

THE HAUNTING OF HEOROT*

The study of sources and analogues for *Beowulf* raises important questions about the literary culture in which the poet lived and worked. Do we view the poem a product of a predominantly oral culture in which book-learning played little or no part, or do we envisage a poet working in a literate milieu? Although no literary sources have been conclusively identified for any parts of the poem, aside from several allusions to the Book of Genesis,¹ a vast number of predominantly Norse, Germanic, Celtic and—to a lesser extent—classical and Christian analogues have been identified for many individual passages and episodes.² The most fertile ground for source and analogue study has consistently proved to be the hero's three great fights.³ Up to this point, discussion of analogues for the first two fights (with the Grendelkin) remains largely restricted to comparison with Norse and Germanic texts. Indeed, the battles with Grendel and Grendel's mother are now widely regarded as a variant of the northern folktale-type known as the Two Trolls or Bear's Son's Tale attested in *Grettis saga* and other Scandinavian sources, though close parallels have also been detected with the Irish folktale known as The Hand and the Child.⁴ Although Beowulf's third and final fight (with the dragon) has attracted considerably less attention than the first two, analogues have again been adduced in tales of Germanic and Norse dragon-slayers such as Sigurd, Frotho and Thor, as well as classical figures such as Cadmus.⁵ However, in her 2000 monograph Christine Rauer made the important discovery that certain elements of Beowulf's dragon-fight absent from or rare in Germanic and Norse tradition have close parallels in the *vitae* of St Samson of Dol (contained in the ninth century *Vita II Samsonis*) and St Michael (in the ninth or tenth century Homiliary of Saint-Père).⁶ Complementing Rauer's work on the Christian resonance of the dragon-fight, this article identifies a new hagiographical analogue

and possible source for Beowulf's fight with Grendel in Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*.⁷ The evidence presented below contributes to a growing body of scholarship highlighting the importance of hagiographical and homiletic materials to the poem's literary background.⁸

Gregory's 'Dialogi' in early medieval England

As the instigator of the Augustinian mission of 597, Pope Gregory I occupied a special place in early medieval English spirituality.⁹ Hence, for example, the ninth-century Mercian author of *The Old English Martyrology* writes:

On ðone twelfan dæg ðæs monðes bið Sancte Gregorius geleornes ures fæder, se us fullwiht onsænde on ðas Brytene. He is ure *altor* ond we syndan his *alumni*: Ðæt is ðæt he is ure festerfæder on Criste, ond we syndon his festerbearn on fullwihte.

('On the twelfth day of the month [March] is the death of our father St Gregory, who sent us baptism here to Britain. He is our *altor* and we are his *alumni*: that means he is our fosterfather in Christ, and we are his fosterchildren in baptism').¹⁰

Given the extent to which Christian thought infuses *Beowulf*,¹¹ we might expect some traces of Gregorian thought to be present in the text. Yet the case for Gregorian or other patristic influence on *Beowulf* has never gained widespread acceptance. The most concerted effort to demonstrate a Gregorian connection came in the form of Margaret Goldsmith's 1970 monograph, *The Mode and Meaning of 'Beowulf'*, which read the entire poem as a sustained allegory concerning the hero's confrontation with the sins of pride and avarice.¹² While such allegorical readings are no longer in fashion, others have detected hints of Gregorian doctrine

in isolated passages. For example, several scholars have found echoes of *Homiliae in Evangelia* and *Regula Pastoralis* in Hrothgar's so-called 'sermon', in which the old Danish king warns the young Beowulf of the dangers of pride,¹³ while in 1977 Judson Boyce Allen argued that the tearing of Grendel's shoulder joint (lines 815b–18a) is indebted to a passage in *Moralia in Iob* on the disordering of the social life.¹⁴ More recently, in an essay which bears directly on this discussion, David F. Johnson has proposed that the poet's characterisation of Grendel is influenced by Gregorian demonology.¹⁵

Although some modern scholars have cast doubt on the authenticity of the *Dialogi*,¹⁶ this collection of the lives and miracles of Italian saints proved immensely popular throughout Europe during the early Middle Ages and was always regarded as one of Gregory's key works.¹⁷ According to Michael Lapidge, the *Dialogi* was part of 'the small core of staple patristic texts, scarcely exceeding twenty titles' that constituted the 'typical Anglo-Saxon library',¹⁸ while the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* database lists citations from the work in a range of Anglo-Latin and Old English sources from the eighth to eleventh centuries.¹⁹ According to King Alfred's biographer, Asser, the king instructed Bishop Wærfeth of Worcester to translate the *Dialogi* into English for him, making it perhaps the first of the Alfredian translations.²⁰ Wærfeth's Old English *Dialogues* survives today in several manuscript witnesses dating from the late-tenth and eleventh centuries.²¹ In addition to Wærfeth's translation, Paul E. Szarmach has shown that Vercelli Homily XIV contains excerpts from what appears to be another, independent (probably Mercian) translation of unknown date of all or part of the *Dialogi*, while Brigitte Langefeld has adduced evidence for a third, independent translation of one section of the *Dialogi* (I.10) in the Old English version of the Rule of Chrodegang produced in Winchester or a nearby centre during the last quarter of the tenth century.²² Evidently the *Dialogi* was very well known in pre-Conquest England from an early date, influencing a wide variety of authors writing in Latin and Old English and

forming part of the materials used by preachers. It is therefore certainly possible, even likely, that a poet with a pronounced interest in miracles and demons, such as the author of *Beowulf*, might have encountered some of the accounts of exorcism contained in Gregory's *Dialogi*, whether at first- or second-hand, in either Latin or Old English, in oral or written form.²³

In the discussion that follows, I highlight a series of verbal and thematic parallels between Beowulf's first fight and an account of an exorcism in Gregory's *Dialogi*. As we shall see, in many specific details the Gregorian passage proves a closer match to the haunting of Heorot than any of the traditionally acknowledged Norse analogues.

A Gregorian Haunting-Tale

In Book III.4 of the *Dialogi*, Gregory relates to Peter the Deacon how Bishop Datius of Milan (d. 552) cast out the devil from an abandoned house in Corinth:

Eiusdem quoque principis tempore, cum Datius Mediolanensis urbis episcopus, causa fidei exactus, ad Constantinopolitanam urbem pergeret, Corinthi deuenit. Qui dum largam domum ad hospitandum quaereret, quae comitatum illius totum ferre potuisset, et uix inueniret, aspexit eminus domum congruentis magnitudinis eamque sibi praeparari ad hospitandum iussit. Cumque eiusdem loci incolae dicerent, in ea hunc manere non posse, quia multis iam annis hanc diabolus inhabitaret atque ideo uacua remansisset, uir uenerabilis Datius respondit, dicens: "Immo ideo hospitari in domo eadem debemus, si hanc malignus spiritus inuasit et ab ea hominum inhabitationem repulit." In ea sibi igitur parari praecepit, securusque illam, antiqui hostis certamina toleraturus, intrauit.

Itaque intempestae noctis silentio, cum uir Dei quiesceret, antiquus hostis immensis uocibus magnisque clamoribus coepit imitari rugitus leonum, balatus pecorum, ruditus asinorum, sibilos serpentium, porcorum stridores et soricum. Cum repente Datus, tot bestiarum uocibus excitatus, surrexit uehementer iratus et contra antiquum hostem magnis coepit uocibus clamare, dicens: “Bene tibi contigit, miser. Tu ille qui dixisti: *Ponam sedem meam ad aquilonem, et ero similis altissimo* (Isai. XIV.14), ecce per superbiam tuam porcis et soricibus similis factus es, et qui imitari Deum indigne uoluisti, ecce, ut dignus es, bestias imitaris.

Ad quam eius uocem, ut ita dicam, deiectionem suam malignus spiritus erubuit. An non erubuit, qui eandem domum ad exhibenda monstra quae consueuerat ulterius non intrauit? Sicque postmodum fidelium habitaculum facta est, quia, dum eam unus ueraciter fidelis ingressus est, ab ea protinus mendax spiritus atque infidelis abscessit.

Sed oportet iam ut priora taceamus. Ad ea quae diebus nostris sunt gesta ueniendum est.²⁴

(During the reign of the same Emperor, Bishop Datus of Milan, having been exiled for his faith, was going to the city of Constantinople, and stopped at Corinth. He looked for a large house to receive him and his company, and he could scarce find any; he noticed a large house some distance away of the exact size he needed, and ordered it to be set in readiness. But the townspeople told him that he would not be able to stay in that house because the Devil had inhabited it for many years and that was the reason why it had stood idle all this time. The venerable man, Datus, responded, saying, “All the more reason

for us to take up our residence there, since the evil spirit haunts it and drives all human occupants away.” And so, after converting the house into his living quarters, he entered it fearlessly to await the onslaught of the ancient enemy.

In the dead of night, when the man of God was sleeping, the ancient enemy began to create a terrible din, imitating the roaring of lions, the bleating of sheep, the screaming of mules, the hissing of serpents and the squealing of pigs and mice. Awakened by the cries of all these animals, Datus got up and became very angry, and loudly denounced the evil spirit: “It serves you right, you wretch,” he said. “You are the one who said, *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High*. Because of your pride you have become like a pig and a mouse. Because you basely wished to imitate God, you find yourself now imitating animals as you deserve.”

Hearing this, the evil spirit blushed, as it were, at his own wretchedness. For surely he must have felt ashamed, since he did not come back again to make these horrible disturbances. Thereafter, the house was again occupied by the faithful. Because one person of real faith had entered the house, the deceitful and treacherous spirit departed.

But now I must leave the past to rest in silence and begin to tell about our own times.)²⁵

One key literary model for *Dialogi* III.4 is Athanasius’ influential account of St Anthony’s struggles with demons (*Vita S. Antonii* VIII–X, XII–XIII), in which the devil/demons who assail the saint at night make similarly horrible animalistic noises. However, in a departure from Antonine tradition, in *Dialogi* III.4 the devil is not sent to tempt the saint;²⁶ instead, the bishop restores a house to its former status as a social space by expelling the devil, who had

already taken up residence long before the saint's arrival. In biblical, patristic and hagiographical sources, exorcisms typically involve the expulsion of a malevolent spirit from a demoniac or the purification of a space for sacred use. Both these forms of exorcism are well attested elsewhere in the *Dialogi* itself.²⁷ The purpose of such miracles is to effect change in others, by making manifest the power of God. Bishop Datius, by contrast, effectively performs a service for the already Christian local population of Corinth by restoring a space to its former use as a dwelling. These divergences from the conventions of early medieval hagiography can largely be accounted for by the fact that the tale of Datius and the devil is itself derived from a tradition of classical haunted-house stories.

A similar haunting tale, also set in Corinth, is found in Lucian's *Philopseudus* (*Lover of Lies*) (c. 150 AD), a satire of superstitious beliefs. Here the Pythagorean philosopher Arignotus hears that the house of Eubatides is uninhabited due to the presence of a 'fearful, terrifying phantom'.²⁸ Despite the protestations of his host, Arignotus determines to stay overnight in the haunted house in order to confront the ghost. Once night falls, the spirit duly appears and attacks Arignotus, but he manages to bring it under his power by reciting Egyptian words that he has learnt from books. The next day, Arignotus leads a party to the same spot where he had seen the ghost disappear into the ground the previous night. Here they dig up a corpse. Once this corpse is provided with a proper burial, the haunting ceases.

Daniel Ogden has identified Latin analogues for Lucian's ghost story in Plautus' play *Mostellaria* ('The Haunted House') and Pliny's *Letters* (VII.27), both of which set the tale in Athens (rather than Corinth), as well as several earlier Greek sources.²⁹ A later version of this story, which Ogden describes as 'semi-Christianised', appears in Constantius of Lyon's late-fifth century *Life of St Germanus of Auxerre* (II.10).³⁰ Despite the fact that the exorcist in Constantius' text is now a bishop, the haunting spirit is still presented as a ghost (*umbra*), in keeping with the classical tradition. Only in Gregory's version of the tale—and, as we shall

see, in *Beowulf*—is the house haunted by a demonic spirit or devil. In Constantius' account, St Germanus travels with a group to an attractive-looking building in an undisclosed location, which has fallen into disrepair due to a haunting. The ghost frightens a member of Germanus' party who has stayed awake to read during the night. This man awakens the saint, who then confronts the ghost by reciting prayers and demanding that it should identify itself. The ghost then reveals that it is one of a group of unburied corpses condemned to haunt the building on account of their former crimes. The saint arranges for a lawful Christian burial for all the bodies and intercedes on behalf of their souls. With the haunting at an end, the house is now restored to its former status as a centre of human activity.³¹

Some aspects of Gregory's story of Bishop Datius and the devil are clearly indebted to this classical haunted-house tradition. However, the atypical nature of this Gregorian miracle-tale, with its unusual blend of classical and hagiographic motifs, makes the structural, thematic and verbal parallels with *Beowulf* outlined below all the more striking.

Comparison with 'Beowulf'

Before we turn to consider the parallels with *Beowulf*, it is worth emphasizing some of the most significant differences between the haunting stories in the *Dialogi* and the Old English poem. In Gregory's tale, no particular motive is attributed to the devil for taking up its residence in the building in Corinth; by contrast, Grendel's attacks on the Danes are driven by his affront at the revelry in the hall (lines 86–90a).³² Datius only discovers that the devil has taken possession of the building while looking for quarters on the way to another destination; Beowulf—like Grettir (*Grettis saga*, chs 34–5, 64)—sets out for the hall with the express purpose of expelling the haunting spirit (lines 194–201).³³ While Datius uses the power of words, humiliating the devil by confronting it with its own baseness, Beowulf—

again like Grettir (*Grettis saga*, chs 35, 65)—mortally wounds his adversary in the hall through brute force, by ripping his arm from its socket (lines 747b–836). In Corinth, the devil—which unlike Grendel does not appear to have a body—is merely humiliated and forced into retreat by the bishop; after his defeat in Heorot, Grendel will be decapitated by the hero, like the *draugar* (animated corpses) of Norse myth (lines 1584b–90).³⁴ These divergences between *Dialogi* III.4 and the haunting of Heorot—and the resemblances between the Old English poem and the Norse analogues—are substantial enough to demonstrate that Beowulf’s fight with Grendel is indebted to quite separate literary traditions, namely northern folktale and heroic legend. However, the series of structural, thematic and verbal parallels between the haunting of Heorot and *Dialogi* III.4 set out in the section below are suggestive of the extent to which the *Beowulf*-poet modified and adapted these folktale and legendary traditions to suit the tastes of his Christian, English audience, for whom the devil was an even greater source of terror than a troll or a *draugr*.³⁵

1. The hero travels to the haunted house from afar as part of a group, before confronting the haunting spirit alone.

In *Dialogi* III.4, Bishop Datius arrives in Corinth after a long journey from Milan as part of a group (‘comitatum’), but later confronts the devil alone.³⁶ Beowulf similarly travels to Heorot from afar (‘sē þe ær feorran cōm’, line 825b) as the leader of a group of fourteen handpicked *cempan* (‘champions’) (lines 205–09), and announces that he will confront Grendel *āna* (‘alone’, lines 425b).³⁷ Later, although Beowulf’s warriors attempt to strike Grendel with their weapons (lines 794b–805a), ultimately it is the hero alone who grapples with the demon, trusting instead in his mighty strength and ‘witig God’ (‘wise God’, line 685b).

In the Greek and Latin tradition, by contrast, the exorcist usually travels alone to the haunted house (with the sole exception of Constantius, in which St Germanus is accompanied by a group). Similarly, in the Norse analogues, the hero is typically alone as he travels to the haunted building to confront the beast (e.g. *Grettis saga*, chs 34–5, 64), though in the case of Bodvar Bjarki he is helped by Hjalti (*Hrolfs saga* ch. 35).³⁸

2. Attempts are made to dissuade the visitor from tackling the haunting spirit.

In Gregory, as in Lucian and Constantius, locals warn the newcomer that the building is uninhabitable because of the haunting. Although the wise men of the Geats are said to have encouraged Beowulf on his mission to Denmark (lines 202–04), later we discover that his own lord, King Hygelac, had tried to convince him not to attempt to tackle the ‘wæl-gæst’ (‘slaughterous spirit’, line 1995a), lest he should lose his life (lines 1992b–97a). The same motif is found in the Norse analogues: in *Grettis saga*, ch. 34, for example, Jokul warns Grettir not to tempt fate by challenging Glámr.

3. The haunted building is a large house visible from afar.

In *Dialogi* III.4, Datius seeks a large house (‘largam domum’)³⁹ that can accommodate his group. Beowulf instructs the Danish coastguard to bring the Geatish party to the place where Hrothgar sits, ‘on hēah-stede hūsa sēlest’ (‘in the lofty place, the best of houses’, line 285), and the elevated (*hēah*) status of Heorot is repeatedly emphasized throughout the poem.⁴⁰ Moreover, just as Datius spies the great building from afar (‘aspexit eminus domum [...] magnitudinis’),⁴¹ so, after leaving their ship secured on the beach, Beowulf’s warriors hasten inland until they are able to catch their first glimpse of the magnificent Danish royal hall:

Guman ōnetton

sigon ætsomne, *op þæt hȳ sæl timbred*
geatolic ond gold-fāh ongyton mihton;
 þæt wæs *foremærost fold-būendum*
receda under roderum, on þæm se rīca bād. (Lines 306b–10).
 (Emphasis added).

(The warriors hastened, journeyed together, *until they were able to make out the timbred building, splendid and gold adorned;* that was *the most famous hall for earth-dwellers under the skies,* in which the ruler dwelt.)

No equivalent details concerning the height or size of the haunted house, or of the hero glimpsing it from afar, appear in the Greek and Latin analogues to Gregory's tale or in any of the Norse analogues to *Beowulf*.⁴²

4. *The haunted house has been abandoned and empty for a long time.*

The long-term abandonment of the haunted house is a feature of all the Greek and Latin accounts (Pliny, Plautus, Lucian, Constantius, Gregory), though only in Gregory do we find the detail that it stood empty for many years ('multis [...] annis [...] uacua remanisset').⁴³ In *Beowulf*, similarly, we are told that Heorot 'stood empty' ('īdel stōd') for twelve-years during Grendel's reign of terror:

Swā rīxode ond wið rihte wan,

āna wið eallum, oð þæt *īdel stōd*;
 hūsa sēlest. *Wæs sēo hwīl micel*:
twelf wintra tīd torn gepolode
 wine Scyldinga, wēana gehwelcne,
 sīdra sorga. (Lines 144–49a). (Emphasis added).

(So he ruled and fought against right, one against all, until the best of houses
stood empty. That was a long time: the friend of the Scyldings endured
 affliction, every misery, great sorrow, *for the length of twelve winters*.)

Mē wearð Grendles þing
 on mīnre ēþel-tyrf undyrne cūð;
 secgað sālīðend þæt þæs *sele stande*,
 reced sēlesta rinca gehwylcum
īdel ond unnyt, siððan āfen-lēoht
 under heofenes haðor⁴⁴ beholen weorþeð. (Lines 409b–414)
 (Emphasis added).

(The affair with Grendel was made known to me in my homeland; sailors said
 that that *hall*, the best of buildings, *stands empty and abandoned* of all
 warriors, since the evening light has been hidden under heaven's
 confinement.)

The collocation of *idel* and *standan* in the context of a building standing empty is rare in Old
 English, appearing on only one further occasion in verse ('eald enta geweorc īdlu stōdon',

‘the ancient work/building of giants stood empty’, *The Wanderer* line 87) and once in prose (Ælfric, *Catholic Homilies* II.45, 339.119).⁴⁵ The Norse analogues place less emphasis on the abandonment of the haunted building or the length of time for which it has stood empty. For example, in *Hrolfs saga kraka* ch. 35, the attacks of the ‘winged beast’ cause gloom to descend on the Skjöldung hall for two years and discourage the king’s best champions from returning to court, but Hledjra itself is never entirely abandoned or empty. Similarly, in *Grettis saga* men flee from Thorhall-stead on account of the attacks of the *draugr*, Glámr, but the building itself is never completely deserted (ch. 33).

5. *The haunting spirit is a satanic demon.*

Of all the related Greek and Latin haunted-house stories, only in Gregory’s version is the spirit who occupies the building described as the devil (‘diabolus’)⁴⁶—in all the other versions, including Constantius’s saint’s life, the building is haunted by the ghost of one or more unburied corpses.⁴⁷ Unlike the hall-haunting trolls and zombies of Norse tradition, Grendel is consistently associated with the devil and demons. For example, the narrator relates that he keeps company with ‘dēofla gedræg’ (‘a host of devils’, line 756), ‘scuccum ond scinum’ (‘demons and evil spirits’, line 939b), and ‘hel-runan’ (‘demons’, line 163) who wander about on the misty moors (line 162a),⁴⁸ while Beowulf relates to Hygelac that Grendel carries a ‘glōf’ (‘bag or pouch’, line 2085b) made ‘dēofles cræftum ond dracan fellum’ (‘with the devil’s skills and dragons’ hides’, line 2088).⁴⁹ The narrator’s description of his night-time attacks on the Danes recalls the devil’s constant efforts to deceive humanity: ‘ēhtende wæs [...] seomade ond syrede’ (‘he was persecuting [...] he ambushed and lay in wait’, lines 159b–61a); ‘mynte se mǎn-scaða manna cynnes/ sumne besyrwan in sele þām hean’ (‘the wicked attacker intended to ensnare some of the race of men in that high hall’,

lines 712–13).⁵⁰ Moreover, the narrator repeatedly emphasizes Grendel’s own demonic nature through a series of epithets such as ‘sē þe in þýstrum bād’ (‘the one who dwelt in darkness’, line 87b), ‘fēond on helle’ (‘enemy in hell’, line 101b), ‘grimma gāest’ (‘fierce spirit’, line 102a), ‘ellor-gāst’ (‘foreign spirit’, line 807b), ‘deorc dēap-scua’ (‘dark death-shadow’, line 160a), ‘scyn-scaþa’ (‘demonic foe’, 707a),⁵¹ and ‘fēond mancynnes’ (‘enemy of mankind’, 164b),⁵² while Hrothgar describes him as ‘eald-gewinna ingenga mīn’ (‘ancient enemy, my invader’, line 1773), perhaps suggesting that Grendel has somehow entered into him—as well as his royal hall—in a manner reminiscent of demonic possession.⁵³ These last two epithets have a direct verbal parallel in *Dialogi* III.4, in which the haunting spirit is twice referred to as *antiquus hostis* (‘ancient enemy’), an epithet which Gregory frequently (together with its inverse *hostis antiquus*) to describe the devil in his sermons.⁵⁴

Grendel’s demonic occupation of Heorot displaces the Danes from their communal space, just as the devil prevents men from using the building in Corinth as a social space (‘hanc malignus spiritus inuasit et ab ea hominum inhabitationem repulit’):

Swā fela fyrena *fēond mancynnes*,
 atol ān-gengea oft gefremede,
 heardra hýnða; *Heorot eardode*,
 sinc-fāge sel *swewartum nihtum*. (Lines 164–67). (Emphasis added).

(So *the enemy of mankind*, terrible solitary wanderer, continually perpetrated many crimes, terrible humiliation; *he occupied Heorot*, the treasure-bedecked hall, *on dark nights*.)

As Richard N. Ringler notes, the use of the verb ‘eardode’ here ‘makes the ironic suggestion that visitation has become residency’, implying that the ‘successful and unopposed haunting of Heorot has become Grendel’s way of life, his routine, his *drohtoð* [‘custom’, line 756b]’.⁵⁵ In Old English prose and verse, *eardian* usually means simply ‘to dwell’, though the *DOE* records one instance of *eardian* in the sense ‘of demonic possession: to dwell’, in the Parable of the Demon’s Return (Matt. 12.45) in the West Saxon Gospels: ‘he [...] togenymþ seofun oþre gastas wyrсан þonne he & in gangende hig eardigeað þær’ (*et intrantes habitant ibi*).⁵⁶ In identifying the haunting spirit as a demon or devil, rather than a ghost, troll or zombie, and by implying that its occupation of the building is a form of demonic possession, *Beowulf* therefore most resembles the version of the haunted-house tale preserved in *Dialogi* III.4.

6. The haunting spirit waits until all is quiet, and men are sleeping in the building, before appearing.

In Gregory, the devil waits until the dead of night, when Datius (and presumably the rest of his party, who are not mentioned) are asleep (‘*intempestae noctis silentio, cum uir Dei quiesceret*’), before beginning its animalistic howling.⁵⁷ Grendel similarly attacks Heorot under cover of darkness, when the guardians of the hall are asleep (lines 115–17). However, unlike Datius, Beowulf remains awake while the rest of the Geatish party have fallen asleep, watching to see how Grendel goes about his murderous work (703b–09, 736b–38).⁵⁸ In this regard, *Beowulf* is closer to the Norse analogues, in which, for example, Grettir remains awake in the barn, hiding within a cloak and waiting for Glámr to enter (*Grettis saga*, ch. 35) (though as we have seen, unlike Beowulf and Datius, Grettir is alone in the haunted building). Nevertheless, the *Beowulf*-poet was evidently aware of the Christian connotations of the sleeping-guardian motif: in Hrothgar’s ‘sermon’, the old king warns the hero that pride

(*oferhygd*) will creep into the soul if its guardian sleeps, leaving it vulnerable to the devil's arrows (lines 1740–44).⁵⁹ By staying awake to guard Heorot—and its king—against the demonic incursions of Grendel, Beowulf performs a role that is in some respects akin to that of a Christian exorcist.

7. *The hero's emotional response to the haunting spirit's assault.*

The emotions of the exorcist are not described in any of the other witnesses to the Greek and Latin haunted-house tradition prior to Gregory. Moreover, in biblical and hagiographical accounts of confrontations with demons the exorcist is unmoved by passion. Christ, for example, never displays any such emotion when expelling devils from demoniacs,⁶⁰ while Anthony and Guthlac calmly resist the temptations of the devil by praying and singing psalms respectively (e.g. *V. S. Antonii* ch. X; *Vita Guthlaci*, chs XXIX, XXXI).⁶¹ By contrast with these impassive exorcists, Gregory states that Bishop Datius 'became violently/extremely angry' ('surrexit uehementur iratus') at the devil when it began to make its noises.⁶² Beowulf displays a similar emotion towards Grendel during the fight Heorot, becoming 'bolgen-mōd' ('enraged in mind/swollen with anger in mind', line 709a).⁶³ This aspect of Beowulf's characterisation clearly mirrors the murderous anger of Grendel himself ('hē gebolgen wæs', 'he was enraged', line 723b; 'Yrre wæron bēgen,/ rēþe renweardas', 'they were both angry, fierce hall-guardians', lines 769b–70a) and the dragon ('wæs ðā gebolgen beorges hyrde', line 2304). However, some scholars have interpreted Beowulf's anger as a form of 'heroic rage' comparable with the 'warp spasms' of the Irish hero Cú Chulainn or the fury of Aeneas.⁶⁴ Given the demonic nature of Beowulf's adversary, the Gregorian parallel adduced here might also invite us to regard his anger as a form of

righteous indignation that aligns him closely with God, who is similarly angry towards Grendel ('Godes yrre bær', line 711b).⁶⁵

8. The emotional reaction of the defeated spirit.

In Plautus, Pliny and Lucian, no reference is made to the ghost's emotional reaction to the confrontation with the exorcist. In Constantius, once St Germanus has invoked the name of Christ and called on the ghost to confess, it quickly lays aside its terrible appearance and speaks with a humble voice. The most detailed account of the spirit's emotional state, however, is provided by Gregory, who describes how the devil becomes dejected and blushes with embarrassment ('deiectionem [...] erubuit') after his humiliating encounter with the bishop.⁶⁶ The *Beowulf*-poet similarly offers insight into the miserable mental state of the defeated demon, explaining how Grendel became 'forht on ferhðe [...] wolde on heolster flēon,/ sēcan dēofla gedræg' ('afraid in spirit [...] he wished to flee into the darkness, to seek the company of devils', lines 755b–56).⁶⁷ The Norse analogues, by contrast, provide no substantial descriptions of the mental processes of the various hall-haunting monsters.

9. The haunting spirit emits a frightening noise.

The terrible noise caused by the spirit is a common feature of the haunted-house tradition, though the source of the noise differs in the various accounts. Hence, in Plautus, Pliny and Constantius, the ghost itself makes loud noises at night, whereas in Lucian the ghost takes on the shape of a dog, bull and lion, though no specific sounds are described.⁶⁸ In Gregory, however, as noted above, the devil's animalistic howling recalls the horrible grunting and hissing of the demons who confront St Anthony in the desert.⁶⁹ Similarly, Grendel unleashes

his ‘wōp’ (‘weeping’), ‘sigelēasne sang’ (‘cry of defeat’) and ‘gryrelēoð’ (‘terrible song’, lines 785–87a) upon recognising that he has suffered a mortal wound at the hands of Beowulf. However, it is worth noting one key difference between Grendel and the other ghost stories here: while Grendel’s weeping is an involuntary reaction to the violence inflicted upon him, Gregory’s devil—like the ghosts of the classical tradition—makes noises intentionally to frighten the would-be exorcist. In some of the Norse sources, the haunting troll or *draugr* makes a terrible noise by banging on the roof of the building, or outside it. For example, Glámr noisily rides the house-roofs of farm buildings (*Grettis saga*, ch. 35), while the troll-wife in the Sandhaugur episode similarly makes a great din outside the hall before entering and encountering the disguised Grettir (*Grettis saga*, ch. 65). Grendel’s wretched howling in Heorot therefore more closely resembles the frightening noises emitted by ghosts and, in the case of *Dialogi* III.4, the devil, than it does any of the disturbing sounds that accompany hall-hauntings in the Norse analogues.

10. The haunted house is cleansed by the hero.

In Plautus, Pliny, Lucian and Constantius, we are simply told that the house was no longer haunted after the reburial of the corpse(s). Although Constantius shares with Gregory the motif that the building became a social hub once more following the exorcism, only in *Dialogi* III.4 and *Beowulf* does the exorcism constitute the spiritual cleansing of a house from a demonic presence. Hence Gregory concludes his tale by emphasising that it was Datus’ faith that caused ‘the deceitful and treacherous spirit’ (‘mendax spiritus atque infidelis’) to depart from the house in Corinth, while Beowulf’s cleansing of Heorot is described in terms which are suggestive of the ritual purification of a space:

hæfde þā *gefælsod* sē þe ær feorran cōm,
 snotor ond swyð-ferhð, sele Hrōðgāres,
generated wið nīðe. (Lines 825–27a). (Emphasis added).

(He had then *cleansed* Hrothgar’s hall, the one who came from afar, wise and brave in spirit, *saved* it from hostility.)

Early *Beowulf* scholarship sought to explain the hero’s hall-cleansing in terms of shamanic practice, as an example of ‘Germanic’ or ‘heroic exorcism’,⁷⁰ while Frederick Klaeber and Andy Orchard point to parallels with Grettir’s *land-hreinsun* (‘land-cleansing’, *Grettis saga*, ch. 67).⁷¹ However, the variation of the verb ‘gefælsod’ (‘cleansed’, line 825a) with ‘generated’ (‘saved’, line 827a), a term often used in the context of Christian salvation and related to the common poetic epithet for God, *nergend* (saviour),⁷² invites the audience to perceive the deeper spiritual implications of Beowulf’s purging of Heorot. Forms of the verb *fælsian* (‘to cleanse, purge’) are very rare in Old English verse, but most occur in Christian contexts. In addition to the example cited above, the term is used four more times in *Beowulf* to describe the expulsion of the demonic Grendel from Heorot (lines 431–32, 1176b, 2351b–52) and once in reference to the purification of the Grendelkin’s hellish mere (line 1620).⁷³ In *Advent Lyrics* (lines 144 and 317–20) and *The Fates of the Apostles* (line 66b), *fælsian* is used to refer to the purification of a place or person through the presence of either Christ or a saint, while in Exeter Book Riddle 83, the speaking object, usually solved as ‘ore, metal, gold’, says that it was ‘fyre gefælsad’ (‘purified with fire’, line 4a), though it has been suggested that biblical or Christian context may be implied here too.⁷⁴

The audience of *Beowulf* are repeatedly invited to understand the purging of Heorot as an act of God, part of what Marijane Osborn calls ‘the Great Feud, a cosmic battle between

good and evil that controls the three main actions of the poem in a manner barely glimpsed by its chief protagonists'.⁷⁵ For example, as Beowulf lies in wait for Grendel, we are told that the Geat was chosen by God to perform the task of defending the hall against the demon:

Hæfde kyning-wuldor⁷⁶

Grendle tōgeanes, swā guman gefrugnon,

sele-weard āseted (lines 665b–67a)

(The King of Glory had appointed a hall-guardian against Grendel, as men have heard tell.)

While Datius succeeds in expelling the devil because of his faith, as Mary C. Wilson Tietjen notes, 'Beowulf is worthy of God's grace because of his great strength and courage'.⁷⁷ The narrator's statement that Beowulf had used his God-given strength to defeat Grendel—'ðy hē þone fēond oferwōm,/ gehnægde helle gāst' ('until he overcame the enemy, laid low the hellish spirit', lines 1273b–74a)—is closely paralleled in *Guthlac A*'s account the saint's victory over a demon in the fens: 'siþþan fēond oferwōn/ Cristes cempa' ('since Christ's champion overcame the enemy', line 152b–53a).⁷⁸ Despite his paganism, Hrothgar too seems to regard the cleansing of Heorot as a miracle. Having seen the material evidence of Beowulf's victory in the form of Grendel's severed hand, he gives thanks 'al-wealdan' ('to the almighty ruler', line 928b) before reflecting: 'ā mæg God wyrcan/ wunder æfter wundre, wuldres hyrde' ('God can always work wonders, miracle after miracle, the Protector of Glory', lines 930b–31). In this speech, Hrothgar shares with the narrator in the knowledge that the cleansing of Heorot was no mere feat of bravery but that a 'scealc' (warrior, line 939b) was performed a deed 'þurh drihtnes miht' ('through the Lord's might', line 940a) that

no one else could (lines 941–42a), before praising Beowulf’s mother in terms that—in the eyes of some modern readers—would seem to invite comparison with the mother of Christ: ‘hyre eald-metod ēste wære/ bearn-gebyrdo’ (‘the Ancient Measurer was gracious to her in child-bearing’, lines 945b–46a).⁷⁹ Viewed within this carefully constructed Christian frame of reference, the purging of Heorot more closely resembles the exorcism of the devil performed by Datus in *Dialogi* III.4 than it does the hall-cleansings of Grettir or the laying to rest of ghosts in the Greek and Latin analogues.

Conclusion: Analogue or Source?

This article has highlighted a series of structural, thematic and verbal parallels between Gregory’s tale of Datus and the devil and the haunting of Heorot. The structural and thematic parallels can be enumerated as follows:

- (1) The hero travels to the haunted house as part of a group before confronting the haunting spirit alone
- (2) Attempts are made to dissuade the visitor from tackling the haunting spirit
- (3) The haunted house is described as a large building visible from afar
- (4) The haunted building has been abandoned and empty for a long time
(The haunting spirit is a satanic demon)
- (5) The haunting spirit waits until all is quiet, and men are asleep, before appearing
- (6) The hero reacts angrily to the haunting spirit
- (7) The haunting spirit’s emotional state is described
- (8) The haunting spirit emits a frightening noise
- (9) The haunted house is cleansed by the hero.

The fact that items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 do not feature in the Norse analogues thus far adduced for *Beowulf* may be suggestive of a connection between Gregory's tale and the haunting of Heorot. Further strengthening the connection between *Dialogi* III.4 and *Beowulf* are the following verbal parallels:

- (1) the description of the size of the haunted buildings (*Dialogi*: 'largam domum' 'aspexit eminus domum'; *Beowulf* line 285: 'hēah-stede hūsa sēlest' and lines 307b–10a: 'oþ þæt hȳ sæl timbred/ geatolic ond gold-fāh ongyton mihton;/ þæt wæs foremærost fold-būendum/receda under roderum')
- (2) the abandonment of the haunted building for a long time (*Dialogi*: 'multis annis [...] uacua reminisset'; *Beowulf* lines 145b–147a: 'īdel stōd;/ hūsa sēlest. Wæs sēo hwīl micel:/ twelf wintra tīd', and lines 411b–13a 'sele stande,/ reced sēlesta rinca gehwylcum,/ īdel ond unnyt')
- (3) the epithets used to describe the demonic spirit (*Dialogi*: 'antiquus hostis', 'diabolus'; *Beowulf* line 164b: 'fēond mancynnes', and line 1773: 'eald-gewinna')
- (4) the hero's anger at the demon (*Dialogi*: 'surrexit uehematus iratus'; *Beowulf* line 709a: 'bolgen-mōd')
- (5) the demon's troubled emotional state (*Dialogi*: 'deictionem [...] erbuit'; *Beowulf* line 755b: 'forht on ferhðe').⁸⁰

In the light of these extensive structural and verbal parallels, *Dialogi* III.4 should certainly be considered a close and significant analogue for the haunting of Heorot. The case for admitting this Gregorian passage as a source for *Beowulf*, however, rests on two main factors: the closeness and extent of the verbal parallels highlighted above; and the availability of the

Dialogi to the poet.⁸¹ The verbal parallels between the haunting of Heorot and *Dialogi* III.4 are more extensive than with any of the Norse analogues thus far adduced for *Beowulf*. For example, only a single close verbal parallel has been detected with the strongest of the Norse analogues, *Grettis saga*, namely the reference to the weapon used by the female troll as a *hepti-sax* (ch. 66) (cf. *Beowulf* line 1547b: *hæft-mēce*).⁸² Moreover, while *Grettis saga* was not written down until as late as the fourteenth century, as we have seen, the *Dialogi* was widely circulated in England from at least the early eighth century.

To return to the question of the poet's literary milieu with which this article began, Emily Thornbury has recently highlighted the lack of evidence for the existence of a designated class of professional poets in Early Medieval England, by contrast with Ireland and other contemporary cultures.⁸³ In this light, we should not assume a *Beowulf*-poet in the character of a romanticized professional bard, but more likely one who, like the poets discussed by Thornbury, was a member of a royal or aristocratic household, well versed in Germanic legend and Scandinavian dynastic history as well as biblical lore, homilies and hagiography.⁸⁴ Collections of saints' lives and miracle tales such as Gregory's *Dialogi* would almost certainly have formed part of the literary culture of such a poet. We might envisage a similar milieu for Felix of Crowland, the author of the eighth-century Latin *vita* of the Mercian aristocratic warrior-turned-hermit, St Guthlac, who drew on Gregory's *Dialogi* and *Moralia in Iob*, Bede's *Vita S. Cuthberti*, Athanasius' *Vita S. Anthonii*, Sulpicius' *Vita S. Martini*, as well as scripture and Virgil's *Aeneid*. The affinities between the *Vita Guthlaci* and *Beowulf*, both of which refer to marsh-dwelling demons as the offspring of Cain (XXXII: 'semen Cain'; *Beowulf* line 107a: 'Caines cynne'), were noted by Dorothy Whitelock as long ago as 1951, and are in need of further exploration.⁸⁵ Patrick Wormald has described Felix's Guthlac as 'a saintly hero in something of a traditional secular mould';⁸⁶ the evidence presented in this article suggests that reverse might be said of *Beowulf*.⁸⁷

What, then, are the implications of the identification of this new hagiographical analogue and possible source for our reading of the poem and its hero? By ridding Heorot of its haunting demon, Beowulf performs an exorcism that bears comparison in some of its details with Bishop Datius' expulsion of the devil from the building in Corinth. Yet Beowulf's paganism, as well as his avowed commitment to vengeance (lines 1384b–85), his love of earthly treasure (e.g. lines 2788–97) and his superlative desire for earthly fame (line 3182b), clearly sets him apart from the heroes of Christian tradition. Indeed, one might argue that the poet's consistent employment of Christian motifs, imagery and language only serves to highlight the earthly limitations of his pagan hero's achievements when compared with the eternal glory of the saints. Hence, for example, Beowulf's victory over the *draca* will come at a terrible cost for both the hero himself and his people, while in the hagiographical sources the slaying of the dragon typically brings peace—and in some cases conversion—to the land.⁸⁸ Similarly, Heorot will suffer yet another murderous assault the night after Beowulf has cleansed it in the form of Grendel's mother (lines 1255b–1306a), whereas the haunted house in Corinth is untroubled by the devil 'because one person of real faith had entered the house' ('dum eam unus ueraciter fidelis ingressus est').⁸⁹

However, the identification of hagiographical analogues and potential sources for Beowulf's monster fights need not lead us in the direction of an allegorical reading of the poem in which the hero is cast as either saintlike or non-saintlike. Indeed, the presence of hagiographical and homiletic motifs in *Beowulf* may simply be conscious or unconscious reflexes of the poet's Christian education. The extraordinary popularity of saints' lives as both edifying and entertaining reading—and listening—material, to which all levels of society were exposed in the early middle ages, is a fact often overlooked in modern scholarship.⁹⁰ Moreover, our modern distinction between saints and secular heroes is perhaps too stark: hagiographical texts—not least Old English verse saints' lives—frequently borrow

motifs and diction from heroic literature.⁹¹ We should not, therefore, be surprised to discover that the reverse might be true in supposedly secular works such as *Beowulf*. The compilers of the Nowell Codex saw fit to present *Beowulf* alongside a prose *Life of St Christopher* and the verse *Judith*, as well perhaps as other, now-missing religious texts,⁹² while in later medieval manuscripts, saints and heroes mingle in a seemingly unproblematic manner.⁹³ Yet, despite the immense breadth of *Beowulf* scholarship, to date relatively little work has been done on hagiographical contexts, analogues and potential sources for the poem.⁹⁴ It is hoped that the identification of this Gregorian analogue and possible source for the haunting of Heorot will encourage further research into links between *Beowulf* and the vast corpus of homilies, saints' lives and miracle tales that shaped medieval English popular piety.

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¹ Lines 90b–98 (the scop's song of Creation; cf. Gen. 1.i–xxv), 106–110, 1261b–66a (Cain and Abel; cf. Gen. 4.i–xvi), and 1688b–93 (Noah's Flood and the race of giants; cf. Gen. 6.i–vii). For the possibility that the

Beowulf-poet adapted these and other biblical stories and motifs from the Old English poem *Genesis A*, see Frederick Klaeber, 'Die ältere Genesis und der Beowulf', *Englische Studien*, 42 (1910), 321–38.

² Analogues can be defined as texts which may or may not predate a target text and correspond in structural or thematic aspects, while sources demonstrably exert a direct influence on the target text, exhibiting close verbal or structural parallels. See further Thomas D. Hill, 'Introduction', in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture: A Trial Version*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 74, ed. Frederick M. Biggs, Thomas D. Hill and Paul E. Szarmach, with the assistance of Karen Hammond (Binghampton, NY, 1990), pp. xxv–xxix; Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Source, Method, Theory, Practice: On Reading Two Old English Verse Texts', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 76 (1994), 51–73; Donald G. Scragg, 'Source Study', in *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 39–58. The recently revised *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* database uses a stratified system for distinguishing between certain, probable and distant sources and analogues for Old English texts: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~cr30/Mercian/Using%20the%20Database.pdf> (accessed 26 July 2021). For overviews, see

Theodore M. Andersson, 'Sources and Analogues', in *A 'Beowulf' Handbook*, ed. Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (Exeter, 1997), pp. 125–48; and Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to 'Beowulf'* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 130–68. For a selection of texts, see *'Beowulf' and its Analogues*, ed. and trans. G. N. Garmonsway and Jacqueline Simpson (New York, 1971); and *Klaeber's 'Beowulf': Fourth Edition*, ed. R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (Toronto, 2008) (henceforth K IV), pp. 291–315. All quotations from *Beowulf* are from this edition, though I have hyphenated poetic compounds; all biblical quotations are from the Vulgate/Douay-Rheims translation.

³ On the 'gradation' of the monster-fights, see Frederick Klaeber, ed., *'Beowulf' and 'The Fight at Finnsburg'*, 3rd edn (Boston, 1936; revised 1950), p. liii; and H. L. Rogers, 'Beowulf's Three Great Fights', *Review of English Studies*, 6 (1955), 339–55

⁴ For Scandinavian analogues to the first two fights, see Nora Kershaw Chadwick, 'The Monsters and *Beowulf*', in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies of Some Aspects of their History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickins*, ed. Peter Clemoes (London, 1959), pp. 171–203; J. Michael Stitt, *'Beowulf' and the Bear's Son: Epic, Saga, and Fairytale in Northern Germanic Tradition* (New York, 1992); Magnús Fjalldal, *The Long Arm of Coincidence: The Frustrated Connection between 'Beowulf' and 'Grettis saga'* (Toronto, 1998); Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the 'Beowulf' Manuscript*, 2nd edn (Toronto, 2003), esp. pp. 149–68; *'Beowulf' and Lejre*, ed. John D. Niles, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 323 (Arizona, 2007); K IV, pp. xxxvi–xxxliii; Francis Leneghan, *The Dynastic Drama of 'Beowulf'*, Anglo-Saxon Studies 39 (Cambridge, 2020), pp. 111–18; Michael Fox, *Following the Formula in 'Beowulf', 'Örvar-Odds saga', and Tolkien* (London, 2021); and most recently, Tom Grant, 'Hrólf's saga Gautrekssonar and the Originality of *Beowulf*', *RES*, 73 (2021), 1–19. For Irish analogues, see James Carney, 'The Irish Elements in *Beowulf*', in his *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin, 1955), pp. 77–128; and Martin Puhvel, *'Beowulf' and Celtic Tradition* (Waterloo, ON, 1979), pp. 86–138. Classical analogues for the first two fights (and indeed for the poem more generally) have attracted comparatively little attention, though Tom Burns Haber has compared Grendel with the Hydra (*Aeneid* VI) and Cacus (*Aeneid* VIII): *A Comparative Study of the 'Beowulf' and the 'Aeneid'* (New York, 1968), pp. 110–15. A distant analogue (i.e. an analogue which was not available in the culture of the target text) for the Grendel fight has been identified in the Japanese tale of Watanabe-no-Tsuna: see Fjalldal, *Long Arm*, p. viii; Michiko Ogura, 'Beowulf and the *Book of Swords*: similarities and differences in scenes, features and epithets', *SELIM*, 16 (2009), 7–22.

⁵ For a summary, see Christine Rauer, *Beowulf and the Dragon* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 24–51.

⁶ Rauer, *Beowulf and the Dragon*, pp. 52–86. The features in question include the dragon's devastation of the local countryside and community, the accompaniment of the hero to the dragon's lair, the hero's issuing of instructions to his companions to wait outside while he tackles the beast, and the pushing of the vanquished serpent into the sea. See further Margaret E. Goldsmith, *The Mode and Meaning of 'Beowulf'* (London, 1970), pp. 130–45; Michael Lapidge, 'Beowulf, Aldhelm, the *Liber Monstrorum* and Wessex', *Studi Medievali*, 3rd ser., 23 (1982), 151–92 (pp. 178–82); Paul Sorrell, 'The Approach to the Dragon-Fight in *Beowulf*, Aldhelm, and the *traditions folkloriques* of Jacques Le Goff', *Parergon*, 12 (1994), 57–87; and K IV, pp. xlv–xlvii.

⁷ I refer to this work by its Latin title throughout to distinguish it from the Old English translation, which is conventionally referred to as the *Dialogues*.

⁸ For a summary of hagiographical and homiletic parallels, see Orchard, *Critical Companion*, pp. 151–62. Scholars have detected the influence of vernacular preaching in the Christian 'excursus' (lines 175–88), the two descriptions of the Grendelkin's haunted mere (lines 1357b–79, 1408–17) and Hrothgar's 'sermon' (lines 1700–84). Michael Lapidge, 'The Archetype of *Beowulf*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 29 (2000), 5–41 (pp. 38–40), argues that parts of Hrothgar's sermon were interpolated due to the lack of evidence for vernacular preaching before the mid-tenth century. However, for the recent discovery of a fragment of an Old English homily from as early as the ninth century, see Donald G. Scragg, 'A ninth-century Old English homily from Northumbria', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 45 (2016), 39–49; and Winfried Rudolf, 'The Earliest Surviving Homily in English', *Notes &*

Queries, 66 (2019), 24–26. For parallels between Scyld Scefing’s ship-funeral (lines 26–52) and an account of the funeral of St Gildas in a Breton *vita*, see Angus F. Cameron, ‘Saint Gildas and Scyld Scefing’, *Neophilologische Mitteilungen*, 70 (1969), 240–46; and Audrey L. Meaney, ‘Scyld Scefing and the Dating of *Beowulf*—Again’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 71 (1989), 7–40.

⁹ On the veneration of Gregory in early medieval England, see Daniel Anlezark, ‘Gregory the Great: Reader, Writer and Read’, in *The Church and Literature*, ed. Peter Clarke and Charlotte Methuen (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 12–34.

¹⁰ *The Old English Martyrology*, ed. and trans. Christine Rauer (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 64–5.

¹¹ On the pervasive influence of both Old and New Testament doctrine on the poem, see Paul Cavill, ‘Christianity and Theology in *Beowulf*’, in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. Paul Cavill (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 15–40.

¹² Goldsmith, *Mode and Meaning*. For a sceptical response to this patristic-exegetical approach, see John D. Niles, *Beowulf: The Poem and Its Tradition* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), pp. 83–95.

¹³ See Albert S. Cook, ed. *The Christ of Cynewulf* (Boston, 1900), pp. 115–16; Eric G. Stanley, ‘*Hæthenra Hyht* in *Beowulf*’, in *Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur*, ed. Stanley B. Greenfield (Eugene, OR: 1963), pp. 136–51 (p. 148); Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 56–7; Leneghan, *Dynastic Drama*, pp. 219–20, 228–31. Orchard notes that the collocation *wundor sceawian* (cf. *considerabo mirabilia* Ps. cxviii.18) appears with frequency only in *Beowulf*, the Old English *Alexander’s Letter to Aristotle* and Wærferth’s *Dialogues* (*Critical Companion*, p. 28, n. 70). Another verbal parallel between the Old English *Dialogues* and *Beowulf* was noted by Samuel J. Crawford, ‘*Beowulf*, ll. 168–69’, *Modern Language Review*, 23 (1928), 336.

¹⁴ Judson Boyce Allen, ‘God’s Society and Grendel’s Shoulder Joint: Gregory and the Poet of the *Beowulf*’, *Neophilologische Mitteilungen*, 78 (1977), 239–40.

¹⁵ David F. Johnson, ‘The Gregorian Grendel: *Beowulf* 705B–09 and the Limits of the Demonic’, in *Rome and the North: The Early Reception of Gregory the Great in Germanic Europe*, ed. Rolf H. Bremmer, Jr., Kees Dekker and David F. Johnson (Leuven, 2001), pp. 51–65. Johnson highlights parallels between the narrator’s statement that Grendel was not allowed to drag the Danes away under the shadows unless God willed it (lines 705b–09) and passages in the *Moralia* explaining how God permits the devil to test mankind. For further Gregorian and other patristic links, see Stephen C. Bandy, ‘*Beowulf*: The Defence of Heorot’, *Neophilologus*, 56 (1972), 86–92; and Malcolm Andrew, ‘Grendel in Hell’, *English Studies*, 62 (1981), 401–10.

¹⁶ Gregory’s authorship of the *Dialogi* was first called into doubt by Francis Clark, in *The Pseudo-Gregorian ‘Dialogues’* (Leiden, 1987), and subsequently *The “Gregorian” ‘Dialogues’ and the Origins of Benedictine Monasticism* (Leiden, 2002). For responses to Clark and defences of Gregory’s authorship, see John Moorhead, ‘Taking Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues* Seriously’, *Downside Review*, 121 (2003), 197–210; and Charlotte Kingston, ‘Taking the Devil at his Word: The Devil and Language in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 67 (2016), 705–20.

¹⁷ On the profound influence of the *Dialogi* on Icelandic sagas, see Regis Boyer, ‘The Influence of Pope Gregory’s *Dialogues* on Old Icelandic Literature’, *Proceedings of the First International Saga Conference*, ed. Peter Foote, Hermann Pálsson and Desmond Slay (London, 1973), pp. 1–27; Kirsten Wolf, ‘Gregory’s influence on Old Norse-Icelandic Religious Literature’, in *Rome and the North: The Early Reception of Gregory the Great in Germanic Europe*, ed. Rolf H. Bremmer, Jr., Kees Dekker and David F. Johnson (Leuven, 2001), pp. 255–74; Siân Grønlie, ‘Translating (and Translocating) Miracles: Gregory’s *Dialogues* and the Icelandic Sagas’, *The Medieval Translator*, 12 (2009), 45–56; Siân Grønlie, ‘Saint’s Life and Saga Narrative’, *Saga-Book*, 36 (2012), 5–26; Siân Grønlie. *The Saint and the Saga Hero: Hagiography and Early Icelandic Literature* (Cambridge, 2017).

¹⁸ Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford, 2005), p. 127. Lapidge records citations of the *Dialogi* in the works of Theodore and Hadrian, Aldhelm, Bede, the Old English *Martyrology*, Asser, Ælfric and Byrhtferth, and lists nine Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, dating from the seventh or eighth century through to the eleventh (p. 304).

¹⁹ *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~cr30/Mercian/Fontes> (accessed 19 February 2022) records citations in texts ranging from Bede, Felix, the Old English *Martyrology*, the Alfredian *Soliloquies* and *Boethius*, and Ælfric’s *Catholic Homilies*.

²⁰ *De Rebus Gestis Ælfredi*, 77, trans. Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge, eds, *Alfred the Great: Asser’s ‘Life of King Alfred’ and Other Contemporary Sources* (London, 1983), p. 92. Asser makes no mention of the roughly contemporary Old English translations of Boethius, Augustine, Bede, Orosius or the Psalms, all of which have been identified at various times with Alfred’s authorship or patronage.

²¹ The most complete version is preserved in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 322 (eleventh century). Parts of the Bks I–IV, which includes a metrical preface which refers to Alfred as the work’s commissioner, are copied in London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho C I, vol. 2 (eleventh century), while a fragment of Bk IV is preserved in Canterbury Cathedral Library Add. 25, dating from the late tenth century. A revised version of

Wærferth's translation was made c. 950–1050; all of Bk I and most of Bk II, together with a preface attributing the work to Alfred, are preserved in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 76 (eleventh century). For text and commentary, see *Bischof Waerferths von Worcester Uebersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen*, ed. Hans Hecht, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 5 (Leipzig and Hamburg, 1907; repr. Darmstadt, 1965). See also David Yerkes, *The Two Versions of Wærferth's Translation of Gregory's Dialogues: an Old English Thesaurus* (Toronto, 1979). *Fontes* lists only two citations of Wærferth's *Dialogues* in Anglo-Saxon sources: the Old English *Boethius* and the *Vision of Leofric*.

²² Paul. E. Szarmach, 'Another Old English Translation of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*?', *English Studies*, 62 (1981), 97–109; Brigitte Langefeld, 'A third Old English translation of Gregory's *Dialogues*, this time embedded in the Rule of Chrodegang', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 15 (1986), 197–204. For a recent discussion of the free reworking of a passage from the *Dialogi* in another Old English homily, see Daniel Thomas, 'Rewriting Gregory the Great: The Prison Analogy in Napier Homily I', *Review of English Studies*, 68 (2017), 203–23.

²³ For evidence of the *Beowulf*-poet's interest in the miraculous, see for example, the account of Scyld's mysterious arrival and departure from the Danes (lines 4–52); Hrothgar's pronouncement that God works 'wunder æfter wundre' ('miracle after miracle', line 930a) after Beowulf's victory over Grendel; and the description of the hero's divinely-assisted recovery in the fight with Grendel's mother's cave (lines 1550–75). See further Adrien Bonjour, *The Digressions in 'Beowulf'* (Oxford, 1950), p. 5; and Gabrielle Cocco, 'Wunder æfter wundre: Recounting the Marvellous in *Beowulf*', *AOQU—Epica e meravigliosa*, II, 1 (2021), 31–61.

²⁴ *Grégoire le Grand: Dialogues*, II (Livres I–III), Sources Chrétiennes 260, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé (Paris, 2011), pp. 270–72.

²⁵ Translation adapted from *Saint Gregory the Great: Dialogues*, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation 39, trans. Odo John Zimmerman, O. S. B. (Washington, 1959), pp. 117–18.

²⁶ Demons attack St Anthony in the desert only after he has taken up his residence in the tomb (*V. S. Antonii VIII*). The fort which Anthony later occupies has been so long deserted that it is now occupied only by reptiles, whom the saint immediately drives out (*Vita S. Antonii XII*). Echoing this Antonine motif, in the *Anonymous Life of Cuthbert III.1*, the saint retires to the island of Farne, which is uninhabited because of the haunting of devils. Similarly, the island of Crowland on which St Guthlac decides to build his hermitage had remained unsettled because of the 'fantasias demonum' ('phantoms of demons') who occupied it (*Vita Guthlaci XXV; Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave [Cambridge, 1956], pp. 88–9). See further *Vita Guthlaci XXIX–XXXVI* (Colgrave, pp. 95–117).

²⁷ For example, in one episode St Benedict casts the devil out of a demoniac clergyman (*Dialogi II.16*), while in another, he expels the devil from a monk who had been possessed while drawing water from a well (*Dialogi II.30*). For the rededication or reconsecration of buildings as churches, see for example *Dialogi III.6* and *III.30*. On rites for the dedication of Anglo-Saxon churches, see Helen Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 223–56. On conflicts between the devil and St Benedict in the *Dialogi*, see Charlotte Emily Kingston, 'The Devil in the Writings and Thought of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604)' (unpub. Ph.D. diss., University of York, 2011), pp. 123–55. For a discussion of two 'ghost' stories from *Dialogi IV* in which (benevolent) spirits return to the living to seek intercession for their sins, see Andrew Joynes, 'The *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great', in his *Medieval Ghost Stories: An Anthology of Miracles, Marvels and Prodigies* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 8–11. See further Peter Dendle, *Demon Possession in Anglo-Saxon England*, *Research in Medieval Culture* 12 (Kalamazoo, 2014); Emily Kesling, *Medical Texts in Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture*, *Anglo-Saxon Studies* 38 (Cambridge, 2020), pp. 77–91. For a list of miracles involving the devil, see *A Dictionary of Miracles, Imitative, Realistic, and Dogmatic*, ed. Ebenezer Cobham Brewer (Philadelphia, 1884), pp. 93–105, 387.

²⁸ *Lucian*, 8 vols, Loeb Classical Library 130, ed. and trans. A. M. Harmon (Cambridge, MA, 1921), III, pp. 319–82 (pp. 364–69).

²⁹ Daniel Ogden, *In Search of the Sorcerer's Apprentice: The Traditional Tales of Lucian's 'Lover of Lies'* (Swansea, 2007), pp. 205–24. Plautus' play is itself a Latin version of the Greek play *Phasma* ('Ghost'), by Philomen (c. 300 BC). Ogden, p. 213, suggests that the Corinthian setting of Lucian and Gregory's tales may point to a traditional link between this city and this tale, or to the city's more general association with ghost stories.

³⁰ For the Latin text, see 'Vita Germani episcopi Autissiodorensis auctore Constantio', in *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici (IV)*, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum 7 (Hanover and Leipzig, 1920), XI, pp. 225–83 (pp. 257–58). For an English translation, see *The Western Fathers: being the lives of SS. Martin of Tours, Ambrose, Augustine of Hippo, Honoratus of Arles, and Germanus of Auxerre*, ed. and trans. Frederick Russell Hoare (New York 1954), pp. 283–320.

³¹ See Ogden, p. 209. John Percival, 'Saints, Ghosts and the Afterlife of the Roman Villa', *L'Antiquité Classique*, 65 (1996), 161–73, discusses the ruined state of the haunted building in Constantius' tale in the context of the decline of late Roman villas in the post-Imperial period.

³² Grendel's envy nevertheless provides a link with patristic and early medieval ideal of the devil more generally: see O. F. Emerson, 'Grendel's Motive in Attacking Heorot', *Modern Languages Review*, 16 (1921), 113–19; Betty S. Cox, 'The Old English Satan and Grendel's Motive', in her *Cruces of 'Beowulf'*, *Studies in English Literature* 60 (The Hague, 1971), pp. 80–101. While earlier figures such as Cassian had attributed the Fall of Man to the devil's envy (cf. Wisdom ii.24: 'But by the envy of the devil, death came into the world'), Augustine established the idea that the devil's chief sin was pride: see Peter Dendle, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative Literature* (Toronto, 2001), p. 10. Gregory places equal emphasis on the devil's pride and envy: see Kingston, 'The Devil in the Writings and Thought of Pope Gregory'.

³³ See *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar*, Íslensk fornrit 7, ed. Guðni Jónsson (Reykjavík, 1936), pp. 104–23 (chs 31–5: the Glámr episode), 209–17 (chs 64–66: the Sandhauger episode); *Grettir's Saga*, trans. Denton Fox and Hermann Pálsson (Toronto, 1974), pp. 67–80, 135–40.

³⁴ See Chadwick, 'The Monsters and *Beowulf*'.

³⁵ For a similar approach to the poet's compositional method, see now Leonard Neidorf, *The Art and Thought of the 'Beowulf' Poet* (Cornell, 2023).

³⁶ Wærfeþ translates 'comitatum illius' as 'his geferrædene' (Hecht, p. 184). Ogden, pp. 211–12, notes that the motif of 'the hero's staff' is absent from Lucian's version of the haunting, but present in Pliny and Constantius' *Life of St Germanus*, where it is most prominent, as well as Gregory. The hero's confrontation of the demon alone is a feature of all versions of the story except Constantius.

³⁷ The Danish coastguard addresses the Geatish visitors collectively, as a group of 'searohæbbendra' ('warriors', lit. 'armour-having ones', line 237b), before singling out Beowulf as the most impressive member of the group (lines 247b–51a).

³⁸ 'Hrólf's saga kraka ok kappa hans', in *Fornaldr Sögur Norðurlanda I*, ed. Guðni Jónsson (Reykjavík, 1950), pp. 1–105 (pp. 66–7); *The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki*, trans. Jesse Byock (London, 1998), pp. 50–51.

³⁹ Cf. Old English *Dialogues*: 'swa rum hus' (Hecht, p. 184).

⁴⁰ For example: 'medo-ærn micel' ('great mead-hall', line 69a); 'heal-ærna mæst' ('the greatest of hall-buildings', line 78a); 'Sele hlífade/ hēah ond horn-gēap' ('the hall towered, high and horn-gabled', lines 81b–82a); 'hean hūses' ('high house', line 116a); 'sele þām hēan' ('that high hall', lines 713b, 919b, 1016b, 1984b); 'hēah-sele' ('high (lofty) hall', line 647a). On the magnificence of Heorot, see Hugh Magennis, 'Imagery of Light in Old English Poetry: Traditions and Appropriations', *Anglia*, 125 (2007), 181–204 (pp. 194–96).

⁴¹ Cf. Old English *Dialogues*: 'þa geseah he feorran sum hus, þæt wæs gerisenlicre mycelnysse' (Hecht, p. 184).

⁴² For comparison with the arrival of Aeneas and his companions at Carthage (*Aeneid* I. 418–22, 446–93), see Haber, pp. 122–24.

⁴³ Cf. Old English *Dialogues*: 'forþon þe deofla þær manige in eardodon ond hit forþon weste wunode' (Hecht, p. 184). In Constantius, the building is half-ruined, and has long been unoccupied ('tectis iam pridem sine habitatore semirutis', Krusch and Levison, p. 257).

⁴⁴ On the emendation of MS *hador* in line 414a and the interpretation of this line, see K IV, p. 141.

⁴⁵ Cf. *The Wanderer* line 74: 'þonne ealre þisse worulde wela wēste stondeð', 'when all the wealth of this world stands wasted'; and line 110: 'eal þis eorþan gasteal īdel weorþeð', 'all this earthly foundation stands empty'. The hills from which Guthlac drives the demons are described in similar terms: 'Stōd seo dýgle stōw dryhtne in gemyndum/ īdel ond æmen, eþel-riehte feor,/ bād bisæce betran hyrdes' ('The remote place was in the thoughts of the Lord, empty and desolate, far from ancestral rights, it awaited the claim of a better guardian', *Guthlac A*, lines 215–16a), though here the verb *stod* is used in the sense of 'remained/was' rather than 'stood'. Cf. the description of the uncreated abyss in *Genesis A*, lines 104b–06a: 'ac þes wida grund/ stōd deop and dim, Drihtne fremde/, īdel and unnyt' ('but this vast abyss stood deep and dark, alien to the Lord, empty and useless'). The collocation *idel* and *unnyt* also appears occasionally in OE prose, usually in the sense of 'superficial/superfluous/vain' (e.g. Ælfric's *Glossary*, *superuacuus*).

⁴⁶ Cf. Old English *Dialogues*: 'þe deofla'. Compare also Wærfeþ's rendering of other terms for the devil in this episode: 'antiquus hostis'/'se ealda feond'; 'malignus spiritus'/'se awyrgda gast'; 'mendax spiritus atque infidelis'/'se leasa gast ond se ungeleaffulla' (Hecht, pp. 184–85). In translating Gregory's account of the devil's attempts to expel St Martin from his cave, Wærfeþ employs several terms that overlap with the diction of the haunting of Heorot: 'Sed antiquus hostis humani generis, eius viribus invidens, hunc usitata arte pellere ex eo specu molitus est'/'ac se ealda feond manna cynnes æfæstgende his godra weorca ongan syrwan, hu he sceolde þisne mid his scincraefte of þam scræfe adrifan', *Dialogues* III.16)

⁴⁷ Ogden, p. 212.

⁴⁸ See further Frederick Klaeber, 'Die christlichen Elemente im *Beowulf*', *Anglia*, 35 (1911–12), 111–36, 249–70, 453–82, and *Anglia*, 36 (1912), 169–99, trans. by Paul Battles as 'The Christian Elements in *Beowulf*', *Old English Newsletter*, Subsidia 24 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1997), pp. 18–24; Cox, 'The Old English Satan and Grendel's Motive'; Rafael J. Pascual, 'Material Monsters and Semantic Shifts', in *The Dating of 'Beowulf': A Reassessment* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 202–18; Leneghan, *Dynastic Drama*, pp. 162–76. On *hel-runan*, see Chadwick, 'The Monsters and *Beowulf*', pp. 174–75. For the argument that line 163 contains an allusion to

Psalm xi.9 (*impii in circuitu ambulans*, ‘the wicked walk round about’), see Thomas D. Hill, ‘*Hwyrftum scriþað*: *Beowulf*, line 163’, *Mediaeval Studies*, 33 (1971), 379–81; and Thomas D. Hill, ‘The Return of the Broken Butterfly: *Beowulf* Line 163, Again’, *Mediaevalia et Humanistica*, 5 (1979) 271–81.

⁴⁹ Rafael J. Pascual has recently proposed the emendation of *Beowulf* line 2088a to *dyrnium cræftum* (‘with secret skills’), on the grounds that the hero lacks knowledge of revealed Christianity: ‘Two Possible Emendations to *Beowulf* 2088a’, *Notes and Queries*, 66 (2019), 5–8. For a defence of the manuscript reading, see Eric Weiskott, ‘On Emending *Beowulf* 2088a’, *American Notes and Queries*, 34 (2021), 9–10.

⁵⁰ Cf. Ps. cxl.5: ‘the proud have hidden a net for me. And they have stretched out cords for a snare: they have laid for me a stumbling block by the wayside’; II Timothy ii.26: ‘And they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, by whom they are held captive at his will’.

⁵¹ Emended from MS *synscapa* to allow for alliteration with the headstave ‘scaedu’ (line 707b). Wærferth uses the related term ‘sincraeft’ to refer to the devil’s horrible disturbances in the story of Datus (*Dialogues* III.4).

⁵² See J. R. R. Tolkien, ‘Grendel’s Titles’, appendix (a) to ‘*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 22 (1936), 22 (1936), 245–95, repr. in *Anthology of ‘Beowulf’ Criticism*, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, 1963), pp. 51–103 (pp. 88–91).

⁵³ The compound *eald-gewinna* is unique to *Beowulf* (cf. *eald-gewin*, ‘ancient strife’, *Elene* line 647a, *Beowulf* line 1781b). For a complete list of compounds and poetic diction, see now *Word-Hord: A Lexicon of Old English Verse*, ed. and compiled Andy Orchard (Oxford, 2020), <https://clasp.ell.ox.ac.uk/wordhord-v1.pdf> (accessed 3 August 2021). The collocation ‘ingenga mīn’ resembles the opening line of Metrical Charm 3, *Wið dweorh* (‘Against a Dwarf’), in which a mysterious creature (perhaps a personification of a nightmare or fever) enters into a room, before taking possession of a person sleeping within: ‘Hēr cōm ingangan inspiden-wiht (?inswiden-wiht) (‘Here came stalking in a creature, burning within (or strengthened within)’), line 1). Rare alliteration on the prepositional prefix *in-*, which in both lines occupies the metrical position of the headstave, emphasizes the invasive properties of the mysterious and hostile being in both the Charm and *Beowulf*. See Caroline Batten, ‘Vulnerable Bodies: The Poetics of Protection in the Old English Metrical Charms’ (unpub. Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford, 2020), pp. 31–34. Batten also notes the correspondence between this line and the description of Grendel’s advance on Heorot: ‘Cōm on wanre niht [...] Grendel gongan [...] cōm [...] Wōð under wolcnum [...] Cōm þā tō recede’ (lines 702b–720a) (p. 43). On the contested meaning of the crux ‘inspidenwiht’, see B. R. Hutcheson, ‘*Wið Dweorh*: An Anglo-Saxon Remedy for Fever in its Cultural and Manuscript Setting’, in *Secular Learning in Anglo-Saxon England: Exploring the Vernacular*, ed. László Sándor Chardonens and Bryan Carella (Amsterdam, 2012), pp. 175–202. In line 831a, the haunting of Heorot is also described as an ‘inwidsorge’ (‘insidious sorrow’) for the Danes. Grendel might also be said to be ‘burning within’: for example, he is described as a *fēond on helle* (‘enemy in hell’, line 101b), *helle hæfta* (‘captive of hell’, line 788a), and he has a hideous light, ‘ligge gelicost’ (‘most like fire’) shining from his eyes (lines 726b–27); see Andrew, ‘Grendel in Hell’; and Francis Leneghan, ‘*Beowulf* and the Hunt’, *Humanities* 11 (2022), 1–22 (pp. 8–10).

⁵⁴ See Kingston, p. 51. In the Old English *Dialogues*, Wærferth translates ‘antiqui hostis’ as ‘ealdan feondes’ (Hecht, p. 184). As Dorothy Whitelock notes, Felix describes the devil that assails Guthlac as ‘antiquus hostis prolis humanae’ (‘the ancient old enemy of the human race’, *Vita Guthlaci* XXIX; Colgrave, p. 94) (*The Audience of ‘Beowulf’* [Oxford, 1951], p. 81).

⁵⁵ Richard N. Ringler, ‘*Him sēo wēn gelēah*: Design for Irony in Grendel’s Last Visit to Heorot’, *Speculum*, 41 (1966), 49–67 (pp. 51–2).

⁵⁶ *Dictionary of Old English: A to I online*, ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al. (Toronto, 2018), accessed 8 April 2021, s. v. *earðian* A.4.c. Douay-Rheims Matt. xii.45: ‘Then he [...] taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there’. Cf. *Beowulf* lines 1253–54a: ‘siþðan gold-sele Grendel warode/ unriht æfnde’ (‘since Grendel guarded/occupied/inhabited the gold-hall, performed wrong’).

⁵⁷ Cf. Old English *Dialogues*: ‘in þære nihte, þa þa seo mæsta stilnes ond swigung wæs, ond se Godes wer reste’ (Hecht, p. 184). The night-time setting is common to all versions of the haunting tale. In Plautus, the guests in the haunted house have all fallen asleep before the apparition occurs. However, in Pliny and Lucian, the visitor keeps himself awake by reading during the night prior to the ghost’s appearance. In a variation of the reading motif, in Constantius’ version of the tale Germanus falls asleep but one of his clerks remains awake reading. When the ghost appears, the terrified clerk calls on the saint for help.

⁵⁸ Commentators have struggled to explain this last detail: why would all the Geatish party save Beowulf fall asleep in Heorot at such a crucial moment? Fulk, Bjork and Niles invoke the ‘Law of Contrast’, whereby ‘a hero is contrasted to his helpless companions, who often serve as no more than a foil by comparison to which his heroism shines all the more brightly’ (K IV, p. xciii). For comparison with scenes featuring sleeping defenders in the *Aeneid*, see Haber, pp. 130–31.

⁵⁹ Cf. I Peter v.8, ‘Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour’; and Ephesians vi.13–18, ‘Therefore, take unto you the armour of God, that you may be

able to resist in the evil day and to stand in all things perfect. [...] In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. [...] By all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the spirit: and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints'). For the motif of the devil's arrows, see Mark Atherton, 'The Figure of the Archer in *Beowulf* and the Anglo-Saxon Psalter', *Neophilologus*, 77 (1993), 653–57.

⁶⁰ For example, Matt. ix.32–33; Matt. xii.22; Matt. xvii.14–18; Mk v.11–15; Mk vii.25–30; Lk. iv.33–35; Lk. viii.26–35; Lk. xi.14.

⁶¹ Colgrave, pp. 96–7, 100–01.

⁶² Cf. Old English *Dialogues*: 'ond he þa swyþlice eorre aras' (Hecht, p. 185).

⁶³ Beowulf becomes similarly enraged during his subsequent fights with Grendel's mother ('yrre ðretta', 'angry warrior'; line 1532a; 'þa he gebolgen wæs', 'when he was enraged', line 1539b; 'yrringa slōh', 'he angrily struck', line 1565b) and the dragon ('torne gebolgen', 'he was enraged with hostility', line 2400b; 'ðā hē gebolgen wæs', 'when he was enraged', line 2550b).

⁶⁴ P. L. Henry, 'Furor Heroicus', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 39 (1982): 235–42; M. Puhvel, 'Beowulf and Irish Battle Rage', *Folklore*, 79 (2012), 40–47; Thomas L. Wymer and Erin F. Labbie, 'Civilized Rage in *Beowulf*', *The Heroic Age*, 7 (2004), <https://www.heroicage.org/issues/7/labbie%26wymer.html>, accessed 25 July 2021. See more generally Rolf. H. Bremmer, Jr, 'Looking Back at Anger: Wrath in Anglo-Saxon England', *RES*, 66 (2015), 423–48. For Virgilian parallels, see Haber, pp. 91–2. On the controversy over Aeneas' anger at Turnus at the end of the *Aeneid* (XII. 947–47), see Karl Galinsky, 'The Anger of Aeneas', *The American Journal of Philology*, 109 (1988), 321–48. Grendel's mother does not display the same anger as the other two monsters; instead, she takes a 'sorfulne sið' ('sorrowful journey', line 1278a; cf. line 2119a) to avenge her son's death, 'gīfre ond galg-mōd' ('greedy and sad in mind', line 1277a).

⁶⁵ Sarah Baccianti, 'Swelling in Anger: Somatic Descriptors in Old English and Old Norse Literature', in *Emotion and Medieval Textual Media*, ed. Mary C. Flannery, Early European Research 13 (Turnhout, 2018), pp. 51–73, compares the 'animalistic rage' of Beowulf and his adversaries with the wrath of God in *Genesis A*, who becomes sorely swollen with anger ('sare abolgen', line 1257a) with the race of Cain, and enraged ('gebolgen', line 299b) with Satan.

⁶⁶ Cf. Old English *Dialogues*: 'for ðære onwegadrifennesse se awyrgda gast his sceamode' (Hecht, p. 185).

⁶⁷ On the poet's interest in Grendel's mental state, see Klaeber, '*Beowulf* and *The Fight at Finnsburg*', pp. lviii–lix; Ringler, 'Design for Irony'. Paul Cavill notes how this passage resembles Cynewulf's account of the thoughts of the vanquished demon in *Juliana*, who also wishes to return to the company of its fellows (lines 553b–58): 'Christianity and Theology in *Beowulf*', p. 31.

⁶⁸ Ogden, p. 212.

⁶⁹ Athanasius, *Vita S. Antonii*, IX (*Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II.IV, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace [Grand Rapids, MI, 1957], p. 198). See also *Felix's Life of Guthlac*, XXXVI (Colgrave, pp. 114–15). For comparison between the animalistic noises made by the devil in *Dialogi* III.4 and the ghost's transformation into animals in Lucian, see Ogden, pp. 214–15. Goldsmith, *Mode and Meaning*, pp. 257–68, compares Athanasius' account of how Anthony, after wrestling with the demons and suffering great bodily pain, looked up and saw a ray of light descending (*Vita S. Antonii*, IX–X), with the light that shines in the underwater cave following Beowulf's victory over Grendel's mother, after a similarly desperate struggle (1570–72a). Boyer, 9–10, notes that *Dialogi* III.4 appears to have influenced an episode in *Jarteinabók Guðmundar byskups* ('The Miracles of Bishop Guðmundr') (c. 1400), in which the bishop, while staying overnight in an abandoned house haunted by ogresses (*flagðit*), hears a frightful noise and the sounds of a violent struggle; the bishop goes out with his relics and puts a stop to the haunting. For the text, see *Biskupa Sögur*, ed. Jón Sigurðsson, Guðbrandur Vigfússon, Þorvaldur Björnsson and Eiríkur Jónsson, 2 vols (Copenhagen, 1858), I, p. 598; Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, *The Folk-Stories of Iceland*, trans. Benedikt Benediktz, Viking Society for Northern Research Texts Series XVI (London, 2003), p. 78.

⁷⁰ Gustav Hübener, '*Beowulf* and Germanic Exorcism', *Review of English Studies*, o.s. 11 (1935), 163–81. For a critique of this approach, see Francis P. Magoun Jr., 'Zum heroischen Exorzismus des Beowulfsepos', *Arkiv för nordisk Filologi*, 54 (1939), 215–28.

⁷¹ Klaeber, '*Beowulf* and *The Fight at Finnsburg*', p. xvi; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 163.

⁷² On terms for God as Saviour and Protector in *Beowulf*, see Klaeber, 'Christian Elements', pp. 5–7.

⁷³ See A. P. Campbell, 'Physical Signs of Spiritual Cleansing in Old English Poetry', *Revue d'Université d'Ottawa*, 45 (1975), 382–91; Arthur G. Brodeur, 'Design for Terror in the Purging of Heorot', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 53 (1954), 503–13. The two vivid descriptions of the entrance to Grendel's mere (lines 1357b–79, 1408–17) appear to be indebted to the account of the entrance to hell in the apocryphal *Visio Pauli*, attested in Old English by Blickling Homily XVI; for an overview of scholarship on this link, see Orchard, *Critical Companion*, pp. 156–58.

⁷⁴ Thomas Klein, 'The Metaphorical Cloak of Exeter Riddle 83, "Ore/Gold/Metal"', *American Notes and Queries*, 28 (2015), 11–14, detects an allusion to the fall of Lucifer. See further Sr M. Maurice Kleman, 'Three

Old English Verbs for “Cleanse, Purge””, *International Anthropological and Linguistic Review*, 1 (1953) 179–84; Nathan J. Ristuccia, ‘*Fælsian* and the Purification of Sacred Space in the *Advent Lyrics*’, *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 41 (2010), 1–22. In non-poetic texts, *fælsende* appears in a gloss for Latin *lustrans* in MS Cotton Cleopatra A.III. Sourced from *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, compiled by Antonette diPaolo Healey with John Price Wilkin and Xin Xiang (Toronto, 2009), accessed 25 November 2021.

⁷⁵ Marijane Osborn, ‘The Great Feud: Scriptural History and Strife in *Beowulf*’, *Proceedings of the Modern Languages Association of America*, 93 (1978), 973–81 (p. 979). Osborn argues that the poet ‘has distinguished between two levels of knowledge, that bound by the secular world of the poem and that perceived from our initiated Christian perspective) (‘The Great Feud’, 973). See further Fred C. Robinson, *‘Beowulf’ and the Appositive Style* (Knoxville, 1985).

⁷⁶ For the argument that the compound ‘kyning-wuldor’ (664a) refers here to God, rather than Hrothgar who is the subject of the preceding lines, see Klaeber, ‘Christian Elements’, pp. 9–10.

⁷⁷ Mary C. Wilson Tietjen, ‘God, Fate, and the Hero of *Beowulf*’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 74 (1975), 159–71 (p. 168).

⁷⁸ Cf. *Beowulf* lines 696b–702a.

⁷⁹ Cf. Lk. xi.27: ‘Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck’. For discussion of this passage, see K4, p. 173. On *Beowulf* and Christ, see Klaeber, ‘Christian Elements’, 51; Leneghan, *Dynastic Drama*, pp. 231–35.

⁸⁰ It is noteworthy that there are no direct verbal parallels with the Old English translation of the *Dialogi*, suggesting that if there is influence it does not come from Wærferth’s version.

⁸¹ R. E. Kaske argues that in order for a text to be considered a source, ‘the proposed correspondence must be either precise or complex enough, and must carry an appropriate enough meaning for its context, that to consider it accidental would outrage probability’: R. E. Kaske, in collaboration with Arthur Groos and Michael W. Twomey, *Medieval Christian Literary Imagery: A Guide to Interpretation* (Toronto, 1988), p. xx.

⁸² The possibility of a direct link is strengthened by the fact that both terms are hapax legomena. See Fjalldall, *Long Arm*, pp. 54–66; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 149–68; K IV, p. xxxix.

⁸³ Emily V. Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 2014).

⁸⁴ The most detailed and compelling study of the poet’s intellectual background remains Patrick Wormald, ‘Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy’, in *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England: papers in honour of the 1300th anniversary of the birth of Bede, given at Cornell University in 1973 and 1974*, BAR 46, ed. Robert T. Farrell (Oxford, 1978), pp. 32–95, repr. in his *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Christian Society*, ed. Stephen Baxter (Malden, 2006), pp. 30–105. Wormald situates the poet within the deeply aristocratic culture of the early English church, noting, ‘If the poet belonged in any way to the mainstream of Christian Latin scholarship, as increasing numbers of critics suppose, it is obvious that he was Christian himself, and highly likely that he was some sort of priest’ (p. 36). For recent arguments for dating the poem’s composition to before the Viking Age, see Leonard Neidorf, ed. *The Dating of ‘Beowulf’: A Reassessment*, Anglo-Saxon Studies 24 (Cambridge, 2014).

⁸⁵ Whitelock, *Audience*, pp. 80–82. See further Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (University Park, PA, 1991), pp. 229–39; Sam D. Newton, *The Origins of ‘Beowulf’ and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East-Anglia* (Cambridge, 1993), esp. pp. 142–43; and Alfred K. Siewers, ‘Landscapes of Conversion: Guthlac’s Mound and Grendel’s Mere as Expressions of Anglo-Saxon Nation-Building’, *Viator*, 34 (2003), 1–39.

⁸⁶ Wormald, ‘Bede, *Beowulf*’, p. 56.

⁸⁷ T. M. Gang, ‘Approaches to *Beowulf*’, *Review of English Studies*, 3 (1952), 1–12, suggests that the poem ‘so far from being a Christianized epic, is an attempt at a sort of Secular Saints’ Life’ (11).

⁸⁸ On the motif of conversion in hagiographical dragon-fights, see Rauer, *Beowulf and the Dragon*, pp. 72–4. Grønlie, *Saint and the Saga-Hero*, pp. 83–7, discusses how the author of *Egils saga* adapted motifs from the *Dialogi* to suit the tale of a pagan Norse hero, casting the hero as an ‘anti-saint’.

⁸⁹ Moreover, the narrator has already confirmed that Heorot is destined to burn in the feud with the Heathobards (lines 82b–85). On the Scylding-Heathobard feud, see Leneghan, *Dynastic Drama*.

⁹⁰ Cf. Grønlie, *Saint and the Saga-Hero*, p. 1.

⁹¹ The authors of Old English verse saints’ lives, such as Cynewulf and the *Andreas*-poet, seem to have found inspiration in *Beowulf*: see, for example, Francis Leneghan, ‘The Departure of the Hero in a Ship: The Intertextuality of *Beowulf*, Cynewulf and *Andreas*’, *SELIM*, 24 (2019), 105–32.

⁹² See Thomson, *Communal Creativity*, p. 89.

⁹³ For example, the earliest manuscript of the *South English Legendary* includes Middle English romances such as *King Horn* and *Havelok* alongside saints’ lives. See Kimberly K. Bell, “‘Holie Mannes Liues’”: England and its Saints in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108’s *King Horn* and *South English Legendary*’, in *The*

Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108, Medieval and Renaissance Authors and Texts 6, ed. Kimberly K. Bell and Juliet Nelson Couch (Leiden, 2011), pp. 251–74.

⁹⁴ For a preliminary study, with a focus on the poem's potential date of composition, see Colin Chase, 'Saints Lives, Royal Lives and the Dating of *Beowulf*', in *The Dating of 'Beowulf'*, ed. Colin Chase (Toronto, 1981), pp. 161–72. See also by the same author 'Beowulf, Bede, and St. Oswine: The Hero's Pride in Old English Hagiography', in *The Anglo-Saxons: Synthesis and Achievements*, ed. John D. Woods and David A. E. Pelteret (Waterloo, Ontario, 1985), pp. 37–48, repr. in *Beowulf: Basic Readings*, ed. Peter S. Baker (London, 1995), pp. 181–94. See further Helen Appleton, 'Anglo-Saxon Landscapes: The Construction of the Environment in Old English and Related Texts' (unpubd. Ph.D. diss., University of Sydney, 2012), esp. ch. 5; Nettie Christine Vinsonhaler, 'The prophetic Beowulf: heroic-hagiographic hybridity in *Andreas*, *Juliana*, and *Beowulf*' (unpubd. Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 2013); and Malcolm Alexander Fleck, 'The Narrative and Descriptive Influence of Latin Hagiography on *Beowulf*' (unpubd. Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2019). In a recent article, Helen Appleton discusses the decapitation of Æschere in the context of *Juliana* and the *Old English Legend of the Seven Sleepers*: 'The Role of Æschere's Head', *Review of English Studies*, 68 (2017), 428–47.