. 148-50.

81 For example, Enos is named (l. 1144), his age at the birth of his first children is given (l. 1146), his happy life is treated (ll. 1150-53), and his age at his death is given (ll. 1153-54). Or Cainan is named (l. 1155), his age at the birth of his first children is given (l. 1158), his happy life is treated (ll. 1160-63), and his age at his death is given (ll. 1163-64).

82 See Chapter III.

83 For examples, see Lee, Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, and McKill.

84 For a similar concluding structure, see Beowulf, ll. 3137-82.

85 See Chapter V.

86 See Chapter VII.

Chapter VII

The Hagiographic Style in Exodus

Like Genesis A and Daniel, the poems which surround it in Ms. Junius 11, Exodus can be examined in terms of the hagiographic style. The poem, which depends for its source in large part on the Bible,¹ cannot be called a "life" of Moses; but it can be shown to display the characteristics of the hagiographic style in its treatment of the acts and the attributes of Moses and in its aim to make clear the significance of those acts for the lives of all Christian men.

Before identifying the hagiographic style in Exodus, one must be aware of troublesome problems related to the text itself. The first and greatest difficulty involves missing leaves in the manuscript. Edward B. Irving, Jr. identifies "two major gaps in the existing ms."² The first falls after line 141; and Irving concludes that "Although there is no trace of removal, it seems clear that the two inner leaves of the gathering--four sides altogether--between pp. 148 and 149 are missing."³ The problem is further complicated by the fact that Liber I contains a number

of blank spaces usually considered the site of illustrations which were never completed.⁴ Thus, "just how much is missing is not easy to conjecture because of the custom in this manuscript of leaving blank space at irregular intervals for illustrations."⁵

The second gap occurs after line 416. Irving states that "an examination of the ms shows that in the 13th gathering, the second of the three which contain Exodus, there are only 14 sides instead of 16; a leaf (2 sides) is missing between the two blank pages 164 and 165. Stoddard observes that 'a folio has been cut out and the knife marks are visible.'"⁶

The two gaps create serious problems in the interpretation of the sections surrounding them. The first gap occurs when the poet has just begun to mention Joseph's relationship with the Pharoah. This section may have contained a reference to Joseph's treasure. Irving says "The reference to Joseph's treasure at the end of the poem perhaps indicates that some definite description of the treasure has appeared earlier, in this section now missing."⁷ Such a reference would facilitate the interpretation of the treasure (ll. 585-90). Unfortunately, one cannot determine what the subject matter of the lines might have been, or indeed how many lines are missing. Irving suggests "On the whole perhaps 50 lines is a fair guess at the amount of missing material,"⁸ but

no real decision can be made.

The second gap, at line 446, presents even greater problems. The gap occurs at the point where a "voice from heaven certainly seems to have concluded its speech, and there is a 'colon', a dot and check-mark, after selost the last word."⁹ The poem resumes with an account of the Egyptians in the sea: "Folc waes afaered, flodegsa becwm . . ." (ll. 447-48).¹⁰ Lines 362-446, the section immediately preceding the gap, constitute a segment occasionally referred to as Exodus B, a distinction refuted by Irving.¹¹ Interpolation or not, the section provides no clue as to the nature of the transition between it and the drowning Egyptians.

These gaps create problems in terms of the recognition of the hagiographical style and present tantalizing but unprovable speculations. For example, a remark on the importance of Joseph's treasure to his people might have related the reference to the treasure in the concluding section (ll. 582-90) to Moses' role as the victorious military leader reclaiming the possessions of his people.¹² The second gap might have contained a transition to the drowning of the Egyptians which made clear the significance and the nature of the battle fought between the Israelites and the Egyptians. But these possibilities must be put aside; there is no proof of what or how much

was lost.

A second problem involves manuscript corruptions. To select only one example, in line 312, the poet states that the army crosses the Red Sea "ofer grene grund." Krapp's note explains "not a proper adjective here. Perhaps one should read 'ofer ginne grund,' over the wide abyss."¹³ This stand has been challenged in a number of studies.¹⁴ These studies develop the idea of a green street which leads to paradise as one of the "traditional Christian exegetical treatments of such Biblical words as viridis, 'acquiring in most occurrences an abstract or secondary spiritual significance,' although, 'in origin they are formulaic.'"¹⁵

The discussion illustrates a key interpretive problem in Exodus scholarship. If "grene" is simply a manuscript error, emendation can try to restore the original sense of the line. But, if it is not an error, one must consider its possible meaning in spiritual or allegorical terms. Critics following this line of reasoning find examples from Old Norse and Old Saxon poetry (Doane) and from the Midrash Rabbah (Keenan). Given some source for the green street, the critics must then decide whether its use in the poem is intended to remind the reader of the tradition or whether its use has become tradition itself. In the second case, the image might be far less arresting to its original audience, who were well versed in such

lore, than to the modern reader. Exodus abounds in such problems.¹⁶

Arriving at an understanding of the intrinsic quality of the poem is the third problem. Exodus, according to Arthur Brodeur, "is, in its diction and style, unique among Anglo-Saxon narrative poems. It is unique also in the quality of the poet's powerful imagination, as revealed in its striking figures . . . and its forceful and loaded verbs."¹⁷ But, Exodus has been criticized as well as praised for its unusual language and style. Irving, surveying the praise and blame given to "the verbal style and diction of Exodus," remarks "It may be said quite safely that no other Old English poem has such violent metaphors or so many new and startling kennings . . . The effectiveness of some of his (the poet's) phrases cannot be doubted."¹⁸ The unique and surprising aspects of Exodus have influenced approaches to the poem. It is startling and imaginative to some and "precious" to others;¹⁹ it is a multi-leveled allegorical work to some and a thematic statement to others.

The challenging problems surrounding Exodus have removed the poem from the category of simple paraphrase: "For Exodus is not in intent merely a paraphrase of the second book of the Old Testament . . ."²⁰ They have also directed attention away from a

consideration of the character of Moses and his role in the poem.

In spite of the conjecture and mystery surrounding the poem, it can be shown to display the characteristics of the hagiographic style. One looks first to the introduction of the poem to observe the kind of thematic statement that ties the behaviour of the protagonist to a central concept of Christian living.

A number of critics have commented on the introductory passage of Exodus. All agree that the poem opens with a statement about Moses' commands ("Moyses domas," l. 2) and that the poet continues with a recounting of Moses' career. Their opinions, however, differ on the length and the purpose of the introduction.

Robert T. Farrell feels that the introduction is found in two parts; ll. 1-7 and ll. 8-54. The first seven lines set the "theme to be developed . . . Moses commands (domas)" and their importance: they offer an "amendment for life (bote lifes) for those in heaven and a long last counsel for the living."²¹

The next section, lines eight to fifty-four, covers "the history of Moses to the last plague."²²

John F. Vickery proposes a more extended introduction:

"I propose that these lines (ie. ll 54-62) be understood along with lines 1-53 as the introduction to the poem."²³ Vickery sees two main sections to the

introduction. The "first indicates broadly the topic of the poem, Moyses domas (l. 2) . . . 8-62 summarize the events of the poem leading up to and culminating in the 'battle', ie. the transitus."²⁴ Vickery further subdivides his second section into two parts: lines 8-22a and 22b-62. His point in this analysis revolves around the significance of the transitus as the "central episode of the Old English poem."²⁵ Thus, he reads the introduction as preparation for this key event.

Edward B. Irving, Jr. discerns an introductory section in lines one to fifty-three which he divides into three parts: Lines one to seven, "The poem begins with the conventional hwaet formula and the usual praise of the hero, in this case celebrating Moses as lawgiver and emphasizing the value of the laws themselves."²⁶ Lines eight to thirty-two provide "a somewhat confusing summary of the career of Moses up to the time of the plagues in Egypt, stressing the wisdom and military prowess of Moses and the great honors shown him by the Lord."²⁷ The third section, lines thirty-three to fifty-three, provides "an obscure transitional passage" which "leads into a description of the grief of the Egyptians at the death of the first born . . . which is climaxed by a general statement on the fate of the Egyptian nation."²⁸ After line fifty-three, Irving continues, "the real

action of the poem begins as Moses leads his people through mysterious lands to the first camping place . . ."²⁹ Irving sees the central theme of the poem as "the march of the Children of Israel under God's guidance to the Promised Land, a progress which the poet has chosen to represent by one chief incident, the escape from Pharoah in the crossing of the Red Sea."³⁰ Thus, it is the beginning of the march which he considers the "real action of the poem."

Observation of the first fifty-three lines does suggest that line fifty-three is the end of an introductory section.³¹ The sentences that run from lines 47b to 53 provide a handy summary of both what has gone before and what will occur. They first tell that the day was famous on earth when the host went forth (ll. 47b-48).. Next, the poet defines the two sides in the fast approaching conflict. There are the Israelites who had been captives for years: "Swa þaes faesten dreah fela missera, / ealdwerige," (ll. 49-50a), and the "Egypta folc" (l. 50b) who wanted to deny freedom to the Israelites. The third and deciding factor in the poem, God, also appears in this sentence. We are told that the Egyptians will commit their wicked acts "gif hie metod lete" (l. 52b).³²

These sentences serve as a transition between the material of the first forty-seven lines and the

action of the poem which follows. Looking back to the beginning of the poem, one can observe a series of statements made by the poet about Moses. The first reference to Moses in line two is more a reference to Moses' judgments and their enduring validity than to Moses himself. The poet announces the power of the laws and invites his audience to learn more if they choose.

The next remark about Moses occurs in lines eight to ten. We are told that God honoured Moses while he was in the wilderness. He also gave Moses the power to do many wondrous things (ll. 10-11). Immediately the poet adds "He waes leof gode" (l. 12) and follows this remark with four epithets for Moses which set out his regal and military characteristics. Thus, in fourteen lines, Moses is described as being loved and honoured by God, as being given special powers by God and as being the "author" of powerful and just commandments.

Lines fourteen to eighteen bring up the problem solved by God and Moses in the poem, that is the defeat of the armies of Pharoah. The Egyptians are called "godes andsacan" (l. 15) leaving no doubt as to which side will eventually triumph. Lines nineteen to twenty-one continue the battle ideas begun previously. God provides Moses with "waepena" (l. 20) to defeat Pharoah's hordes. The poet somewhat abruptly abandons

his pattern of battle imagery here and adds that the first time God spoke to Moses, He told him many remarkable things: "he him gesaegde soðwundra fela," (l. 24). Particularly, He explained how the world was created, the earth and the heavens. God also told Moses His own name which no one had known before..

The poet now reiterates the relationship between God and Moses. He says that God strengthened (geswided, l. 30) and honored (gewurðodne, l. 31) Moses on the departure (on forðwegas, l. 32).

Lines thirty-three to forty-seven, a difficult and often interpreted passage, speak generally about the troubles of the Egyptians which culminate in the leave-taking of the Israelites. John Vickrey calls lines thirty-three to fifty-three "among the most perplexing passages" and interprets the lines in a symbolic manner: "some verses were intended to figure Christian redemption." Particularly the "tenth plague, death of the new born and preservation of the Israelites" was a "type of Christ's victory over the devil and his redemption of mankind."³³

In all, the introduction focuses on God's preparation of Moses to lead the Israelites not only out of bondage but also into a victorious military encounter. Moses is honoured, given power, loved, armed, addressed, taught, and trusted with the secret of God's own name. All of these attributes help to suggest that the poet's

opening comments about "Moyses domas" and their usefulness for men living in the present time are true. The introduction presents Moses as a privileged and able man. The events of the poem, leaving the allegorical significance aside, reinforce these ideas. If later men continue to follow Moses' commands, spiritual victory can be assured.

The hagiographic style imposes an active role upon the saintly figure. He must overcome earthly trials and temptations in order to fulfill God's purpose and to define himself. His example must function in his own time and in all time as, of course, did Christ's. The introduction suggests that Moses will be called upon to face God's enemy (godes andsacan, l. 15) and his own (Faraones feond, l. 32) in some kind of epic battle. The battle in Exodus is one of the great problems in the interpretation of the poem. Whether or not a battle exists in the poem has been a recurring critical question. John Vickrey, in his article "Exodus and the Battle in the Sea," cites Cross and Tucker³⁴ as critics who do not feel that a battle takes place. "These interpretations presuppose no battle in any sense to have occurred in the sea itself."³⁵ Yet, the "battle does occur and . . . it occurs in the Red Sea."³⁶

A further complication regarding the battle is the gap in the manuscript at line 446. Irving speculates

"Presumably the missing leaf contained a transitional passage of some sort, probably at least a description of the entrance of Pharoah's army into the sea."³⁷

Vickery's view is stronger; he feels that the missing passage might cover the "Israelites' progress through the sea or perhaps the Egyptians' pursuit into or progress through the sea before they were overwhelmed or another analogue of redemption, in addition to those of Noah or of Abraham and Isaac (ll. 362-446)."³⁸

This battle is also important as the basis for Moses' role as warrior. He is seen as a princely general leading his army, always with God's help. Probably the most dramatic moment of Moses' army career occurs in lines 252 to 299. Moses speaks to his men exhorting them to be unafraid ("Ne beoð ge þy forhtran," l. 259). He assures them that, through him, God will preserve them: "Him eallum wile / mihtig drihten þurh mine hand / to daege þissum daedlean gyfan, . . ." (ll. 261-63) and reminds them to honour God above all: "Ic on beteran raed, / þaet ge gewurdien wuldres aldor, . . ." (ll. 269-70).³⁹

In this section, Moses behaves with proper soldierly mien. He is impressive and dignified. His words work well on the emotions of the army: "Aefter þam wordum werod eall aras, / modigra maegen," (ll. 299-300). Taking Moses' good advice, they abandon their previous terrors (ll. 135-41) and with

colourful pageantry move in order across the sea-path. Just as Moses was strengthened by God in the beginning of the poem (ll. 30-31), his army is strengthened by his words about God just before the battle.

Moses has another role which is presented in the introduction and brought to fulfillment at the end of the poem. In the introduction, the poet mentions that Moses was taught a variety of truths by God. Near the end of the poem, Moses teaches his people what he knows about God (ll. 516-64).⁴⁰ At the end of the conflict, Moses appears ready to speak (ll. 516-19). The moment is dramatic; the Egyptian army has struggled its last. Not one survivor remains to tell the tale (ll. 508-12). The poet has explained their loss with the terse line "Hie wið god wunnon" (l. 515).

Now, Moses prepares to speak wise words, but we do not hear him at once. We leave Moses standing on the seashore (merehwearfe, l. 517) teaching holy truth; and, with the poet's aid, we are asked to relate the vivid scene to the words of the Bible. The poet tells us, in effect, the importance of words we have yet to hear. They relate to life on earth, the promise of heaven, the threat of hell, and the day of judgment when all promises and threats are made good (ll. 519-48). The judgment day references are discussed by Richard M. Trask in his article "Doomsday Imagery in the Old English Exodus."⁴¹ Trask accepts Irving's

rearrangement which places Krapp's lines 519a-48 at the end of the poem (Irving's lines 561b-90) and demonstrates their conventional doomsday imagery. Trask relates this imagery to the drowning of the Egyptians: the "drowning of the Egyptian host (Irving, ll. 447-515) is unmistakably presented in specific and extended terms that correspond precisely to the circumstances and details of the destruction of the world and of sinful humanity on Doomsday . . ."⁴²

In their manuscript position, the lines continue to relate to Doomsday. Perhaps it is enough to say that the poet is taking a moment to remind his audience of the enduring significance of the words. Moses is about to speak, but the wisdom he will teach must wait for its importance to be stated. We have seen Moses as an able military leader capable of incredible military victory; he had a remarkable Supreme Commander. Now Moses' role changes. He is the saintly teacher, and the poet uses this section to prepare the audience for the ultimate significance of Moses' teaching.

At line 549, Moses is still about to speak. To borrow the cinematic terminology made popular by Alain Renoir,⁴³ the poet cuts away at line 519 from his close-up on Moses, who is about to speak, and gives his audience a panoramic view not of the army on the seashore but of the generations of men from Moses all

the way to the present. The significance for the future of following Moses' teaching is presented by a glimpse of the inevitable future in heaven or in hell.

After this view of past and future, the poet returns to Moses and by repeating that Moses spoke (swa reordode, l. 549) assures his audience that Moses' words have yet to begin. He tells us that the army was quieted ("here still bad / witodes willan," ll. 551-52) and says again that Moses spoke ("he to maenegum spraec," l. 553). At this moment, the "many" to whom Moses speaks includes not only his army but also all Christians who read his teachings in the Bible.

Moses' speech is short (ll. 554-64) and double-edged. It relates to the situation of the Israelites; God has helped them defeat the Egyptians and will stand by them as long as they obey His teachings ("gif ge gehealdað halige lare," l. 561). It also relates, as the poet has prepared us to understand, to every man's struggle on earth.

Moses begins "micel is þeos menigeo": the poem's audience is also a great host of now Christian people. He continues "maegenwisa trum, / fullesta maest, se ðas fare laeded" (ll. 554-55); similarly the greatest of leaders leads later man's march through life. The Lord did deliver the people to the "Promised Land," which is capable of more than one interpretation.

The promised land for the Israelites was on earth, but the promised land for later men is found in heaven. The rules for finding this land are the same: follow God's "halige lare" (l. 561). The reward is also the same: "Bið eower blaed micel" (l. 564).

This speech also insures victory over all enemies (feonda gehwone, l. 562) and success in the "beorselas beorna" (l. 564), a meaningful reference to the Anglo-Saxon audience.⁴⁴

Moses plays two roles in Exodus; both are set forth in the thematic introduction. He is the earthly commander of the host that is ultimately led by God. As such, he can direct his army to sure success. Also, Moses is a directly inspired teacher of God's truth to men. The poet takes special care to prepare his audience for Moses' role as teacher and for the enduring significance of his words. The last view of Moses in Exodus shows him functioning well in both roles.

Moses' character and his important actions are highlighted by the epithets used for him by the poet. There are thirty-nine epithets for Moses in Exodus. Moses' name occurs ten times in the poem, and only two other terms recur.⁴⁵ Twice Moses is called modiges. Also, twice Moses is called modig magoraeswa, and magoraeswa is used again in the epithet maere māgoraeswa. Combining these two repeated epithets, one finds that

four times the poet calls Moses modig, courageous.

There are three other epithets that stress Moses' courage and boldness: from folctoga, from, and modes rofan (and possibly the disputed bald beohata).

Nine epithets, including the three mentioned above, characterize Moses as a leader of people. He is called both leoda aldor and werodes aldor and both herges wisa and werodes wisa. In addition, the poet describes Moses as lifes latþeow, maere magoraeswa, freom folctoga, and twice as modig magoraeswa.

There are a number of other ideas reinforced by the names for Moses. Twice the poet calls him a warrior: tirfaeste haeled and the questioned hildecalla.⁴⁶ Twice he refers to Moses as loved: leof gode and leofes. Twice he refers to Moses as powerful: mihtum swiðed and maegenprymmum maest.

There are eight other concepts, each mentioned only once. Moses is wise: horsc and hreðergleaw; a guardian of the kingdom: rices hyrde; the enemy of Pharoah: Faraones feond; holy: haliges; famous: maere (the idea of Moses' fame occurs in two other epithets mentioned above). He is noble: heahþungen wer; mild in nature: manna mildost; and chosen: witodes.

The poet of Exodus has been described as having a strangely limited and remarkably original vocabulary.⁴⁷ His tendencies in these directions are illustrated in the epithets. For example, two of the thirty-nine are

unique to Exodus; hildecalla and bald beohata have occasioned critical speculation both on their meanings and on the question of whether or not they refer to Moses.⁴⁸ The poet's creative range is shown in the variety of ideas expressed in the epithets. Moses is described as brave, loved, a leader of people, wise, a guardian, an enemy of the wicked, a warrior, holy, "one," famous, noble, mild, powerful, and chosen: many of these notions are expressed only once, yet they all lend credence to the over-riding message in the poem, that is, that one should obey Moses' judgments in order to obey God's laws.

There are three key groupings of epithets in the poem that illustrate the poet's use of names. When Moses is first brought into the poem (ll. 8-14), the poet calls him leof gode, leoda aldor, horsc and hreðergleaw, herges wisa, and freom folctoga in succession. He is loved by God, which explains his privileged position, the chief of the people, quick in mind and wise, the leader of the army, the brave leader of a people. Moses' position as leader is mentioned in three of the five epithets.

In the second grouping (ll. 252-59), the reader finds Moses about to address his army at the point where they are about to witness the miracle of the parting of the sea. Between lines 252 and 258, the poet uses five epithets for Moses. He is called

hildecalla (disputed), bald beohata (disputed), modiges, rices hyrde, and werodes wisa. Leaving aside the two disputed terms, one finds Moses described as bold, guardian of the kingdom, and leader of the host. Once again, Moses' leadership is stressed.

The final grouping occurs between lines 549 and 553. These lines occur just before Moses' final speech and the conclusion of the poem. In them, Moses is called manna mildost, mihtum swiðed, witodes, and modiges. Here Moses is about to tell his people that God will never forsake them as long as they follow His law. Moses is the mildest of men,⁴⁹ strengthened with power,⁵⁰ ordained or chosen, and bold. His role in this section is more than leader or warrior. Here he is the teacher of God's truth and by extension the about-to-be author of words of wisdom for future generations. The poet reminds his audience of the full nature of Moses' character with the rapid succession of epithets, all of which become good reasons for believing Moses domas. He is identified by poet and audience as mild, strong, chosen, and bold.

The characteristics of the hagiographic style include a recapitulation of the major theme of the poem, that theme which the saintly figure personally illustrates, in the concluding lines. Although the conclusion to Exodus has been a matter of critical dispute,⁵¹ this study accepts the manuscript arrangement

and views the close of the poem as a counter-balance to the introduction as well as the thematic stopping point. When the audience first meets Moses in the poem, he is "on westenne" (l. 8) receiving power from God in order to accomplish a mighty purpose. When we leave him, he is "on merehwearfe" (l. 517) and his army is safely "on lande" (l. 567). Various interpreters of the poem have suggested that the crossing of the Red Sea is a type of baptism; thus, we see Moses and his people first before the saving grace of baptism and, at the final moment, after the waters of redemption have cleansed them. We also follow Moses from the "wilderness" to the shore of the sea where there is both joy and safety.

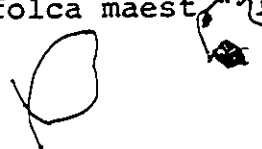
Huppé feels that "the symbolic meanings are inextricably connected with the biblical events themselves. When the poet speaks of Egypt, he clearly means the word or hell, from both of which Christ freed mankind." Translating "verses from the Latin De cruce, sometimes attributed to Erigena," Huppé uses the following lines to support his point: "Symbolically Moses is Christ, king and priest, / Who freed us when Egypt was subdued."⁵² The conclusion may also be understood on a more literal level.

Moses is shown in the final lines receiving his victorious troops and reminding them of God's laws. At the close of his speech, the army of "saved"

Israelites burst into rejoicing activities. Trumpets sang (ll. 566), and the people praised God: "hofon herepreatas hlude stefne, / for þam daedweorce drihten heredon, / weras wuldres sang; . . ." (ll. 575-79). The old treasure of Joseph was joyfully reclaimed (ll. 580-90).

There are problems of interpretation in these lines;⁵³ but whatever the textual difficulties may involve, the sense of the celebration is clear. The Israelites are saved and are rejoicing in their salvation. At this point, the poet draws away from Moses, who is presenting God's holy teaching, and turns his attention to the rejoicing army. We hear songs of praise offered to God; we see the treasure of Joseph reclaimed by the victorious army; and, in the background, we see the Red Sea which can remind of both the literal and the symbolic reasons for the celebration.

This visual technique has been used by the poet before (ll. 519-49, discussed above). He leaves his poem at a joyous moment and a terrible one. While the Israelites sing, the Egyptians sprawl in death along the shore. The final moments of the poem demonstrate the ideas put forward in the introductory section. Those who hear and heed Moses' words are saved from harm and offered great happiness; those who do not lose everything ("Werigend lagon / on deadstede, drihtfolca maest" ll. 589-90). In the opening lines



of the poem, the poet offered his audience the opportunity of learning about the efficacy of Moses' teaching: "Gehyre se de wille!" (l. 7). Here at the end of the poem, he shows his audience the wisdom of taking advantage of this chance for eternal and temporal joy (ll. 4-7). The fate of those who opposed Moses and thus God is as clearly shown as is the reward of those who learned from Moses to place their trust in God.

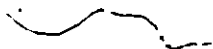
The treatment of the conclusion of Exodus is similar to those of both Genesis A and Daniel.⁵⁴ In all three cases, the poets leave their audiences not with an explanation of the significance of what has occurred but with a glorious picture of the success of the saintly hero. Moses is last seen fulfilling his dual role of military commander and teacher. His army is victorious and his people have learned from him to trust in God. Their doubts and fears have been put aside.⁵⁵ Always with God's help, Moses has completely succeeded.

I have argued that the development of Moses as a character in Exodus is influenced by the key idea which the poet presents in the introduction to the poem. That is, Moses' judgments are to be trusted to provide sure help for the man who is trying to live a Christian life. Moses' qualifications for the important role which he is to play both in the poem and in the lives

of later men are developed early in the poem (11, 10-31) as is his special relationship with God. The action of the poem shows Moses as a leader of both a people and an army, as a miracle worker, and as a teacher of God's truth. The poet supports this view of Moses with the variety of epithets he chooses to identify him. In the conclusion to the poem, Moses is seen as the successful Christian saint. He, like Andreas and Judas-Cyriacus, is shown teaching his people the power and truth of God's way. He has triumphed over the forces of evil, Pharoah, and the Egyptian army, in the dramatic battle with the help of God. And at the end of the poem he is seen not only as a venerable prophet but also as an example of faith and trust in God.

The Exodus poet employed the hagiographic style to present the lesson of his poem in clear and readily understandable terms. The familiar story with its rich and resonant associations is used to convey an important idea, that trustworthy information is available to all who wish to earn the eternal joys offered by God. Moses becomes a powerful example of one who triumphed over evil because he knew and placed his trust in God's words. As Moses' adventures convince the audience of his power and relationship with God, they also support the poet's initial statement

that Moses domas can be of value to all who wish to
earn eternal joy.



Notes

¹ Cf Edward B. Irving, Jr., "Exodus Retraced," in Old English Studies in Honour of John C. Pope, eds., Robert B. Burlin and Edward B. Irving, Jr. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 203-23; and Joseph B. Trahern, Jr., "More Scriptural Echoes in the Old English Exodus," in Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation, eds., Lewis E. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 291-98: "Edward B. Irving, Jr. remarks that 'if we say that the basic source of the poem lies in the 13th and 14th chapters of the book of Exodus, there is no question that the source next in importance is the rest of the Vulgate itself'" (p. 291).

² Edward B. Irving, Jr., ed., The Old English Exodus (New Haven: Archon Books, 1970), p. 6.

³ Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 6.

⁴ Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 2 for a list of blank spaces.

⁵ Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 7.

⁶ Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 10.

⁷ Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 7.

⁸ Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 7.

⁹ Irving, The Old English Exodus, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰ All citations from Exodus are taken from George Philip Krapp, The Junius Manuscript, already cited.

¹¹ Irving, The Old English Exodus, pp. 8-9.

¹² Cf Judith, ll. 334-41, the sharing of the captured treasure with the saintly figure is discussed in Chapter V.

¹³ Krapp, The Junius Manuscript, p. 210.

¹⁴ Alger N. Doane, "The Green Street of Paradise," NM, 74 (1973), 456-465; Hugh T. Keenan, "Exodus 312a, The Green Street of Paradise," NM, 71 (1970), 455-60; and Hugh T. Keenan, "Exodus 312a, Further Notes on the Eschatological 'Green Ground'," NM, 74 (1973), 217-19.

¹⁵ Doane, "The Green Street," p. 456.

¹⁶ For example, the nautical imagery surrounding the Israelite army has perplexed interpreters. Eleanor McLoughlin, "O.E. Exodus and the Antiphony of Bangor," NM, 70 (1969), p. 660, following James B. Bright's observation that Exodus could be based on the vigil service of Easter eve, discovers similarities between the poem and the Antiphony of Bangor, a collection of "several Latin hymns, four Scriptural Canticles, prayers, collects and antiphons." In these, she finds the "theme of Exodus including the 'nautical aspect'," (p. 662).

In a series of articles, John F. Vickrey ('Exodus' and the Tenth Plague," pp. 41-52; "Exodus and the Treasure of Pharoah," Anglo-Saxon England, 1 (1972), 159-65; "Exodus and the Battle in the Sea," Traditio, 28 (1972), 119-40, supports not only "the importance of patristic commentary but also the particular allegorical mode which the poet employed" ("Exodus and the Battle," p. 121). Vickrey and other scholars (Peter J. Lucas, "An Interpretation of Exodus, 46-53," N and Q, NS 16 (1969), 364-66; James W. Earl, "Christian Tradition in the Old English Exodus," NM, 71 (1970), 541-70; J. E. Cross and S. I. Tucker, "Allegorical Tradition in the Old English Exodus," Neophil, XLIV (1965), 122-27; and Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry) view the poem in key symbolic terms. See critics, Farrell, "A Reading," pp. 401-17 and Robert Farrell, "Eight Notes on Old English Exodus," NM, 67 (1966), 364-75; and Peter J. Lucas, "The Cloud in the Interpretation of the Old English Exodus," ES, 51 (1970), 297-311. See also Lee. These critics understand the complex imagery of Exodus in terms of theme and conclude that thematically the apparent conclusion of action and description does exhibit poetic unity.

¹⁷ Brodeur, p. 112.

¹⁸ Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 32.

¹⁹ See Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 32.

²⁰ Krapp, The Junius Manuscript, p. xxvii.

²¹ Farrell, "A Reading," p. 406.

- 22 Farrell, "A Reading," p. 406.
- 23 Vickery, "Exodus and the Battle," p. 132.
- 24 Vickery, "Exodus and the Battle," p. 132.
- 25 Vickery, "Exodus and the Battle," p. 119.
- 26 Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 4.
- 27 Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 4.
- 28 Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 4.
- 29 Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 4.
- 30 Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 29..
- 31 Krapp, The Junius Manuscript, p. 92 begins a new paragraph with line fifty-four, but Irving, The Old English Exodus, does not create a new paragraph until line sixty-three where the manuscript shows EHT in large capitals with space left for, perhaps, a decorated H. (See also, Vickery, "Exodus and the Battle," p. 134 and Wells, pp. xxix-xxxi.)
- 32 See Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 30: "It is remarkable that the more one contemplates the poem as a whole the more one tends to feel that the role of epic hero and king has been filled by the person of God himself." See also, Lee, p. 41: "The source of all real action is God . . . The power and love of the Christian God are revealed in each creative act and they are the very substance of the poem."
- 33 Vickery, "'Exodus' and the Tenth Plaque," p. 41.
- 34 Cross and Tucker, pp. 122-27.
- 35 Vickery, "Exodus and the Battle," p. 119.
- 36 Vickery, "Exodus and the Battle," p. 121.
- 37 Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 10.
- 38 Vickery, "Exodus and the Battle," p. 125.
- 39 Moses' pre-battle speech is not unlike Abraham's speech (Genesis A) under similar circumstances, see ll. 2057-59. (See also Chapter VI, p. 262.)

40 This section was rearranged by Edward B. Irving, Jr., in his edition (The Old English Exodus, p. 11). He said, "As it stands in the Manuscript, the passage from l. 516 to the end is confused to the point of incomprehensibility." Responding to the rearrangement, as did a number of critics, Farrell, "A Reading," p. 402, argues that the manuscript order is more than acceptable as it stands. He feels that the "poem is a careful consecutive development of central themes in terms of epic action and morally oriented narrative."

Farrell argues for a thematic approach to lines 516 to 590. He suggests that the poem is characterized by "an elastic framework of anticipation and flash-back," (Farrell, "A Reading," p. 412) and suggests that lines 519a to 548b (the section which Irving moved) relate Moses' counsels and the "propriety of applying oneself to the interpretation of such tests to all men on earth" (Farrell, "A Reading," p. 413).

For the purpose of this study, I will follow the manuscript order, accept Farrell's notion of thematic development, and Irving's return to the manuscript order described in his revised notes (Irving, "New Notes on the Old English Exodus," Anglia, 90 (1972), 320).

41 Richard M. Trask, "Doomsday Imagery in the Old English Exodus," Neophilologus, LVII (1973), 295-97.

42 Trask, p. 295.

43 Alain Renoir, "Point of View and Design for Terror in Beowulf," NM, 63 (1962), 154-67.

44 Lee, pp. 41-48.

45 Sister Carolyn Wall, "Stylistic Variation in the Old English Exodus," ELN, 6 (1968), 79-84. Sister Carolyn Wall notes that there are a "wide variety of epithets used to designate the principal characters in the story, God and Moses," (p. 80).

46 Irving, The Old English Exodus, translates hildealla as "war-herald" in his edition. In "New Notes," he agrees with Farrell that the term may refer to a herald and not to Moses (p. 308).

47 Irving, The Old English Exodus, pp. 32-35; see also Brodeur, pp. 110-13.

48 Bald beohata, for example has proved difficult to translate. Irving translated the word as "bold boaster" in his edition but admitted in his note that

"no satisfactory explanation or emendation of this word has been offered" (The Old English Exodus, p. 84). His "New Notes," discuss the problem further but arrive at no clear solution (p. 308). Farrell, "Eight Notes," p. 308, suggests that the word be amended to beothata (leader or command caller) and adds that the term does not refer to Moses but to a master-at-arms.

49 Great praise when one recalls Beowulf, l. 3181.

50 Cf l. 30, geswided.

51 Irving's initial rearrangement of the text changes conclusions entirely. Some commentators have not felt the need to alter the manuscript arrangement and yet have still wondered about the proper interpretation of the lines. Krapp, The Junius Manuscript, p. xxx, supporting the manuscript order (as opposed to Gollancz' rearrangement), concludes "It is doubtful if we are doing the poet a service in thus re-arranging the text." Farrell, "The Reading," pp. 401-17, considering Irving's rearrangement, reaches the same conclusion.

52 Huppé, The Web of Words, p. 219.

53 For example, the "afrisc meowle" (l. 580) has been variously identified. Huppé suggests "The much debated terms 'African maidens' is probably employed by the poet because of the African maiden of the Song of Songs, traditionally a symbol of the bride of Christ," (Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 223).

Fred C. Robinson, "Notes on the Old English Exodus," Anglia, LXXX (1962), 375, feels that the reference is to Moses' wife. He adds that Moses' wife "is typologically 'the church gathered out of the nations.'" He sees Moses as a type of Christ and Miriam as a type of the synagogue. According to Robinson, the large, well known tradition surrounding Moses' wife would elucidate such a reference.

Irving solves the problem by amending the "manuscript reading afrisc to Ebrisc arguing that 'the emendation ebrisc suggests itself quite naturally. Presumably the sequence was *ebrisc to *efrisc to afrisc in the history of the manuscript,'" (Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 96).

Krapp accepts Blackburn's emendation of neowle and translates "Then an African (Egyptian) was easily found prostrate on the shore of the sea, adorned with gold," (Krapp, The Junius Manuscript, p. 217). In his revised notes, Irving again discusses this problem. He concludes that he cannot support Robinson's attractive emendation, and offers only minor support

to the change from meowle to neowle (Irving, "New Notes," p. 323).

⁵⁴ See Chapter V, the assumption that little has been lost from Daniel is made here.

⁵⁵ Cf Moses' speech "Eow is lar godes / abroden of breostum," ll. 268-69.

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ABSTRACT

This study suggests that Genesis A and Exodus, two poems usually seen as biblical paraphrases, share the style which is common to Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives. To make this notion clear, two major arguments are presented. First, all extant Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives share a style at once common to them and distinct from the style of Latin prose saints' lives. This argument is presented in Chapters I through IV. Chapter I traces the critical history of Latin prose, Anglo-Saxon prose, and Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives. Chapter II contrasts the Latin prose life of St. Guthlac with the two Anglo-Saxon poems, Guthlac A and Guthlac B, and compares the two Anglo-Saxon poems in four areas of style.

These four areas of style are the form of the introduction, the role of the saint, the use of epithets to describe the character of the saint, and the form of the conclusion.

In Chapter III, the four areas of style are identified in Andreas, Fates of the Apostles, and Juliana. Chapter IV concentrates on the two saints, Elene and Judas-Cyriacus, found in the poem Elene and

the use of the hagiographic style in the section of the poem that concentrates on the actions of Judas-Cyriacus.

The second major argument of this study is that once the four characteristics of the hagiographic style are identified, they may be found in Genesis A and Exodus. Chapter V argues that the hagiographic style may be found in Judith and Daniel, poems which are, like Genesis A and Exodus, based ultimately on sections of books of the Bible but which have been previously identified as sharing qualities with the poetic saints' lives. This chapter begins the discussion of the use of Old Testament figures as saints.

Chapter VI concentrates on the use of the hagiographic style in Genesis A and concludes that the four characteristics of the style are present in that part of the poem devoted to the activities of Abraham. Chapter VII explores the hagiographic style in Exodus and concludes that the four defining characteristics are present in the poem. Here, they function to develop the role and character of Moses and to highlight the major theme of the poem. Recognition of the hagiographic style in Genesis A and Exodus places both poems in the tradition of Anglo-Saxon poetic saints' lives and suggests that critical approaches concentrating on hagiographic practices may be taken to them.