

**SPATIAL DIALECTICS: POETIC TECHNIQUE AND THE
LANDSCAPE OF OLD ENGLISH VERSE**

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D.PHIL THESIS
TRINITY TERM 2012

ABSTRACT

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D.Phil Thesis
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This thesis examines the role of spatial representation in Old English poetry. Focusing on the presentation of setting and spatial relationships in narrative poetry, it argues that sensibility towards the creative potential of spatial representation within a conventional tradition constitutes a significant element of Old English poetic technique. It emphasizes the importance of intertextual reading practices which recognize the dialectics of text and tradition underlying spatial representation in individual examples.

Chapter one introduces the subject, outlining the relevant critical contexts in which the thesis stands and describing the methodology that is followed in the subsequent chapters. It also describes the connection between the representation of space and critical assumptions regarding vernacular poetic composition.

Chapter two focuses on poetic accounts of the angelic rebellion. The presentation of this event as a territorial and spatial conflict establishes a contrast between vertical and horizontal spatial relationships which relates to concerns prevalent throughout the Anglo-Saxon period over conflicting models for power relationships. The prominence of vertical spatial relationships in these accounts serves to legitimize hierarchical power structures.

Chapter three considers territorial conflict in Old English battle poetry. Similarities in the use of setting and the construction of a sense of place in these texts suggest the influence of established poetic conventions. However, poetic artistry is evident in the ways in which spatial representation contributes to the wider thematic and artistic concerns of these texts.

Chapter four examines poetic representations of the prison. Whilst such representations do partially reflect conceptualizations of the prison current in Anglo-Saxon England, they also demonstrate a deeper interest in the valence of enclosed space. The chapter extends the intertextual approach of the thesis to consider the possibility of direct borrowing between poems.

Chapter five clarifies the argument of the thesis regarding the relationship between spatial representation and poetic technique and identifies some directions for further work.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Whilst writing this thesis I have received financial support in the form of travel grants and research allowances from both Jesus College, Oxford and the Meyerstein Research Fund at the Faculty of English. For helping keep body and soul together, I am also grateful to the various Oxford colleges which have employed me as a lecturer during this period, especially Harris Manchester College, Jesus College, Oriel College, St John's College and Trinity College.

To two tutors at Oxford I owe particular debts. In the first place, my interest in medieval literature developed, during my undergraduate career, under the inspirational tuition of Dr Helen Barr. For this, and for much subsequent assistance and advice, I am extremely grateful. In the second place, both this thesis and my own development as a scholar have benefited immeasurably from the insightful comments and criticisms of my supervisor Prof. Malcolm Godden. My thanks are due for this, and also for his patience with a project that ended up taking far longer than either of us had anticipated.

On a personal level, it is impossible to imagine that this project would have been completed without the unfailing support—intellectual as well as emotional—of Liv Robinson. It is impossible to imagine that it would ever have been started without the encouragement and generosity of my parents Janet and David, to whom it is gratefully dedicated.

ABBREVIATIONS AND SHORT TITLES

ANQ	<i>American Notes & Queries</i>
ASC	<i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition</i> , gen. ed. David Dumville and Simon Keynes (Cambridge, 1983-); cited (unless otherwise stated) from <i>Volume 3. MS A</i> , ed. Janet M. Bately (see bibliography for details of individual volumes)
ASE	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
ASPR	Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records
Bethurum	<i>The Homilies of Wulfstan</i> , ed. Dorothy Bethurum (Oxford, 1957); cited by homily and line number
Blickling	<i>The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century</i> , ed. R. Morris, EETS os 58, 63, 73 (London, 1880); cited by homily and page number
BT, BTS	Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, <i>An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary</i> (Oxford, 1898); T. Northcote Toller, <i>Supplement</i> (Oxford, 1921) with Alistair Campbell, <i>Revised and Enlarged Addenda</i> (Oxford, 1972)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CH 1	<i>Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series: Text</i> , ed. P. A. M. Clemoes, EETS ss 17 (Oxford, 1997); cited by homily and line number
CH 2	<i>Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series: Text</i> , ed. Malcolm Godden, EETS ss 5 (Oxford, 1979); cited by homily and line number
CSASE	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
DOE	<i>Dictionary of Old English: A-G</i> online, ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonina diPaolo Healey <i>et al</i> (Toronto, Dictionary of Old English Project 2007), http://www.doe.utoronto.ca
EETS	Early English Text Society os Original Series ss Supplementary Series
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
ELN	<i>English Language Notes</i>
ES	<i>English Studies</i>
HE	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum</i> ; cited by book and chapter number from <i>Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> , ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969)
JEGP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>

- LS *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. Walter W. Skeat, EETS os 76, 82, 94, 114, reprinted in 2 vols. (London, 1966); cited by homily and line number
- LSE *Leeds Studies in English*
- MÆ *Medium Ævum*
- MLN *Modern Language Notes*
- MLQ *Modern Language Quarterly*
- MLR *Modern Language Review*
- MP *Modern Philology*
- N&Q *Notes and Queries*
- Napier *Wulfstan: Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien*, ed. Arthur Napier (Berlin, 1883); cited by homily, page, and line number
- NM *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*
- ns New Series
- ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition, ed. Lawrence Goldman (2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com>
- OEB *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius's De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine with a chapter on the Metres by Mark Griffith and contributions by Rohini Jayatilaka, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2009)
- PL *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844-64); cited by volume and column number from *Patrologia Latina: The Full Text Database* (1993), <http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk>
- PMLA *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*
- PQ *Philological Quarterly*
- RES *Review of English Studies*
- S P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks 8 (London, 1968); cited from *The Electronic Sawyer: an online version of the revised edition of Sawyer's Anglo-Saxon Charters section one [S 1-1602]*, ed. S. E. Kelly (1999), <http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/chartwww/eSawyer.99/eSawyer2.html>
- SN *Studia Neophilologica*
- SP *Studies in Philology*
- Vercelli *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. D. G. Scragg, EETS os 300 (Oxford, 1992); cited by homily and line number

NOTE ON EDITIONS CONSULTED AND TRANSLATIONS

The principle throughout this thesis has been to consult the most recent dedicated critical edition of all texts cited, except in some instances where the treatment of the most recent edition(s) has been less full than that of older works. In three respects I have consistently and silently altered the edited texts: by omitting diacritical markers, by silently accepting editorial emendations marked as such in the edited text, and by normalizing the characters ‘wynn’ and ‘yogh’ to ‘w’ and ‘g’ respectively.

The text of the Vulgate is cited from *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. Robert Weber *et al*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart, 1994); translations follow the Douai-Rheims text contained in *The Holy Bible: Douay version, translated from the Latin Vulgate (Douay, A.D. 1609: Rheims, A.D. 1582)* (London, 1956). Other translations are my own throughout unless otherwise stated.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: SPATIAL DIALECTICS AND THE ‘SPATIAL TURN’ IN OLD

ENGLISH LITERARY CRITICISM

Until relatively recently, the critical study of the representation of landscape and setting in medieval literature consisted primarily of what John Ganim has called ‘a[n] exercise of apology’.¹ While Ganim is referring specifically to the study of later medieval literature, his comments are equally true of the study of Anglo-Saxon literature, and particularly of Old English poetry. In the nineteenth century and beyond, literary critics routinely judged and evaluated the depiction of scene and setting in Old English verse—particularly the depiction of natural landscapes—according to contemporary mimetic and Romantic expectations.² Such expectations tended, moreover, to be implicitly or explicitly founded on a belief that precise and evocative depictions of the natural world provide a proper and fitting subject for poetic representation.

These criteria are revealed, for example, in the comments of Francis Turner Palgrave in his study of *Landscape in Poetry from Homer to Tennyson*:

From primaeval days it is impossible that man can have looked without interest, awe, and pleasure on the mysteriously alluring scene around him—mountains, rivers, plains, sea, sky: stars, moon, sun, their rising and setting. Nor could these great features of nature fail of being in some way represented, so soon as poetry and painting reached any true grasp of expression.³

On the back of this statement, Palgrave bases his analysis of Old English poetry—of which he does not have a high opinion—on the extent to which he may discern in it the ‘true, [...]’

¹ John M. Ganim, ‘Landscape and Late Medieval Literature: A Critical Geography’, in ed. Laura L. Howes, *Place, Space, and Landscape in Medieval Narrative*, Tennessee Studies in Literature 43 (Knoxville, Tennessee, 2007), xv-xxix, at xvi.

² Cf. Daniel G. Calder, ‘Histories and surveys of Old English literature: a chronological review’, *ASE* 10 (1981), 201-44, at 207.

³ Francis Turner Palgrave, *Landscape in Poetry from Homer to Tennyson* (London, 1897), 1.

modern feeling' for landscape 'partially prefigured'.⁴ Particularly damning for Palgrave is the lack of detailed realism in the depiction of natural landscapes in Old English poetry:

'the landscape is scarcely described; the scene is indicated, rather than painted, by isolated touches'.⁵

However, in comparison to the beautiful pastoral landscapes he finds in classical and biblical literature, Palgrave does acknowledge the 'powerfully lurid' quality occasionally evident in descriptions of nature in Old English poetry.⁶ For many of Palgrave's contemporaries, the value of Old English poetry was felt to reside largely in such 'lurid' depictions of desolate landscapes and forbidding seascapes. Henry Sweet, who differs from Palgrave in identifying depictions of 'natural scenery' as amongst the 'most characteristic features' of Old English verse, praises the 'vividness and individuality' achieved in such passages, many of which are 'not inferior to the most perfect examples of descriptive poetry in modern English literature,—perhaps the highest praise that can be given'.⁷ For Sweet, any value that is to be found in the description of setting in Old English verse derives from an essentially emotive depiction of natural landscapes, and in this he is followed by contemporaries such as Stopford Brooke and W. P. Ker. For Brooke, it is the riddles of the Exeter Book—which he attributes to Cynewulf—that particularly display this Romantic tendency, being marked by 'deliberate and careful descriptions of natural scenery' included 'not as a background for human interest, but for the sake of nature alone'.⁸ Similarly, Ker also singles out Cynewulf—to whom he tentatively assigns *Andreas*, *The Dream of the Rood*, *Guthlac (A and B)*, and *The Phoenix* in addition to the

⁴ *Ibid.*, 111, 113.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 109-10. The same comparison has been made more recently by C. R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (Oxford, 1982), 26.

⁷ Henry Sweet, 'Sketch of the History of Anglo-Saxon Poetry', in Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry from the Twelfth to the Close of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, 4 vols. (London, 1871), II, 3-19, at 6-7. Cf. Calder, 'Chronological review', 213.

⁸ Stopford A. Brooke, *English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest* (London, 1898), 91.

four signed poems—as ‘a romantic poet’ in whose works ‘the characters and the story are subordinate to the incidental beauties’.⁹

The ongoing influence of such essentially Romantic criteria on criticism of Old English verse throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, particularly with regard to the depiction of nature, has been documented in a landmark study by E. G. Stanley.¹⁰

However, throughout the second half of the twentieth century critical approaches to setting and landscape in Old English verse increasingly emphasized the degree to which such criteria and expectations are inappropriate when applied to a literature governed both by strongly traditional poetic conventions and also a less strongly mimetic literary aesthetic.¹¹

In 1973, Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter articulated a growing perception that Old English poetic descriptions of setting might be best understood not as an attempt at naturalistic or realistic re-presentation, but symbolically as part of the way in which meaning is constructed in these poems. Pearsall and Salter argued that the use of setting in Old English poetry calls for an ‘iconological’ approach on the part of the audience, suggesting that while individual instances of landscape description might be ‘valid in terms of natural reality and personal experience’, their significance is nonetheless ‘subsumed in a larger purpose which concerns itself with spiritual and conceptual truths’.¹²

The ‘iconological’ approach to medieval descriptions of setting proposed by Pearsall and Salter, and their implicit rejection of previous teleological approaches such as those outlined above, has proved influential.¹³ Their study was timely, anticipating to a significant extent the so-called ‘spatial turn’ in critical and cultural studies whose origins

⁹ W. P. Ker, *The Dark Ages* (New York, 1904), 263.

¹⁰ E. G. Stanley, ‘The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism’, in *id.*, *Imagining the Anglo-Saxon Past: The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism and Anglo-Saxon Trial by Jury* (Cambridge, 2000), 1-110, at 3-6. First printed as a series of articles in *N&Q* ns 11 (1964) and *N&Q* ns 12 (1965).

¹¹ Cf. A. J. Gurevich’s warning that ‘the process of perceiving and reproducing the world in terms of art generates its own autonomous categories of space and time, whose conventional character must always be borne in mind’ (*Categories of Medieval Culture*, trans. G. L. Campbell (London, 1985), 35).

¹² Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (London, 1973), 42.

¹³ Cf. Chris Fitter’s praise of *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* as ‘a miracle of near inerrancy’ (*Poetry, Space, Landscape: Towards a New Theory* (Cambridge, 1995), 156).

are usually identified in the late 1970s.¹⁴ Originating in the work of Francophone critical theorists such as—particularly—Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault, this ‘spatial turn’ concerns primarily the consequences of poststructuralism’s rejection of objective epistemology for the study of the representation and organization of space.¹⁵ Based on the fundamental recognition that the conceptualization of space is neither objective nor absolute but a social and cultural construct, the ‘spatial turn’ in critical theory has fostered a greater alertness to the role that representation in all its forms plays in the production of space.¹⁶

In medieval studies, this spatial turn has been apparent in the growing prominence of critical studies of the representation of place and space in the literature of the period. Renewed engagement with these issues is apparent both in the wealth of shorter studies focusing on individual aspects of space and place in particular texts that have appeared in recent years—many of which will be referred to during the course of this study—and also in the appearance of edited collections focusing on the presentation of landscape, place, and setting, or on specific elements of this presentation.¹⁷ It is also apparent, however, in

¹⁴ For convenient discussions of the ‘spatial turn’ and its ongoing influence on critical thinking, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, see James S. Duncan, Nuala C. Johnson, and Richard H. Schein, ‘Introduction’, in eds. *id.*, *A Companion to Cultural Geography*, Blackwell Companion to Geography 4 (Oxford, 2004), 1-8; Barney Warf and Santa Arias, ‘Introduction: the reinsertion of space into the social sciences and humanities’, in eds. *id.*, *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary perspectives*, Routledge Studies in Human Geography (New York, 2009), 1-10.

¹⁵ See further Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991; reprinted 2005) and for commentary Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial dialectics* (London and New York, 1999), esp. 141-85. Foucault’s diverse contributions to the theorization of space are best approached through the original writing and critical responses collected in eds. Jeremy W. Crampton and Stuart Elden, *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography* (Aldershot, 2007). On the influence of poststructuralist thinking on the ‘spatial turn’ see Deborah P. Dixon and John Paul Jones III, ‘Poststructuralism’, in eds. Duncan *et al.*, *Cultural Geography*, 79-107.

¹⁶ Cf. Adam Jaworski and Crispin Thurlow, ‘Introducing Semiotic Landscapes’, in eds. *id.*, *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space* (London and New York, 2010), 1-40, at 6-7; Shields, *Spatial dialectics*, 154-5.

¹⁷ See, for example, eds. John Howe and Michael Wolfe, *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Sense of Place in Western Europe* (Gainesville, Florida, 2002); ed. Nicholas Howe, *Home and Homelessness in the Medieval and Renaissance World* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2004); eds. Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, *A Place to Believe In: Locating Medieval Landscapes* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2006); ed. Howes, *Place, Space, and Landscape in Medieval Narrative*. Most recently, the effect of Britain’s insular geography on the intersection of place and identity in medieval literature has been the focus of a volume edited by Sebastian I.

the way in which such concerns have been reflected in more detailed studies produced during, particularly, the past two decades.

With reference to Old English verse, an example of this engagement with spatial representation from the late 1990s is Hugh Magennis' study of *Images of Community in Old English Poetry*, a work which includes chapters examining the use of landscape and setting not only in *Beowulf*, but also in Old English biblical and hagiographical narrative poetry.¹⁸ In the same period, Jennifer Neville's *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry* appeared. Whilst Neville's study does not, in spite of the title, consider poetic depictions of landscape or setting in particular detail, she does emphasize 'the lack of a single, consistent unity' in the treatment of nature in Old English verse, arguing that the use of the natural world should be interpreted as 'a powerful cipher through which Old English poets developed their themes'.¹⁹ More recently still, conceptions of place and the poetic representation of space have featured prominently in several studies published during the first decade of the twenty-first century, including Ananya Kabir's examination of conventional descriptions of paradisiacal landscapes in Old English poetry and prose,²⁰ John Hines' exploration of what poetic approaches to space and place can reveal about 'the Anglo-Saxon cultural relationship with the landscape',²¹ and two monographs published in 2006 by Catherine Clarke and Kathy Lavezzo respectively which each consider the

Sobecki (*The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages: Maritime Narratives, Identity and Culture* (Cambridge, 2011)).

¹⁸ Hugh Magennis, *Images of Community in Old English Poetry*, CSASE 18 (Cambridge, 1996), esp. 121-88. On the setting of hagiographical narrative, see also Peter Dendle, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative Literature* (Toronto, 2001), 62-86.

¹⁹ Jennifer Neville, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry*, CSASE 27 (Cambridge, 1999), at 204. See also, *id.*, 'Leaves of Glass: Plant-Life in Old English Poetry', in ed. C. P. Biggam, *From Earth to Art: The Many Aspects of the Plant-World in Anglo-Saxon England* (Amsterdam and New York, 2003), 287-300.

²⁰ Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, CSASE 32 (Cambridge, 2001), esp. 141-66.

²¹ John Hines, *Voices in the Past: English Literature and Archaeology* (Cambridge, 2004), 54-70, quotation at 54.

relationship between literary depictions of place and the development of national identity in early medieval literature, as well as in the literature of the later medieval period.²²

However, the most notable contributions to the study of spatial representation and setting in Old English literature have come from two scholars in particular. The first of these is Fabienne Michelet, whose *Creation, Migration, and Conquest: Imaginary Geography and Sense of Space in Old English Literature*—also published in 2006—draws on the theoretical approach to spatial representation outlined by Jacques Le Goff to provide what is, to date, the only full-length monograph study of ‘the Anglo-Saxons’ spatial *imaginaire* and [...] the writing strategies underlying its elaboration’.²³ Despite her insistence that the goal of her study is ‘exemplification, [...] not exhaustiveness’, Michelet’s approach—loosely organized around the three headings of creation, migration and conquest—is broad in scope and deliberately ‘heterogeneous’.²⁴ Alongside both prose and verse literature in Old English and Latin, Michelet’s discussion encompasses wider European traditions for the representation of space, both written and visual, from the late antique and early medieval periods. Central to Michelet’s approach is her understanding of ‘the complex and essential relation between location and identity’;²⁵ like the work of Clarke and Lavezzo, therefore, Michelet is also concerned with the development and expression of national identity in the literature of the Anglo-Saxon period.

The second scholar whose influence upon critical understanding of Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards spatial representation must be particularly acknowledged is the late

²² Catherine A. M. Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England, 700-1400* (Cambridge, 2006), esp. 7-66; Kathy Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature, and English Community, 1000-1534* (Ithaca, New York, 2006), 27-45.

²³ Fabienne L. Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest: Imaginary Geography and Sense of Space in Old English Literature* (Oxford, 2006), xi. Following Le Goff, Michelet defines the *imaginaire* as ‘the creative, as opposed to the reproductive part of the mental depiction of reality that is fundamental to any process of representation’ (*ibid.*, 8). See also, *id.*, ‘Lost at Sea: Nautical Travels in the Old English *Exodus*, the Old English *Andreas*, and Accounts of the *adventus Saxonum*’, in ed. Sobecki, *The Sea and Englishness*, 59-79.

²⁴ Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 32-3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, ix.

Nicholas Howe. In contrast to Michelet's highly theoretical approach, Howe, in a series of shorter studies several of which are collected in the posthumously published volume *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography*, focuses more explicitly on the relationship between space and place in Anglo-Saxon culture and the creation of ideas of landscape during this period.²⁶ Writing from a more explicitly historicist stance, Howe largely rejects the Francophone theoretical tradition in favour of 'the precise analysis' that he sees as characteristic of Anglo-American critical traditions.²⁷ Where Howe's approach partially overlaps with that of Michelet, however, is in their shared debt to post-colonial literary theory as a tool for explicating Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards space and place, a debt that was also evident in Howe's earlier work on Anglo-Saxon cultural responses to the historical migration of the continental Germanic tribes at the *adventus Saxonum*.²⁸

This new-found receptiveness to the significance of spatial representation in Old English poetry forms the principal critical context in which this thesis is located, and my particular debt to the work of both Michelet and Howe will be apparent throughout this study. The aim of this thesis, broadly speaking, is to further critical appreciation of the sensibility of Anglo-Saxon poets to spatial representation through a particular focus on the use of setting in vernacular narrative verse. An important part of the argument to be

²⁶ Nicholas Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography* (New Haven, Connecticut, and London, 2008). Cf. *id.*, 'An Angle on This Earth: Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 82 (2000), 3-27; *id.*, 'The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England: Inherited, Invented, Imagined', in eds. Howe and Wolfe, *Inventing Medieval Landscapes*, 91-112; *id.*, 'Falling Into Place: Dislocation in the Junius Book', in eds. Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr.* (Toronto, 2003), 14-37; *id.*, 'Looking for Home in Anglo-Saxon England', in ed. *id.*, *Home and Homelessness*, 143-63; *id.*, 'Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34 (2004), 147-72; *id.*, 'Anglo-Saxon England and the Postcolonial Void', in eds. Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams, *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 54 (Cambridge, 2005), 25-47; *id.*, 'Two Landscapes, Two Stories: Anglo-Saxon England and the United States', in ed. Paolo Squatriti, *Natures Past: the Environment and Human History*, Comparative Studies in Society and History (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 2007), 214-39.

²⁷ Howe, *Writing the Map*, xi.

²⁸ Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England*, paperback ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2001).

developed here is that the use of setting in Old English narrative poetry remains largely underappreciated. Much of the work that has been undertaken on spatial representation in Old English verse has focused either on the more lyrical depictions of landscape contained particularly in the Exeter Book ‘elegies’,²⁹ or on particular and perhaps exceptional settings such as the monstrous landscapes of *Beowulf*³⁰ or the ambiguous fenland setting of *Guðlac A*.³¹ In this study, I have deliberately avoided discussing such well-known examples, focusing instead on less frequently examined instances from the corpus of narrative poetry in an attempt to demonstrate the extent to which sensibility to the significant use of setting pervades this poetry.

²⁹ Cf. Edward B. Irving, Jr, ‘Image and Meaning in the Elegies’, in ed. Robert P. Creed, *Old English Poetry: Fifteen Essays* (Providence, Rhode Island, 1967), 153-66; Karl P. Wentersdorf, ‘The Situation of the Narrator in the Old English *Wife’s Lament*’, *Speculum* 56 (1981), 492-516; Frederick S. Holton, ‘Old English Sea Imagery and the Interpretation of *The Seafarer*’, *The Yearbook of English Studies* 12 (1982), 208-17; Emily Jensen, ‘The Wife’s Lament’s *eorðscraef*: Literal or Figural Sign’, *NM* 91 (1990), 449-57; Paul Battles, ‘Of Graves, Caves, and Subterranean Dwellings: *Eorðscraef* and *Eorðsele* in *The Wife’s Lament*’, *PQ* 73 (1994), 267-86; Stacy S. Klein, ‘Gender and the Nature of Exile in the Old English Elegies’, in eds. Lees and Overing, *A Place to Believe In*, 113-31; Sachi Shimomura, ‘Remembering in Circles: *The Wife’s Lament*, *Conversatio*, and the Community of Memory’, in eds. Charles D. Wright, Frederick M. Biggs and Thomas N. Hall, *Source of Wisdom: Old English and Early Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Thomas D. Hill* (Toronto, 2007), 113-29.

³⁰ Cf. Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, *The Art of Beowulf* (Berkeley, California, 1959), esp. 25-6, 94-5, 111-12, 117-18; Margaret E. Goldsmith, *The Mode and Meaning of ‘Beowulf’* (London, 1970), 112-22; Richard J. Schrader, ‘Sacred Groves, Marvellous Waters, and Grendel’s Abode’, *Florilegium* 5 (1983), 76-84; Sarah Lynn Higley, ‘*Aldor on ofre*, or The Reluctant Heart: a Study of Liminality in *Beowulf*’, *NM* 87 (1986), 342-53; Richard Butts, ‘The Analogical Mere: Landscape and Terror in *Beowulf*’, *ES* 68 (1987), 113-21; Donald K. Fry, ‘The Cliff of Death in Old English Poetry’, in ed. John Miles Foley, *Comparative Research in Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry* (Columbus, Ohio, 1987), 213-34; Alfred Bammesberger, ‘*Beowulf*’s Descent into Grendel’s Mere’, *NM* 96 (1995), 225-27; Jan Čermák, ‘*Hie dygel lond warigeað*: Spatial Imagery in Five *Beowulf* Compounds’, *Linguistica Pragensia* 1 (1996), 24-34; Magennis, *Images of Community*, 121-43; Margaret Gelling, ‘The Landscape of *Beowulf*’, *ASE* 31 (2002), 7-11; Daniel Anlezark, ‘Poisoned places: the Avernian tradition in Old English poetry’, *ASE* 36 (2007), 103-26; Stuart Elden, ‘Place Symbolism and Land Politics in *Beowulf*’, *Cultural Geographies* 16 (2009), 447-63; Christopher Abram, ‘New Light on the Illumination of Grendel’s Mere’, *JEGP* 109 (2010), 198-216. See also, Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 75-114; John D. Niles, *Old English Heroic Poems and the Social Life of Texts*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 20 (Turnhout, 2007), 119-40; Alfred Hiatt, ‘*Beowulf* off the map’, *ASE* 38 (2009), 11-40.

³¹ Cf. Laurence K. Shook, ‘The Burial Mound in *Guthlac A*’, *MP* 58 (1960), 1-10; Paul F. Reichardt, ‘*Guthlac A* and the Landscape of Spiritual Perfection’, *Neophilologus* 58 (1974), 331-8; A. P. Campbell, ‘Physical Signs of Spiritual Cleansing in Old English Poetry’, *Revue de l’Université d’Ottawa* 45 (1975), 382-91; Karl P. Wentersdorf, ‘*Guthlac A*: The Battle for the Beorg’, *Neophilologus* 62 (1978), 135-42; Magennis, *Images of Community*, 178-88; Manish Sharma, ‘A Reconsideration of *Guthlac A*: The Extremes of Saintliness’, *JEGP* 101 (2002), 185-200; 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; Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 172-4, 181-3.

Where possible, this sensibility will be demonstrated through comparison with relevant textual sources and analogues. My analysis will suggest that vernacular poets consistently elaborate on details of scene and setting when adapting pre-existing Latin textual models. Moreover, an examination of extant vernacular prose responses to these same Latin models—which do not commonly handle aspects of setting in this way—suggests that this elaboration is a feature of the process of poetic adaptation or translation. In making this suggestion, I am arguing that significant use of spatial setting forms one aspect of traditional poetic technique available to Anglo-Saxon vernacular poets. This in itself is not a new argument. That particular depictions of scene and landscape in Old English poetry reflect established poetic conventions for the representation of space has been argued by several scholars in recent years. Magennis, for example, discusses ‘the inheritance of traditional landscape and seascape themes’ in Old English poetry, while Kabir identifies the ‘formulaic system’ behind the common description of paradisiacal locations as verdant, spacious, and fertile plains.³² What I should like to stress, however, is that despite the similarities that are often apparent in the description of particular settings in particular narrative situations, it is often the precise, local differences in the use of setting that are particularly noteworthy, displaying as they do the individual sensitivity of different vernacular poets.

In this respect, the argument of this thesis also relates to critical debates concerning the relationship between convention and individual artistry in Old English poetry. To what extent does the recognition that the use of setting in Old English verse draws upon poetic conventions and traditions affect the significance that any particular depiction may have carried for an Anglo-Saxon poet or his audience? This is, in effect, a variant of the challenge to critical practices and assumptions posed in the 1950s by the advent of oral-

³² Magennis, *Images of Community*, 122; Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, 142-7. Cf. Neville’s description of the depiction of the natural world in Old English verse as ‘a literary convention with specific and limited aims’ (‘Leaves of Glass’, 287).

formulaic approaches to Old English verse.³³ In its original form as applied to Old English literature by Francis P. Magoun, oral-formulaic theory held not only that the demonstrable use of formulaic language provided a clear test for the oral origins of individual poems,³⁴ but also that the circumstances of oral poetic composition—‘not word by word with deliberation and at leisure but rapidly in the presence of a live audience’³⁵—were such that the use of formulaic language was governed by utility rather than aesthetics.³⁶ According to such an understanding of oral-formulaic composition, the presence of traditional formulas is not easily compatible with modern assumptions regarding individual poetic artistry.³⁷

Many of the original tenets of oral-formulaic theory have since been shown to be inapplicable in the case of Old English verse, or have been modified under pressure from opponents of the theory.³⁸ In the first place, the strict dichotomy between oral and literate modes of composition that Magoun’s formulations assumed now looks like an oversimplification. The possibility that poets composing ‘word by word with deliberation and at leisure’ may utilise formulaic language has been amply demonstrated with reference to

³³ On the challenge of oral-formulaic theory for New Critical literary approaches, see Roy Michael Liuzza, ‘The Return of the Repressed: Old and New Theories in Old English Literary Criticism’, in ed. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Old English Shorter Poems: Basic Readings*, Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England 3 (New York and London, 1994), 103-47, at 107-17.

³⁴ Francis P. Magoun, Jr., ‘The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry’, *Speculum* 28 (1953), 446-67, reprinted in ed. Lewis E. Nicholson, *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1963), 189-221, at 190: ‘The recurrence in a given poem of an appreciable number of formulas or formulaic phrases brands the latter as oral, just as a lack of such repetitions marks a poem as composed in a lettered tradition’.

³⁵ *Id.*, ‘Bede’s Story of Cædmon: The Case-History of an Anglo-Saxon Singer’, *Speculum* 30 (1955), 49-63, at 52.

³⁶ Cf. John D. Niles’ comments on the essential utility of formulaic compounds: ‘They are functional, and this is their prime reason for being’ (‘Compound Diction and the Style of *Beowulf*’, *ES* 62 (1981), 489-503, at 489).

³⁷ Cf. William Whallon, ‘The Diction of *Beowulf*’, *PMLA* 76 (1961), 309-19, at 310: ‘To the extent that a language is formulaic, its individual components must be regarded as no more distinguished than other clichés.’ As Alexandra Hennessey Olsen points out, these arguments were to a certain extent anticipated by earlier and less systematic studies of the conventional diction of Old English poetry, but it was the advent of oral-formulaic theory that brought these issues into the critical foreground (‘Oral-Formulaic Research in Old English Studies: II’, *Oral Tradition* 3 (1988), 138-90, at 145).

³⁸ Cf. Geoffrey Russom, ‘Aesthetic Criteria in Old English Heroic Style’, in ed. John M. Hill, *On the Aesthetics of Beowulf and Other Old English Poems* (Toronto, 2010), 64-80, at 67: ‘the ‘hard Parryites’ simply got it wrong about oral-formulaic composition, overlooking the creative power of the human language faculty’.

both Old English and Anglo-Latin poetry.³⁹ Moreover, Old English verse survives not as ‘the immediate spontaneous outpourings of untutored or ungifted singers’, but only in written witnesses, many apparently copied and re-copied over substantial periods of time by diverse scribal hands.⁴⁰ Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe’s study of Anglo-Saxon scribal practice has strongly indicated that this process of transmission took place in a literary culture that was neither wholly oral nor wholly lettered, but occupied a ‘transitional’ place on a spectrum between these two poles.⁴¹

Of particular importance for the question of poetic artistry, however, has been the recognition that the principle of ‘economy’—or ‘thrift’, as it is sometimes known—cannot be applied to Old English poetry. Drawn from studies of the formulaic nature of Homeric epic poetry, the concept of economy suggests that in any given metrical environment, an oral-formulaic poet will always use one, and only one, formulaic phrase to express any basic concept or object.⁴² That is to say, the use of a particular formula in a particular situation is automatic and, to a large extent, unthinking.⁴³ However, whilst such a principle may hold true for ancient Greek epic, its relevance to Old English verse is doubtful. Attempts by William Whallon to apply the principle of economy to *Beowulf* in the 1960s demonstrated the extent to which the poet in fact varies his alliterative and formulaic

³⁹ Larry D. Benson, ‘The Literary Character of Anglo-Saxon Formulaic Poetry’, *PMLA* 81 (1966), 334-41; Michael Lapidge, ‘Aldhelm’s Latin Poetry and Old English Verse’, *Comparative Literature* 31 (1979), 249-314.

⁴⁰ S. B. Greenfield, *The Interpretation of Old English Poems* (London, 1972), 31.

⁴¹ Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse*, CSASE 4 (Cambridge, 1990). The picture of ‘transitional’ literacy described by O’Brien O’Keeffe was anticipated some years previously in a response to Magoun by Claes Schaar (‘On a New Theory of Old English Poetic Diction’, *Neophilologus* 40 (1956), 301-5).

⁴² Cf. Milman Parry, ‘Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. I: Homer and Homeric Style’, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 41 (1930), 73-147, at 86: ‘The thrift of a system lies in the degree in which it is free of phrases which, having the same metrical value and expressing the same idea, could replace one another’.

⁴³ On the mechanical nature of oral-formulaic composition, cf. R. P. Creed’s account of how the *Beowulf*-poet’s formulaic language ‘did his thinking and his poetizing for him’ (‘The Making of an Anglo-Saxon Poem’, *ELH* 26 (1959), 445-54, at 446).

diction in contravention of the ideals of economic composition.⁴⁴ Whallon originally suggested that the lack of economy in Old English verse may be explained as a sign of the relative youth of the oral-formulaic tradition from which it arises,⁴⁵ but such explanations ignore the extent to which Old English poets apparently ‘valued the richness of their tradition and exploited that richness systematically in their works’.⁴⁶ Indeed, as first noted in this context by Donald Fry, deliberate lexical variation appears to occupy a central position in Old English poetic technique as a hallmark of the appositional style, the impulse of which is ‘diametrically opposed to economy’.⁴⁷

The general acceptance amongst Anglo-Saxonists of more nuanced accounts of the oral-formulaic roots of the Old English poetic tradition has therefore facilitated a mainstream consensus that views individual artistry and the use of conventional poetics as compatible. The following remarks by Elizabeth Tyler may be taken as typical of current approaches to this question:

It has become a truism of the criticism of Old English poetry that originality, individuality and poetic excellence must be seen in terms of how traditional elements, conventions, are handled, rather than in the rejection of convention. Thus the formula and poetic artistry are not incompatible, both because the formula can be used to fulfil aesthetic aims and / or because the formula can exist in poems alongside features, such as deliberate verbal repetition, which are seen as literary.⁴⁸

The emphasis revealed here on the deliberate artistic use of formulas and conventional diction draws upon critical responses to oral-formulaic theory such as those of Stanley Greenfield and Alain Renoir, both of whom attempt to identify artistry in the modification

⁴⁴ Whallon, ‘Diction of *Beowulf*’; *id.*, ‘The Idea of God in *Beowulf*’, *PMLA* 80 (1965), 19-23; *id.*, ‘Formulas for Heroes in the *Iliad* and in *Beowulf*’, *MP* 63 (1965), 95-104.

⁴⁵ Cf. Whallon, ‘Diction of *Beowulf*’, 318: ‘no formulaic language could long maintain a total of superfluous elements that reaches dozens in three thousand lines [...]. Further centuries of poetizing in the same tradition might have augmented the language with useful formulas it lacked, and might also have limited the use of certain distinctive kennings for the epic hero; further centuries would at least have cast many replaceable kennings into oblivion.’

⁴⁶ Geoffrey R. Russom, ‘Artful Avoidance of the Useful Phrase in *Beowulf*, *The Battle of Maldon*, and *Fates of the Apostles*’, *SP* 75 (1978), 371-90, at 390.

⁴⁷ Donald K. Fry, ‘Variation and Economy in *Beowulf*’, *MP* 65 (1968), 353-6, at 356. Cf. Niles, ‘Compound Diction’, 492. On the importance of apposition in Old English verse, see Fred C. Robinson, *Beowulf and the Appositive Style* (Knoxville, Tennessee, 1985).

⁴⁸ Elizabeth M. Tyler, *Old English Poetics: The Aesthetics of the Familiar in Anglo-Saxon England* (York, 2006), 110-11. Cf. Gillian R. Overing, *Language, Sign, and Gender in Beowulf* (Carbondale, 1999), 21.

or development of formulaic elements in particular instances.⁴⁹ The same argument may be applied, moreover, in the case of conventional responses to scene and setting in Old English poetry. The recognition that vernacular poets may have drawn upon inherited conventional themes, *topoi*, or associations in their depiction of particular narrative settings does not necessarily suggest that they could not do so in individual and artistic ways.

Indeed, the current state of the critical debate regarding the use of formulaic language in Old English poetry points towards a further aspect of conventional poetry that may in fact render traditional language and imagery more aesthetically powerful, rather than less so. In his defence of the artistic potential of formulaic language, Greenfield notes that the particular aesthetic power of oral traditional poetics ‘is that the very words and traditions it employs lend extra-emotional meaning to individual words and phrases’.⁵⁰ This sense that conventional poetics can imbue language with added significance has subsequently been expressed by numerous scholars, notably John Foley, whose description of the ‘more-than-textual resources of meaning’ of oral traditional poetry and of the ‘extratextual meaning’ and ‘inherent signification’ of formulaic language mirrors Greenfield’s discussion of ‘extra-emotional meaning’.⁵¹

Drawing on poststructuralist critical theory, Foley goes on to outline the ‘metonymic’ nature of formulaic poetics, describing the Old English poetic tradition as ‘a network of signification [...], a poetic code with well-established associations that was not easily

⁴⁹ S. B. Greenfield, ‘The Formulaic Expression of the Theme of Exile in Anglo-Saxon Poetry,’ *Speculum* 30 (1955), 200-6; *id.*, ‘Syntactic Analysis and Old English Poetry,’ *NM* 64 (1963), 373-78; *id.*, ‘The Canons of Old English Criticism,’ *ELH* 34 (1967), 141-55; Alain Renoir, ‘*Judith* and the Limits of Poetry,’ *ES* 43 (1962), 145-55; *id.*, ‘Point of View and Design for Terror in *Beowulf*,’ *NM* 63 (1962), 154-67; *id.*, ‘The Heroic Oath in *Beowulf*, the *Chanson de Roland*, and the *Nibelungenlied*’, in ed. Stanley B. Greenfield, *Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur* (Eugene, Oregon, 1963), 237-66.

⁵⁰ Greenfield, ‘Theme of Exile’, 205.

⁵¹ John Miles Foley, ‘Texts That Speak to Readers Who Hear: Old English Poetry and the Languages of Oral Tradition’, in ed. Allen J. Frantzen, *Speaking Two Languages: Traditional Disciplines and Contemporary Theory in Medieval Studies* (New York, 1991), 141-56, at 148, 152. Cf. E. G. Stanley’s suggestion that Old English poetic diction ‘requires more than literal interpretation’ (‘Old English Poetic Diction and the Interpretation of *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, and *The Penitent’s Prayer*’, *Anglia* 72 (1955), 413-66, at 431).

displaced.⁵² What Foley says here with specific reference to formulaic diction may, however, also be broadly applicable to matters of spatial representation. As Ganim has pointed out, poststructuralist critical approaches are particularly suited to the ‘typological’ nature of spatial representation in medieval literature according to which the presentation of setting is valued in the first place ‘not because of its mimetic accuracy but because of its explicit signage’.⁵³

The approach of this thesis will therefore be to examine the presentation of spatial settings in particular narrative situations across a range of poetic texts. I shall attempt both to demonstrate certain similarities in the presentation of these settings, and also to articulate the significant differences between them. The reading practice adopted is therefore largely intertextual, a fact that is reflected in the phrase ‘spatial dialectics’ in my title. This phrase has a somewhat loaded critical history. Originating in Lefebvre’s analysis of the production of space in Marxist terms as a *dialectique de triplicité*—that is, the recognition that space is at once ‘perceived’, ‘conceived’ and ‘lived’⁵⁴—the precise meaning of the term ‘spatial dialectic(s)’ in contemporary social and cultural theory has become ‘a site of conflict and innovation’.⁵⁵ My use of the term does not draw directly on this contested critical terminology. More simply, my use of the term is primarily intended to describe the way in which the significance of spatial representation in individual poems may be best understood by examining the relationship between individual texts and the literary and cultural tradition from which they arise.

⁵² Foley, ‘Texts that Speak’, 154-5. Cf. Liuzza, ‘Return of the Repressed’, 115; Carol Braun Pasternack, *The Textuality of Old English Poetry*, CSASE 13 (Cambridge, 1995), 12-28. On the metonymic mode of Old English poetry, see Overing, *Language, Sign, and Gender*, 5-32. For a survey of poststructuralist approaches to Old English poetry, see Manish Sharma, ‘Beowulf and Poststructuralist Theory’, *Literature Compass* 6 (2009), 56-70.

⁵³ Ganim, ‘A Critical Geography’, xvi. See further, Ruth Waterhouse, ‘Spatial perception and conceptions in the (re-)presenting and (re-)constructing of Old English texts’, *Parergon* ns 9 (1991), 87-102.

⁵⁴ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38-9.

⁵⁵ Panu Lehtovuori, *Experience and Conflict: The Production of Urban Space* (Farnham, 2010), 1116-20, quotation at 119. Cf. Shields, *Spatial dialectics*, 160-70; Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible* (London and New York, 2004), 181-92; Frederic Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic* (London, 2009), 66-70.

In making this statement, my methodology approaches that of Edward Said in his influential discussion of ‘Orientalism’.⁵⁶ Said distinguishes between what he terms ‘*strategic location*’—defined as ‘the author’s position in a text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about’—and ‘*strategic formation*’—‘the relationship between texts and the way in which groups of texts, types of texts, even textual genres, acquire mass, density, and referential power among themselves’.⁵⁷ In making this distinction, Said aims to ‘employ close textual readings [...] to reveal the dialectic between individual text or writer and the complex collective formation to which his work is a contribution’.⁵⁸

In a similar way, the following chapters will employ close reading in order to examine the dialectical relationships linking the use of setting and spatial representation in individual verse texts to the ‘complex collective formation’ of Old English poetry. This formation should not, however, be understood as a purely literary or linguistic one. As Howe has pointed out, any study of the literature of a past culture such as Anglo-Saxon England is in essence a study of that culture itself.⁵⁹ This thesis is also concerned, therefore, to describe the dialectical relationships that exist between spatial representation and setting in individual poems and the historical and cultural contexts in which they were composed and received.

So, in chapter two, I begin by examining the presentation of the fall of the angels in Old English poetry. Despite its position as an essentially non-biblical Christian tradition relating to the origins of evil within creation, the rebellion and fall of Lucifer and his companions is one of the most frequently recurring Christian motifs in Old English verse. Poetic responses

⁵⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London and Henley, 1978). Said’s methodology is also applied to Anglo-Saxon literature, though to different effect, by Scott Thompson Smith (‘Writing Land in Anglo-Saxon England’, unpubl. PhD dissertation (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2007), 5). Cf. below 28 n. 33.

⁵⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, 20.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 23-4.

⁵⁹ Nicholas Howe, ‘Historicist approaches’, in ed. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Reading Old English Texts* (Cambridge, 1997), 79-100, at 79: ‘As they interpret the remains of a past culture, all works on Old English language and literature are historical in method and intent.’

to this episode are strikingly consistent in their militaristic interpretation of the rebellion, repeatedly presenting the rebels' ambitions in territorial terms as an attempt to appropriate God's spatial control over the kingdom of heaven. This uniformity in the spatial presentation of the rebellion has been explained as a reflex of the traditional heroic and militaristic interests of the Old English poetic tradition. However, I argue in this chapter that the evident interest in the rebellion as a poetic subject might also be explained in terms of its suitability as a vehicle for exploring tensions regarding the conceptualization of authority and kingship in the Anglo-Saxon period.

In the first of the two main sections of this chapter, therefore, I focus on the narrative accounts of the rebellion in the poems *Vainglory*, *Genesis A*, and *Christ and Satan* and examine the different ways in which the territorial focus of these accounts of the rebellion can be seen to reflect ideological developments in the conceptualization of lordly authority in the post-conversion era. I then turn, in the second main section of the chapter, to the more developed account of the rebellion in *Genesis B*. An exception amongst Old English poems in that it might be assigned with some certainty to a relatively precise historical context, my analysis of this account focuses on the development of the practice of sub-kingship in Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Europe in the ninth and early tenth centuries as a context in which to examine the spatial presentation of Lucifer's insurrection.

Territorial concerns are also central to the discussion in chapter three, which focuses upon the use of setting and spatial representation in Old English battle poetry. Commonly assumed to have occupied a central place in the Old English poetic tradition, the depiction of battle is frequently perceived to be governed by the especially strong influence of poetic formulae and conventions. In response to this perception, I argue that while it is undeniably the case that the use of setting in the depiction of battle shows notable

similarities across a range of poems, suggestive of the influence of poetic convention, nevertheless the artistry with which spatial representation is manipulated in individual poems is evident in the ways in which the use of scene and setting contribute to the wider thematic and artistic concerns of these texts. In some cases, this significant use of scene and setting also reflects the wider historical and social context in which these accounts should be viewed. However, any attempt to interpret the significance of individual accounts of battle must pay attention to the way in which techniques for the spatial depiction of the action are employed. To fail to do so is to risk misinterpretation of the evidence.

Chapter three is also divided into two main sections, the first of which deals with poetic accounts of battle that draw directly on Latin and vernacular prose sources or analogues and the second of which deals with two poems for which no such sources have been discovered. For those accounts considered in the former section, comparison with the relevant prose texts shows that in each case the setting of the battle narrative has been considerably expanded in the poetic account. The same is true of the depiction of the prison as a narrative setting in three Old English hagiographical poems that forms the basis of my analysis in chapter four. In each case, comparison of these texts to their various prose analogues shows that the description of the prison setting has been substantially extended in the poetic narrative, arguing for the sensibility of the Anglo-Saxon poets to matters of space and setting.

My analysis of the presentation of the prison setting in this, the longest chapter of this thesis, begins by delineating, so far as possible, the historical and cultural significance of the prison in Anglo-Saxon England. Whilst the documentary evidence for the practice of incarceration during this period is somewhat ambiguous, my examination of the presentation of the prison and the use of carceral language and imagery in vernacular

Christian literature suggests that the prison as a *locus* was conventionally interpreted according to certain identifiable but overlapping associations. Several of these associations also figure prominently in the interpretation of the prison setting in the hagiographical verse texts, whose shared characteristics are frequently striking. At the same time, however, the presentation of the prison in each of these three poems reveals a wider engagement with the meaning and valence of enclosure that develops on the presentation of the prison setting in ways that differ between the individual poems.

Each of these three main chapters seeks to demonstrate the way in which an intertextual approach to the study of spatial representation in Old English verse highlights not only the conventional and even formulaic elements of the use of scene and setting in this tradition, but also the artistry with which these elements might be handled in individual examples. Before proceeding, however, there are three general problems, more or less specific to the study of Old English poetry, that must be acknowledged. The first of these problems concerns the difficulties associated with locating Old English verse within precise historical or geographical contexts. Given the particular circumstances of transmission and preservation that operate in the case of Old English poetry, the process of establishing a context for either the composition or original reception of individual poems distinct from that of the extant manuscript witnesses is one that is fraught with difficulty. Such a situation perhaps inevitably fosters a problematic tendency to treat the Anglo-Saxon period as a single, monolithic historical and cultural context. This problem is inherent to the study of Old English verse, and is one that will necessarily be addressed throughout the course of this study. The other two problems relate more particularly to the methodology adopted here, specifically the use of close reading of Old English poetic texts.

The first of these problems is superficially similar to but distinct from the question of the 'thrift' of Old English formulaic diction discussed above. It concerns the semantic

value that may be attached to individual words in a poetic tradition governed by such apparently strict rules of metre and alliteration. As noted most recently by Tom Shippey, Old English verse might be characterized as a ‘low-information’ poetry, in that ‘words that carry alliteration (words of high alliterative ‘rank’) are likely to carry relatively little meaning, to be only generally appropriate’.⁶⁰ This is a problem particularly keenly felt with regard to the analysis of the nominal compounds that form such a prominent feature of Old English verse. The formation of these poetic compounds has been frequently examined for evidence of precise, poetic nuances attributable to the originality of the poet responsible for their use, an approach most systematically undertaken by Caroline Brady.⁶¹ In her studies of the nominal compounds used to describe both weaponry and warriors in *Beowulf*, Brady argues at length that the poet’s use of particular compounds in particular instances can often be directly attributed to an artistic impulse that is both stylistic—‘to increase the dignity and stateliness of the language in certain contexts and to enrich the sonority and resonance’—and also semantic—‘to impart connotations, nuances and overtones to the plainer simplices’.⁶² From her analysis of the poet’s use of these compounds, Brady concludes that ‘[w]hether he drew from the common stock or created his own, he selected them for their appropriateness to the particular scene or setting in which he placed them, and he used them carefully for the purpose: clarity of meaning or aesthetic or stylistic effect.’⁶³

However, such efforts to uncover the fine nuances of poetic compounds—and particularly of the first elements of these where they carry necessary alliteration—are

⁶⁰ Tom Shippey, ‘The Fall of King Hæðcyn’: Or, Mimesis 4a, the Chapter Auerbach Never Wrote’, in ed. Hill, *Aesthetics of Beowulf*, 247-65, at 262, 255. Cf. Russom’s discussion of ‘semantically inessential language’ (‘Aesthetic Criteria’, 72).

⁶¹ Caroline Brady, ‘Weapons’ in *Beowulf*: an analysis of the nominal compounds and an evaluation of the poet’s use of them’, *ASE* 8 (1979), 79-141; *id.*, ‘Warriors’ in *Beowulf*: an analysis of the nominal compounds and an evaluation of the poet’s use of them’, *ASE* 11 (1983), 199-246. See also Jeffrey Alan Mazo, ‘Compound Diction and Traditional Style in *Beowulf* and *Genesis A*’, *Oral Tradition* 6 (1991), 79-92.

⁶² Brady, ‘Weapons’, 136-7.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 141.

sometimes guilty of ignoring the very real formal requirements which these compounds satisfy, much as oral-formulaic approaches once ignored any possibility of artistic justification for their use.⁶⁴ What seems desirable is an approach that both recognizes the potential for precise lexical choice by poets working within the Old English tradition, but that also accepts that this precision is not necessarily to be expected as a ubiquitous feature of their work. The obvious difficulty with such an approach, however, is deciding when the language of these poems is, in Shippey's terms, 'low-information' and when it is not. This difficulty introduces the third of the general problems to be addressed here, the issue of competence.

As Yvette Kisor has pointed out, literary texts—whether oral or lettered—'presuppose readers with the necessary competence to read them', but the competence of modern audiences to appreciate the aesthetics of Old English poetry must be in doubt.⁶⁵ The absence of any native speakers of Old English and the fragmentary nature of the extant textual corpus must place severe restraints upon the ability of the modern critic to detect verbal nuances or to identify stylistic features, such as meaningful collocations or juxtapositions, that might have been readily apparent to the original audiences of these texts.

For modern scholars, electronic resources such as the ongoing 'Dictionary of Old English' project at the University of Toronto—and the complete, searchable corpus of Old English texts which supports it—have provided fast, accurate and reliable means of

⁶⁴ Cf. Niles, 'Compound Diction', 497: 'an aesthetics of Old English poetry that overlooks the *utility* of compounding is likely to go astray in searching out nuances of meaning in the poet's use of one alternative expression in place of another, when very likely his chief concern was not to develop subtle shades of meaning but simply to compose in the alliterative form.'

⁶⁵ Yvette Kisor, 'The Aesthetics of *Beowulf*: Structure, Perception, and Desire', in ed. Hill, *Aesthetics of Beowulf*, 227-46, at 240. Cf. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Editing and the Material Text', in eds. D. G. Scragg and Paul E. Szarmach, *The Editing of Old English: Papers from the 1990 Manchester Conference* (Woodbridge, 1994), 147-54, at 148. For a related argument regarding the question of scribal competence, see Douglas Moffat, 'Anglo-Saxon Scribes and Old English Verse', *Speculum* 67 (1992), 805-27, esp. at 826.

studying linguistic usage across the extant body of Old English literature.⁶⁶ This study has made extensive use of these electronic tools, alongside more traditional resources such as the monumental dictionary compiled by Bosworth and Toller.⁶⁷ As Peter Baker has pointed out, however, such tools may be invaluable in providing the basic data on which close analysis of linguistic usage may be carried out, but the problem of interpretation remains.⁶⁸ The responsible critic must ultimately acknowledge that, given our imperfect appreciation of the ‘complex collective formation’ of Old English verse, the conclusions that can be drawn from an intertextual approach based on close reading of particular poems and passages are inevitably conditional. This thesis is premised on the belief that such imperfect conclusions are nevertheless a valid object for critical inquiry.

⁶⁶ Both the *Dictionary of Old English A-G* and the *Old English Corpus* are available online at <http://www.doe.utoronto.ca> (accessed 19 March 2012) under the present editorship of Antonette diPaolo Healey. The *Dictionary of Old English A-G* (hereafter *DOE*) is cited throughout from the online edition.

⁶⁷ Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford, 1898) (hereafter *BT*). See also, T. Northcote Toller, *Supplement* (Oxford, 1921) (hereafter *BTS*), and Alistair Campbell, *Revised and Enlarged Addenda* (Oxford, 1972).

⁶⁸ Peter S. Baker, ‘Old English and computing: a guided tour’, in ed. O’Brien O’Keefe, *Reading Old English Texts*, 192-215.

CHAPTER TWO

HEHSTNE TO HIM ON HEOFONA RICE: SPATIAL AUTHORITY AND THE ANGELIC REBELLION

INTRODUCTION

Christian formulations of the nature and causes of the angelic fall developed slowly. The work of the earliest fathers of the church, where they address the topic, displays the influence of Judeo-Christian apocrypha and pseudepigrapha. Drawing particularly on the account of the ‘Watcher Angels’ contained in the pseudepigraphical I Enoch, early writers including Justin Martyr and Athenagoras believed that the first sin of the fallen angels was lustful desire for the daughters of men.¹ Even in this early tradition, however, a distinction was commonly made between the lustful fall of the angels and the individual fall of Satan. In the work of, particularly, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Cyprian the devil’s fall is distinguished from that of the angels as resulting not from lust but from envy, specifically envy that man alone was created in the image of God.²

A radically different conception of the angelic fall arose, however, in the third century in the writing of Origen.³ Rejecting the distinction between the fall of the devil and that of the other angels, Origen asserted both that the fallen angels were followers of the devil who participated in his sin, and also that the fall itself preceded—and motivated—the

¹ Cf. Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge, 2005), esp. 24-57, 160-89; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, ‘The Origins of Evil in Jewish Apocalyptic Traditions: The Interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4 in the Second and Third Centuries B.C.E’, in eds. Christoph Auffarth and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *The Fall of the Angels*, Themes in Biblical Narrative 6 (Leiden, 2003), 87-118.

² Cf. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* (Ithaca, New York, 1981), 80-1, 93-4, 105-6.

³ *Ibid.*, 130-3. Cf. P. E. Dustoor, ‘Legends of Lucifer in Early English and in Milton’, *Anglia* (1930), 213-68, at 238-9.

creation of the physical universe.⁴ The result of this revised chronology was to render both lust for and envy of created beings impossible as an explanation of the sin for which the angels fell. Instead, Origen equated the fall of Satan with certain allusive biblical passages including Isaiah's description of the fall of Lucifer quoted above and that of the fall of the Prince of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:1-20), and argued that the motivation for the fall was pride (*superbia*).⁵

Origen's formulation of the angelic fall was widely influential, and is reflected in the writings of Augustine in the fifth century, who argues that through pride in their own lower good the rebel angels envied, and ultimately turned from, the supreme good that is God.⁶ Equally significantly for the study of Anglo-Saxon literature, pride is also prominently identified as the angels' sin in the influential writings of Gregory the Great.⁷ Gregory repeatedly affirms both Lucifer's initial pre-eminence amongst the angels and particularly the role of the intellectual sin of *superbia* as not only the cause of the angelic rebellion, but also the chief and root of all sins.⁸ While persuasive arguments have been made for the influence of apocryphal texts such as the *Vitae Adae et Evae* and *The*

⁴ On Origen's rejection of the account of the Watcher Angels contained in I Enoch, see Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 197-8.

⁵ See especially, *Homily IX on Ezekiel 2 (Origen: Homilies 1-14 on Ezekiel)*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, *Ancient Christian Writers* 62 (New York, 2010), 119-121 and *Homily XIII on Ezekiel 2 (ibid.)*, 158-60). Origen's commentaries may have been available in Anglo-Saxon England in the Latin translations of Rufinus and Jerome (cf. Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford, 2006), 322-3).

⁶ See especially the views expressed in book XII of *De civitate Dei (Avrelii Avgvstini Opera. Pars XIV, De civitate Dei)*, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, CCSL 47, 48, 2 vols. (Turnhout, 1955)). On Augustine's changing views regarding the angelic sin, see J. Patout Burns, 'Augustine on the Origin and Progress of Evil', *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 16 (1988), 9-27, at 16-18; William S. Babcock, 'Augustine on Sin and Moral Agency', *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 16 (1988), 28-55, at 41-8; *id.*, 'The Human and the Angelic Fall: Will and Moral Agency in Augustine's *City of God*', in ed. Joanne McWilliam, with Timothy Barnes, Michael Fahey, and Peter Slater, *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian* (Waterloo, Ontario, 1992), 133-49.

⁷ G. R. Evans, *The Thought of Gregory the Great*, *Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought* 4th ser. 2 (Cambridge, 1986), 62-3. Cf. C. Abbetmeyer, *Old English Poetical Motives Derived from the Doctrine of Sin* (New York, 1903), 29-30; Russell, *Satan*, 96-7.

⁸ See, for example, *Homilia XXXIV in evangelia* 203-12 (cited by line number from *Gregorius Magnus, Homiliae in Evangelia*, ed. Raymond Étaix, CCSL 141 (Turnhout, 1999)); *Moralia in Job* XXVIII:2, XXIX:8, XXXI:45, XXXII:23, XXXIV:21 (cited by book and chapter number from *S. Gregorii Magni Opera, Moralia in Iob*, ed. Marci Adriaen, CCSL 143, 3 vols. (Turnhout, 1979-85)). On the Gregorian formulation of the cardinal sins and its influence in Anglo-Saxon England, see Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing, Michigan, 1952), 69-82, 105-21.

Questions of Bartholomew on details of individual accounts of the angelic fall from Anglo-Saxon England, the perception of the episode as ‘a foundational event in cosmic history’ rests largely on the Augustinian and Gregorian traditions.⁹

In an Anglo-Saxon culture which was, according to Malcolm Godden, ‘inclined to associate the ‘mind’ with emotion and a kind of passionate volition and self-assertion’,¹⁰ the Gregorian conception of *superbia* as an intellectual sin—described by Bloomfield as ‘the sin of exaggerated individualism’¹¹—seems to have been particularly resonant. The rebellion is frequently and freely related in vernacular homiletic writing, particularly in that of Ælfric, but also in the work of Wulfstan and other anonymous homilists.¹² In non-homiletic vernacular prose, the translator of Boethius’ *De consolatione philosophiae* introduces a reference not paralleled in the Latin text to the *wiðerwierdan englas* (‘antagonistic angels’, B.35:104-5) as an example of the folly of those who resist the will of God.¹³ In the Anglo-Latin tradition, Aldhelm describes Lucifer’s originary act of pride in both the prose and (at greater length) the verse redactions of his monumental treatise *De*

⁹ Daniel Anlezark, ‘The Fall of the Angels in *Solomon and Saturn II*’, in eds. Kathryn Powell and Donald Scragg, *Apocryphal Texts and Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England*, Publications for the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies 2 (Cambridge, 2003), 121-33, at 121. Cf. Rosemary Woolf, ‘The Fall of Man in *Genesis B* and the *Mystère D’Adam*’, in ed. Greenfield, *Studies in Old English Literature*, 187-99, reprinted in Rosemary Woolf, *Art and Doctrine: Essays on Medieval Literature*, ed. Heather O’Donoghue (London, 1986), 15-28, at 19-20; James H. Morley, ‘Adam and Judas in the Old English *Christ and Satan*’, *SP* 87 (1990), 397-409. On the influence of Enochic literature in Anglo-Saxon England, see Frederick M. Biggs, ‘I Enoch’, in eds. Frederick M. Biggs, Thomas D. Hill, and Paul E. Szarmach, *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture: A Trial Version*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 74 (Binghamton, New York, 1990), 25-7; Elizabeth Coatsworth, ‘The Book of Enoch and Anglo-Saxon Art’, in eds. Powell and Scragg, *Apocryphal Texts and Tradition*, 135-50.

¹⁰ M. R. Godden, ‘Anglo-Saxons on the Mind’, in eds. Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss, *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Cambridge, 1985), 271-98, at 295.

¹¹ Bloomfield, *Seven Deadly Sins*, 75.

¹² Cf. Michael Fox, ‘Ælfric on the creation and fall of the angels’, *ASE* 31 (2002), 175-200. For references to the rebellion in the homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan and in the anonymous Vercelli and Blickling collections, see Robert DiNapoli, *An Index of Theme and Image to the Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church: Comprising the Homilies of Ælfric, Wulfstan, and the Blickling and Vercelli Codices*, rev. ed. (Hockwold-cum-Wilton, 2003), 34.

¹³ Cited by text, chapter and line number from *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius’s De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine with a chapter on the Metres by Mark Griffith and contributions by Rohini Jayatilaka, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2009) (hereafter *OEB*).

virginitate and refers to Lucifer's fall in the eighty-first of his *Enigmata*.¹⁴ The rebellion even features in two Anglo-Latin charters drawn up in Winchester in the second half of the tenth century.¹⁵

It is in vernacular Christian poetry, however, that the rebellion and fall of Lucifer is most prominent.¹⁶ The rebellion features particularly memorably in the scripturally-inspired poetry of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11.¹⁷ As an episode within the narrative of biblical history, the rebellion is recounted in the opening *exordium* to *Genesis A* (18b-81)¹⁸ and, in greater detail, as a precursor to the account of the Fall of Man in *Genesis B* (246-337).¹⁹ Subsequently, the first 365 lines of *Christ and Satan* also contain extensive references to the rebellion, largely presented as the reminiscences of Satan himself.²⁰ Besides these major treatments of the theme, both *Solomon and Saturn II* (272-92) and *Vainglory* (57-66) contain narrative accounts of the rebellion and the event is referred to more allusively in four vernacular hagiographical poems: *Andreas* (1190b-4,

¹⁴ *Aldhelmi Opera Omnia*, ed. R. Ehwald, Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi XV (Berlin, 1919), 134-5:6-8 (*Enigmata* LXXXI); 239:7-20 (prose *De virginitate*); 464:2730-51 (verse *De virginitate*). Abbtmeyer (*Doctrine of Sin*, 18) would also attribute to Aldhelm the hypothetical vernacular poetic account of the rebellion which he believes constitutes the ultimate source for all subsequent 'Plaints of Lucifer', but cf. Carleton F. Brown, '[Review]', *MLN* 19 (1904), 221-3.

¹⁵ David F. Johnson, 'The Fall of Lucifer in *Genesis A* and Two Anglo-Latin Royal Charters', *JEGP* 97 (1998), 500-21. Cf. Petra Hofmann, 'Infernal Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Charters', unpubl. PhD dissertation (University of St Andrews, 2008), 160-210, esp. at 198-210.

¹⁶ On the treatment of the angelic fall in Old English poetry, see Abbtmeyer, *Doctrine of Sin*, 9-20; *Christ and Satan: An Old English Poem*, ed. Merrel Dare Clubb, Yale Studies in English LXX (New Haven, Connecticut, 1925), xxiv-vi, 51-2 n. to line 20; Malcolm Godden, 'Biblical literature: the Old Testament', in eds. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge, *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Cambridge, 1991), 206-26, at 211-13; Anlezark, 'Fall of the Angels', 121-2.

¹⁷ Cf. Alvin A. Lee, *The Guest-Hall of Eden: Four Essays on the Design of Old English Poetry* (New Haven, Connecticut, and London, 1972), 18-22

¹⁸ Cited from *Genesis A: A New Edition*, ed. A. N. Doane (Madison, Wisconsin, 1978). On the form and function of the *exordium* in *Genesis A*, see Laurence Michel, '*Genesis A* and the *Praefatio*', *MLN* 62 (1947), 545-50; Paul G. Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse: Studies in Genesis, Exodus and Daniel*, CSASE 16 (Cambridge, 1996), 126-7.

¹⁹ Cited from *The Saxon Genesis: An Edition of the West Saxon 'Genesis' and the Old Saxon Vatican Genesis*, ed. A. N. Doane (Madison, Wisconsin, 1991). On the a-chronological position of the account of the rebellion in *Genesis B*, see *ibid.*, 227-8 n. to lines 18b-81; Michael Benskin, 'An Argument for an Interpolation in the Old English *Later Genesis*', *NM* 72 (1971), 224-45, at 231; Eric Smith, *Some Versions of the Fall: The Myth of the Fall of Man in English Literature* (London, 1973), 69-71; G. C. Britton, 'Repetition and Contrast in the Old English *Later Genesis*', *Neophilologus* 58 (1974), 66-73, at 67-8. On the possible influence of Alcimus Avitus' *Poematum de Mosaicae Historiae Gestis Libri Quinque* (PL 59:329C-38B) on this peculiarity of *Genesis B*, see the sample entry for Avitus on the *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture* website (<http://saslc.nd.edu/samples/a/avitus.pdf>, accessed 19 March 2012).

²⁰ Cited from *Christ and Satan*, ed. Clubb.

1376-85), *Elene* (759b-71, 939-52a), *Guðlac A* (596-8, 623-36, 651b-72), and *Juliana* (420b-4).²¹ Finally, and more allusively still, the origins of the conflict between Christ and the devils is briefly described in the Exeter Book poem *Resignation* (51b-6).²²

The treatment of the rebellion in these poetic texts is, as Godden has pointed out, often marked by the ‘surprisingly dramatic and sympathetic picture of Lucifer’s rebellion’, a fact that has been explained as a reflection of the appeal of Lucifer’s proud and self-willed character to poets schooled in the traditions of Old English heroic poetry.²³ Depictions of the rebellion in Old English verse have, as a result, frequently been read by modern critics as a reflection of literary ideals of social behaviour current at the time of their composition. In an influential essay on ‘The Devil in Old English Poetry’, Rosemary Woolf argued in 1953 for the need to read poetic accounts of Lucifer’s disobedience against such idealised literary standards of ‘heroic’ behaviour as an example of ‘the revolt of a *þegn* from his lord’.²⁴ In the wake of Woolf’s description of Lucifer as ‘a faithless retainer’,²⁵ critical study of the poetic accounts of the angelic rebellion has tended to heavily emphasize the ways in which Old English poets ‘resort to the heroic ethos [...] to condemn the devil’s rebellious thoughts’.²⁶

Particular attention has focused on the presentation of the rebellion in the longer narrative accounts. Charles Sleeth and Constance Harsh have both stressed the importance of the heroic ideal of the *dryht* as a framework on which the cosmic struggle is presented

²¹ Cited from the following editions: *Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles*, ed. Kenneth R. Brooks (Oxford, 1961); *Cynewulf’s Elene*, ed. P. O. E. Gradon (London, 1958); *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book*, ed. Jane Roberts (Oxford, 1979); *Juliana*, ed. Rosemary Woolf (London, 1955); [*Vainglory*] *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliot van Kirk Dobbie, ASPR III (London and New York, 1936); *The Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, ed. and trans. Daniel Anlezark, Anglo-Saxon Texts 7 (Woodbridge, 2009).

²² Cited from *The Exeter Book*, eds. Krapp and Dobbie.

²³ Godden, ‘Biblical literature’, 211.

²⁴ Rosemary Woolf, ‘The Devil in Old English poetry’, *RES* ns 4 (1953), 1-12, reprinted in *id.*, *Art and Doctrine*, ed. O’Donoghue, 1-14, at 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

²⁶ Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 64-5. Cf. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, New York, 1984), 134-9.

in *Christ and Satan*.²⁷ In a similar vein, Larry McKill has discussed the way that the poet of *Genesis A* ‘uses the traditional vocabulary of heroic poetry to create an imaginative and idealized picture of a perfect social order’,²⁸ while Jennifer Neville has commented upon the poem’s amalgamation of ‘the Christian dogma of the fall of the angels and the conventions of Germanic heroism’.²⁹ Perhaps most prominently, however, scholars have emphasized the role of heroic ideals in *Genesis B*.³⁰ The behaviour of the rebel angels in this poem has been compared by Alain Renoir to the expectations of loyalty operative in the account of the West Saxon dynastic struggle between Cynewulf and Cyneheard recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 755,³¹ while Michael Cherniss has gone so far as to suggest that ‘[t]he moral and ethical climate of *Genesis B* is controlled completely by heroic ideals’.³²

Whilst I would not wish to deny that ‘heroic’ expectations of behaviour contribute to the interpretation of the angelic rebellion in these poems, my intention in this chapter is to examine the extent to which this episode might also be interpreted in terms of contemporary social and political realities. In particular, I intend to read the poetic accounts of the rebellion not in the context of nebulous ‘heroic’ ideals, but against developments in the conceptualization of lordship and of power relationships in Anglo-

²⁷ Charles R. Sleeth, *Studies in Christ and Satan*, McMaster Old English Studies and Texts 3 (Toronto, 1982), 71-91; Constance D. Harsh, ‘*Christ and Satan*: The Measured Power of Christ’, *NM* 90 (1989), 243-53, esp. at 244.

²⁸ Larry N. McKill, ‘Patterns of the Fall: Adam and Eve in the Old English *Genesis A*’, *Florilegium* 14 (1995-6), 25-41, at 27.

²⁹ Neville, *Representations of the Natural World*, 151. Cf. Joyce Ruth Galpern, ‘The Shape of Hell in Anglo-Saxon England’, unpubl. PhD dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 1977), 32.

³⁰ Cf. for example, J. M. Evans, ‘*Genesis B* and its Background’, *RES* n.s. 14 (1963), 1-16, 113-23, at 116-9; Joyce M. Hill, ‘Figures of Evil in Old English Poetry’, *LSE* 8 (1975), 5-19, at 5-6; Peter J. Lucas, ‘Loyalty and Obedience in the Old English *Genesis* and the Interpolation of *Genesis B* into *Genesis A*’, *Neophilologus* 76 (1992), 121-35, at 121-2.

³¹ Alain Renoir, ‘The Self-Deception of Temptation: Boethian Psychology in *Genesis B*’, in ed. R. P. Creed, *Old English Poetry: Fifteen Essays* (Providence, Rhode Island, 1967), 47-67, at 51-3. For the suggestion that, in its wider context in the *Chronicle*, the account of Cynewulf and Cyneheard is in fact more interested in ‘the realities of late-eighth-century kingship’ than in heroic standards of behaviour, see Francis Leneghan, ‘Royal wisdom and the Alfredian context of *Cynewulf and Cyneheard*’, *ASE* 39 (2010), 71-104.

³² Michael D. Cherniss, ‘Heroic Ideals and the Moral Climate of *Genesis B*’, *MLQ* 30 (1969), 479-97, at 495. Cf. *id.*, *Ingeld and Christ: Heroic Concepts and Values in Old English Christian Poetry*, Studies in English Literature 74 (The Hague and Paris, 1972), 219.

Saxon society.³³ In so doing, I shall, in the first place, examine the ways in which the sensibility of Anglo-Saxon poets to matters of spatial representation is reflected in the conventional depiction of the rebellion as a spatial and territorial conflict. More particularly, by focusing on the presentation of spatial relationships on contrasting horizontal and vertical planes, I shall attempt to show how individual poetic responses to the rebellion manipulate spatial imagery and setting in order to spatialize implicit tensions between differing conceptualizations of the relationships between a lord and his followers.

INTERPRETING THE ANGELIC REBELLION IN OLD ENGLISH VERSE

According to Bede's account in the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England to Christianity began with the arrival of the Augustinian mission in Kent, an event which probably occurred early in the year 597 (HE Lxxiii-xxxiii).³⁴ Whatever the precise historical significance of this date in the long drawn-out process by which Christianity was adopted as the formal religion of the competing Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the seventh century—a process which may well have been begun by British missionaries before the arrival of the delegation from Rome—the social and cultural impact of the new religion, and of the Latinate and Classical thought and learning that accompanied it, must have been considerable.³⁵ The precise extent of this

³³ My approach here is similar to and influenced by Doane's discussion of the account of the rebellion in *Genesis B* (*Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 122-4). Scott Thompson Smith's discussion of the *Genesis A* account in relation to the use of forfeiture of land as a punishment for insurrection in Anglo-Saxon England came to my attention too late to be considered here ('Writing Land', 237-56).

³⁴ For an account of the origins and progress of the Augustinian mission, see Peter Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede* (Cambridge, 1970), 41-67. On Bede's knowledge of the events of the mission, see *ibid.*, 68-79, and for Bede's uncertainty concerning the date of Augustine's arrival, *ibid.*, 75.

³⁵ The standard history of the conversion is Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to England*, 3rd ed. (London, 1991). A recent account by John Blair identifies five 'phases' of the conversion, beginning with the relatively short-lived conversion of Kent under King Æthelberht and ending in the 680s with the conversion of the Isle of Wight (*The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), 9). On the impact of the conversion on Anglo-Saxon society (particularly aristocratic society), see Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf*, and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', in ed. Robert T. Farrell, *Bede and Anglo-Saxon*

impact on Anglo-Saxon culture is probably masked by the clerical environment from which the vast majority of surviving Anglo-Saxon texts surely originated, and by the general lack of documentation relating to the pre-Christian period.³⁶ However, the particular influence of Christian learning and belief must, as Peter Clemoes points out, have extended to fundamental ways of conceptualizing humanity's place within a Christian cosmos:

The perspectives of human life – its lines of communication, its morality, its conceptions of individuality, its loyalties – all underwent permanent transmutation. The environment was rearranged. Verticality took on a greater prominence in surroundings which had a heaven above and a hell beneath than it had had before in horizontal continuous time: the old Germanic term *middangeard*, 'middle dwelling', began to signify the region between heaven and hell rather than the inhabited land surrounded by sea.³⁷

Clemoes' distinction between the verticality of the Christian cosmological model and a pre-Christian horizontal model is apparently drawn through analogy with the legendary cosmology presented in later Icelandic texts; it must be admitted, therefore, that the accuracy of these accounts as a reflection of pre-Christian 'Germanic' belief—and especially of pre-Christian belief in Anglo-Saxon England—is questionable.³⁸ However, the importance of verticality in the ideologies of Christian Anglo-Saxon England, and the effect of these ideologies upon the conceptualization of power relationships and

England: Papers in Honour of the 1300th Anniversary of the Birth of Bede, British Archaeological Reports 46 (London, 1978), 32-95; Barbara Yorke, 'The Reception of Christianity at the Anglo-Saxon Royal Courts', in ed. Richard Gameson, *St Augustine and the Conversion of England* (Stroud, 1999), 152-73.

³⁶ Cf. Carol Braun Pasternack, 'Post-structuralist theories: the subject and the text', in ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, *Reading Old English Texts*, 170-91, at 180-2. For a thoughtful account of the pervasive influence of Christian religion and monastic culture on Old English poetry in particular, see Patrick W. Conner, 'Religious Poetry', in eds. Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne, *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Oxford, 2001), 251-67.

³⁷ Peter Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry*, CSASE 12 (Cambridge, 1995), 229-30. On Clemoes' understanding of 'horizontal continuous time' as a dominant mode in traditional Old English narrative verse, see *ibid.*, 85-7. Michelet similarly stresses the Christian conception of the universe as 'a hierarchical structure organized vertically' (*Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 14).

³⁸ Cf. Kirsten Hastrup, *Culture and History in Medieval Iceland: An anthropological analysis of structure and change* (Oxford, 1985), 145-51. Hastrup in fact distinguishes intersecting horizontal and vertical cosmological models in medieval Icelandic literature, but concedes that the vertical model is more firmly 'locked into Christian concepts of cosmology' (*ibid.*, 150). Cf. Margaret Clunies Ross, 'Images of Norse Cosmology', in ed. Daniel Anlezark, *Myths, Legends, and Heroes: Essays on Old Norse and Old English Literature in Honour of John McKinnell* (Toronto, 2011), 53-73. On the evidence for pre-Christian belief in Anglo-Saxon England, see John D. Niles, 'Pagan survivals and popular beliefs', in eds. Godden and Lapidge, *Old English Literature*, 126-41.

expectations of loyalty in Anglo-Saxon society to which Clemoes refers, cannot be doubted. From the beginning, the spread of Christianity in England appears to have been closely linked to matters of political expediency. The development of the institution of kingship in England at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century extended the authority of the ruler beyond the confines of an immediate and highly localized community or kin-group to incorporate wider and more diverse constituencies.³⁹ In this developing political climate, the unifying organizational and ideological structures of the church seem to have offered Anglo-Saxon kings a means of legitimizing their growing power over a kingdom composed of previously distinct political entities. As Higham remarks:

In a sense, [...] Christianity was adopted in England because systems of authority and organization which were inherent within it offered attractive solutions to political problems confronting powerful kings and ‘overkings’. It was not primarily the intellectual or spiritual message which attracted such kings – indeed none can be shown to have grasped such messages in any sense meaningful to a Christian. Rather, they clearly and visibly took over the ideas about organization, hierarchy and authority which were on offer.⁴⁰

The influence of Christian notions of hierarchy and authority was to extend into the centuries following the gradual conversion of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Indeed, the influence of Christianity has been identified as a key factor in a dramatic transformation in the conceptualization of power relationships which apparently took place in England from the eighth century onwards.⁴¹ In broad terms, this transformation consisted of a shift from a paradigm by which the operation of power is prefaced largely on the association of individuals within “horizontal” groupings—especially those based on kinship—and in which lordship is contingent upon ability and continued reciprocal cooperation, to a

³⁹ N. J. Higham, *The Convert Kings: Power and Religious Affiliation in Early Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester, 1997), 25-8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 27. Cf. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 50-1.

⁴¹ See especially, M. J. Swanton, *Crisis and Development in Germanic Society 700-800: Beowulf and the Burden of Kingship* (Göppinger, 1982). On the role played by the church in this transformation, see J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), 150-1.

“vertical” model based on ‘a more ‘abstract’ systematization of royal authority’ in which retainers are bound to their lord by strict non-personal obligations of loyalty.⁴²

This transformation was supported ideologically by a developing Christian ideal of kingship which ‘stressed how the king was set apart from his subjects as Christ’s representative on earth and owed unquestioning loyalty and obedience by his people’.⁴³ As will be discussed in more detail below, this developing understanding of the nature of kingship continued to have an impact upon Anglo-Saxon society throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. During this period, the increasing scope and range of royal authority necessitated increasing devolution of power into the hands of dependant officers and sub-kings responsible for the administration of discreet territories. In practice, this policy of devolved authority commonly led to conflicts based upon a lack of clear definition and agreement regarding the nature of such power-sharing relationships.

Developments in the way in which lordship was conceptualized thus represent a significant area of social and political tension throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, contributing—in Said’s terms—to the ‘complex collective formation’ in which individual Old English poems stand. We are justified, therefore, in examining the extent to which such tensions might be reflected in the presentation of societal relationships in Old English poetry.⁴⁴ It could be argued that the controlling influence of Christianity as a dominant social ideology might be expected to introduce normative constraints upon the way in

⁴² Clemons, *Interactions of Thought and Language*, 19. Cf. Swanton, *Crisis and Development*, esp. 12, 34-7, 77-80; Scott Gwara, *Heroic Identity in the World of Beowulf*, Medieval and Renaissance Authors and Texts 2 (Leiden, 2008), 129, 351-2.

⁴³ Barbara Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London and New York, 1990), 176.

⁴⁴ Since this chapter was completed, a new monograph has appeared by Catherine A. M. Clarke which does indeed examine the various ways in which a range of prose and verse texts from the later Anglo-Saxon period ‘present structures of hierarchical or vertical relationship alongside patterns of reciprocity and economies of interaction and obligation between individuals and groups’ (*Writing Power in Anglo-Saxon England: Texts, Hierarchies, Economies*, Anglo-Saxon Studies 17 (Cambridge, 2012), 1). Whilst Clarke does not cover any of the ground examined in this chapter, her analysis does support the approach taken here, particularly in her examination of the way in which poems such as the *Guðlac*-poems of the Exeter Book are able to ‘sustain contradictory ideas or ambivalent models’ of power relationships by means of a ‘recurrent inter-play between strict structures of hierarchical order and more fluid models of inter-connection, economy and reciprocity’ (*ibid.*, 43, 41).

which society and societal relationships are represented in Anglo-Saxon literature.

However, as Pasternack reminds us—drawing on Frederic Jameson’s idea of the ‘political unconscious’ in literature—even texts produced under the strictest influence of such a dominant social ideology might, through their ‘fissures and slippages’, reveal the tensions or conflicts that that ideology would seek to conceal.⁴⁵

As so often, a case in point is *Beowulf*, and the presentation of lordship in this poem has frequently been examined in relation to developments in the theoretic basis of kingship in the Anglo-Saxon period.⁴⁶ The possibility that similar tensions and concerns might be evident elsewhere in Old English verse has not, however, received the same detailed attention. The rebellion and fall of Lucifer and his followers, an event which turns explicitly on issues of loyalty and disloyalty, is one context in which we might particularly expect to detect such tensions. Moreover, as I shall argue, the explicitly spatial interpretation of this event in much vernacular poetry means that it is also reasonable to expect that an examination of the depiction of the rebellion across a range of poetic texts might reveal the symbolic potential of spatial representation in Old English verse.

Vainglory and Genesis A

That the description of the rebellion and fall of the angels in Old English verse reflects the significance ascribed to the event in the Augustinian and Gregorian traditions is clear.

While the rebel angels are accused of several other sins in the various poetic accounts of

⁴⁵ Pasternack, ‘The subject and the text’, 182.

⁴⁶ Swanton, assuming an eighth-century origin for the poem, argues that *Beowulf* occupies ‘what might well be described as ‘a pregnant moment of poise’ between two political eras’ (*Crisis and Development*, 152). Clemons, by contrast, would locate the poem ‘at a time when an ancient Germanic conception of personal martial rule still remained essentially unaffected by the radical redefinition, bringing kingship more into line with Christian terms and continental, Carolingian, practices, and beginning in earnest during the second half of the eighth century’ (*Interactions of Thought and Language*, 66). John Hill has raised the possibility that, as a product of the late ninth or early tenth century, the presentation of kingship in the poem could be read in the context of ‘Christian theories of authority, lordship, and kingship in the time of Alfred, his brothers, and sons’ (John M. Hill, *The Narrative Pulse of Beowulf: Arrivals and Departures* (Toronto, 2008), 92).

the rebellion—envy in *Genesis A* (*æfst*, 29a), lust in *Genesis B* (*gal*, 327b; *for galscipe*, 341a), greed in *Christ and Satan* (*gredig and gifre*, 32a; *gifre and grædige*, 192a)—it is the intellectual sin of pride (*oferhygd*, *ofermod*) of which they are most commonly accused.⁴⁷ Indeed, the accounts of the angelic fall in Old English verse are remarkably homogenous in their presentation of the pride of the angels as an excess or misapplication of ‘mind’. In *Genesis B*, for example, Lucifer is twice explicitly said to have been enticed or deceived by his *hyge* (‘mind’, 274b; 350b), while the adjective *wiðerhygende* (‘perverse-minded’) is used in two separate poems to describe the rebels (*Elene* 951a; *Guðlac A* 663b). Elsewhere the prefixed verbs *forhyrgan* (‘despise’, *Andreas* 1381a), *oferhyrgan* (‘renounce’, *Christ and Satan* 252a) and *wiðhyrgan* (‘oppose’, *Guðlac A* 631a) are variously used to describe their rebellion against God’s will in terms suggestive of an intellectual transgression.

As Michelet has recently demonstrated, however, the poetic accounts of the rebellion are homogenous also in their interpretation of the angelic fall in spatial and militaristic terms as a territorial conflict.⁴⁸ The presentation of this essentially non-biblical episode in Old English poetry probably derives in part from the wording of Isaiah 14:12-15, a text which was commonly interpreted as a reference to the angelic fall:

quomodo cecidisti de caelo lucifer qui mane oriebaris corruisti in terram qui
vulnerabas gentes¹³ qui dicebas in corde tuo in caelum conscendam super astra Dei
exaltabo solium meum sedebo in monte testamenti in lateribus aquilonis¹⁴
ascendam super altitudinem nubium ero similis Altissimo¹⁵ verumtamen ad
infernum detraheris in profundum lacu⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Cf. Anlezark, ‘Fall of the Angels’, 124. On vocabulary related to the concept of *superbia* in Old English poetry, see Hans Schabram, *Superbia: Studien zum altenglischen Wortschatz. Teil 1: Die dialektale und zeitliche Verbreitung des Wortguts* (München, 1965), 123-9.

⁴⁸ Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 64-8.

⁴⁹ Isaiah 14:12-15, ‘How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning? how art thou fallen to the earth, that didst wound the nations? And thou saidst in thy heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the most High. But yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, into the depth of the pit.’

As Michelet has pointed out, however, vernacular poetic accounts of the rebellion habitually elaborate on the details of this allusive passage in a way that emphasizes the suggestion of spatial contestation. Her discussion of Old English creation narratives highlights the ways in which such accounts ‘betray special concerns with questions of space and spatial organization’.⁵⁰ In doing so, these accounts, and the poetic accounts in particular, establish the basis of divine power in God’s ability to control spatial organization and relationships. It is in this context that the poetic accounts of the rebellion represent the disobedience of the rebels as an attempt to contest God’s spatial authority:

Accounts of the genesis of the world stress that it is God who ultimately rules over space, and Old English poets modify their biblical sources to indicate that the very first crime, that which causes Lucifer’s downfall and his resentment of Adam and Eve, is a territorial transgression.⁵¹

A prime example of this territorial focus—one not considered by Michelet—is the account of the rebellion contained in the Exeter Book poem *Vainglory*:

Ðæt wæs geara iu	in godes rice
þætte mid englum	oferhygd astag,
widmære gewin.	Wroht ahofen,
heardne heresiþ,	heofon widedan,
forsawan hyra sellan,	þa hi to swice þohton
ond þrymcyning	þeodenstoles
ricne beryfan,	swa hit ryht ne wæs,
ond þonne gesettan	on hyra sylfra dom
wuldres wynlond.	Ðæt him wige forstod
fæder frumsceafta;	wearð him seo feohte to grim. ⁵²

Even in so short an account, several of the features appearing here are familiar from other, longer Old English poetic narratives of the rebellion. The rebellion is motivated by the angels’ illegitimate and excessive pride (*oferhygd*) and is presented explicitly in militaristic terms (*gewin*, *heresiþ*, *wig*, *feohte*). The angels’ territorial ambitions are also

⁵⁰ Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 38.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵² *Vainglory* 57-66, ‘It was years ago when pride arose amongst the angels in God’s realm, well-known strife. They raised dispute, violent expedition, polluted heaven, rejected their Superior, when they intended treachery and to deprive the powerful King of glory of His royal throne, as it was not right, and then to order the joyful land of glory by their own reckoning. The Father of creation denied them that with war; that conflict became too painful for them.’

clear. The opening line of the extract serves to locate the episode temporally (*geara iu*), but also spatially (*in godes rice*), and the actions contemplated by the angels are dependent upon an understanding of the rebellion in terms of space and territory.

In the first place, the statement that the angels wish to deprive God of His kingly throne (*þeodenstoles [...] beryfan*) suggests an attempt to arrogate and control a symbolically important space. The detail is reminiscent of the opening of *Beowulf*, in which Scyld Scefing's expansion of Danish territorial authority is figured in terms of depriving neighbouring tribes of their mead-benches (*meodosetla ofteah*, 5b).⁵³ The symbolic importance of this gesture has been discussed by Davis:

The benches represent the autonomy these leaders had once enjoyed, sharing out drink to their fellow-tribesmen and other followers in their own mead-halls. As the poet realizes, mead-benches are the very spot on which a group's collective identity was most assiduously enculturated through drinking, gift-giving and the performance of heroic verse celebrating the supposed ancestors of the chieftain and his people.⁵⁴

As Davis' analysis makes clear, occupation of and control over the mead-benches is closely associated in this passage with identity and authority. In a similar way, the angels' attempt to control the symbolic space represented by God's *þeodenstol* in *Vainglory* is a challenge both to God's authority and to His identity as 'lord' or *þeoden*.⁵⁵

At the same time, however, the *Beowulf*-poet's account of Scyld's encroachment upon the autonomy of neighbouring tribes (*þara ymbsittendra*, 9b) implies a model in which spatial authority is divided—in an often unstable fashion—into competing territories or provinces.⁵⁶ A similar model is also evident in *Vainglory* in the rebels' expectation that they might take personal control over the territory of heaven (*gesettan on hyra sylfra dom / wuldres wynlond*). The verb (*ge-*)*settan* is significant in this context as a term frequently

⁵³ Cited from *Klaeber's Beowulf: Fourth Edition*, ed. R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles (Toronto, 2008).

⁵⁴ Craig R. Davis, 'An ethnic dating of *Beowulf*', *ASE* 35 (2006), 111-29, at 115.

⁵⁵ On the association of God's authority with the divine throne in Anglo-Saxon art and literature, see John F. Vickrey, 'The Vision of Eve in *Genesis B*', *Speculum* 44 (1969), 86-102, at 87-9.

⁵⁶ Cf. Hill, *Narrative Pulse*, 6-7.

used in Old English verse to describe God's divine control over the organization of space.⁵⁷ In both *Genesis A* (9-11a) and *Christ and Satan* (4-6), and in texts as diverse as *The Phoenix* (10b)⁵⁸ and *Beowulf* (94), the verb is used to describe God's original creative act. It is also used in *Genesis A* to describe the wide expanses appointed to Abraham and his descendents (2204b-7), and the verb is used in both *The Phoenix* (395-6a) and *Christ III* (1389)⁵⁹ to describe God's settlement of mankind within the world.

In *Vainglory*, therefore, the transgression of the rebel angels consists in their rejection of divinely appointed spatial arrangements. Their belief in the fundamentally fluid nature of spatial organization is at odds with the conventional presentation of divine control in Old English verse described by Michelet according to which God 'appoints an appropriate place to everyone and everything'.⁶⁰ However, their attempt to assert their independence through military action also suggests an understanding of lordship as conditional, premised on strength and ability rather than on right.

In this extract, the angels are presented very much as a collective force. The *superbia* that causes the rebellion emerges 'amongst' them all (*mid englum*), while in the new order heaven is apparently to be apportioned according to their collective judgement (*hyra sylfradom*).⁶¹ This presentation creates a marked contrast between the collectivity of the angels on the one hand and the singular figure of God on the other. This contrast is enhanced by the lack of any reference here to Lucifer as the guiding figure of the rebellion or to the angels who remain loyal in heaven. The result of this presentation is to emphasize the

⁵⁷ *BT, ge-settan*, 'To set, put, fix, confirm, restore, appoint, decree, settle, possess, occupy, place together, compose, expose, allay'.

⁵⁸ Cited from *The Phoenix*, ed. N. Blake, rev. ed. (Exeter, 1990).

⁵⁹ Cited from *The Christ of Cynewulf: A Poem in Three Parts*, ed. Albert S. Cook (Boston, Massachusetts, 1900).

⁶⁰ Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 62.

⁶¹ On the concept of 'self-judgement' as a means of legal redress, see Fritz Mezger, 'Self-Judgment in OE Documents', *MLN* 67 (1952), 106-9. However, John M. Hill has questioned the currency of such a legalistic interpretation in Anglo-Saxon texts, arguing that this idea implies 'having the entire, exclusive use (alienated from its previous possessor) of the goods in question', and noting that the idea is frequently used to describe transactions that might be seen as dishonourable or treacherous (*The Anglo-Saxon Warrior Ethic: Reconstructing Lordship in Early English Literature* (Gainesville, Florida, 2000), 85).

significance of the rebellion as an attempt on the part of the angels to contest God's authority over them.

This rejection is described in potentially quite formal terms in the statement that the rebels *to swice þohton*. Whilst the noun *swice* here most obviously means 'deceit' or 'treachery',⁶² the related verbal form *swican* can, according to *BT*, carry the more precise meaning 'to withdraw favour or allegiance from'.⁶³ It is in this sense that the verb is used twice in *Genesis A*. In the account of the battle of the kings drawn from Genesis 14, the verb is used to describe the decision by the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah to end their payment of tribute to the Elamites (1976b-81), where the phrase *him from swicon* ('withdrew allegiance from them', 1981b) translates the words of Genesis 14:3: *recesserunt ab eo* ('revolted from him [i.e. the Elamites' king Chodorlahomor]'). Moreover, in a much earlier passage in *Genesis A*, the same verb is used during the account of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise when the poet comments on the favour that God showed to the first couple in spite of their previous rejection of his authority (*þeah þe he him from swice*, 954b).⁶⁴

However, the depiction of the rebellion in *Vainglory* nevertheless highlights the folly of the angels' attempt to reject God's lordship over them. On the one hand, their attempt to assert a 'horizontal'-style model of power relationships in which authority is premised upon strength and ability is undone by their own inability to match God militarily (*Þæt him wige forstod*). On the other hand, however, the language of this passage also presents the rebellion as failure to recognize God's absolute authority. He is described not only as the angels' 'better' (*hyra sellan*) and as the 'Father of Creation' (*fæder frumsceafta*)—terminology that potentially implies a horizontal-style kinship relationship between God and the angels—but also as the 'King of glory' (*brymcyning*). This latter term emphasizes

⁶² *BT*, *swice*, II.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, *swican*, II. a.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Genesis A*, ed. Doane, 245 n. to line 954b.

the extraordinary nature of divine authority, and in a narratorial aside the poet is at pains to emphasize the absolute rather than conditional obligations that this authority confers upon the angels. In contrast to the *Beowulf*-poet's positive assessment of Scyld's subjugation of neighbouring tribes (*Þæt wæs god cyning*, 11b), the poet of *Vainglory* ultimately stresses the injustice of the angelic rebellion (*swa hit ryht ne wæs*), a comment that seems to privilege a 'vertical' model of unconditional lordship which is at odds with the implicit 'horizontal' model according to which the angels act.

A similar picture emerges from the description of the rebellion in *Genesis A*. As in *Vainglory*, the originary sin of the angels is identified as pride (*oferhygd*, 22b, 29a) and the rebellion is depicted in militaristic terms as a campaign against God (*þæs þe heo ongunnon wið gode winnan*, 77). The aim of the rebellion is again described in territorial terms. The angels desire to possess a kingdom (*cwædon þæt heo rice [...] agan woldon*, 47-8a), and the rebellion is presented as a rejection of the divinely appointed organization of space:

	Noldan dreogan leng
heora selfra ræd	ac hie of siblufan
godes ahwurfon.	hæfdon gielp micel
þæt hie wið drihtne	dælan meahton
wuldorfæstan wic	werodes þrymme,
sid and swegltorht. ⁶⁵	

The angels' boast that they might divide the kingdom of heaven with God recalls not only the presentation of the rebellion in *Vainglory* but also, as Anlezark has noted, the statement in *Solomon and Saturn II* that Lucifer intended to overrun the territory of heaven and occupy one half of its area with his companions (275b-6).⁶⁶ As in these other accounts, moreover, the territorial ambition presented in *Genesis A* represents a challenge to God's 'spatial mastery'.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Genesis A* 23b-28a, 'They would no longer perform their own good counsel but turned from God's friendship. They had a great boast that through the power of the host they could divide the glorious dwelling-place with the Lord, wide and heaven-bright.'

⁶⁶ Anlezark, 'Fall of the Angels', 124-5.

⁶⁷ Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 65.

The use of the verb *dælan* to describe this challenge is strikingly paralleled elsewhere in Old English literature. In his *De initio creaturae*, Ælfric describes how Lucifer considered *hu he mihte dælan rice wið god* ('how he could divide the kingdom with God', CH 1 I.42-3).⁶⁸ In a subsequent Lenten homily, Ælfric makes an almost identical comment (CH 1 XI: 89-93), and the pseudo-Wulfstan homily Napier LVIII, described by Bethurum as 'a rather disorganized pastiche',⁶⁹ similarly explains how Lucifer *wolde dælan rice wið god ælmihtigne* ('desired to divide the kingdom with God Almighty', 306:26-7).⁷⁰ In each of these contexts the connotations of the verb *dælan* may extend to notions of authority and power.

The verb is one that is most characteristically used in a context of lordly benevolence. Of the seven occasions outside this passage that the verb appears in *Genesis A* it is used four times with specific reference to the distribution of treasure, a process that serves to both create and enforce power relationships (1069b, 1611b, 2789b, 2830b). Of the three remaining examples, one consists of a familiar poetic idiom for taking flight (*fleame dælan*, 2281b) and one of a reference to the stars spreading their radiance across the heavens (2193b). The final reference relates directly to the divine organization of space, describing how, on the second day of creation, God divided the oceans (*holmas dælde*, 146b) so that the water was sundered (*flod wæs adæled*, 150b). In this wider context, therefore, the angels' boast that they, as grammatical subject of the verb, could *dælan* heaven with God not only represents a belief that territorial authority might be divisible

⁶⁸ For the suggestion that Ælfric's presentation of the rebellion was in fact influenced by that of *Genesis A*, see Stephen Pelle, 'Ræd, Unræd, and Raining Angels: Alterations to a Late Copy of Ælfric's Homily 'De Initio Creaturae'', *N&Q* ns 57 (2010), 295-301.

⁶⁹ *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. Dorothy Bethurum (Oxford, 1957), 42.

⁷⁰ According to both Bethurum (*ibid.*, 43) and Mark Atherton ('The Sources of Napier Homily 58 (Cameron B.3.4.47)', *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register* (2000), <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk>, accessed 19 March 2012), Napier LVIII is here drawing on Wulfstan's account of the rebellion in his homily Bethurum VI (24-33), which in turn draws on Ælfric's *De initio creaturae*. However, the phrasing here does not correspond to anything in Bethurum VI, and it seems highly probable that the author of Napier LVIII is drawing either directly on Ælfric's account, or on an intermediate text that follows Ælfric more closely than does Bethurum VI.

and conditional, but also a failure to appreciate the absolute nature of God's spatial mastery.

However, the presentation of the rebels' ambitions in terms suggestive of horizontal spatial distribution is at odds with an emphasis on verticality apparent in the account of the rebellion in *Genesis A*. As Trilling points out, in Augustinian thought the angelic rebellion marks the emergence of temporality within Creation.⁷¹ However, in Old English poetry, the foundational importance of the rebellion and fall of the angels also extends to the spatial reorganization which results from it. On the one hand, the influence of the so-called 'doctrine of replacement' can be clearly seen in both *Genesis A* (92-100) and *Genesis B* (395-7a, 364b-8a, 425b-7a) in the direct causal link that is established between the fall of the angels and the subsequent creation of the physical universe.⁷² On the other hand, the punishment of the angels themselves is commonly presented in spatial terms as exile. So, the *Genesis B*-poet describes how, expelled from heaven, the angels had to seek another land (*sohton oper land*, 332b). Forced to dwell in hell (310b-12), their world is literally inverted (*hyra woruld wæs gehwyrfed*, 318b). Similarly, in *Genesis A* the rebels are forced to undertake a long journey (*on langne sið*, 68b) when God creates hell as a wretched home (*wræcligne ham*, 37a) to await the arrival of the exiles (*wræcna bidan*, 39b). In *Christ and Satan*, the devil himself likewise laments that he is now 'cut off from the troop' (*duguðum bedeled*, 122a) and is forced to occupy 'exile paths' (*wræclastas*, 121a, 188b, 259a).

⁷¹ Renée R. Trilling, *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia: Historical Representation in Old English Verse* (Toronto, 2009), 79-90. By contrast, Howe suggests that '[e]ven the most superficial reading of the book of Genesis establishes that the fall of Adam and Eve was a fall into time and its inexorable workings' (*Writing the Map*, 198).

⁷² Cf. Dorothy Haines, 'Vacancies in Heaven: The Doctrine of Replacement and *Genesis A*', *N&Q* ns 44 (1997), 150-4; Jeanne-Marie Pont, 'Homo angelorum decimus ordo', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 31 (1988), 43-8. On Satan's resentment that mankind will take his place in heaven in *Genesis B*, see Margaret Bridges, 'The Heroic and Elegiac Contexts of Two Old English Laments of the Fallen Angels: Towards a Theory of Medieval Daemonization', *Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature* 4 (1988), 117-32, at 122; Thomas D. Hill, 'The Fall of Angels and Man in the Old English *Genesis B*', in eds. Lewis E. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation for John C. McGalliard* (Notre Dame, Indiana, and London, 1975), 279-90, at 287.

As presented in Old English poetry, therefore, the rebellion and dislocation of the angels is instrumental in establishing the three-tier vertical model of the Christian cosmos which places the earth between heaven above and hell below.⁷³ In this context, it is notable how frequently these poetic accounts present the fall of the angels explicitly as a literal downward movement. In *Elene*, for example, the rebel angels are cast out of heaven (*of radorum*, 761b) and forced downwards to occupy the depths of hell (*under heolstorhofu hreosan sceolde*, 763; *in neolnesse nyðer bescufeð*, 942; *in susla grund*, 943b). Similarly, in *Juliana* Lucifer is forced downward (*niðer gedolfen*, 423a) into the pit of hell (*helle seað*, 422b), where, on account of his pride, he is forced to seek a dwelling (*fore oferhygdum eard gesohtes*, 424). In *Solomon and Saturn II* Lucifer's attempt to conquer heaven results in his expulsion from heaven (*aweorp hine ða of ðam wuldre ond wide todraf*, 285), from where he is again explicitly forced downwards (*forlet hine ða of dune gehreosan*, 279b; *afielde hine ða under foldan sceatas*, 280a), to suffer the torments of hell with his companions (*heaf under hefonum*, 289a).

In *Genesis A* too the newly created hell to which the rebels are exiled is—in contrast to the heights of the heaven which the angels previously occupied (*heah on heofenum*, 97a) and on which Lucifer's ambitions centred (*ham and heahsetl*, 33a)—characterized by its depth (*deop, dreama leas*, 40a).⁷⁴ In this account of the rebellion, however, an interest in vertical hierarchies is more generally apparent. From the beginning of the poem, God's authority is aligned with his high position. The opening lines of the poem describe God as *heafod ealra heahgesceafta* ('the head of all high Creation', 4), a description that potentially alludes not only to His role as the lord and source of creation, but also to His

⁷³ On the use of 'dislocation' as a narrative strategy throughout the poems of MS Junius 11, see Howe, *Writing the Map*, 195-224. Curiously, whilst Howe does discuss the account of the angelic fall in *Christ and Satan* (*ibid.*, 219-20), he does not discuss the accounts in *Genesis A* and *Genesis B* and appears to discount their possible significance for his argument (*ibid.*, 220 and 267 n. 44).

⁷⁴ Cf. McKill, 'Patterns of the Fall', 29: 'In place of a desirable hall, they receive a *wraelicne ham* "wretched home" (37a) and *witehus* "torment house" (39a); instead of a *heah* "high" (33a) seat, they obtain a dwelling *deop* "deep" (40a) in hell.'

status as the pinnacle or high-point of existence.⁷⁵ God rules over the thrones of heaven by means of His ‘high powers’ (*ac he bið a rice / ofer heofonstolas heagam þrymmum*, 7b-8), and in His defeat of the rebellious angels is explicitly described as the ‘high-king’ of heaven:

him seo wen ge Leah siððan waldend his,
heofona heahcining, honda arærde
hehste wið þam herge.⁷⁶

The gesture with which God brings about the defeat of the angels here is not without significance. Whether *hehste* refers to God Himself, or more specifically to his hands (as reflected in my translation), is ambiguous.⁷⁷ However, the combination of the superlative with the reference to God’s position as *heahcining* in these lines again associates God’s supremacy with his vertical spatial pre-eminence.

The account of the rebellion in *Genesis A* thus appears to juxtapose two distinct spatial models. On the one hand, the angels’ belief in their ability to divide the kingdom of heaven with God suggests an understanding of spatial authority as negotiable on a horizontal plane. On the other hand, the emphasis on God’s pre-eminence as ‘highest’ and on the literal ‘fall’ that the angels experience opposes to this a vertical model which emphasizes God’s absolute spatial authority. The outcome of the rebellion and the spatial reorganization that results from it affirms the supremacy of this vertical spatial model.

At the same time, however, the supremacy of this spatial model also affirms a model of kingship that emphasizes God’s absolute and unconditional authority over his followers.

Interpreting the account of the rebellion in terms of ‘the idealized life of the Germanic

⁷⁵ Amongst the meaning of *heafod* recorded in *BT* are not only ‘one to whom others are subordinate, a chief, a leader’ (XI (1)) but also ‘head as in fountain-head, source’ (VIII), ‘a summit, eminence’ (VII (1)), and, in an architectural context, ‘the top of a building’ (VI). The use in *Genesis A* seems to play on this potential polysemy.

⁷⁶ *Genesis A* 49-51a, ‘That expectation failed them when the Ruler, the High-King, raised up His most high hands against that army.’

⁷⁷ Cf. *Genesis A*, ed. Doane, 229 n. to lines 50b-51.

war-band with their lord', Trilling has characterized the bond between God and the angels as essentially 'a personal one':⁷⁸

The angels' crime consists in the actions of supposedly loyal thegns who have turned their backs on their lord, preferring instead to raise themselves up as equals to him. They fail to adhere to their appropriate social positions as created beings; more than that, however, casting them as a Germanic war-band makes their disloyalty an act of personal betrayal against their lord.⁷⁹

There is, I think, more significance in this statement than Trilling perhaps realizes. The description of the rebellion as 'an act of personal betrayal' suggests a horizontal-style model of lordship in which authority is premised upon maintaining such cooperative personal relationships. Trilling's reference to the angels' 'appropriate social positions', however, suggests a model in which authority and status is defined according to the position that an individual occupies in a vertically organized social hierarchy.

This contrast is at the heart of the spatial depiction of the rebellion in *Genesis A*. The angels fail to appreciate that God's authority is not dependent upon their cooperation and the rebels' attempts to renounce their position as his followers are accordingly destined to be unsuccessful. In contrast to the horizontal spatial and social relationships envisaged by the rebel angels, the countervailing emphasis on verticality in the repeated descriptions of God's supreme position as 'highest' reflects His absolute authority over Creation. At the same time, the descent of the angels into the newly appointed depths of hell manifests spatially their consequent loss of status.

Christ and Satan

The presentation of the angelic fall in *Christ and Satan* shares many features with the accounts in both *Vainglory* and *Genesis A*. However, the general similarities in approach

⁷⁸ Trilling, *Aesthetics of the Familiar*, 87, 88-9.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

apparent between these poems potentially masks significant differences in the way in which the rebellion is interpreted in the former poem, particularly in relation to the spatial representation of contested power relationships. Rather than a single consistent narrative of the rebellion, *Christ and Satan* presents the events through a series of retrospective laments spoken primarily by Satan—who here assumes a greater prominence as the instigator of the rebellion—interspersed with passages of both narrative and exhortation by the poet-narrator. This structure has caused the textual integrity of this part of the poem, and its connection to the subsequent accounts of the Harrowing of Hell and Christ's temptation in the wilderness, to be questioned. To a modern audience at least, the repetitive nature of the account of the rebellion might seem to support Conybeare's dismissive account of the first part of the poem:

several long harangues of Satan and his angels, reproaching themselves and each other with their crime and its consequent punishment, so little connected with the sequel or with each other, and so inartificially thrown together, as rather to resemble an accumulation of detached fragments than any regular design.⁸⁰

Such a judgement may, however, be overly condemnatory. It is not the case that the various accounts of the rebellion are utterly disconnected either from each other or from the concerns of the poem as a whole.

The emphasis throughout the poem on the verticality of the Christian cosmos provides one linking factor. A strong contrast is established again and again between the heights of heaven and the depths of hell. The former is *upheofon* (16b, 95b, 167b) and an *uplicne ham* (362b), and the adverb *uppe* ('above') is repeatedly used as a virtual synonym for

⁸⁰ John Josias Conybeare, *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, ed. William Daniel Conybeare (London, 1826), 189. Abbetmeyer similarly argued that this portion of the text consists of 'a fairly orderly collection' of originally distinct 'Plaints of Lucifer' to which lines 366-733 of the extant poem were later appended (*Doctrine of Sin*, 10-12, 41). Clubb, who suggests that the MS Junius 11 text might represent 'an unimproved first draft', points out that 'Old English poets have never been commended especially for their constructive ability, and hence the lack of articulation and centralization so evident in *Christ and Satan* need not prejudice us against the conclusion that the poem is the product of a single molding spirit' (*Christ and Satan*, lvi). For a more recent analysis of the question and an argument in favour of the unity of the text, see Sleeth, *Studies in Christ and Satan*, 3-26. Finnegan also sees unity in the work, but argues that the mixture of styles and subject matter results from the poet's reliance on homiletic prose models (*Christ and Satan: A Critical Edition*, ed. Robert Emmett Finnegan (Waterloo, Ontario, 1977), 12-36).

heaven in phrases such as *uppe mid englum* ('above with the angels', 123a, 142a, 293a, 330a, 591a; cf. 391), *uppe on earde* ('in the land above', 231a), and *uppe ecne gefean* ('eternal joy above', 199b). God's throne is repeatedly associated semantically with height (*hehseld*, 47b, 208a; *hehsetle*, 220a), and His spatial pre-eminence is suggested from the very beginning of the poem. Following the brief account of creation with which the poem opens, the poet stresses God's external, encircling perspective:

Deopne ymblyt clene ymbhaldeð
Meotod on mihtum, and alne middangeard.⁸¹

The precise meaning of these lines has been much debated.⁸² As they stand, however, the image suggested by the passage is of God reaching downwards to encompass Creation, an image which is consistent with Sleeth's observation that the presentation of God in the poem is as one who 'can only manifest himself through what is lower than he is'.⁸³

By contrast, hell is explicitly *deop* (638a) and is three times described as a 'deep darkness' (*neowle genip*, 102a, 180a, 446a). In a series of formulaic phrases, hell is also repeatedly described as an abyss (*grund*): it is *biteran grund* ('a bitter abyss', 149b), *grimme grundas* ('terrible abysses', 260a), *helle grund* ('the abyss of hell', 450b, 456a), *hatne grund* ('a hot abyss', 485b) and *caldan grund* ('a cold abyss', 637b). It is also repeatedly described as a floor (*flor*, 39b, 70b, 110a, 318b). This is pointedly expressed, moreover, in the account of the literal fall of the rebel angels. Throughout the first part of *Christ and Satan*, the poet repeatedly establishes a contrast between the heights to which the angels aspired and the depths which they in fact obtained:

⁸¹ *Christ and Satan* 7-8, 'In His might, God utterly encompasses the deep expanse and all the earth.'

⁸² Cf. Emily V. Thornbury, 'Christ and Satan: "Healing" Line 7', *ES* 87 (2006), 505-10. Thornbury would emend line 7 to read *Cleowne ymb lyfte clene ymbhaldeð* ('entirely supports the sphere around the air'), an alteration she considers justified by the poet's apparent interest in celestial cosmography. Cf. Thomas D. Hill, 'Apocryphal Cosmography and the "Stream uton Sæ": A Note on *Christ and Satan*, lines 4-12', *PQ* 48 (1969), 550-4; Miranda Wilcox, 'Meotod, the Meteorologist: Celestial Cosmography in *Christ and Satan*, lines 9-12a', *LSE* 39 (2008), 17-32.

⁸³ Sleeth, *Studies in Christ and Satan*, 20.

	Hæfdan Dryhtnes liht
for oferhygdum	ufan forleton;
hæfdon hym to hyhte	helle floras,
beornende bealo. ⁸⁴	

The rhetorical parallelism here is underscored by both the repetition of the verb *habban* and the half-rhyme between *Dryhtnes liht* and *hym to hyhte*, and the opposition established in these lines between the ‘floors of hell’ and the joys abandoned ‘above’ in heaven is also perhaps reflected aurally in the assonance of *forleton* and *floras*.

This distinction is equally prominent, moreover, in the very first account of the rebellion in the poem, where the poet stresses the angels’ changed circumstances:

	nales swegles leoht
habban in heofnum,	heahgetimbra,
ac gedufan sceolun	in ðone deopan wælm,
niðær under nessas	in ðone neowlan grund ⁸⁵

There is again a clear contrast here between the *heahgetimbra* of heaven and the *deopan wælm* of hell. The latter is especially associated with depth through the almost tautological phrase *gedufan [...] niðær under*. The description of hell as an abyss below a cliff or cliffs is of course common enough in Old English literature, but in *Christ and Satan* the line *niðær under nessas in ðone neowlan grund* is repeated verbatim at line 91 and is closely paralleled in lines 134b-5a in Satan’s description of the lamentations of the inhabitants of hell (*grundas mænan / niðer under næssum*). Moreover, the use of the verb *gedufan* in this passage places an emphasis on the literal downwards movement associated with the angels’ fall. The same verb is used again in the same context at line 670b, and the verbs *geglidan* (‘to fall’, 376b) and *gehenan* (‘to cast down’, 190b) are also used to describe the abasement of the rebels, both verbs that connote literal downwards movement.

⁸⁴ *Christ and Satan* 68b-71a, ‘Because of pride, they had abandoned above the Lord’s light; they had the floors of hell as their expectation, burning evil.’

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 28b-31, ‘Not at all to have in heaven the celestial light, the high foundations, but they must dive into that deep surge, below under the cliffs in that deep abyss.’

This emphasis on vertical movement is paralleled throughout the poem. In his presentation of salvation history, the poet of *Christ and Satan* is perhaps drawing upon a well-attested patristic motif associated with the theology of glory according to which Christ's salvific agency is presented in terms of a series of vertical movements. The so-called 'descent-ascent' motif has been identified by George Hardin Brown as a key influence on Cynewulf's treatment of Christ's earthly mission in *The Ascension (Christ II)*.⁸⁶ Brown notes not only the 'profound theological importance' that the motif assumes in much patristic theological writing, but also its 'obvious suitability to the Old English poetic technique of contrast and variation'.⁸⁷ It is possible, therefore, that the influence of this same motif is seen in the emphasis on vertical spatial relationships in *Christ and Satan*. Here, Christ's own account of His journey to earth from the homeland above (*Ferde to foldan [...] ufan from eðle*, 495-6a) is mirrored by His subsequent upwards movement at the Ascension (*ic eft up becom*, 512a; *Astah up on heofonum*, 563a). Similarly, Christ's descent to hell at the Harrowing as related by Eve (*wolde helwarum ham gelihtan*, 431) is mirrored by a striking emphasis on the upwards movement of the freed Patriarchs whom Christ allows to travel upwards from hell (*Let þa up faran*, 407a, 443a). The released captives journey upwards to heaven (*up to eard*, 458a, 506a) and are led up to the homeland (*up to eðle*, 403a, 461a, 554a). By contrast, neither the rebel angels nor the souls damned on Judgement Day will ever be allowed to travel upwards from their place of punishment in hell (*up þanon*, 327b, 635a; cf. 424b).

In contrast to this strong emphasis on the vertical nature of the Christian cosmos, however, the poem presents the angelic rebellion in terms that again suggest a rejection—or perhaps a wilful misunderstanding—of vertical power hierarchies. As in *Vainglory*, the

⁸⁶ George Hardin Brown, 'The Descent-Ascent Motif in *Christ II* of Cynewulf', *JEGP* 73 (1974), 1-12, reprinted in ed. Robert E. Bjork, *Cynewulf: Basic Readings*, Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England 4 (New York and London, 1996), 133-46.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

throne of God becomes a focal point for the rebellion in *Christ and Satan*. Twice in the space of twenty lines, Satan recalls his intention to drive God from His throne:

[...] ðæs ic wolde of selde Sunu Meotodes,
Drihten adrifan [...]’⁸⁸

[...] þæs ðe ic geþohte adrifan Drihten of selde,
Weoroda Waldend [...]’⁸⁹

However, alongside this ambition to displace God from his symbolic position, Satan’s ambition in *Christ and Satan* extends to the construction of a rival throne:

Þa Satanus swearte geþohte
þæt he wolde on heofonum hehseld wyrcan
uppe mid þam Ecan.⁹⁰

The wording of this passage suggests the influence of Isaiah 14:13-14. However, in the context of the poet’s strong emphasis on verticality elsewhere in the poem, the specification that the throne should be *uppe mid þam Ecan* suggests a challenge to God’s authority based on a misunderstanding of the significance of God’s spatial pre-eminence. The implication here is that God’s authority as lord is in some way conditional upon, rather than reflected by, his literal position as highest. Satan’s attempt to match God’s spatial position reveals again a misconception of divine authority as provisional rather than absolute, a mistake which underpins the rebels’ belief that they might themselves attain to God’s divine authority (22-4a).

However, *Christ and Satan* differs from the poetic accounts discussed above in its presentation of the territorial motivation for the rebellion. In contrast to the accounts in *Vainglory* and *Genesis A*, it is clear from Satan’s laments in *Christ and Satan* that he and his fellow rebels had already been granted territory in heaven prior to their uprising:

⁸⁸ *Christ and Satan* 173-4a, ‘Because I desired to drive the Lord, the Son of God, from the throne’.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 187-8a, ‘Because I intended to drive the Lord, the Ruler of hosts, from the throne’.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 371-3a, ‘Then Satan thought darkly that he wished to build a high-throne in the heavens, up with the Eternal One.’ Cf. *ibid.* 40-3.

‘Ne ðurfon we ðes wenan, þæt us Wuldorcýning
 æfre wille eard alean,
 eðel to æhte, swa he ær dyde,
 ecne onwald; ah him alles gewald,
 wuldres and wita, Waldendes Sunu. [...]’⁹¹

As Sleeth has shown, the emphatic use of terminology connoting possession and authority in these lines is paralleled throughout the description of the rebellion, and the verb *agan* (‘possess’) and the nouns *æht* (‘possession’) and (*ge-/on-*)*wald* (‘authority’, ‘power’) recur frequently in this section.⁹² What is striking here, however, is the way in which these terms relate specifically to the issue of territorial authority. As punctuated here, this passage suggests that Satan and the other demons had previously been granted territory (*eard*), possession of a homeland (*eðel æhte*), and also authority (*ecne onwald*). This last phrase, however, represents a correction made to the manuscript. The original text of this verse reads not *ecne* but *ece*, a reading which would make the phrase *ece onwald* not an object of the verb *alyfan*, but a subject of the verb *agan* and a reference to Christ as ‘Eternal Power’ in apposition to *Waldendes Sunu*. Such is the reading adopted by Finnegan, who objects to the traditional reading of these lines on the ground that the rebel angels cannot have been granted eternal authority in view of their subsequent punishment.⁹³

This objection is, however, unnecessary. Critical to the understanding of these lines is the force of the verb *alyfan*, which occurs only twice in the poem, both times in relation to the territory granted to the angels in heaven (116b, 278b). The primary meaning of this verb is to allow or permit, but it is also used with the specific meaning ‘grant’, and is attested with reference to grants of land.⁹⁴ The authority possessed by the angels prior to the rebellion, like the territory granted to them, should be seen in terms of a top-down

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 115-19, ‘We need not expect that the King of Glory will ever grant us a land, a homeland as a possession, as he previously did, eternal authority; but the Ruler’s Son has power over everything, glory and punishments’. Cf. *ibid.* 277-9.

⁹² Sleeth, *Studies in Christ and Satan*, 16-18, 26. Cf. *Christ and Satan* 55-60, 84-8, 95b-6a, 107-10a, 173-6, 250-4a.

⁹³ *Christ and Satan*, ed. Finnegan, 96, n. to line 117a. Cf. *DOE*, *agan*, I.A.5.f.i.a.i.

⁹⁴ *DOE*, *alyfan*, C.1. See below 136-8.

devolution of power from God to his followers. This grant may, therefore, be seen as ‘eternal’ only in a conditional sense: the angels will be granted this authority for ever so long as they continue in their obligations towards God.⁹⁵ The rhetorical force of the corrected text of line 118 makes this reading clear: the angels’ eternal authority (*ecne onwald*) was, as Satan now realises, subordinate to and reliant on God’s own ultimate authority (*ah him alles gewald*).

Dissatisfied with this limited and conditional authority, Satan’s own account of the motivations behind his rebellion make clear that what he sought was total and autonomous authority in heaven:

[...] Þa ðæs ofþuhte	þæt se Þeoden wæs
strang and stiðmod.	Ongan ic þa steppan forð
ana wið englum,	and to him eallum spræc:
“Ic can eow læran	langsumne ræd,
gif ge willað mire ⁹⁶	mihte geleafan:
uta oferhycgan	Helm þone micclan,
weroda Waldend,	agan us þis wuldres leoht
eall to æhte.” [...]’ ⁹⁷	

On the one hand, Lucifer’s ambitions here again presume a conceptualization of lordship premised on ability rather than right. It is God’s strength (*strang and stiðmod*) that is displeasing to Lucifer, and his belief in his ability to challenge God is similarly prefaced on his confidence in his own power (*mire mihte*). The rebels’ understanding of the nature of authority is at odds with the poem’s presentation of God as the head of a vertically ordered Creation, who, as the narrator of the poem points out, rules not by power, but by right:

⁹⁵ The conditional nature of the favours shown to the angels is made explicit at *Christ and Satan* 233-4.

⁹⁶ Clubb retains the manuscript reading *mire* here, although a superscript ‘n’ has been added to the text at this point, either by the scribe or a later corrector, to give the more usual form *minre*. Cf. *Christ and Satan*, ed. Clubb, 84 n. to line 251.

⁹⁷ *Christ and Satan* 247-54a, ‘Then it displeased me that the Lord was strong and resolute. Then I began to step forward one amongst the angels, and spoke to them all: ‘I can teach you a lasting counsel, if you will have faith in my strength: let us scorn the great Protector, the Ruler of hosts, have for ourselves this light of glory to possess completely.’’

in the absence of reliable dating evidence for these three poems it is impossible to make more specific links between their depictions of the rebellion and socio-political developments in Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁰⁰ For the remainder of this chapter, therefore, I shall examine the use of significant spatial representation in the account of the rebellion in a poem for which a more reliable historical and social context might reasonably be inferred.

Genesis B stands alone in the corpus of Old English poetry as the only text that can be demonstrably linked to a poetic exemplar written in another European vernacular. The story of Eduard Sievers' hypothesis regarding the Old Saxon origins of *Genesis B*, and of its subsequent confirmation when three fragments of a corresponding Old Saxon poem were discovered in the Vatican library, is well known.¹⁰¹ The process by which the Old Saxon *Genesis*—or a portion of it—was adapted to Old English verse has, however, been a matter of critical disagreement. More than a century after the discovery of the Old Saxon fragments, no scholarly consensus has been reached on fundamental issues such as whether the adaptation of the Old Saxon original is best understood as an act of translation or as part of an ongoing process of transliteration, or whether the person (or persons) responsible for the adaptation was an Anglo-Saxon poet, working either in England or on the Continent, or a Continental speaker of Old Saxon working in England with only a partial understanding of the requirements of Old English verse.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Traditionally, *Genesis A* has been placed alongside *Beowulf* as one of the earliest extant Old English poems. Doane suggests a range of c. 650 – c. 900 but favours a date in eighth century (*Genesis A*, 36-7). Both Finnegan (*Christ and Satan*, 60-3) and Clubb (*Christ and Satan*, lix-lx), though for different reasons, would locate *Christ and Satan* at the end of the eighth century or the first decades of the ninth, but Sleeth argues, chiefly on metrical grounds, for a date close to the middle of ninth century (*Studies in Christ and Satan*, 27-34). T. E. Pickford tentatively suggests a connection between *Vainglory* and the late ninth- and tenth-century 'renaissance' associated first with Alfred and subsequently with the Benedictine Reform, but also notes that certain features of the language might point to a significantly earlier date ('An Edition of *Vainglory*', *Parergon* 10 (1974), 1-40, at 11-12).

¹⁰¹ For a cogent summary, see *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 3-8.

¹⁰² The literature on these issues is extensive, but see especially Michael J. Capek, 'The Nationality of a Translator: Some Notes on the Syntax of *Genesis B*', *Neophilologus* 55 (1971), 89-96; Peter J. Lucas, 'Some Aspects of *Genesis B* as Old English Verse', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C*:

This context of critical uncertainty invites the question raised (but not answered) by René Derolez: ‘whether *Genesis B* [...] should be treated as *Old English* poetry at all’.¹⁰³ The justification for the inclusion of the poem in the present study is therefore based on two observations. Firstly, very simply, the transmission of *Genesis B* as an interpolation within *Genesis A* and as part of the poetic texts collected in MS Junius 11 provides a precedent for accepting the text as Old English verse. The immediate physical context of the manuscript encourages one to read *Genesis B* as part of what may once have been intended to be read as a single, protracted Christian ‘epic of redemption’.¹⁰⁴ Whatever the circumstances of its transmission, it is in the context of Old English Christian verse that *Genesis B* was and is experienced.

The second point is related, although admittedly subjective. While there is much about *Genesis B* that stands out as different from our expectations of Old English poetry—particularly in terms of metre and idiom—there is also much that is familiar.¹⁰⁵ This familiarity is unlikely to be coincidental, nor can it be wholly attributed to the ‘curiously mixed and incomplete’ adaptation of the poem for an Anglo-Saxon audience.¹⁰⁶ To a degree, similarities are to be expected between the poetic traditions of such closely related languages as Old English and Old Saxon. Fred C. Robinson, commenting on the parallels evident in Old English, Old Saxon, Old High German and Old Icelandic poetry, has argued that poets working in each of these traditions ‘were not only adhering to a common

Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature 88c (1988), 143-78; Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 94-8; 154-7; Colette Stévanovitch, ‘The Translator and the Text of the Old English *Genesis B*’, *The Medieval Translator* 5 (1996), 130-45. Most recently, these issues have been re-examined by A. N. Doane, ‘The Transmission of *Genesis B*’, in eds. Hans Sauer and Joanna Story with the assistance of Gaby Waxenberger, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 394, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Studies* 3 (Tempe, Arizona, 2011), 63-81. Doane argues that the initial ‘transcription’ of the Old Saxon poem was the result of a collaboration between ‘several learned and multicultural scholars’, possibly associated with the court of King Alfred in the late ninth century (*ibid.*, 81).

¹⁰³ René Derolez, ‘*Genesis: Old English and Old Saxon*’, *ES* 76 (1995), 409-23, at 409.

¹⁰⁴ J. R. Hall, ‘The Old English Epic of Redemption: The Theological Unity of MS Junius 11’, *Traditio* 32 (1976), 185-208.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 64 n. 123.

¹⁰⁶ Doane, ‘Transmission of *Genesis B*’, 70.

metrical form but were also drawing on the same Germanic thesaurus of poetic formulae'.¹⁰⁷ Whilst Robinson may overstate his case when he argues that '[i]n describing the Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition [...] we are in fact describing the Old Germanic poetic tradition', it is likely that the links between Old English and Old Saxon poetry might have been particularly close.¹⁰⁸ To an extent still not fully understood, Old English biblical poetry, perhaps particularly in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon Christian missionaries at work on the Continent from the seventh century, seems to have provided an important model—both in terms of style and subject matter—for the developing ninth century Old Saxon tradition.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, a recent argument that the influence of Old Saxon verse can be detected in four other poems from the Old English corpus might suggest that lines of dependency between these two poetic traditions moved both ways to an extent not previously realised.¹¹⁰ In view of our incomplete understanding of the relationship between Old English and Old Saxon poetic traditions, therefore, and in view of the poem's preservation in a manuscript collection of Old English scriptural verse, it would seem perverse to disregard *Genesis B* in any study of Old English poetic accounts of the angelic rebellion.

Whilst the peculiarities of the transmission of *Genesis B* raise a challenge to modern critical responses to the poem, they also potentially provide an opportunity to locate the poem within a narrower historical context than is usually possible for Old English verse. As will be argued below, the multiplication of dating evidence caused by the connection

¹⁰⁷ Fred C. Robinson, 'The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Tradition', in eds. Haruko Momma and Michael Matto, *A Companion to the History of the English Language* (Chichester, 2008), 435-44, at 436.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 95; Seiichi Suzuki, *The Metre of Old Saxon Poetry: The Remaking of the Alliterative Tradition* (Cambridge, 2004), 4-5. On Anglo-Saxon missionary activities, see Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, 108-42.

¹¹⁰ Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'Old Saxon Influence on Old English Verse: Four New Cases', in eds. Sauer *et al.*, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent*, 83-111. The four poems are *The Dream of the Rood*, *Solomon and Saturn I and II* (which Bredehoft believes to have been a single poem), *The Battle of Finnsburh*, and the *Metrical Preface* to the Old English *Dialogues*. See also *id.*, *Authors, Audiences, and Old English Verse* (Toronto, 2009), 65-103.

between the Old Saxon and Old English texts presents a double provenance for the poem both in the West Frankish kingdom in roughly the second quarter of the ninth century and in England from the turn of the tenth century. Any attempt to read the spatial poetics of *Genesis B* in the context of contemporary ideologies concerning lordship and power relationships must, therefore, take into account the unique status of the poem as an Old Saxon artefact reproduced in Anglo-Saxon England.

The double provenance of Genesis B

The three fragments of the Old Saxon *Genesis*, along with a single extract from the Old Saxon New Testament poem the *Heliand*, are preserved as marginalia added to Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, MS Palatinus Latinus 1447. The manuscript, which contains a calendar and a collection of computistical texts, was produced at the monastery of St. Alban's at Mainz, consecrated in the year 805. The Old Saxon extracts were added to the manuscript at some point after the completion of the computistical entries, which are in a hand dated post-836; the vernacular verses were copied by three distinct but probably contemporary hands—one responsible for the *Heliand* extract and two for the three *Genesis* fragments—each of which is usually dated to the third quarter of the ninth century.¹¹¹

The composition of the text may, however, be placed some decades earlier. According to Derolez, 'Old Saxon scriptural poetry seems to have been a fairly short-lived phenomenon', and the tradition may have been in decline by the late 860s.¹¹² Close linguistic associations between the Old Saxon *Genesis* and the *Heliand*, to which the former apparently alludes, seem to indicate a date of composition within the first half of

¹¹¹ For a full description of the manuscript, see *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 9-28.

¹¹² Derolez, 'Old Saxon and Old English', 411.

the ninth century.¹¹³ According to Doane, the composition of the *Heliand* ‘could not be much earlier than 819’, while the earliest extant manuscript of the poem has been dated to c. 850.¹¹⁴ The similarities of language and poetic expression between the two texts, and the short-lived nature of the Old Saxon biblical poetic tradition, suggests that the Old Saxon *Genesis* is likely to have also originated during these decades.

The date of the surviving Old English witness is clearly far removed from either the original composition of the Old Saxon text or its inscription in MS Palatinus Latinus 1447. Although traditionally dated to the turn of the eleventh century, a recent comprehensive evaluation of the evidence for the date of MS Junius 11 has argued convincingly that the manuscript was constructed in the period c. 960 to c. 990.¹¹⁵ The surviving witness does not, however, represent the first stage of copying for the combined Old English *Genesis*. As has been shown by Timmer, and following him Doane, and linguistic evidence suggests, firstly, that the initial Old English adaptation of the Old Saxon text was undertaken around the turn of the tenth century, and, secondly, that the dialect into which the poem was adapted was consistently West Saxon, the only influence of the Anglian dialect being some ‘poetic’ terms common to the vernacular verse tradition.¹¹⁶

The date at which the Old Saxon poem arrived in England is largely a matter of speculation. However, in a study of the illustrations of MS Junius 11, Barbara Raw has noted the marked dislocation between the illustrations and the accompanying text in the combined MS Junius 11 *Genesis* and their lack of agreement in certain details.¹¹⁷ She argues convincingly that ‘the drawings in Junius 11 were not designed for the conflate

¹¹³ *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 46.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. Suzuki, *Metre of Old Saxon Poetry*, 1-2.

¹¹⁵ Leslie Lockett, ‘An integrated re-examination of the dating of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11’, *ASE* 31 (2002), 141-73.

¹¹⁶ *The Later Genesis. Edited from Ms. Junius 11*, ed. B. J. Timmer (Oxford, 1948), 19-42; *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 47-54.

¹¹⁷ Barbara Raw, ‘The probable derivation of most of the illustrations in Junius 11 from an Old Saxon *Genesis*’, *ASE* 5 (1976), 133-48. Cf. Doane, ‘Transmission of *Genesis B*’, 64-5. For a recent digital facsimile of MS Junius 11, see *A Digital Facsimile of Oxford Bodleian Library MS Junius 11*, ed. Bernard J. Muir and Nick Kennedy (software), Bodleian Digital Texts 1 (Oxford, 2004).

Genesis text', but rather that the main group of illustrations 'belonged originally to the Old Saxon *Genesis*, and that the Old Saxon text and the illustrations came to England together'.¹¹⁸ Raw's conclusions regarding the derivation of those illustrations are telling:

The pictures of Adam and Eve are closely connected with the illustrations of four ninth-century bibles associated with Tours and with the court school of Charles the Bald (reigned 840-77). The pictures of Cain and Abel show similarities of detail to a painting in a manuscript known to have been at Tours by the ninth century. The pictures of God enthroned and holding a scroll resemble a painting which has connections with the court school at Aachen, and the frontispiece includes a detail found also in the Utrecht Psalter, a manuscript executed at Rheims. Artists moved to Tours from Rheims and from Aachen and their influence can be seen in the bibles from Tours.¹¹⁹

Raw goes on to suggest more specifically that the marriage of Æthelwulf of Wessex to Charles' daughter Judith in 856 might provide one possible context for the arrival of this manuscript in England.¹²⁰ An appealing possibility, this suggestion must nevertheless remain merely speculation. Raw's analysis does convincingly suggest, however, that the Old Saxon *Genesis* travelled to England in a high-status manuscript probably illuminated in Tours, perhaps during the reign of Charles the Bald.

The peculiar circumstances surrounding the origins and transmission of *Genesis B* thus suggest that the poem originated, in its Old Saxon form, in Francia during the years c. 820 to c. 850,¹²¹ and that the Old English text preserved in MS Junius 11 in the final third of the tenth century was the result of a lengthy process of linguistic change occurring over successive revisions of the text since its arrival in England—probably in Wessex—in the late-ninth or early-tenth century. It is to these contexts, therefore, that we should look for

¹¹⁸ Raw, 'Probable derivation', 136, 148.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 148. Cf. Doane, 'Transmission of *Genesis B*', 67.

¹²¹ If Raw's association of the illustrated *Genesis* with the West Frankish centre of Tours is correct, then this might suggest a date of composition for the Old Saxon poem before the division of the empire upon the death of Louis the Pious in 840. It is notable that during the relatively peaceful decade of the 920s, Louis moved to consolidate his support in the territories of the eastern empire, including Saxony, where the family of the Empress Judith were influential (Eric J. Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire: Kingship and Conflict Under Louis the German, 817-876* (Ithaca, New York, and London, 2006), 59). Locating the composition of the Old Saxon poem during this period would accord well with Doane's interpretation of the poem as a political text 'created about 840 by imperial fiat and distributed in deluxe copies throughout the Carolingian realms in an artificial atmosphere of domination of Franks over Saxons' ('Transmission of *Genesis B*', 81).

evidence of the ideological conceptions of lordship that may be reflected through the spatial and territorial presentation of the angelic rebellion in *Genesis B*. For both of these contexts it can be demonstrated both that the practice of dividing lands into sub-kingdoms under the over-lordship of a single figure was a political commonplace, and that this practice of devolving territorial authority frequently led to rebellion by sub-kings resentful at their lack of autonomy and subordinate position.

On the Continent, the legacy of the expansion and consolation of Carolingian power during the reign of Charlemagne was an empire so vast as to be beyond the scope of purely centralized authority. The situation upon the emperor's death in 814 resembled, in the words of Janet Nelson, 'a conglomeration of *regna*—regions, formally independent kingdoms, and sub-kingdoms [...] all of which had a great deal of autonomy'.¹²² When he succeeded to his father's throne, Charlemagne's son Louis the Pious had been sub-king of Aquitaine for thirty-three years. Within three years of his accession, Louis had already established sub-kingdoms for his eldest three sons—Lothar I, Pippin I and Louis the German—while maintaining overall authority himself.¹²³ This tendency towards a diffusion of power proved highly problematic. The ill-defined nature of the power-sharing relationship between over-kings and sub-kings frequently lead to challenges relating to the division of available resources and the hereditary nature of individual regions, and these tensions were to be the direct cause of rebellion during the reign of Louis the Pious (814-40).¹²⁴ Concerned that his sub-kingdom of Italy had not been assured in the 817 declaration of succession, Louis' illegitimate nephew Bernard had attempted to secure his territory by

¹²² Janet L. Nelson, 'The Frankish Kingdoms, 814-898: The West', in ed. Rosamond McKitterick, *The New Cambridge Medieval History Vol. II c.700-c.900* (Cambridge, 1995), 110-141, at 111.

¹²³ On the practical and ideological background to the Carolingian practice of sub-kingship, see Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes, and Simon MacLean, *The Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2011), 208-13.

¹²⁴ Cf. Janet L. Nelson, 'Kingship and Royal Government', in ed. McKitterick, *New Cambridge Medieval History Vol. II*, 383-430, at 402.

insurrection.¹²⁵ Similarly, on the death of his son Pippin, sub-king of Aquitaine, in 838, Louis overlooked the hereditary claim of his grandson Pippin II in favour of his youngest son Charles (later ‘the Bald’). The incident indicates the difficulty for Louis of accommodating all of those with expectations of succession; his actions caused much resentment in the region, and Louis spent the last two years of his reign repelling the challenge of the younger Pippin.¹²⁶

Moreover, both the reign of Louis and those of his sons Charles the Bald and Louis the German indicate the potential for the practice of sub-kingship to exacerbate rather than diffuse tension between potential rivals. In 830, Louis the Pious’s unwillingness to allow his sons total administrative freedom within their respective *regna*, in conjunction with ongoing disputes regarding arrangements for the imperial succession, led to an attempted rebellion by Lothar I and Pippin I, and three years later in 833 Louis was, temporarily, deposed through the joint efforts of his three eldest sons.¹²⁷ Following his death in 940, the division of the empire between Louis’ three surviving sons was ultimately secured after three years of fraternal conflict by the Treaty of Verdun in 843.

In the western kingdom, the practice of sub-kingship continued during the rule of Charles the Bald (843-77), but, perhaps in response to the tensions of his father’s reign, Charles made determined attempts to limit the potential challenge of his sons and other close family. To achieve this, Charles adopted two strategies simultaneously. Firstly, he attempted to limit the number of potential candidates for power by disbarring his younger sons from succession by having them forcibly tonsured.¹²⁸ Secondly, when Charles did

¹²⁵ Nelson, ‘Frankish Kingdoms’, 111

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 118-9

¹²⁷ Cf. Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire*, 59-77.

¹²⁸ Janet L. Nelson, ‘Hincmar of Reims on King-making: The Evidence of the Annals of St. Bertin, 861-882’, in ed. János M. Bak, *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual* (Berkeley, California, 1990), 16-34, at 19-20. On the potential inefficacy of tonsuring as a means of political control, see *id.*, ‘A Tale of Two Princes: Politics, Text and Ideology in a Carolingian Annal’, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 11 (1988), 105-41.

appoint his sons to their own *regna* he was, as Nelson shows, careful to limit the regal powers they were able to exercise:

Even though Charles' sons were nominally kings in their own *regna*, Charles kept them on a short rein, denying them the right to issue coins or grant charters, as the sons of Louis the Pious had done in their *regna*, and thus inhibiting their construction of aristocratic 'constituencies' of their own.¹²⁹

Inevitably, perhaps, Charles' eldest sons Louis the Stammerer and Charles the Child rebelled in the early 860s in pursuit of greater autonomy, only to be comprehensively crushed by a ruthless Charles.

Similarly, in the eastern kingdom, Charles' brother Louis the German—whose kingdom included the politically sensitive region of Saxony¹³⁰—responded to the political ambitions of his three sons in a way intended to maintain his own overall authority. Like his father before him, Louis issued a decree in 865 outlining the division of his kingdom between his sons upon his death. As Goldberg points out, however, Louis attempted to avoid the mistakes of his father by placing determined limits on the power that his sons could wield during his lifetime:

The king did not allow his sons to take possession of their future kingdoms before his death, nor did he grant them the royal title of *rex* during his lifetime. In this way, Louis made his sons' continued loyalty a precondition of their eventual inheritance. Moreover, Louis was careful to maintain control of the reins of government.¹³¹

Despite, or perhaps because of, these preconditions, Louis was immediately faced with rebellion on the part of his son Louis the Younger, and his reign continued to be disrupted by the instability of power-sharing relationships between the king and his sons until Louis' death in 876.¹³²

¹²⁹ Nelson, 'Frankish Kingdoms', 125

¹³⁰ On the Saxon popular uprising against Frankish authority in 841-2, see Eric J. Goldberg, 'Popular Revolt, Dynastic Politics, and Aristocratic Factionalism in the Early Middle Ages: The Saxon *Stellinga* Reconsidered', *Speculum* 70 (1995), 467-501.

¹³¹ Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire*, 276.

¹³² Cf. *Ibid.*, 31: 'The question of how to reconcile the ideal of imperial unity with the fractious reality of dynastic politics and partible inheritance was to be the central dilemma of Louis the German's long career.'

Despite Nelson's observation that the 'firmly king-centred' nature of the surviving documentation of ninth- and tenth-century English history probably obscures much of the contention faced by rulers, a similar picture of the unstable relationship between kings and sub-kings may be seen in England during this period.¹³³ A familiarity with, and interest in, degrees of lordship is perhaps suggested by the statement in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 827 that, having conquered all England south of the Humber, King Egberht of Wessex became the eighth Anglo-Saxon king to achieve the status of *Bretwalda*. However, whether or not this debated term relates to any specific historical reality is unclear,¹³⁴ and the historical evidence suggests that the practice of over-lordship tended, until the ninth century, to be based on subjugation and the extraction of tribute rather than on a top-down division and distribution of royal power and territorial authority as in the Carolingian examples discussed above.¹³⁵ A clearer parallel for the well-developed Carolingian practice of sub-kingship is afforded, however, by the history of Egberht's son Æthelwulf. Following Egberht's successful expansion of West Saxon authority into areas previously under Mercian control in the mid-820s, Æthelwulf ruled as sub-king of Kent until his father's death in 839.¹³⁶ During this period, Æthelwulf issued charters as king, and may also have issued his own coinage, apparently enjoying a considerable degree of autonomy.¹³⁷ Following his succession to the kingship of Wessex, the *Chronicle* entry for 837 indicates that Æthelwulf followed his father's example by appointing his own eldest

¹³³ Nelson, 'Kingship and Royal Government', 397.

¹³⁴ Cf. Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', in ed. Patrick Wormald with Donald A. Bullough and Roger Collins, *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford, 1983), 99-129; Steven Fanning, 'Bede, *Imperium*, and the *Bretwaldas*', *Speculum* 66 (1991), 1-26. Nelson ('Kingship and Royal Government', 397) argues that this apparent interest in degrees of lordship arose in reaction to the presence in England of Scandinavian leaders who styled themselves as kings.

¹³⁵ Cf. David N. Dumville, 'The Terminology of Overkingship in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in ed. John Hines, *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Woodbridge, 1997), 345-65; Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, 157-62; *id.*, 'The *bretwaldas* and the origins of overlordship in Anglo-Saxon England', in eds. Stephen Baxter, Catherine E. Karkov, Janet L. Nelson and David Pelteret, *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, Studies in Early Medieval Britain (Farnham, 2009), 81-95.

¹³⁶ Cf. Simon Keynes, 'The control of Kent in the ninth century', *Early Medieval Europe* 2 (1993), 111-31.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 121-2.

son Æthelstan as sub-king of Kent; after Æthelstan's death in the mid 850s, Æthelwulf appointed his third son Æthelberht to take his place.¹³⁸ In contrast to his own authority within the region, however, Æthelwulf appears to have prevented his sons from either issuing charters or minting currency in their own names, a policy which Joanna Story has interpreted as a means of 'restricting his sons' ability to establish their own patronage networks' comparable to the strategies employed by Charles the Bald on the Continent.¹³⁹

Resentment of this tight control on regal authority may have been a factor contributing to the challenge to Æthelwulf's reign in Wessex occasioned, it seems, by his marriage to Charles' daughter Judith whilst returning from a journey to Rome in 856.¹⁴⁰ On the death of Æthelstan, Æthelwulf had passed-over his second son Æthelbald by appointing Æthelberht to the Kentish sub-kingship, apparently with the intention that Æthelberht should retain Kent after his death, whereupon Æthelbald—who had already been granted extensive lands in and around Somerset—should succeed to the West Saxon kingship. This policy, reiterated in the details of Æthelwulf's will as recounted in Asser's *Life of King Alfred* (XVI.1-12), may also have been influenced by Carolingian practices.¹⁴¹ However, following Æthelwulf's marriage, Æthelbald, apparently in response to the potential threat to his succession from any issue of his father's Carolingian union, attempted to usurp the West Saxon kingdom and to prevent Æthelwulf returning from the Continent:

Nam Æthelbaldus rex, [*Æthelwulfi regis filius,*] et Ealhstan, Scireburnensis ecclesiae episcopus, Eanwulf quoque Summurtunensis pagae comes coniurasse

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 124-5.

¹³⁹ Joanna Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c. 750-870*, Studies in Early Medieval Britain (Aldershot, 2003), 224. Janet L. Nelson similarly remarks that Æthelwulf 'ran a Carolingian-style family firm of plural realms, held together by his own authority as father-king' ('Æthelwulf (d. 858)', *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8921>, accessed 19 March 2012).

¹⁴⁰ Michael J. Enright has argued that this marriage formed part of an alliance between the two kings, both of whose rule was under threat from rebellious sons ('Charles the Bald and Æthelwulf of Wessex: the alliance of 856 and strategies of royal succession', *Journal of Medieval History* 5 (1979), 291-302).

¹⁴¹ Cf. *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources*, trans. Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge (London, 1983), 236-7 n. 33. Asser's *Life* is cited by chapter and line number from *Asser's Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously ascribed to Asser*, ed. William Henry Stevenson (Oxford, 1904).

referuntur, ne unquam Æthelwulf rex, a Roma reventus, iterum in regno reciperetur.¹⁴²

According to Asser, the conflict between father and son was averted on Æthelwulf's return through the king's great forbearance (*ineffabili patris clementia*, XII.25-6), and the kingdom was divided between father and son. The failure of the *Chronicle* to record these events is perhaps testimony to the royal bias described by Nelson, but whatever reliance we might place in Asser's claims that Æthelbald's behaviour was a violation of proper Christian behaviour (*contra morem omnium Christianorum*, XII.3) and that his attempted coup was without popular support (*nec nobiles totius Saxoniae consenserunt*, XII.21), the example of Æthelwulf's reigns in Kent and in Wessex indicates not only that policies for the distribution of territorial authority and the subordination of kingship common in Carolingian Europe were also available to rulers in Anglo-Saxon England in the ninth century, but also that such policies did not always eliminate—and might even exacerbate—familial disputes concerning the vexed question of succession.

There is some evidence that Æthelwulf's policy with regard to Kent was imitated by his son and ultimate successor Alfred, who seems to have appointed his own son Edward the Elder as sub-king of Kent at some point before 898.¹⁴³ It is conceivable, moreover, that the designation of Edward as sub-king thus late in Alfred's reign might have been a result of tensions regarding arrangements for Alfred's succession, and it is possible that the appointment of Edward coincided with a lessening of the overall authority of his father.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, whilst this developed practice of sub-kingship is less apparent during the period of consolidation of West Saxon authority in the early tenth century, issues of succession

¹⁴² *Life of King Alfred* XII.4-9. Cf. *Alfred the Great*, trans. Keynes and Lapidge, 70: 'For King Æthelbald and Ealhstan, bishop of Sherbourne, along with Eanwulf, ealdorman of Somerset, are reported to have plotted that King Æthelwulf should never again be received in the kingdom on his return from Rome.'

¹⁴³ Barbara Yorke, 'Edward as Ætheling', in eds. N. J. Higham and David Hill, *Edward the Elder 899-924* (London, 2001), 25-39, at 32.

¹⁴⁴ Janet L. Nelson, 'Reconstructing a Royal Family: Reflections on Alfred, From Asser, chapter 2', in eds. Ian Wood and Niels Lund, *People and Places in Northern Europe, 500-1600: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer* (Woodbridge, 1991), 47-66, at 62-4; Sean Miller, 'Edward [Edward the Elder] (870s?-924)', *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8514>, accessed 19 March 2012.

and the difficulty of accommodating rival claimants to royal authority continued to be highly problematic. The *Chronicle* entry for 901, for example, records the attempt by Æthelwold, son of Alfred's older brother Æthelræd I, to contest Edward's succession, and on Edward's own death in 924 the confused arrangements for the royal succession appear to have included the division of Mercia and Wessex between his sons Æthelstan and Ælfweard, possibly with one or other brother initially acting as sub-king before succeeding to the whole kingship on the death of the other.¹⁴⁵

What this evidence suggests, therefore, is that at the time of the composition of the Old Saxon *Genesis*, and at the time of its likely transmission to England and initial adaptation into Old English, questions related to the division of lordship and the power dynamics between over-kings and sub-kings—particularly with regards to spatial concerns over the division of territory—were of pressing relevance to the contemporary political situation. I would now like to suggest that these issues also feature prominently in the account of Lucifer's rebellion in *Genesis B*, and that they are reflected in the territorial ambitions and spatial relationships depicted in that poem.

Spatial poetics and territorial conflict in Genesis B

The foundation of Lucifer's rebellion is his perception (or misperception) of his own authority as ruler. In his first speech in the poem, Lucifer declares:

¹⁴⁵ Æthelstan was the elder brother, but as possibly an illegitimate son his position might have been weaker than that of his legitimate younger brother. In the event, Ælfweard was dead within sixteen days of his father, whereupon Æthelstan unified the succession (ASC D. 924). See further, Ann Williams, 'Some notes and considerations on problems connected with the English royal succession, 860-1066', in ed. R. Allen Brown, *Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1978* (Ipswich, 1979), 144-67, at 149-50.

[...] ic hæbbe geweald micel
 to gyrwanne godlecraan stol,
 hearran on heofne [...]'¹⁴⁶

I shall return to the wider implications of this statement for the spatial representation of the rebellion below, but for now I should like to consider the significance of Lucifer's claim to possess *geweald*, a term which, as we have seen, also assumes significance in the account of the rebellion in *Christ and Satan*. Glossed 'power' by both Timmer and Doane, this use of the noun is cited in support of the meaning 'power to do' in *BTS*.¹⁴⁷ Together, these glosses suggest that the reference in these lines is to Lucifer's perception of his own efficacy or his ability to construct a throne. However, *BTS* suggests that the noun is in fact more frequently used not in reference to ability but to indicate power or authority in the sense of jurisdiction. The word is notably used with the meaning 'power of one in authority, rule, dominion, sway', and in some instances the word is also used in an explicitly spatial sense to refer to the area or region of one's authority.¹⁴⁸

It is possible, therefore, that Lucifer is not claiming to possess the ability to build a throne, but the authority to do so. This authority has already been established in the description of Lucifer's pre-eminent place amongst the angels. In a passage detailing the favours that God bestowed on Lucifer the poet declares that God *let hine swa micles wealdan* ('allowed him to rule so much', 253b). The idea of authority is inescapable here, but—as in *Christ and Satan*—this authority is made dependent upon divine volition. The key word in this verse is *let*, from the verb *lætan*. Like *alyfan* discussed above, the principle meaning of *lætan* is 'allow', but the verb is also employed with a more specialized usage in relation to both letting property and granting someone temporary control of something.¹⁴⁹ It is in this more specific sense that the verb is used three times in

¹⁴⁶ *Genesis B* 280b-2a, 'I have great authority to prepare a better throne, higher in heaven.'

¹⁴⁷ *Later Genesis*, ed. Timmer, 119; *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 371; *BTS*, *ge-weald*, I. (9).

¹⁴⁸ *BTS*, *ge-weald*, I. (4), (4a).

¹⁴⁹ *BT*, *lætan*, I: 'to LET, allow, permit, suffer'; VI: 'to let [land, &c.]'; *BTS*, *lætan*, I. (8): 'to grant temporary possession of something to (to) a person'.

the first twenty-five extant lines of *Genesis B*. In an echo of line 253b, the poet subsequently states that had Lucifer fulfilled his obligations to praise and thank God, this authority would have been granted to him for ‘a long time’ (*þonne læte he his hine lange wealdan*, 258b). The conditional nature of Lucifer’s authority is here signalled not only by the use of the verb *lætan*, but also in the combination of conjunction and subjunctive preterite (*þonne læte*). A similar overtone of conditionality is seen in the third use of *lætan*. In the incomplete opening account of His instructions to Adam and Eve in the garden (235-45), God allows them to occupy the region (*he let heo þæt land buan*, 239b). However, the final lines of this account suggest the conditionality of this occupation, stressing that the pair were dear to God so long as they obeyed his commands (*ðenden heo his halige word healdan woldon*, 245).

So in the opening section of the extant *Genesis B*, the verb *lætan* is used once in the context of a conditional grant of land and twice in the context of a conditional grant of authority. In all three cases, the use of this verb assumes a top-down, vertical model for the distribution of power, a reading potentially supported by comparison with a controversial passage in *Beowulf*. Following the death of Heardred, the poet states that his killer Onela ‘let’ Beowulf assume the Geatish throne:

him eft gewat	Ongendþioes bearn
hames niosan	syððan Heardred læg,
let ðone bregostol	Biowulf healdan,
Geatum wealdan;	þæt wæs god cyning. ¹⁵⁰

Beowulf’s ‘curiously passive role’ in this passage has been remarked by several critics, but the precise significance of the passage is debated.¹⁵¹ The possibility that Beowulf, the archetypal heroic retainer, should be implicated in following the slayer of his lord has

¹⁵⁰ *Beowulf* 2387-90, ‘After Heardred lay dead Ongentheow’s son [i.e. Onela] departed again to seek his home, allowed Beowulf to hold the royal throne, to rule over the Geats; that was a good king.’

¹⁵¹ Stanley B. Greenfield, ‘Geatish History: Poetic Art and Epic Quality in *Beowulf*’, *Neophilologus* 47 (1963), 211-17, reprinted in *id.*, *Hero and Exile: The Art of Old English Poetry*, ed. George H. Brown (London, 1989), 19-26, at 21.

made uncomfortable reading for many scholars who would prefer to agree with Gale Owen-Crocker's suggestion that 'Onela 'allowed' [...] Beowulf to occupy the throne of Geatland because he could not stop him'.¹⁵² However, as Huppé has pointed out, it is difficult to avoid the clear implication that Beowulf had entered into some kind of a compact with Onela, ruling the Geats as a sub-king or dependant, before subsequently betraying his adoptive lord (2391-6).¹⁵³ If this interpretation is accepted the construction *let [...] wealdan* not only precisely mirrors the twofold description of Lucifer's conditional authority in *Genesis B*, but also supports the reading of these latter instances in terms of devolved lordship.

This picture is further supported by Satan's complaints following his defeat. To his companions in hell, he laments the loss of *ures rices* ('our realm', 360a) and deplores his lack of territorial authority (*ic eom rices leas*, 372b). Recalling how his followers and he had occupied *þan godan rice* ('that good kingdom', 410b), Lucifer refers specifically to the authority associated with the possession of heavenly thrones (*hæfdon ure setla geweald*, 411b) and laments the loss of the territory in heaven granted to him by God (*þe me min hearra onlag*, 357b). This is clearly a reference to a distinct area of the heavenly kingdom assigned to Lucifer, and, in light of the use of the verb *lætan* already discussed, it is perhaps significant that *onleon* may similarly mean both 'grant' and also 'loan'.¹⁵⁴

I suggest, therefore, that the picture of Lucifer's *geweald* in heaven should be viewed in terms of devolved territorial government conditional on the will of God. This is very much in keeping with the notion of over-lordship and sub-kingship familiar throughout the ninth and tenth centuries both in England and on the Continent. Moreover, the motivation of Lucifer in the poem, his rebellion, and his subsequent punishment are all consistent with

¹⁵² Gail R. Owen-Crocker, *The Four Funerals in Beowulf: and the Structure of the Poem* (Manchester, 2000), 207.

¹⁵³ Bernard F. Huppé, *The Hero in the Earthly City: A Reading of Beowulf*, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 33 (New York, 1984), 87.

¹⁵⁴ *BT*, *onleon*, I: 'to grant the loan of something'; II: 'to grant, bestow'.

the tensions and conflicting interests evident in the operation of sub-kingship throughout this period. Lucifer's stated motivation for rebellion is to secure his autonomy and it is the over-arching authority of God which he resents. At stake is territorial lordship—Lucifer desires to *rædan on þis rice* ('rule in this realm', 289a)—and there is a specific territory at issue, with Lucifer's ambitions focused on an area *west and norð* ('west and north', 275a) in heaven. Lucifer's association with the north is a patristic commonplace, derived ultimately from Isaiah 14:13, but while the reference to an area in the *northwest* is less explicable, the specification does emphasize the autonomy and independence from God's rule that is Lucifer's primary aim.¹⁵⁵

Moreover, this territorial ambition is directly preceded—and, I suggest, justified—by Lucifer's account of the strength of his following:

[...] bigstandað me strange geneatas þa ne willað me æt þam striðe geswican,
 hæleþas heardmode. hie habbað me to hearran gecorene,
 rofe rincas. mid swilcum mæg man ræd geþencean,
 fon mid swilcum folgesteallan. frynd synd hie mine georne
 holde on hyra hygesceaftum. ic mæg hyra hearra wesam [...]'¹⁵⁶

Strikingly similar to Satan's analeptic account of his appeal to his followers in *Christ and Satan*, Lucifer's speech again suggests an understanding of lordship conditional upon strength and horizontal cooperative bonds. However, the wording of these lines—particularly the phrase *mid swilcum mæg man ræd geþencean*—suggests that Lucifer is not merely boasting of the loyalty and strength of his followers, but is specifically claiming that their backing legitimizes his bid for autonomy. His confidence in his support is here reminiscent of Nelson's conception of 'aristocratic "constituencies"' in ninth-century

¹⁵⁵ On the use of a northwest-southeast axis in *Genesis B*, see Paul Salmon, 'The Site of Lucifer's Throne', *Anglia* 81 (1963), 118-23; Thomas D. Hill, 'Some Remarks on "The Site of Lucifer's Throne"', *Anglia* 87 (1969), 303-11. A more pragmatic explanation for the unusual detail is that offered by Stévanovitch: 'some logical mind must have been disturbed by the fact that with God in the east and Lucifer in the north there is no clear-cut division of territory, south and west being left unaccounted for' ('The Translator and the Text', 139).

¹⁵⁶ *Genesis B* 284-8, 'Strong companions stand beside me who will not abandon me at the strife, hard-spirited heroes. They have chosen me as Superior, brave warriors. With such support may one devise a counsel, make a start with such comrades. They are my eager friends, loyal in their hearts. I may be their Superior.'

Francia.¹⁵⁷ The reality of early medieval European politics was that any would-be lord required the support of aristocratic followers, not merely for the logistics of government, but as a signal of the legitimacy of his claim. As Nelson has demonstrated, the *Annals of St. Bertin*, compiled from 861-882 by Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, indicate the active role of aristocratic support in successful and unsuccessful attempts to establish lordship, even where this involved challenging an existing king or disregarding the succession arrangements of a dead king.¹⁵⁸ The importance of this support in England is suggested by the fact that in his account of Æthelbald's failed rebellion Asser not only lists his principle backers—Bishop Ealhstan and Ealdorman Eanwulf—but is also at pains to deny any degree of widespread aristocratic support for the attempted coup, going so far as to suggest that on the return of Æthelwulf, an indignant population was ready to expel Æthelbald himself for his treachery (XIII.1-5).

Lucifer's reliance on his angelic following continues after his rebellion. When, bound in hell, he plots the downfall of humanity, Satan appeals for support from amongst his thanes (*minra þegna hwilc*, 414a), reminding them of the lordly treasures with which he has previously endowed them (*þeodenmadmas*, 409b) and urging them to now repay their former gifts (*mine gife gyldan*, 413a). This appeal to the loyalty of his followers has, in the light of Satan's own previously betrayal of his lord, been read ironically, most notably so by Michael Cherniss:

¹⁵⁷ Nelson, 'Frankish Kingdoms', 125.

¹⁵⁸ Nelson, 'Hincmar of Reims', *passim*.

An audience accustomed to hearing Germanic heroic poetry would immediately recognize the hypocrisy reflected by this paradoxical demand. Further, such an audience would be aware that a band of retainers who had broken faith with one lord should scarcely be cause for the boasting of their new lord. While it is acceptable for a band of retainers to “choose” a new lord if their old one has died, they are bound to serve the old lord as long as he lives and dispenses favors to them. No respectable lord would, like Satan, accept into his service retainers whom he knew to have been disloyal to their former lord.¹⁵⁹

For Cherniss, Lucifer’s words expose the absurdity of his position. However, whilst Lucifer’s expectations of loyalty might seem hypocritical by the heroic standards invoked by Cherniss, they do perhaps reflect the realities of ninth- and tenth-century European politics. It is important to balance the viewpoint represented by Cherniss with Nelson’s recognition of a pragmatic reality which accepted ‘the participation of the aristocracy in every type of dynastic succession’.¹⁶⁰

The terminology in which Lucifer’s resentment of his dependence on an over-lord is expressed further supports the idea that the depiction of the rebellion reflects contemporary realities familiar to both poet and audience. What particularly marks out the *Genesis B* account of the rebellion is the intensity of Lucifer’s ‘rejection of a subordinate position’.¹⁶¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that the first words spoken by Lucifer constitute a statement of his own self-sufficiency:

‘hwæt sceal ic winnan?’ cwæð he. ‘nis me wihtæ þearf
hearran to habbanne. [...]’¹⁶²

On the one hand, Lucifer’s dissatisfaction with his place within the hierarchical society of heaven is a clear example of his *superbia*. For the present study, however, it is the implications of the noun *hearra* (‘superior’) for the spatial dynamics of *Genesis B* that is most significant. This poetic term for a lord occurs twenty-six times in *Genesis B*, compared to a mere four examples (one of them doubtful) in the remainder of the poetic

¹⁵⁹ Cherniss, ‘Heroic Ideals’, 486.

¹⁶⁰ Nelson, ‘Hincmar of Reims’, 18.

¹⁶¹ Godden, ‘Biblical literature’, 214.

¹⁶² *Genesis B* 278-9a, “‘Why must I toil?’ he said, “‘There is no need for me to have a superior.’”

corpus.¹⁶³ This impressive statistic may plausibly be explained by the relative frequency of the analogous Old Saxon *hêrro*. According to D. H. Green, the Old English *hearra* is a direct literary borrowing based on the Old Saxon term, and it may be that the metrical and alliterative requirements of the translation (or transliteration) process encouraged the redactor of the Old Saxon *Genesis* to use this otherwise uncommon word.¹⁶⁴

It seems likely, however, that aesthetic as well as pragmatic considerations motivated this prominent use of an unusual term. Tom Shippey has demonstrated the frequency with which *hearra* alliterates with the word *hyldo* ('favour') in *Genesis B*, reflecting a close association between these two concepts.¹⁶⁵ That this repeated collocation was a feature of the Old Saxon original is suggested by the fact that on one of the three occasions in which the cognate *huldi* occurs in the extant fragments of the Old Saxon *Genesis* it is found in precisely this alliterative relationship to the word *hêrro*:¹⁶⁶

so thana is manno uuel
 thei io mið sulicarō huldi muot herron thionun¹⁶⁷

In these instances, therefore, it can be said that the poet-translator's use of the uncommon *hearra* to render the Old Saxon term maintains a poetic feature of the original text which might have been obscured had one or more of the several synonymous terms available

¹⁶³ *Genesis B* 263a, 279a, 285b, 288b, 294a, 301a, 339b, 358b, 506b, 521a, 542a, 567a, 579a, 586b, 625a, 633a, 654b, 658b, 664a, 678b, 726a, 757a, 764b, 768a, 796a, 819a. Cf. *Judith* 56a; *The Battle of Maldon* 204b; *The Death of Edward* 32b. Robert Farrell (*Daniel and Azarias*, ed. R. T. Farrell, (London, 1974), 136) argues convincingly that the manuscript reading *herran* at *Daniel* 392b should be taken as an error for *heran* (servants). Cf. Earl R. Anderson, 'Style and Theme in the Old English *Daniel*', *ES* 68 (1987), 1-23, at 6.

¹⁶⁴ D. H. Green, *The Carolingian Lord: Semantic Studies on Four Old High German Words: Baldor, Frô, Truhtin, Hêrro* (Cambridge, 1965), 405-87, esp. at 425; *id.*, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge, 1998), 112-16. This supposition is supported by a consideration of the only instance of *hearra* in the portion of *Genesis B* which overlaps with the extant Old Saxon fragments. Where *Genesis B* 796 reads *þæt wit þurh unces hearran þanc habban moston*, line 6 of the Old Saxon text has *that uuit hier thuruh unkas herran thank hebbian muostun*. Cf. *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 58-9. The text of the Old Saxon *Genesis* is cited from this edition.

¹⁶⁵ Tom Shippey, 'Hell, Heaven, and the Failures of *Genesis B*', in ed. Loren C. Gruber with Meredith Crellin Gruber and Gregory K. Jember, *Essays on Old, Middle, Modern English and Old Icelandic in Honor of Raymond P. Tripp, Jr.* (Lewiston, New York, 2000), 151-71, at 165-6. On the importance of the term *hyldo* in the poem, see J. R. Hall, 'Geongordom and Hyldo in *Genesis B*: Serving the Lord for the Lord's Favor', *Papers on Language and Literature* 11 (1975), 302-7.

¹⁶⁶ See also Paul Cavill, 'Notes on Maxims in Old English Narrative', *N&Q* ns 33 (1986), 145-8, at 146-7.

¹⁶⁷ *Genesis* 112b-13, 'So it is well for that one amongst men who might always serve the Lord with such favour.'

been used instead. Perhaps more tellingly, however, the word *hearra* also plays a significant role in establishing a powerful hierarchical contrast between God's lordship and the inferior status of Lucifer which not only draws upon contemporary political realities, but which also contributes to a presentation of power relationships that is consistently expressed in terms of vertical spatial relationships.

The subordinate position occupied by Lucifer is characterised by the use of the complementary term *geongra* ('servant') and the related forms—uniquely attested here in Old English literature—*geongordom* ('subservience') and *giongorscipe* ('service'). The use of these words in *Genesis B* is again to be explained as a response to the cognate words *jungiro*, *jungardom* and *jungarskepi* in the Old Saxon poem.¹⁶⁸ According to Green, the substantive use of the Old Saxon *jungiro* to mean 'subordinate' reflects the 'logical complement' of the term *hêrro*.¹⁶⁹ Lucifer's obligation to God is explicitly a duty to praise his lord (*sceolde his drihtne þancian*, 257b) and Lucifer's rejection of this obligation is expressed in terms of service, as suggested by the repeated use of the verb *þeowian* ('serve', 264b, 268a, 282b).

Indeed, the obligation of service implicit in the relationship of *geongra* and *hearra* is presented in the poem as fundamental to the existence of the angels: God shapes the angelic orders and gives them intelligence in order that they perform this duty (*his giongorscipe fyligan*, 249). It is this obligation that Lucifer rejects. Twice he questions the need for him to perform *geongordom* (266b-8a; 282b-3a) and twice he rejects the position of *geongra* (276b-7; 289b-91). There is a move from questioning to certainty. Initially, Lucifer lacks the desire to serve (*ne meaht he æt his hige findon*, 266b). Subsequently he

¹⁶⁸ Green, *Carolingian Lord*, 440-1.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* Green's analysis is more convincing than that of Margaret J. Ehrhart, who argues that these terms imply a relationship based on 'discipleship' rather than 'service' ('Tempter as Teacher: Some Observations on the Vocabulary of the Old English *Genesis B*', *Neophilologus* 59 (1975), 435-46). Cf. Eric Jager, 'Tempter as Rhetoric Teacher: The Fall of Language in the Old English *Genesis B*', *Neophilologus* 72 (1988), 434-48.

expresses doubts about his continued obedience (*cwæð him tweo þuhte*, 276b) and questions its necessity (*hwý sceal ic æfter his hylðo ðeowian*, 282b). Lucifer's first speech in the poem culminates with his outright rejection of his subservient role (*ne wille ic leng his geongra wurþan*, 291b).

Lucifer's rejection of his obligations to fulfil God's *geongordom* and of the role of *geongra* seems to relate to the connotations of inferiority and juniority implicit in these terms. The use of this terminology can be compared to the way in which Carolingian kings used the term *vassus* ('vassal') for the purposes of what Susan Reynolds has called 'ostentatious abasement' of subjects.¹⁷⁰ In the Carolingian state, *vassi* acted as 'agents of royal authority in centre and province' and were 'sometimes endowed with lands'.¹⁷¹ However, the role of *vassus* was considered amongst the lowest ranks of government, beneath the dignity of counts, bishops and abbots, and the word—which originated in a term for an unfree servant—appears to have been used deliberately to humiliate unruly followers.¹⁷² A notable case in point is that of Tassilo, Duke of Bavaria. Following an aborted attempt to assert his autonomy in 787, Tassilo was forced to submit himself to Charlemagne as *vassus*. Although as Reynolds points out, Tassilo 'may have been called a *vassus* only on this one occasion in order to stress his humiliation', Tassilo's reaction to this humiliation indicates the depths of resentment that the term could induce.¹⁷³ Within a year Tassilo was again accused of plotting against Charlemagne, reportedly declaring that the loss of ten sons, or his own death, would be preferable to his subservient position. As

¹⁷⁰ Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals. The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994), 86.

¹⁷¹ Nelson, 'Kingship and Royal Government', 413.

¹⁷² Charles Edwin Odegaard, *Vassi and Fideles in the Carolingian Empire* (New York, 1972), 16. Cf. Nelson, 'Kingship and Royal Government', 412.

¹⁷³ Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, 86.

Odegaard points out, Tassilo was motivated ‘to take treasonable steps to extricate himself from a situation which he regarded as worse than death’.¹⁷⁴

The violence of Tassilo’s reaction to his symbolic abasement provides a possible political context in which to read Lucifer’s rejection of his own subservient position. However, the use of the terms *hearra* and *geongra* in *Genesis B* also serves to establish a hierarchical contrast which is expressed in the poem through a strong emphasis on vertical spatial hierarchies that is at odds with Lucifer’s own conception of cooperative horizontal power relationships outlined above. So much is suggested by Lucifer’s first, dramatic speech in the poem. In lines quoted at the beginning of this section, this speech opens with Lucifer’s rejection of the need for him to have a *hearra*. In a gesture that is again reminiscent of the account to the rebellion in *Christ and Satan*, Lucifer’s belief in his self-sufficiency is here expressed as the ability to rival God by building for himself a more splendid throne *hearran on heofne* (‘higher in heaven’, 282a).

This phrase is a significant one, mirroring closely the poet-narrator’s similar statement some eight lines previously that Lucifer desired to build a throne *heahran on heofonum* (274a). However, the orthographic variation between these two verses—*hearran* for the more usual *heahran*—seems to draw attention to the possibility of wordplay between the comparative of *heah* (‘high’) and the substantive *hearra* (‘lord’). This possibility is strengthened, moreover, by Lucifer’s subsequent use of the substantive to assert his own claims to lordship. In another passage quoted above, Lucifer states that his followers have chosen him as their lord (*hie habbað me to hearran gecorene*, 285b) and bullishly affirms his belief that he can assume this role (*ic mæg hyra hearra wesan*, 288b). The significance of the wordplay here is, moreover, embodied in the structure of Lucifer’s fourteen-line speech: in the first half of the speech, the form *hearran* occurs once as substantive and

¹⁷⁴ Odegaard, *Vassi and Fideles*, 31. On the wider political significance of this episode, see Stuart Airlie, ‘Narratives of Triumph and Rituals of Submission: Charlemagne’s Mastering of Bavaria’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 9 (1999), 93-119.

once as comparative, each time in an a-verse; in the second half, the substantive occurs twice, each time in a b-verse.¹⁷⁵ In Doane's words, the distinction between lordship and high positioning here 'blurs into mere paronomasia', and there is a clear associative link between Lucifer's ambition to be lord (*hearra*) and his attempt to be higher (*hearran*) than God.¹⁷⁶

The wordplay evident here in *Genesis B* probably does not derive directly from the Old Saxon exemplar. The Old Saxon substantive *hêrro* represents a contracted form of the comparative of the adjective *hêr* ('worthy of respect, noble').¹⁷⁷ As Stévanovitch has pointed out, however, the comparative *hearra* ('higher') in *Genesis B* probably reflects the Old Saxon form *hôhoron*, the comparative of *hôh* ('high').¹⁷⁸ It seems likely, therefore, that the precise significance of Lucifer's desire to build a throne *hearran on heofne* is unique to the Old English text. Whether or not this wordplay should be attributed to the deliberate artistry of the person or persons responsible for the West Saxon adaptation of the Old Saxon poem is difficult to ascertain. Stévanovitch has argued that that variation of the comparative forms *heahran* (274a) and *hearran* (282a) suggests that whoever undertook the adaptation of the Old Saxon was initially influenced morphologically by the form *hôhoron*, but that subsequently someone involved in the process 'may have been struck by the potential pun' which was subsequently emphasized by the change to the form *hearran*.¹⁷⁹ That there was some scribal confusion over the correct form of the comparative even in the MS Junius 11 copy is suggested by the fact that in the first instance the scribe seemingly wrote *hearoran* at line 274 before altering the text to read *heahran*.¹⁸⁰ That the paronomasia based on the form *hearra* was deliberately emphasised

¹⁷⁵ Cf. *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 261-2 n. to lines 279a/282a/285b/288b.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 124. Cf. Stévanovitch, 'The Translator and the Text', 143-4.

¹⁷⁷ Green, *The Carolingian Lord*, 405ff.; *id.*, *Language and History*, 112-13.

¹⁷⁸ Stévanovitch, 'The Text and the Translator', 143.

¹⁷⁹ Stévanovitch, 'The Text and the Translator', 143-4.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 209 textual note to line 274.

at some point in the long process by which the Old Saxon *Genesis* was transformed into the text of *Genesis B* cannot be conclusively demonstrated. In light of the consistent emphasis on vertical hierarchies and relative positioning in Old English accounts of the fall of the angels, however, it remains an attractive possibility.

Indeed, an association between high position and lordly authority is evident throughout the account of the rebellion in *Genesis B*, and may even be said to be central to the way in which this episode is depicted. This is true even in the introductory account of the gifts bestowed on Lucifer which prefaces the account of the rebellion proper. Lucifer, we are told, was created *hehstne to him on heofona rice* ('highest after Him [i.e. God] in the kingdom of heaven', 254a). The idiomatic phrase *hehstne to him* superbly captures the essence of the cosmological tension inherent in the character of Lucifer, expressing at once the pre-eminence within Creation for which his loyalty and thanks are particularly due, and also the corresponding subordination before God that he so bitterly resents.¹⁸¹ The superlative is here rendered relative, suggesting strongly the operation of a gradated social hierarchy in heaven that is again expressed in terms of verticality and spatial relationships.

In the passage that follows the description of Lucifer's unparalleled gifts, we are told that the angel turned his privileged status *to wursan þinge* ('into a worse state', 259a):

ongan him winn up hebban
 wið þone hehstan, heofnes waldend
 þe siteð on þam halgan stole.¹⁸²

The metre of line 260 is exceptional. Two separate metrical studies of *Genesis B* have been unable to accommodate the line within current analyses.¹⁸³ In Doane's edition of the poem, this difficulty is addressed by treating the line as one of four 'triplets' in *Genesis B*, lines

¹⁸¹ On the translation of this idiom, see *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 258 n. to line 254a.

¹⁸² *Genesis B* 259b-60c, 'He began to raise up strife against the Highest, the Ruler of heaven who sits on the holy throne.'

¹⁸³ David J. G. Lewis, 'The metre of *Genesis B*', *ASE* 16 (1987), 67-125, at 123-4; Lucas, '*Genesis B* as Old English Verse', 174.

composed of three alliterating verses, analogous to Old Norse *ljoðaháttir*.¹⁸⁴ Whether Doane's interpretation of these lines is correct or not, however, the highly anomalous metre of line 260 serves to distinguish the line in a passage already marked by the use of regular hypermetric lines (253-61), perhaps implying that the line is particularly significant.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, if accepted, Doane's division of the line into three verses perhaps indicates a correspondence between form and content. The line describes three attributes of the deity with whom Lucifer strives, each of which is contained within one of Doane's three verses: He is highest; He is ruler of heaven; He occupies the holy throne.

The structure of the line, then, consists of an expression of God's territorial authority (*heofnes waldend*) bracketed between expressions of his privileged spatial position as highest (*þone hehstan*) and as He who occupies the throne (*þe siteð on þam halgan stole*).¹⁸⁶ The subsequent account of Lucifer's rebellion suggests, moreover, that he at least interprets the relationship between spatial position and territorial authority as conditional rather than absolute.¹⁸⁷ If God's authority as *heofnes waldend* is considered dependent upon His occupation of the throne and of the highest spatial position, then a challenge to this privileged positioning constitutes a challenge to His lordship. Lucifer's challenge takes precisely this form. In the two passages quoted above, Lucifer's rebellion is

¹⁸⁴ *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 78-9. The other three 'triplets' identified by Doane occur at lines 356, 403, and 507. The layout and numbering of these verses here reflects that of Doane's text. It should be noted that the most recent edition of *Genesis B* prints each of lines 260, 403 and 507 as consisting of two verses and emends Doane's line 356 to form two regular lines (*Old Testament Narratives*, ed. and trans. Daniel Anlezark, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 7 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, 2011)).

¹⁸⁵ On the use of hypermetric lines to distinguish passages of verse, see Constance B. Heatt, 'Judith and the Literary Function of Old English Hypermetric Lines', *Studia Neophilologica* 52 (1986), 251-5. Douglas Simms, though he would prefer to classify them as 'heavy hypermetrics', has argued that lines 356, 403 and 507 all mark key moments in the poem ('Heavy Hypermetrical Foregrounding in the Old Saxon *Heliand* and *Genesis Poems*', *The Heroic Age: A Journal of Early Medieval Northwestern Europe* 12 (2009), <http://www.mun.ca/mst/heroicage/issues/12/simms.php>, accessed 19 March 2012). Strangely, whilst he initially lists line 260 as one of four identifiable heavy hypermetric lines in *Genesis B*, in his subsequent analysis Simms talks of *three* examples in the poem and does not offer a reading of line 260.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 65-6.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 123: 'In his folly, Satan sees "highness" as a self-willed and self-attained position, not a quality. [...] It seems to him an accident that God is "highest".'

expressed in terms of building a stronger (*strenglican*) and more splendid (*godlecran*) throne, higher in heaven (*hearran on heofne*).

Lucifer's act of rebellion is repeatedly associated with upwards vertical movement, particularly through the use of the verb (*a-*)*hebban*. This verb—the semantics of which encompasses both actual physical elevation and also a more figurative idea of promoting or exulting an abstraction such as praise or hostility¹⁸⁸—occurs three times in the poem, each time referring to Lucifer's insurrection, and each time in a collocation that emphasizes the literal, spatial sense of elevation. The verb is used for the first time in the initial description of the rebellion cited above. Turning from his obligation to serve, Lucifer raises strife against God: *ongan him winn up hebban / wið þone hehstan* (259b-60a). On the one hand, this statement establishes a protracted example of wordplay throughout the account of the rebellion through which the dual meanings of (*ge-*)*winn* ('strife'/'reward') and (*ge-*)*winnan* ('struggle'/'gain') set up a heavily ironic picture of Lucifer's just deserts.¹⁸⁹ Of immediate interest, however, is the use of the verb (*a-*)*hebban*. The first object of the verb is clearly *winn*, and the primary meaning is certainly that Lucifer raises or foments strife. However, the addition of the adverb *up* in the phrase *up hebban* draws attention to the verb's connotations of vertical movement within space. The suggestion of upwards movement is enhanced, moreover, by the collocation with the superlative *hehstan*, used here substantively as a reference to God. The sense of vertical elevation in these verses is even more striking when the verb is used again just three lines later to describe Lucifer's proud self-exaltation: *ahof hine wið his herran* ('he raised himself against his superior', 263a). Here, the object of (*a-*)*hebban* is not an abstraction, but Lucifer's own person (*hine*). Moreover, the word-play identified above in connection

¹⁸⁸ Cf. *DOE*, *ā-hebban*, A.5, 'to lift up so as to position above, place on high, put in place above'; A.6: 'to raise, exalt, extol'.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. *Genesis B* 278a, 296-9a, 301-3, 322-3a etc.

with the substantive *hearra* is reflected in the description of Lucifer raising himself *wið his herran*, a phrase which parallels the earlier construction *wið þone hehstan*.

The implication that Lucifer is raising himself up in challenge to one higher than himself is also evident in the final occurrence of *(a-)hebban* in the poem:

þa hit se allwalda eall gehyrde
 þæt his engyl ongan ofermede micel
 ahebban wið his hearran and spræc healic word
 dollice wið drihten sinne¹⁹⁰

The use of *(a-)hebban* in these lines draws upon a figure not uncommon in Old English poetry that associates pride with figurative upwards movement.¹⁹¹ In the current passage, however, the connotations of vertical movement are enhanced not only by the reappearance of the phrase *wið his hearran*, but also by the use of the adjective *healic* to describe Lucifer's actions. In his note on this line, Doane points out that the Old Saxon adjective *hōhilik*, of which *healic* is probably an approximation, is extant only as a gloss for Latin *ridiculum*, and argues that, in collocation with the adverb *dollice*, *healic* should be interpreted as 'ridiculous'.¹⁹² However, this interpretation seems unnecessary and counterintuitive. The meaning 'ridiculous' is not, as Doane acknowledges, supported by the use of *healic* in Old English literature, nor is there sufficient evidence to say with any certainty that this was a common meaning of Old Saxon *hōhilik*. In the sense of 'lofty' or even 'noble', the word fits well in the current context, and in collocation with the verb *(a-)hebban* and the substantive *hearra*, it contributes to a semantic field associating Lucifer's rebellion with putative vertical movement.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 292-5a, 'Then the Ruler of all heard all of it, that his angel began to raise up great pride against his superior and foolishly spoke lofty words against his Lord.'

¹⁹¹ On the 'rising' quality of pride in Old English verse and possible biblical parallels, including Isaiah 14:12-15, see Sharma, 'Extremes of Saintliness', 193 and n. 29. The use of this figure constitutes what cognitive linguists call an orientational metaphor (PRIDE IS UP). Cf. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, Illinois, and London, 1980), 14-21; *id.*, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York, 1999), 30-6. For a diachronic study of orientational metaphor in English, including Old English examples, see Toril Swan, 'Spatial Metaphors in the History of English and Norwegian', *NM* 111 (2010), 55-67.

¹⁹² *Saxon Genesis*, ed. Doane, 263 n. to line 294b and glossary entry.

In each case individually, and collectively through repetition, the verb (*a-*)*hebban* is thus used in such a way as to emphasize its connotations of vertical movement in space. As with his desire to build a higher throne, these passages show that Lucifer's rebellion takes the form of a spatial contest, assuming an association between relative vertical positioning and authority. Here, as in the poems previously considered in this chapter, the description of God as 'highest' embodies his position at the top of a vertical hierarchy of power relationships. Lucifer's initial position as clear second in this vertical hierarchy is emphasized through the description of him as *hehstne to him* at the opening of the account of the rebellion. However, through his subsequent disobedience, Lucifer not only contests his own inferiority to God, but consequently also rejects the vertical model of abstract lordship that this terminology presents in favour of a model in which power is prefaced on the operation of cooperative bonds.¹⁹³ Moreover, in contrast to *Christ and Satan*—where the rebel's ambitions extend explicitly to the whole territory of heaven—Lucifer's immediate desire for autonomy over an area previously assigned to him provisionally in a role analogous to the contemporary Carolingian and West Saxon position of sub-king opposes a horizontal model of competing and independent regions to a vertical model of devolved authority within a single territory united under the ultimate authority of the lord or king.

More clearly than in any other Old English description of the rebellion, the account in *Genesis B* carries a clear ideological and political sub-text. The presentation of Lucifer as a rebellious sub-king serves by analogy to promote the authority of the king as head of the vertical hierarchy on earth. Also by analogy, those who challenge the vertical model of lordship are equated to Lucifer and his followers, whose fate they may ultimately expect to share. What is again striking about the presentation of this message, however, is that the

¹⁹³ Cf. *ibid.*, 123: 'Satan retrogressively conceives of a multitude of petty hierarchies, each self-sufficient, self-justifying, and opportunistic.'

ideal hierarchical relationships envisaged are, to a large extent, established by the use of spatial terminology and imagery related to verticality. The poem's spatial poetics are key to the political message that it appears intended to convey.

This much is apparent from the description of God casting His former favourite from heaven, a description that redeploys terms which had previously seemed open to challenge but which now become incontrovertible expressions of authority:

þa wearð se mihtiga gebolgen,
 hehsta heofones waldend, wearp hine of þan hean stole.
 hete hæfde he æt hi hearran gewonnen, hylde hæfde his ferlorene¹⁹⁴

The recasting of line 260 here acts as an envelope pattern, framing Lucifer's rebellion.¹⁹⁵

There is no sense of conditionality in this description of God as *hehsta*, nor in the substantive use of *hearra*. Inevitably, Lucifer's challenge has failed, and his ambition to create a throne *hearra on heofne* results in his being cast *of þan hean stole*.¹⁹⁶ In *Genesis B*, the fall of the angels is envisaged very literally:

acwæð hine þa fram his hylde and hine on helle wearp
 on þa deopan dala þær he to deofle wearð,
 se feond mid his gefeum eallum. feollon þa ufon of heofnum
 þurhlonge swa, þreo niht and dagas
 þa englas of heofnum on helle¹⁹⁷

That the angels fall for three days and three nights might, as Stephen Pelle has recently suggested, reflect the influence of continental hexameral traditions on the original Old Saxon poem.¹⁹⁸ This does not, however, detract from the emphatic nature of the angels' descent. The deep valleys of hell are again referred to at line 421a (*þas deopan dalo*) and the rebels fall *under eorðan neoðan* ('underneath the earth', 311a) and *niðer on þæt*

¹⁹⁴ *Genesis B* 299b-1, 'Then the Mighty One became angry, the highest Ruler of heaven, cast him from the high throne. He had won hate from his superior, he had forsaken His favour.'

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Colette Stévanovitch, 'Envelope Patterns in *Genesis A* and *B*', *Neophilologus* 80 (1996), 465–78, at 468-74; *id.*, 'The Text and the Translator', 135-40.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Britton, 'Repetition and Contrast', 70.

¹⁹⁷ *Genesis B* 304-8a, 'He banished him from His favour and cast him into hell, into those deep valleys where he became a devil, the fiend with all his companions. The angels fell then downwards from the heavens for a long time, three nights and days, from the heavens into hell.'

¹⁹⁸ Pelle, 'Raining Angels', 297-301.

niobedd ('down into that bed of death', 343a).¹⁹⁹ Hell is a bottomless abyss (*grundleas*, 390; *þas grimman grundas*, 407a) which God (*se hehsta*, 344a) compels Lucifer, now Satan, to govern (345b-6, 348-9a). In the same way that Lucifer's rebellion is figured in terms of relative positioning and vertical movement, therefore, so too is the punishment which he and his followers face. Endeavouring to overreach God by occupying a higher position, Lucifer is ultimately condemned to fall into the uttermost depths of hell.

CONCLUSION

A. N. Doane has argued that, for the original Continental audience, the Christian narrative of the Old Saxon *Genesis* would have seemed 'systematically contemporized so that it reflect[ed] the ideology of the emerging imperial system against the old pre-feudal tribal society'.²⁰⁰ He goes on to deny, however, that these concerns might have been relevant to the audience of the West Saxon adaptation of the poem, describing the reflections of imperial ideology in *Genesis B* as 'mere remainders that must be made sense of as best a reader can'.²⁰¹ The analysis of the account of the rebellion in *Genesis B* in the previous section suggests, however, that this distinction is unnecessary, and perhaps unhelpful.

As the historical examples cited above demonstrate, issues relating to the delegation of authority, and particularly the relationship between kings and sub-kings, were pressing political concerns in Wessex during the late-ninth and early-tenth century. Whether or not these issues might have been framed in a specifically *imperial* ideology is a moot point. Certainly, it is possible to see Æthelwulf's visit to Rome in 855-6, his marriage to Charles the Bald's daughter, and the subsequent consecration of his new queen—a practice not

¹⁹⁹ On the hapax legomenon *niobedd*, see Kathleen E. Dubs, 'Niobedd: Bed of Death and Rebirth', *ANQ* 14 (1976), 145-6.

²⁰⁰ Doane, 'Transmission of *Genesis B*', 80.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

common in Anglo-Saxon England before this time—as the expression of an imperial ambition.²⁰² A similar argument might be made concerning the way in which the papal anointing of his son Alfred is (mis-)represented as an imperial-style coronation in contemporary sources.²⁰³ In the tenth century, the style of royal charters issued during and after the reign of King Æthelstan, and particularly the series of regal titles given to the king therein, has been interpreted as part of an imperial agenda.²⁰⁴ Indeed, the imperial claims of the West Saxon dynasty perhaps reach their apogee in the second coronation of Edgar in 973, during that period in which the construction of MS Junius 11 and the copying of *Genesis B* might be located.²⁰⁵ Without insisting on an appreciation of specifically imperial ideology during this period, however, it is clear that the endorsement of royal authority implicit in the presentation of Lucifer's rebellion would have been welcome to the increasingly powerful kings of Wessex during this period.

It is equally clear, moreover, that *Genesis B* is not unique in presenting the angelic rebellion and fall in a manner that reflects an interest in the conceptualization of authority. The account of the rebellion in *Genesis B* is undoubtedly more developed than those in the other poems with which this chapter has been concerned. There are also clear differences in the treatment of the episode amongst these poems. Notably, *Christ and Satan* and *Genesis B* differ from both *Genesis A* and *Vainglory* in the prominence that they ascribe to Lucifer's role in the rebellion. Lucifer's role as the leader of the rebels, and the suggestion

²⁰² Cf. Story, *Carolingian Connections*, 241-3. On the consecration of Judith, see Pauline Stafford, 'Charles the Bald, Judith and England', in eds. Margaret T. Gibson and Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom* (Oxford, 1981), 139-53.

²⁰³ Cf. Susan Irvine, 'The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the idea of Rome in Alfredian literature', in ed. Timothy Reuter, *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, Studies in Early Medieval Britain 3 (Aldershot, 2003), 63-77, at 66-7.

²⁰⁴ Eric John, *Orbis Britanniae and Other Studies* (Bristol, 1966), 1-63, esp. 48-56; Nicholas Brooks, *Anglo-Saxon Myths: State and Church 400-1066* (London and Rio Grande, 2000), 191-2; Sarah Foot, 'Where English Becomes British: Rethinking Contexts for *Brunanburh*', in eds. Julia Barrow and Andrew Wareham, *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks* (Aldershot, 2008), 127-44.

²⁰⁵ J. L. Nelson, 'Inauguration Rituals', in eds. P. H. Sawyer and I. N. Wood, *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds, 1977), 50-71, reprinted in *id.*, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), 283-307, esp. at 300-3. Cf. Julia Crick, 'Edgar, Albion and Insular Dominion', in ed. Donald Scragg, *Edgar: King of the English, 959-975* (Woodbridge, 2008), 158-70; Scott Thompson Smith, 'The Edgar poems and the poetics of failure in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*', *ASE* 39 (2010), 105-37.

in both *Christ and Satan* and *Genesis B* that the rebels had enjoyed authority and territory in heaven prior to their fall, indicates the gradation of the power hierarchies presented in these poems. These four accounts are alike, however, in the emphasis that each places upon the territorial expression of the attempted rebellion.

Such an emphasis is not necessarily surprising. As the following chapter will demonstrate, the association of territorial control with authority is a feature of much Old English verse. Alongside this territorial focus, however, several of the poetic accounts of the rebellion also emphasize spatial relationships and movement on a vertical plane. As this chapter has shown, the rebels' attempt to contest God's authority in heaven is consistently spatialized in Old English poetry, particularly through the opposition of symbolic horizontal and vertical spatial relationships. The spatial presentation of the episode can in this way be seen to intersect with an ideological interest in the nature of power relationships.

Writing in another context, Thomas D. Hill has suggested that the interpretation of the angelic rebellion in spatial terms in medieval literature may reflect nothing more than a natural and unsophisticated attempt to rationalize complex theological doctrine:

God, Satan (or to identify him by his prelapsarian name, Lucifer), and those angels who were going to remain blessed as well as those who were going to fall, existed in a spiritual realm where possibly time, and certainly space as we and other material beings experience it, did not exist. It follows that the claim that Lucifer fell from "high" heaven to "deep" Hell is a naïve and anthropomorphic spatial understanding of an event that unfolded in a realm of being quite unlike any that we have ever experienced.²⁰⁶

In the case of the Old English poems discussed in this chapter, dismissing the spatial presentation of the rebellion and fall as simplistic would be a mistake. The spatial and territorial focus of these accounts plays a crucially important role in the way in which meaning is constructed in these poems. In each of the examples considered, the setting of

²⁰⁶ Thomas D. Hill, 'Satan's Pratfall and the Foot of Love: Some Pedal Images in *Piers Plowman* A, B and C', *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 14 (2000), 153-61, at 157.

the rebellion both expresses, and is informed by, competing models for the operation of authority. In particular, the prominent use of language and imagery relating to relative positioning on a vertical plane not only reflects, but also legitimizes as natural—even as inevitable—absolute, hierarchical power relationships.

CHAPTER THREE

LANDES TO FELA: TERRITORIAL DYNAMICS AND THE DEPICTION

OF BATTLE

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter examined the spatial and territorial aspects of the presentation of the angelic rebellion and fall in Old English verse. The current chapter also focuses on issues relating to space and territory, but in the established tradition of Old English battle poetry. This tradition has been frequently associated with the migration-era origins of Old English verse.¹ Several of the depictions of battle that will be considered in this chapter do occur in explicitly Christian or even biblical poems. There remains, however, a common critical assumption—frequently repeated in standard histories of Old English literature—that battle poetry, and the wider category of ‘heroic’ literature in general, forms part of the pre-Christian poetic inheritance of Old English verse.²

This view is supported both by the martial character of much of the body of Old English ‘poetic diction’, and by the exuberant use of this vocabulary in compound-formation in descriptions of arms and warfare, as exemplified in *Beowulf*.³ In addition, the identification

¹ Cf. Tyler’s suggestion that, to a real extent, the formal and aesthetic characteristics of the Old English poetic tradition ‘took shape before the movement of Germanic speaking people to Britain’ at a time when ‘the world and concerns of the Germanic aristocratic warrior gave rise to the poetic tradition we term heroic’ (*Old English Poetics*, 1, 24).

² See, for example, Michael Alexander, *A History of Old English Literature*, revised ed. (Peterborough, Ontario, 2003), 52-3; R. D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain, *A History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 2003), 193.

³ Cf. Geoffrey Hughes, ‘A History of the English Lexicon’, in eds. Momma and Matto, *Companion to the History of the English Language*, 69-80, at 72; Robinson, ‘Poetic Tradition’, 38-9. On the vocabulary of warfare in *Beowulf*, see Brady, ‘Weapons’; *id.*, ‘Warriors’; Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (Cambridge, 2003), 70-2. In a recent article, Dennis Cronan raises the possibility that there once existed ‘a specialized warrior vocabulary which overlapped the poetic vocabulary’ (‘Poetic Meanings in the Old English Poetic Vocabulary’, *ES* 84 (2003), 397-425, at 408), but cf. Thomas A. Bredehoft’s caution that

of type-scenes such as the ‘beasts of battle’, as well as formulaic themes such as ‘victor-returns-home-with-his-reward’, has contributed to a perception that the description of battle in such texts is governed by inherited and well-established poetic conventions.⁴ Such a view is represented by the comments of Michael Alexander, who suggests that Old English battle scenes are ‘standardized in construction’ and composed according to ‘ancient conventions of battle poetry’.⁵

This belief in the ‘standardized’ character of Old English battle poetry has been applied to the use of scene and setting and the depiction of the battlefield. So, Hugh Magennis, who argues for the general insensibility of traditional narrative poetry (*Beowulf* excluded) to matters of setting, has argued that, despite its non-legendary subject matter, the description of a historical tenth-century battle in *The Battle of Maldon* draws on conventional techniques for the poetic representation of battle, and further that this reliance on convention renders any detailed depiction of the real or imagined scene of the encounter unnecessary:

In presenting the conflict commemorated in the poem as a classic heroic battle it is not to the poet’s purpose to describe the particular setting at Maldon: the presentation of the battle is essentially traditional and bases itself upon a concept of the Germanic heroic background shared between poet and audience.⁶

The use of setting in *The Battle of Maldon* will be discussed in greater detail below.

Magennis’ suggestion that the poet is not concerned with the mimetic description of the actual tenth-century landscape around Maldon is one I would not wish to dispute.

However, I would take issue with his further claim that ‘the interest in location in this

‘there is no indication at all that Anglo-Saxon audiences ever understood archaic heroic vocabulary and perspectives to be definitive of Old English verse’ (*Old English Verse*, 13).

⁴ On the ‘beasts of battle’, see M. S. Griffith, ‘Convention and Originality in the ‘Beasts of Battle’ Typescene’, *ASE* 22 (1993), 179-99. For the ‘victor-returns-home-with-his-reward’ theme, and several other themes related to the depiction of battle, see Anita Riedinger, ‘The Old English Formula in Context’, *Speculum* 60 (1985), 294-317.

⁵ Alexander, *History*, 65, 2.

⁶ Magennis, *Images of Community*, 123.

poem is never more than incidental'.⁷ The suggestion that the influence of 'classic' or 'traditional' poetic conventions might be incompatible with an interest in the significant use of setting in poetic narratives of battle requires re-examination.

My argument in this chapter is, in the first place, that Old English battle poetry frequently displays a particular concern with issues of setting and location. In the second place, I suggest that striking similarities in the treatment of the setting of battle in several different poetic accounts do suggest the general influence of certain established, conventional techniques for the depiction of battle which probably formed part of the inheritance of the Old English poetic tradition. However, a comparison of the use of these techniques across a range of extant poems suggests that they could be and were employed in very different ways by individual poets. Moreover, I shall argue that the concern with the spatial representation of battle in these poems frequently contributes to the wider significance ascribed to the events described, both within these poems themselves, and even sometimes within a wider historical or cultural context.

Central to the discussion in this chapter is my argument that the localization of the battle-site in the examples that I discuss fosters a specific sense of place equivalent to modern ideas of territory. In particular, the concept of territory with which I am concerned here is one which arises out of the action of human territoriality, defined as 'the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area'.⁸ Place becomes territory 'only when its boundaries are used to affect behaviour by controlling access'.⁹ By their very nature, boundaries establish an opposition between space within and space without, and when those boundaries are used to assert territorial authority by an

⁷ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁸ Robert David Sack, *Human territoriality: Its theory and history*, Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography (Cambridge, 1986), 19.

⁹ *Ibid.*

individual or group an opposition is also established between those who have access to the particular place delineated by those boundaries and those who do not.

The attempt to assert territorial control thus gives rise to a conception of identity founded upon an association of people and place, but, like all constructions of identity, territorial identity is ‘inconceivable without difference’.¹⁰ As Iver Neumann has pointed out, identity is best conceived of not as an inherent property of a person or group, but as ‘a *relation*, always forming and reforming in discourse’.¹¹ At the heart of any attempt to exert or maintain territorial control, therefore, is a dynamic opposition between a native ‘self’ and a non-native ‘constitutive other’ that is not stable but essentially fluid and malleable.¹² A key difference between the concept of territory and that of place more generally, therefore, is that ‘territories require constant effort to establish and maintain’.¹³

In the examples I shall consider in this chapter, the description of battle in Old English poetry shows a keen interest in the dynamics of territorial authority. It may be objected that such issues are a near-ubiquitous concern in the narration of conflict between different groups. In response to this argument, we might note the examples of Old English battle poetry in which territorial dynamics seem to attract little or no emphasis and in which the poet focuses instead on issues such as the acquisition of plunder or the celebration of violence.

The *Genesis A* account of Abraham’s battle against the Four Kings (1960-2161) provides a strong example of interest in the former. In his elaboration of Genesis 14, the poet does, as Doane notes, introduce a ‘north / south axis’ that is not suggested either by

¹⁰ Iver B. Neumann, ‘Russia as Central Europe’s Constituting Other’, *East European Politics and Societies* 7 (1993), 349-69, at 350.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 349.

¹² Michelet (*Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 91-106) makes a similar observation regarding the dynamic relationships of centre and periphery in *Beowulf*.

¹³ Sack, *Human territoriality*, 19.

the biblical account or by exegetical commentaries.¹⁴ The Elamites and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are respectively depicted as advancing to battle from the north and the south (1966a, 1975a, 1987-8) while the victory of the former is explicitly described as the victory of the ‘north men’ over the ‘southern people’ (1995b-6a). This presentation might, as Doane suggests, reflect the biblical association of the north with evil.¹⁵ However, the poet does not elaborate on the possible geographical significance of this presentation, and the Elamites’ ascendancy is most strikingly presented in terms of the wealth of treasure and (female) captives that they attain (2006b-11a). When Abraham subsequently leads a successful counterattack and defeats the Four Kings, the poet again describes his victory in terms of the ‘treasure and brides’ (*sinc and bryda*, 2090b) that he takes from them. This ‘plunder’ (*huð*, 2113a) is represented as now belonging by right to Abraham, rather than to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and by allowing both the women and the treasures to return home Abraham is characterized as acting both nobly (*drihtlice*, 2138b) and with honour (*arna*, 2164b).

This interest in the treasures to be won in battle is also evident in several instances in *Beowulf* where it is, however, combined with an emphasis on the violence and brutality of battle. So, the hero’s feat of swimming home from the disastrous raid on Frisa laden with thirty sets of armour (*ealra þritig / hildegeatwa*, 2361b-2a) is tempered by the graphic description of Hygelac’s death ‘beaten with swords’ (*bille gebeaten*, 2359a) and slain ‘by sword-drinks’ (*hiorodryncum swealt*, 2358b).¹⁶ Similarly, Beowulf’s rescue of Hygelac’s armour and adornments (*frætwe*, 2503a; *breostweorðunge*, 2504a) from his killer Dæghrefn gives the poet another opportunity to describe the brutality of hand to hand combat: *him hildegap heortan wylmas, / banhus gebræc* (‘a battle-grip broke his bone-house, the surges of his heart’, 2507-8a).

¹⁴ *Genesis A*, ed. Doane, 296 n. to line 1966.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ On the compound *hiorodrync*, see *Klaeber’s Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al*, 243 n. to line 2358b.

The focus of this chapter is, however, on those accounts of battle in which geographical and topographical description is used to invent a sense of the place of the battlefield and to focus the narrative on questions of territorial control. The chapter is organized into two parts, the first of which examines the representation of battle in instances where the poetic text is drawing specifically upon pre-existing prose accounts of the battle in question. The second part of the chapter, focuses on the representation of battle in two poems that commemorate historical battles in which Anglo-Saxon forces participated during the course of the tenth century.

TRANSLATING BATTLE IN OLD ENGLISH VERSE

Both Cynewulf's *Elene* (18b-152) and *Judith* (199-235) contain notable battle scenes. In the case of *Elene* this scene is very considerably expanded from a brief account in the apparent Latin source text, the *Acta Cyriaci*; in the latter instance the battle in *Judith* is a notable addition to the Vulgate *Liber Judith*, and in fact contradicts the scriptural narrative.¹⁷ A similar expansion is also evident in the account of the Gothic invasion of Italy presented in the first Metre of the prosy-metric C-text of *The Old English Boethius*, which elaborates upon the very brief reference in the prose B-text to the sack of Rome by Gothic forces in the year 409.¹⁸

Each of these accounts of battle can be discussed in terms of 'translation'. Most obviously, both *Elene* and *Judith* involve linguistic translation from the Latin of their respective source texts. This is not the case for the account of the Gothic invasion in Metre 1: the poetic text here draws on the opening sentence of the Old English B-text, a detail for

¹⁷ On the relationship of Cynewulf's poem to both the *Acta Cyriaci* and the vernacular homily *In inventione sanctae crucis*, see *Elene*, ed. Gradon, 14-22; *The Old English Finding of the True Cross*, ed. and trans. Mary-Catherine Bodden (Cambridge, 1987), 24-47. On the adaptation of the Vulgate text in *Judith*, see *Judith*, ed. Mark Griffith (Exeter, 1997), 47-61.

¹⁸ On the process by which the B-text was recast in the C-text, see *OEB*, I, 44-6, 80-105.

which no direct source has been discovered.¹⁹ All three examples can, however, be seen as a translation of prose into verse, and particularly into the strongly conventional tradition of Old English verse. There again, through the respective poets' engagement with the 'heroic' traditions of Old English martial poetry, each of these accounts also involves a sort of cultural translation. In each case, a battle situated in a temporal and geographical setting far removed from that of the poet and audience is 'translated' in terms of the ideals and expectations of contemporary verse.

One feature of this 'translation' is that in each of the examples mentioned above, the poetic account adapts the details of its source text with particular regard to the location and setting of the battle in question. In each instance, this process of adaptation facilitates the invention of a sense of place in relation to the battlefield and emphasizes the territorial dynamics that are at play. These adaptations may reflect the influence of traditional techniques for the depiction of battle in Old English poetry. However, as the following analysis will show, the presentation of battle in these texts also contributes to the interpretation of the significance of the battle in each poem.

Elene

Drawing on accounts of the invention of the true Cross associated with the unhistorical figure of Judas Cyriacus, Cynewulf's *Elene* opens with a description of the conversion of the emperor Constantine as the result of a heavenly vision of the Cross received on the eve of a daunting battle (1-224). Taking the Cross as his battle-standard, Constantine attacks the following morning and wins a decisive victory. This he ascribes to divine assistance, converting to Christianity and instigating the search for the true Cross that forms the basis

¹⁹ Cf. *OEB*, II, 249-50.

of the subsequent narrative. While the battle with which Constantine's vision was associated was, in early Latin accounts, identified as the defeat of his Roman rival Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge over the Tiber, in the Judas Cyriacus legends—probably originating in eastern Syriac versions but known to Cynewulf in a later Latin recension—the setting shifts from the vicinity of Rome to the northern reaches of the Empire, and instead of his Roman rival, Constantine is faced with invading barbarian tribes.²⁰

Cynewulf, following his source, also locates the battle on the northern frontier in the vicinity of the Danube.²¹

The account of Constantine's battle in the *Acta Cyriaci* begins with the simple statement that a barbarian horde was prepared to wage war against the empire:

Anno ducesimo tricesimo tertio, post passionem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, regnante venerabili Dei cultore magno viro Constantino, in sexto anno regni ejus, gens multa barbarorum congregata est super Danubium, parati ad bellum contra Romaniam.²²

In contrast, the equivalent passage in Cynewulf's text is expanded from this basic account to some forty and a half lines of verse (1-41a). In the poetic text, the account of the battle with the barbarian hordes is prefaced by a reference to Constantine's own expansionist tendencies:

²⁰ Cf. Cynthia Wittman Zollinger, 'Cynewulf's *Elene* and the Patterns of the Past', *JEGP* 103 (2004), 180-96, at 182-3.

²¹ Cf. Pamela Gradon, 'Constantine and the Barbarians. A Note on the Old English 'Elene'', *MLR* 42 (1947), 161-72, at 161-3. Howe is misleading in his implication that the scenic shift from the Tiber to the Danube was Cynewulf's own innovation (*Writing the Map*, 119-20, 252-3n.). Although it is clear from Ælfric's Invention homily (CH II XVIII:1-61) that the tradition associating Constantine's vision with the battle at the Milvian Bridge was known in Anglo-Saxon England, it is not clear that this tradition was known to Cynewulf. Even if it were, the most that could be said is that Cynewulf chose to follow a source text locating the battle on the northern frontier. On Ælfric's treatment of the event, see Malcolm Godden, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, EETS ss 18 (Oxford, 2000), 513-19.

²² *Acta Cyriaci* 60:1-4. Cited by page and line number (the latter added) from *Finding of the True Cross*, ed. Bodden. Cf. *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry: the Major Latin Texts in Translation* (Cambridge, 1976), trans. M. J. B. Allen and D. G. Calder, 60: 'In the two hundred and thirty-third year after the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sixth year of the reign of Constantine (a great man and reverent worshipper of God), a large barbarian host gathered beyond the Danube, prepared to wage war against the Roman Empire.'

Wæs se leodhwata lindgeborga
 eorlum arfæst, æðelinges weox
 rice under roderum; he wæs riht cyning,
 guðwearð gumena.²³

Constantine's expanding territorial authority is here described in a way reminiscent of Scyld's expansion of Danish territorial control in the opening lines of *Beowulf* discussed in the previous chapter, and his ability to control territory is identified as a facet of good kingship.²⁴ It is against this context that the account of the battle must be approached.

The territorial focus implied by these lines is emphasized by two significant deviations from the Latin text in Cynewulf's account of the setting of the coming battle. The first of these is that whereas the Latin text simply states that the battle took place beside the river Danube (*super Danubium*, 60:3), the Old English poem specifically stresses the extremity of the location of the battle *on Romwara rices ende* ('on the margins of the Romans' kingdom', 59). In Cynewulf's account, the description of the mustering of the Germanic tribes also stresses the peripheral setting of the action:

ofer burgende lungre scynde
 hergum to hilde²⁵ beaduþreata mæst

The compound *burgende*, here translated 'city margins', represents Gradon's emendation of the manuscript reading *burgenta*.²⁶ This emendation results in an otherwise unrecorded compound, and other editors have taken the manuscript reading either as a reference to a 'city of giants' (*burg enta*) or as a reference to the Burgundian tribe (cf. the attested form *Burgenda*) living near the Danube.²⁷ In light of the location of the battle *on Romwara rices*

²³ *Elene* 11-14a, 'The courageous guardian was gracious to men, the prince's kingdom expanded under the heavens; he was a just king, a leader of men.'

²⁴ On the parallels with *Beowulf* in these lines, see Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 50-2. For the suggestion that Cynewulf knew *Beowulf* and borrowed from it in composing his own verse, see Andy Orchard, 'Both Style and Substance: The Case for Cynewulf', in eds. Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown, *Anglo-Saxon Styles* (New York, 2003), 271-305; *id.*, *Critical Companion*, 165-6.

²⁵ *Elene* 30b-2a, 'the greatest of war-troops hastened quickly to battle in troops over the city margins'.

²⁶ *Elene*, ed. Gradon, 27 n. to line 31a.

²⁷ Cf. *The Vercelli Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp, ASPR II (London and New York, 1932), 133 n. to line 31; *DOE*, *burgenta*.

ende, however, Gradon's emendation seems to fit the context best. A compound *burgende* would skilfully describe the ambiguity concerning the marginal areas at the limits of the Roman empire: is the region through which the attackers pass part of the empire or not? The resultant sense of uncertainty, and the image of the invaders hastening through the suburbs, creates a memorable moment of dramatic tension.

The second change made by Cynewulf also stresses the peripheral location of battle. In the Latin text, the setting of the battle *super Danubium* serves to locate the events in a geographic context. The same is true of the reference to the Danube in *Elene*, but in Cynewulf's poem the river itself takes on added significance as a topographical feature.²⁸ In the Latin text, it is not made clear whether or not the barbarians cross over the Danube, but it is explicitly stated that the host had seized Roman land in the vicinity of the river.²⁹ In the Old English poem it is clear that the raiders have not in fact crossed the river:

For fyrda mæst,	feðan trymedon,
eoredcestum	þæt on ælfylce
deareðlacende	on Danubie,
stærceðfyrhðe	stæðe wicedon
ymb þæs wæteres wylm ³⁰	

The army's position on the bank of the river is stressed through almost verbatim repetition (*ymb þæs wæteras stæð*, 60a), and in response Constantine in turn takes up a position by the river (*egstreame neah*, 66b), presumably on the opposite shore.

The changes Cynewulf makes to his source in the setting of the battle present the Danube as a frontier and boundary of Roman territory. In doing so, Cynewulf may have been responding to the similar use of the Danube as a boundary in texts known to him. In his account of European geography, Orosius had referred to the Danube as the boundary

²⁸ Cf. Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 168.

²⁹ *Acta Cyriaci* 60:6: 'invenit eos qui vindicaverant Romaniae partes, et erant secus Danubium.' Cf. *Sources and Analogues*, trans. Allen and Calder, 60: 'He [Constantine] found they had laid claim to and had occupied parts of Roman territory on the Danube.'

³⁰ *Elene* 35-9a, 'The greatest of hosts advanced in companies, fell into formations, so that in a foreign army the resolute warriors camped on the shore of the Danube, by the surge of the water.'

marking off the barbarian lands to the north and he repeatedly presents the river as a frontier in his accounts of Roman interaction with the Germanic tribes.³¹ The Danube is equally prominent as the southern border of Germania in the radically revised geographical description of the *Old English Orosius*, and the vernacular author also follows Orosius in his subsequent use of the river as a frontier of Roman territory.³² Bede too, in his *De temporum ratione*, includes a passage drawn from Orosius in which the Danube is presented as a frontier between Roman territory and that of the barbarians (512:450).³³ However, the effect of Cynewulf's emphasis on the peripheral location of the battlefield and on the role of the Danube as a territorial boundary is to situate the battle between the Roman army and the Germanic tribes at the very point of difference where the dynamics of territorial control operate most keenly.

These dynamics are felt not only through the more precise geographical and topographical setting of the battle in the Old English poem, but also through Cynewulf's greater precision regarding the enemy forces with which Constantine is confronted. Whereas the *Acta* identifies Constantine's opponents only as a large, unidentified host of barbarians (*gens multa barbarorum*, 60:3), in the poem the invaders are identified as the Huns, Hrethgoths, Franks and Hugas of Germanic legendary history (18b-23a). Both Cynthia Wittman Zollinger and Nicholas Howe have argued that by identifying the northern barbarians with tribal names redolent of the Anglo-Saxons' own Germanic past, Cynewulf is forcibly bringing into conflict two divergent cultural heritages: a pagan heritage based on ethnicity on the one hand, on the other a Christian heritage based on

³¹ *Historiarum adversus paganos libri VII* I.2:54: 'Nunc quidquid Danuuius a barbarico ad mare Nostrum secludit expediam.' Cf. *ibid.* IV.20:34-5; VII.33:8-15. Cited by book, chapter and section number from *Pauli Orosii historiarum adversus paganos libri VII*, ed. C. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna, 1882).

³² *Old English Orosius* 12:14-23; 18:3-4; 110:6-11; 152:27-153:7. Cited from *The Old English Orosius*, ed. Janet Bately, EETS ss 6 (London, 1980). Cf. *id.*, 'The relationship between geographical information in the Old English Orosius and Latin texts other than Orosius', *ASE* 1 (1972), 45-62, at 52-3; Irmeli Valtonen, *The North in the Old English Orosius: a Geographical Narrative in Context* (Helsinki, 2008), 320-2.

³³ Cited by page and section number from *Beda's Venerabilis Opera. Pars VI, Opera Didascalica*, ed. C. W. Jones and C. B. Kendall, CCSL 123, 3 vols. (Turnhout, 1975-80).

membership of a universal Church.³⁴ By locating the conflict ‘within the conceptual territory of Anglo-Saxon history’, Howe argues, Cynewulf imbues the event with a cultural resonance drawn from the Anglo-Saxons’ own historical experience of conversion.³⁵ According to Wittman Zollinger, this recasting of the battle as between pagan forces and the (soon-to-be) Christian empire ‘initiates the process by which the spiritual interests of the Christian faith become identified with the political interests of Constantine and the Roman Empire’.³⁶

This approach to the opening of *Elene* is tacitly reliant upon an allegorical reading of the battle as a symbolic war between Christian and heathen.³⁷ However, the description of the battle by the Danube is in fact not obviously allegorical in approach. Hermann devotes a chapter to allegoresis in *Elene*, but is tellingly reticent about the actual (as opposed to the later figural) warfare in the poem, highlighting only the single description of the Germanic warriors as heathens, and linking this to the later description of the heathen Jews who crucified Christ.³⁸

³⁴ Wittman Zollinger, ‘Patterns of the Past’; Howe, *Writing the Map*, 119-23.

³⁵ Howe, *Writing the Map*, 120.

³⁶ Wittman Zollinger, ‘Patterns of the Past’, 186. Cf. Gradon, ‘Constantine and the Barbarians’, 172. The emperor’s status as a divinely appointed ruler is in fact explicit in the opening passage of *Elene* (14b-18a). The Latin legend also begins with a description of Constantine that presupposes his Christian virtue: ‘regnante venerabili Dei cultore magno viro Constantino’ (60:2).

³⁷ Cf. Wittman Zollinger, ‘Patterns of the Past’, 185: ‘The battle on the Danube brings these historical traditions face-to-face, recognizing but simultaneously displacing the pagan past in favour of the Christian point of view.’

³⁸ John P. Hermann, *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1989), 91-2.

hæðene grungon,
 feollon friðelease, flugon instæpes
 Huna leode swa þæt halige treo
 aræran heht Romwara cyning
 heaðofremmende.³⁹

In addition to the description of the barbarians as heathen, the use of the adjective *friðleas* is perhaps significant here. Gradon glosses the term ‘savage’, presumably in the sense of being without the desire for peace, a reading supported by the use of the compound in *Andreas* (29b).⁴⁰ However, as a simplex *friþ* is well attested with the meaning ‘security’ or ‘protection’ in the sense of that granted either by the king or by God.⁴¹ The implications of *friðleas* in the present context may, therefore, be not only that the barbarians are hostile but also that they are beyond the pale of God’s protection.⁴²

However, besides these lines there is remarkably little allegorization of the battle scene, and it may be argued that such allegoresis as here appears is implicit in the narrative of a divinely-inspired victory. The analyses of both Wittman Zollinger and Howe form part of wider arguments about Cynewulf’s poem and about Old English literature in general which are not strictly relevant here, but it does appear that both critics over-emphasize the importance of allegoresis in this passage.⁴³ I suggest that the identification of the Germanic tribes is important less because it establishes a dynamic between pagan and (nominally) Christian forces than because it emphasizes the challenge posed to the dynamics of native and non-native upon which Roman territorial authority are founded. The Germanic tribes in *Elene* serve as a constitutive other in opposition to which Roman territorial identity can be expressed. In contrast to the native Roman inhabitants (*Romware*, 9a, 40a, 46b, 59a,

³⁹ *Elene* 126b-30a, ‘the heathens died, fell devoid of peace, the people of the Huns fled at once when the battling Roman king commanded that holy tree to be raised.’ The causal link is more explicit still in the vernacular homily, where the sight of the cross causes the enemy host to flee: ‘Sona swa hio on þæt halige rode taken beseagon þa wurdon hio sona afyrhte and to fleame gehwyrde’ (35-7). Cited by line number from *Finding of the True Cross*, ed. Bodden.

⁴⁰ *Elene*, ed. Gradon, 91. Cf. *DOE*, *fripleas*, b.

⁴¹ *DOE*, *friþ*, 4.a.i.b.; 4.a.ii. Cf. *ibid.*, *fripleas*, a.i.

⁴² Cf. the description of the heavenly messenger as a *fæle friðoweþba* (88a).

⁴³ Wittman Zollinger examines Christian appropriation of non-Christian pasts, whether Germanic or Judaic, in *Elene*; Howe is concerned with the symbolic status of Rome as a “capital of culture” for the inhabitants of Anglo-Saxon England.

62a, 129b), the Germanic forces are explicitly identified by their non-native status (*yumbsittend*, 33a; *ælfylce*, 36b; *elpeodig*, 57b, 82a).

In the description of both the setting of the battle and the participants, therefore, the account of this episode in *Elene* presents the battle as a challenge to Constantine's ability to control the dynamics upon which his territorial authority is founded. In contrast to the Latin account, the threat posed by the barbarians in the Old English poem is specifically a territorial one. In the *Acta Cyriaci*, the sight of the enemy massed against him fills Constantine with a mortal fear: *Videns autem quia multitudo esset innumerabilis, contristatus est et timuit usque ad mortem.*⁴⁴ In Cynewulf's poem, however, the emperor's sadness is caused by the thought that he might be unable to defend his kingdom:

Romwara cyning, for werodleste ⁴⁵	Modsorte wæg rices ne wende
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The territorial nature of the threat is signalled also by the fact that the barbarians' ambition is aimed not at the Roman inhabitants themselves, but at their empire (*Woldon Romwara rice geþringan*, 40).

That the would-be invaders do not, in Cynewulf's text, actually cross the topographical boundary represented by the Danube demonstrates the failure of this threat. As noted above, Cynewulf initially presents the two armies drawn up on either side of the river. Logically, for the battle to take place, one side or the other must have crossed over. Cynewulf does not in fact describe this crossing, but the battle is said to result from an advance by the Roman forces in the morning following Constantine's dream (105-9a). The implication of this, and of the subsequent flight of the barbarians, is that the foreign enemy

⁴⁴ *Acta Cyriaci* 62:1-2. Cf. *Sources and Analogues*, trans. Allen and Calder, 60: 'Seeing their countless numbers, he was sad and mortally afraid.' The Old English homily also states mortal fear as the cause of Constantine's sadness: 'Ða wæs he swiðe sarig and geunrodsad oð deað forþanþe he wende þæt hi ealle scoldon sweltan' (17-19).

⁴⁵ *Elene* 61b-3a, 'The king of the Romans was sorrowful in his mind, despaired of his kingdom for lack of troops'.

does not succeed in traversing the Roman frontier. Constantine's victory confirms his authority by asserting his ability to control access to Roman territory.

The subsequent pursuit of the fleeing enemy both reiterates the foreign status of the attackers (*ehton elþeoda*, 139a) and depicts the vanquished survivors as being confined to the marginal areas beyond the limits of Roman territory (*stede weardedon / ymb Danubie*, 135b-6a). In contrast to the emperor's exultant homecoming (*Gewat þa heriga helm ham eft þanon / huðe hremig*, 148-9a), few of the fleeing barbarians return from their attempted incursion into Roman territory (*lythwon becwom / Huna herges ham eft þanon*, 142b-3). As Anita Riedinger has pointed out, Cynewulf is here drawing on established poetic convention in his use of the formulaic theme 'victor-returns-home-with-his-reward' and a contrapuntal theme of a loser returning empty-handed.⁴⁶ In context, however, the parallelism of these two homecomings provides an emphatic statement concerning the respective native and non-native status of the opposing forces.

Constantine's territorial authority is, moreover, explicitly sanctioned by the ultimate, divine authority:

þa wæs gesyne	þæt sige fogaef
Constantino	cynig ælmihtig
æt þam dægweorce,	domweorðunga,
rice under roderum	þurh his rode treo. ⁴⁷

Riedinger, investigating the use of the phrase *rice under roderum* as a 'thematic formula' in Old English verse, has argued that in this instance 'rice should probably be translated as the "power," rather than as the "kingdom," with which God endows his victorious warrior'.⁴⁸ In the context of contested territorial authority evident throughout this first episode in the poem, however, the implication of these lines is surely that the territorial

⁴⁶ Riedinger, 'The Formula in Context', 309-11; *id.*, "'Home" in Old English Poetry', *NM* 96 (1995), 51-9, at 55-7.

⁴⁷ *Elene* 144-7, 'Then it was evident that the almighty King gave Constantine victory at the day's work through His rood tree, honour and a kingdom under the heavens.'

⁴⁸ Riedinger, 'The Formula in Context', 299.

authority of which Constantine had despaired in the face of the barbarian threat has been endorsed by God as part of the emperor's conversion to Christianity.

It is possible to see the territorial focus of the opening episode of *Elene* in relation to the wider thematic concerns of the work as a whole. Following Constantine's victory and conversion, the subsequent narrative of Elene's commission to discover the true cross—her journey to Jerusalem, the construction of a church on the site of the Crucifixion and the establishment of an Episcopal see, and the unhistorical account of the conversion of Jews—can be interpreted in terms of the expansion into new territories both of Constantine's imperial authority and especially of the sphere of influence of the Roman church.⁴⁹ As Gordon Whatley has pointed out, the poetic account differs from the known prose analogues in the prominence that it gives to Constantine as the motivating spirit behind Elene's mission to Jerusalem, emphasising the causal links between the two parts of the narrative.⁵⁰ Moreover, Constantine's promotion of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire was highlighted as an example of pious Christian governance in a letter of Gregory the Great to Æthelberht of Kent recorded by Bede, and it is possible that the focus on territorial control and expansion in the poem reflects the wider significance attached to Constantine's conversion in Anglo-Saxon England.⁵¹ However, as the following sections of this chapter will demonstrate, the particular interest in the location and setting of the battle in *Elene* and the territorial interpretation of the narrative situation is something that is not unique to Cynewulf's poem. On the contrary, the example of *Judith* suggests that close attention to the spatial representation of battle, and an awareness of the creative potential of the territorial dynamics that this presentation brings to the fore, was a feature of the depiction of battle in vernacular poetry.

⁴⁹ See esp. *Elene* 1006-14a; 1093-1124; 1204b-17a. Cf. Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 53-4, 167-9; Howe, *Writing the Map*, 121-3.

⁵⁰ Gordon Whatley, 'The Figure of Constantine the Great in Cynewulf's 'Elene'', *Traditio* 37 (1981), 161-202, at 175-7.

⁵¹ HE I.xxxii. Cf. Whatley, 'Constantine the Great', 169-70; Howe, *Writing the Map*, 121 and n. 59.

Judith

Throughout the anonymous Old English poetic adaptation of the Vulgate *Liber Iudith* significant details of the Latin narrative are freely adapted and recast in familiar traditional language and themes. According to the most recent editor of the poem the process of adaptation ‘essentially means that the poet’s interpretation is dressed up in heroic fashion’.⁵² The most notable departure from the Vulgate account is the introduction of a battle scene describing a Bethulian attack on the Assyrian camp, before the subsequent discovery of the death of the Assyrian general Holofernes and the flight of his army, that has no basis in the Latin account.⁵³

This passage has been described as ‘one of the best of its kind in the entire corpus of Old English verse’,⁵⁴ and has been praised for its richness of detail and depth of feeling.⁵⁵ Much attention has been paid to the handling of apparently conventional material in this passage (and those preceding and succeeding it), applying the concept of the formulaic ‘theme’ and ‘type-scene’ and analysing the treatment of such details in the passage.⁵⁶ Particular praise has been spent on the poet’s manipulation of point of view during this episode, in which a rapid succession of images aligns the audience’s perspective with the advance of the Bethulian host.⁵⁷

⁵² *Judith*, ed. Griffith, 62.

⁵³ The Vulgate clearly describes the discovery of Holofernes’ corpse taking place at the approach of the Bethulians; the Assyrians flee before battle is joined (*Liber Iudith*, 14:7-15:4).

⁵⁴ Jackson J. Campbell, ‘Schematic Technique in *Judith*’, *English Literary History* 38 (1971), 155-72, at 169.

⁵⁵ Arthur G. Brodeur, ‘A Study of Diction and Style in Three Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poems’, in ed. Allan H. Orrick, *Nordica et Anglica: Studies in Honor of Stefán Einarsson* (The Hague, 1968), 97-114, at 106.

⁵⁶ Cf. esp. Donald K. Fry, ‘The Heroine on the Beach in *Judith*’, *NM* 68 (1967), 168-84; *id.* ‘Type-Scene Composition in *Judith*’, *Annuaire Mediaevale* 12 (1971), 100-19; Fredrik J. Heinemann, ‘*Judith* 236-291a: A Mock Heroic Approach-to-Battle Type Scene’, *NM* 71 (1970), 83-96.

⁵⁷ Renoir, ‘Limits of Poetry’, 145-55; Donald K. Fry, ‘Imagery and Point of View in *Judith* 200b-231’, *ELN* 5 (1968), 157-9; Howell Chickering, ‘Poetic Exuberance in the Old English *Judith*’, *SP* 106 (2009), 119-36, at 129-30.

Not unlike critical responses to the battle in *Elene*, the presence of the battle scene in *Judith* has been explained on allegorical grounds. Jackson Campbell has argued that the account is influenced by exegetical responses to the Judith story and detects the Pauline concept of spiritual warfare in the description of a battle which is ‘really a struggle between internal virtues and vices’.⁵⁸ Stressing a tropological reading of the poem, Bernard Huppé reads the battle as a symbolic representation of ‘the triumph of faith over the heathen, of good over evil’.⁵⁹ Building on both of these earlier studies, Hermann insists on the need to understand the ‘curious’ battle scene *sub specie allegoriae*, and identifies the conflict as between *Ecclesia*, as represented by Judith and her Bethulian compatriots, and *Diabolus*, as represented by Holofernes and the Assyrians.⁶⁰ For Hermann, the battle is ‘a historical event that is also an allegorical battle against the Devil and his minions by the spiritual warriors of *Ecclesia*’.⁶¹

Such explanations of the battle scene in *Judith* are perhaps overly schematic. As Griffith has pointed out, the poet in fact resists the straightforwardly allegorical interpretation of the narrative with which he was no doubt familiar.⁶² Magennis has likewise stressed the plurality of symbolism in the poem, a plurality in danger of being effaced by reductive allegorical models.⁶³ The introduction of the battle is only one way in which the Vulgate narrative is adapted in *Judith*. As Griffith has shown, the process of simplification and flattening of the narrative serves to emphasize the ‘moral message’ in *Judith* by establishing a more direct contrast between, on an individual level, Judith and

⁵⁸ Campbell, ‘Schematic Technique’, 172.

⁵⁹ B. F. Huppé, *The Web of Words: Structural Analysis of the Old English Poems Vainglory, The Wonder of Creation, The Dream of the Rood, and Judith with texts and translations* (New York, 1970), 178.

⁶⁰ Hermann, *Allegories of War*, 174-81.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁶² *Judith*, ed. Griffith, 79: ‘the poet was probably indebted to exegetical tradition, but at no point does he explicitly allegorise [the characters]. Instead, he literalises whatever he may have taken from exegesis. So, Judith is wise, but not a typification of wisdom, and Holofernes is devilish, but not simply a mask of Satan.’

⁶³ Magennis, *Images of Community*, 161-3.

Holofernes, and on a wider level, between the Jewish inhabitants of Bethulia and the Assyrian army.⁶⁴

A similar strategy is applied to the treatment of setting in the poem. In view of the poem's fragmentary nature any discussion of the setting of *Judith* is necessarily tentative, but Magennis has shown that the surviving portion of the poem departs substantially from the Vulgate approach.⁶⁵ This variance revolves around the treatment of the cities of Jerusalem and Bethulia. The Vulgate account consistently highlights the importance of the former location, emphasizing the Israelites' fear of Jerusalem falling prey to Holofernes' scorched earth tactics (*Liber Iudith* 3:11-13; 4:2). Bethulia, in the Vulgate, is merely one amongst many mountain outposts charged specifically with protecting the approaches to Jerusalem, and no special significance is attached to it:

The emotive focus of the people's sense of themselves is not the shadowy place called Bethulia but the symbolically charged city of Jerusalem. Bethulia has significance not for its own sake but because this city high in the mountains serves as a defence for Jerusalem.⁶⁶

In his prose homily based on the *Liber Iudith*, Ælfric follows this same approach, omitting all references to the name Bethulia save in one instance in which it is used in contrastive juxtaposition with a reference to Jerusalem (322-4).⁶⁷ The approach to setting in the poetic *Judith* is, however, quite the reverse. Although Jerusalem is mentioned twice in the portion of the *Liber Iudith* corresponding to the extant Old English text, the city is not named in the poem.⁶⁸ Indeed, the only place-name that appears in the poem is *Bethulia* (138a, 326b),

⁶⁴ *Judith*, ed. Griffith, 62-70.

⁶⁵ Magennis, *Images of Community*, 159-61. For contrasting views regarding the original length of the poem, see Rosemary Woolf, 'The Lost Opening to the *Judith*', *MLR* 50 (1955), 168-72, reprinted in *id.*, *Art and Doctrine*, ed. O'Donoghue, 119-24; David Chamberlain, '*Judith*: A Fragmentary and Political Poem', in eds. Nicholson and Warwick Frese, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, 135-59.

⁶⁶ Magennis, *Images of Community*, 160.

⁶⁷ Cited by line number from *Ælfric's Homilies on Judith, Esther, and The Maccabees*, ed. Stuart D. Lee (1999), <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~stuart/kings>, accessed 19 March 2012.

⁶⁸ Magennis, *Images of Community*, 160-1.

and there is nothing to suggest the wider national context within which the siege of Bethulia stands.⁶⁹

In the absence of Jerusalem, Bethulia is the dominant image in the poem and arguably takes on much of the emotional significance of the former city. It is described as the ‘holy city’ (*ðære haligan byrig*, 203b) and its brightness and shining walls (*þære wlitigan byrig weallas blican*, 137; *ðære beorhtan byrig*, 326a) have been plausibly linked to contemporary depictions of the paradisiacal New Jerusalem.⁷⁰ Envisaged as a stronghold (*fæsten*, 143a), there is a particular emphasis on the walls and gates of the city (*fæstengeat*, 162a; *geat*, 151a; *wealgeat*, 141a; *weall*, 137b, 151a, 161a). Creating a strong contrast between within and without the city, the walls function as a boundary that is strictly controlled by the Bethulians. Following her earlier instructions, the Bethulians stand guard by the gates of the city until Judith’s return (*weas wæccende wearde heoldon*, 142), an example of territorial control that informs the identity of the city-dwellers (*burhleode*, 175a, 187a; *burhsittende*, 159b). Tellingly, in the long description of Judith’s homecoming (132b-70) the heroine returns both to her homeland (*ham*, 131b; *eft to eðle*, 169a) and to her people (*leof to leodum*, 147a).

The poet’s treatment of his source text establishes an opposition between the city and its inhabitants and the Assyrian camp.⁷¹ The journey between these opposing centres is made both by Judith and her maid when they return to the city with Holofernes’ head (132b-41a), and by the Bethulian army on its march to battle (199-229a). However, in neither instance is the terrain separating the city and the camp actually described. In the former passage, the two women are said to have left the Assyrian camp (*ut of ðam herige*, 135b) and to have hastened forwards until they had arrived at the gates of Bethulia (*to ðam*

⁶⁹ *Judith*, ed. Griffith, 53.

⁷⁰ Cf. *Judith*, ed. Griffith, 126-7 n. to line 137b; Hermann, *Allegories of War*, 176-7.

⁷¹ Cf. Magennis, *Images of Community*, 164: ‘In the confrontational scheme of the poem, Bethulia stands in opposition to the military camp of the Assyrians. The Camp faces the city, the foreigners face the people of the homeland’.

wealgate, 141a). The second passage is a longer and more complex description of the martial advance of the Bethulian forces. As has been often noted, the non-biblical account of the Bethulian attack is in fact presented as a single forward movement described in three sections, marked by the repeated use of the verb *steppan* (200b; 212b; 227a). However, here again, the army is depicted moving out of the city (*of ðære haligne byrig*, 203b) and arriving at the camp (*to ðam fyrdwicum*, 220a), but the land over which they travel so determinedly is not described or characterized in any way.

The description of a journey as a departure from one point and an arrival at another may not be a particularly surprising technique in narrative poetry. In particular, the account of Judith and her maid travelling out of the Assyrian camp until they might see the walls of Bethulia (*Eodon ða [...] oð þæt hie becomon [...] þæt hie sweotollice geseon mihten*, 132b-6) is strikingly reminiscent of the account of Beowulf's sea-voyage from Geatland to Denmark (*Gewat þa [...] oð þæt [...] wundenstefna gewaden hæfde, / þæt ða liðende land gesawon*, 217-21). Similarly, the celebrated description of Grendel's approach to Heorot—whose triplicate structure marked by what Klaeber described as the 'bell-like' repetition of the verb *cuman* (702b; 710a; 720a) has been frequently compared to the three-part advance of the Bethulians⁷²—in fact says little about the journey itself beyond the fact of his departure from the moor (*Ða com of more*, 710a) and his arrive at the hall (*Com þa to recede*, 720a). It does not follow that this technique was the only one available to an Anglo-Saxon poet describing a journey between two points, as demonstrated clearly by the dramatic description of the landscape over which Beowulf subsequently passes to reach the mere on his mission to destroy Grendel's mother (1408-21). However, the use of what we might call the 'departure-arrival' technique to twice describe the same journey in

⁷² *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. Fr. Klaeber, 3rd ed. with first and second supplements (Boston, Massachusetts, 1950), 154 n. to line 710. Cf. *Judith*, ed. Griffith, 131n; Orchard, *Critical Companion*, 191.

Judith establishes the land between the city and camp as a kind of no-man's-land, an empty space, and even perhaps a symbolic boundary.

Through its adaptation of the Vulgate source, therefore, the description of the setting of *Judith* not only fosters a sense of Bethulia as a homeland (*eðle*, 169a), moving the city from the peripheral location in relation to Jerusalem that it occupies in the Vulgate narrative to form the principal centre of the poetic text as the Bethulian homeland, but then also locates the non-biblical battle in a peripheral border-land space at the margins of that constructed territory. In so doing, and despite the absence of any tangible boundary such as the river Danube, the presentation of the battle in *Judith* begins to look very similar to the elaborated account of Constantine's battle in *Elene*.

The precise status of the land occupied by the Assyrian camp on which the battle takes place is—like the *burgende* region in which the battle in *Elene* is located—somewhat unstable. Not only does the account of the Bethulian approach to battle explicitly characterise the Assyrian forces as foreign (*elðeodig*, 215; *elðeod*, 237) in contrast to the nativity of the Bethulians (*landbuende*, 226a; *eðelweardas*, 320a),⁷³ but Michelet has also persuasively linked the emphatic use of the verb *steppan* here to a 'pervasive motif' in Old English poetry whereby stepping or treading on an area of ground is figured as a way of asserting control over it.⁷⁴ It is through their dramatic advance that the Bethulians assert and reinforce their territorial authority over the periphery surrounding their homeland, effectively controlling access to the city. Moreover, as again in *Elene*, the contrast between the treasure-laden return of the victors in *Judith* (323b-41a)—here motivated by the Vulgate account of the spoiling of the Assyrians (*Liber Iudith* 15:6-14) as well as by the emphasis on plunder noted above as a feature of several Old English poetic accounts of

⁷³ Cf. J. E. Cross, 'The ethic of war in Old English', in eds. Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes, *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge, 1971), 269-82, at 274-5.

⁷⁴ Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 111-3. See also, 109-13, 190-3, 223-6. The phrase 'pervasive motif' is used at 187.

battle—and the return of the few Assyrian survivors to their distant homeland (*Lythwon becom / cwicera to cyððe*, 310b-11a) reinforces the dynamics of native Bethulian and foreign Assyrian upon which the territorial authority of the former is founded.

In both *Elene* and *Judith* the description of battle is the description of a divinely appointed victory. In each case, the poem's Latin source recounts a narrative situation in which those loyal to or chosen by God are under threat from a heathen enemy. In each case, the Old English poetic version both elaborates the depiction of the ensuing conflict and also dramatically develops the setting of the action. Through these alterations, each poem interprets the battle it describes specifically in territorial terms, identifying the enemy not only as heathen, but also as foreign. In both cases victory reinforces the territorial authority of God's elect by enacting their ability to control access to their homeland.

The similarities in the manipulation of the setting of the battle in each of these poems may suggest that the depiction of battle in each case reflects established techniques for the depiction of battle in Old English verse. In particular, an intertextual reading of these poems suggests that vernacular battle poetry was marked by a concern with the territorial implications of battle that tended to spatialize oppositions based on factors such as religion and ethnicity. However, in neither case does it seem fair to suggest that such an approach to the depiction of battle has been employed automatically or unthinkingly. In *Elene*, as we have seen, the territorial focus of the battle scene may reflect the thematic concerns of the poem and possibly also the wider significance ascribed to these events in Anglo-Saxon England. It may be that the same is true of the territorial focus evident in the *Judith*-poet's handling of the *Liber Iudith*. As is well known, Ælfric highlighted the story of Judith as an example to the Anglo-Saxons of the importance of defending their own territory against

the incursion of a heathen threat,⁷⁵ and David Chamberlain has argued that the battle scene in *Judith* draws upon the realities of Viking invasion and raiding in England in the late tenth century.⁷⁶ The evidence for Chamberlain's historical contextualization of the poem is perhaps rather thin. What the above analysis has demonstrated, however, is that in its immediate poetic context the account of the battle in *Judith* again reflects the wider thematic concerns of the poem and participates in the re-conceptualization of the Vulgate narrative as a contest for territorial authority. This contextual specificity can also be seen in the final example of 'translated' battle that I shall consider here, but the territorial presentation of battle in this example also contains notable differences from the techniques evident in *Elene* and *Judith*.

The Old English Boethius: Metre 1

The author of the all-prose B-text of *The Old English Boethius* opens his text with an account of the sack of Rome by Gothic forces in the year 410:

On ðære tide ðe Gotan of Sciððiu mægðe wið Romana rice gewin up ahofon, and mid heora cyningum, Rædgota and Eallerica wæron hatne, Romane burig abraecon and eall Italia rice þæt is betwux þam muntum and Sicilia þam ealonde in anwald gerehton, þa æfter þam foresprecanan cyningum Peodric feng to þam ilcan rice.⁷⁷

This bare, if surprising, statement of cause and effect linking Alaric's raid and Theoderic's rule was apparently recast into a considerably longer verse account comprising the first

⁷⁵ *Libellus de ueteri testament et nouo* 463-7: 'Judith seo wuduwe, þe oferwann Holofernem þone Siriscan ealdormann, hæfð hire agene boc [...] be hire agenum sige. Seo ys eac on Englisc on ure wisan gesett, eow mannum to bysne þæt ge eowerne eard mid wæmnum bewerian wið onwinnendne here.' Cited by line number from *The Old English Heptateuch and Ælfric's Libellus de Veteri Testamento et Novo: Volume One: Introduction and Text*, ed. Richard Marsden, EETS os 330 (Oxford, 2008). On Ælfric's responses to the story of Judith, see Mary Clayton, 'Ælfric's *Judith*: manipulative or manipulated?', *ASE* 23 (1994), 215-27.

⁷⁶ Chamberlain, 'Fragmentary and Political Poem', esp. 156-7. See too A. H. Olsen, 'Invasion and Political purpose in the Old English *Judith*', *ES* 63 (1982), 289-93.

⁷⁷ *Old English Boethius* B.1:1-6, 'In that time when the Goths from the Scythian people raised up strife against the Roman kingdom, and with their kings, who were called Rædgota and Alaric, conquered the city of the Romans and took into their control all the kingdom of Italy that is between the mountains and the island of Sicily, then, after those aforementioned kings, Theoderic succeeded to that same kingdom'.

thirty and a half lines of the opening Metre in the later prosy-metric version of the Old English text (the C-text).⁷⁸ This degree of expansion is not seen elsewhere in the versification of the Old English Metres, and apparently represents an imaginative response to the prose of the B-text.⁷⁹ According to the text's most recent editors, the treatment of this episode reveals a versifier 'relishing the opportunity to incorporate the heroic diction and motifs of battle characteristic of Old English poetry'.⁸⁰ This opportunity, the argument goes, is unusual in the versification of the Metres, whose thematic concerns and generally non-narrative form preclude such expansion.⁸¹

It is certain that specifically poetic and martial diction is used in Metre 1 with a frequency that is unusual in the Metres. Of the twenty-two times that a poetic term is introduced into the versification of the Metres, nine occur in Metre 1, of which seven occur in the first thirty and a half lines.⁸² The two peoples of Alaric and Rædgota are described as victorious nations (*sigeþeoda twa*, 4b), boastful and eager for battle (*gylpes full, guðe gelysted*, 9). Their advance is described in the traditional figure of bearing weapons (*sceldas læddon*, 2b), and familiar epithets are used to refer to the collected warriors (*Sceotend*, 11a; *lindwigend*, 13a; *beadurinc*, 18a). What is absent, however, is any reference to the clash of weapons, to shaking of spears, to shining swords, to the din of battle, and, perhaps most noticeably, to the beasts of battle so firmly associated with

⁷⁸ The sole surviving manuscript witness for the C-text is the partial text contained in London, British Library MS Cotton Otho A.vi. The manuscript was badly damaged in the Cotton fire of 1731 and the beginning of the prosy-metric text, including Metre 1, is now recorded only in a seventeenth-century transcription prepared by Francis Junius (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Junius 12). For details, see *OEB*, I, 18-34. On the unhistorical association of Alaric and Rædgota, see M. R. Godden, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths: rewriting the sack of Rome', *ASE* 31 (2002), 47-68, at 62-3.

⁷⁹ Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons and Goths', 65-6; *OEB*, I, 94-5. On average, the versification process results in an amplification of around 28 per cent, with a range in individual metres from less than 10 per cent to more than 60 per cent (*OEB*, I, 82 and n.1). The recasting of the opening sentence of chapter one of the B-text into thirty and a half lines in Metre 1 of the C-text represents an amplification of nearly 187 per cent.

⁸⁰ *OEB*, II, 497.

⁸¹ *OEB*, I, 88, 94. For the suggestion that the additional details in the verse text are evidence that the direction of influence was from the C-text to the B-text, see Kevin S. Kiernan, 'Alfred the Great's Burnt Boethius', in eds. George Bornstein and Theresa Tinkle, *The Iconic Page in Manuscript, Print, and Digital Culture* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1998), 7-32, at 13.

⁸² *OEB*, I, 88 and n.4. The seven are: *sigeþeod*, 4b; *guð*, 9b, 23a; *sceotend*, 11b; *lindwigend*, 13a; *beadorinc*, 18b; *magorinc*, 26a.

approaching martial encounters in Old English poetry.⁸³ Indeed, what is particularly surprising about the account in Metre 1 is the way in which—in contrast to the description of the fighting in both *Elene* and *Judith*—the combat implied by the narrative is glossed over.⁸⁴ The sack of Rome is not, in fact, described in Metre 1, and nor are the feats of arms which implicitly proceed it. The nearest that Metre 1 comes to such details is the stark description of a waving banner (10b-11a): this description, however, is clearly associated with the mustering of the Gothic forces and their aggressive intent, not with the actual performance of martial deeds.⁸⁵ The two references to battle contained in lines 1-31a are, significantly, both hypothetical: lines 8-10a present the Gothic army's *eagerness* for battle, whilst lines 22-3a state that the inhabitants of Rome are *unable* to oppose the Goths with battle following the flight of the emperor (20b-1).

The progression of the narrative in Metre 1 moves directly from intention to result:

Sceotend þohton
Italia ealla gegongan,
lindwigende. Hi gelæstan swua⁸⁶

The poet here presents the military conquest of Italy as a *fait accompli* and goes on to relate the victorious entry of the Gothic kings into a Rome that has already succumbed (*wæs [...] abrocen*, 17-18a). Indeed, the account of the sack in Metre 1 refers only to tribute and pledges of submission extracted from the population of the city (23b-5); as the text stands, it is not clear that any blows were actually exchanged.⁸⁷ If the motivation for

⁸³ Cf. Griffith, “Beasts of Battle”, 183-4. On the ‘particularly noticeable’ absence of poetic terms for weaponry in the Metres, see *OEB*, I, 88 n.4.

⁸⁴ Cf. esp. *Elene* 114-26a; *Judith* 216b-35.

⁸⁵ According to Mark Griffith, lines 2-11 portray ‘the Gothic invasion of Italy complete with the carrying of shields and fluttering of the battle standard’ (*OEB*, I, 95 n.1). I would argue, however, that the actual conquest of Italy is at this point merely anticipated.

⁸⁶ *Old English Boethius* CM.1:11b-13, ‘The warriors, the shield-bearers, intended to overrun all of Italy. They accomplished that’.

⁸⁷ Cf. Griffith, “Beasts of Battle”, 183. The lack of violence associated with the sack is emphasized in the *Old English Orosius*, which claims that Alaric forbade his men from killing anyone during the attack (*he mid swa lytle niþe abraec Romeburg þæt he bebead þæt mon nænne mon ne sloge*, 156:14-15). Cf. Orosius, *Historiarum* VII.39:1-40:1. However, while the author of the B-text was apparently familiar with the Old

the extended C-text account of the Gothic invasion were simply a desire to indulge a passion for traditional vernacular militaristic poetry, this reticence would be surprising.

In fact, the most striking feature of the expansion of the prose account of the Gothic raid in Metre 1 is the re-presentation of the opportunist and relatively insignificant plundering of Rome in 410 as the conquest of all Italy. In recent years two separate studies have stressed the particular importance ascribed to the sack of 410 in Anglo-Saxon texts, whereby the event is interpreted as a symbolic marker of the decline of Roman *imperium* and the consequent rise of Germanic power in Europe.⁸⁸ With specific reference to the accounts in the *Old English Boethius*, Godden has argued that the prose B-text reflects this understanding by telescoping the events in 410 and the later tyranny of Theoderic in such a way as to imply that the earlier raid constituted the invasion and continued settlement of Italy.⁸⁹ According to Godden, the versifier of the C-text, consciously or not, accepted and emphasized the B-text's presentation of the sack as conquest and occupation.⁹⁰

This emphasis on conquest in the C-text, I suggest, is based upon a manipulation of setting and a particular construction of a sense of place. A rudimentary sense of place is evident already in the statement in the B-text that the Gothic armies conquered *eall Italia rice þæt is betwux þam muntum and Sicilia þam ealonde*. This simple statement describes a place that is defined both by name (*Italia*) and also by area, marked out by topographical boundaries (the mountains and the island).⁹¹ These same basic topographical boundaries

English text, and possibly also the original Latin, the versifier of the C-text does not seem to have consulted either work (*OEB*, I, 136-7; Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons and Goths', 65).

⁸⁸ Stephen J. Harris, 'The Alfredian *World History* and Anglo-Saxon Identity', *JEGP* 100 (2001), 481-510; Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons and Goths'.

⁸⁹ Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons and Goths', 62-3. In prefacing his text with an account of the events which led to Boethius' downfall the author of the B-text was probably influenced by the various *vitae* associated in the manuscript tradition with the Latin text of the *De consolazione*; he is unique, however, in incorporating an account of the earlier sack (*ibid.*; *OEB*, II, 248-50).

⁹⁰ Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons and Goths', 64-6.

⁹¹ Without mentioning Sicily, Orosius similarly describes Italy as a land bounded by the Alps and the sea (*Historiarum* I.2:61; cf. *Old English Orosius* 18:19-21).

recur in the verse text; here, however, a more sophisticated idea of place is produced. The Gothic forces are victorious

efne from Muntgiop oð þone mæran wearoð
 þær Sicilia sæstreamum in,
 eglond micel, eðel mærsað.⁹²

The key phrase here is *eðel mærsað*. The area implied by the term *eðel* is not immediately apparent. It could be a reference to Sicily itself, bounded and delimited by the surrounding ‘sea-streams’.⁹³ The context of the lines, however, makes this interpretation unlikely: the island is being invoked not as a place in its own right, but as a marker for the area over-run by the Goths, and the phrasing *þær Sicilia [...] eðel mærsað* seems to support the idea that the *eðel* is not Sicily itself. A seemingly minor change to the boundaries specified in the verse text makes this clear. In contrast to the prose text, Metre 1 defines the extent of the area conquered by the Goths as that between the mountains and *þone mæran wearoð*, by which is presumably meant the shore of the mainland opposite which the island stands *sæstreamum in*, a visible and tangible marker of the limits of the land conquered.⁹⁴

The term *eðel*, therefore, describes the area over-run by the Goths. The primary connotation of this word is ‘homeland’, and in poetry especially it is frequently used in a strongly emotive sense.⁹⁵ The expanded account of the Gothic attack not only identifies *Italia* as a territory delineated by the mountains and the island, but also situates it in a wider geographical context not evident in the prose account. The general statement in the B-text that the Goths were *of Sciððiu mægðe* is developed in the C-text into a more explicitly geographical identification. The poet not only stresses the Goths’ point of origin

⁹² *Old English Boethius* CM.1:14-16, ‘even from the Alps unto the famous shore where, in the sea streams, Sicily, that great island, marks out a homeland.’

⁹³ Such a reading is explicit in the translation offered at *OEB*, II, 98: ‘right from the Alps to that famous shore where the large island of Sicily marks out its territory with sea currents’. Kiernan’s translation is less specific: ‘where Sicily in sea-streams, / the great island, marks out a native land’ (‘Burnt Boethius’, 13).

⁹⁴ The reference to Sicily in the B-text might be the result of historical detail drawn from Latin sources (possibly Isidore or Jordanes). Cf. *OEB*, II, 251.

⁹⁵ *DOE*, *epel*, 1a: ‘home, homeland, land of one’s birth, (hereditary) land, (ancestral) domain’. Cf. Howe, ‘Looking for Home’, 146-7. Howe notes that the term ‘can denote such larger and more amorphous categories as ‘native land’, ‘country’, ‘ancestral region’ (‘*ibid.*’, 147). See also, Riedinger, “‘Home’”.

(*Sciððia*, 2a), but also traces their journey westward (*eastan*, 1b) and southwards (*suðweardes*, 4a) from Scythia to Rome. The relative positioning of these two locations corresponds to the information contained in the opening chapter of the Old English *Orosius*, and may be said to be accurate, therefore, according to the geographical understanding of the time.⁹⁶ The point that I would stress, however, is that the adaptations made here delineate Roman territory by establishing it within a contrastive geographical context. Beyond the boundaries of Italy in the distant north-east, Scythia and its inhabitants provide the ‘difference’ or ‘constituting other’ against which a sense of place can be defined.

Like the mustering of the barbarian tribes in *Elene*, the advance of the Goths of *Sciððia* in Metre 1 is an encroachment of the other. The threat posed by the Gothic forces, moreover, is expressed in explicitly territorial terms. From the opening of the poem, the Gothic kingdom is shown to be in a state of expansion: *Gotene rice gearmælum weox* (‘the Gothic kingdom expanded year by year’, 5). This statement, which constitutes an addition to the prose source, indicates the fluidity and instability of territorial authority. As the subsequent description of the Gothic military successes prior to the invasion of Italy makes clear, the expansion of Gothic territorial authority is at the expense of that of various unnamed peoples: *þreate geþrungon þeodlond monig* (‘they oppressed many nations with force’, 3). The compound *þeodlond* combines precisely the elements of people and place implicit in the concept of territory. The expansion of the prose source in the opening seven lines of Metre 1 thus establishes the attack on Rome firmly within a context of shifting territorial dynamics. In this again, the account in Metre 1 is reminiscent of the account of Constantine’s battle in *Elene*, which is, as we have seen, prefaced by a description of the

⁹⁶ *Old English Orosius* 13:9-10. Cf. Valtonen, *Geographical Narrative*, 541-6; Niles, *Social Life of Texts*, 121-2. Scythia is also located to the north-east of Rome on the *Mappa Mundi* contained on fol. 56^v of British Library MS Cotton Tiberius B.v. For a facsimile, see *An Eleventh Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany: British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. v*, ed. P. McGurk, D. N. Dumville, M. R. Godden, and A. Knock, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile* 21 (Copenhagen, 1983).

emperor's own expansion of his territorial authority. However, whereas the expansion of Roman territory in *Elene* is explicitly described as having been sanctioned by God (14b-18a), the encroachment of the Gothic forces—in the Old English text at least—results in the conquest of a Christian people by a force that is associated, if not with paganism, then at least with heresy (31a-43).

In addition to reproducing and expanding the reference to the boundaries of the area under attack, the versifier also introduces a specific reference to the Gothic transgression of these boundaries:

Pa wæs ofer Muntgiop monig atyhted
Gota gylpes full, guðe gelysted,
folcgewinnes.⁹⁷

The violation of the established boundaries of Italian territory challenges the Roman ability to exercise territorial authority. Like the Bethulians in *Judith*, the inhabitants of Rome are described as *eðelweardas* (24b), a compound that stresses the territorial nature of Roman identity. The use of this term in Metre 1 is, however, heavily ironic: the Romans are identified as defenders of a native territory precisely at the moment at which they abandon any thought of defending Rome against the non-native Gothic attackers, offering instead tribute and pledges of loyalty (23b-5a).⁹⁸ The failure of the Roman *eðelweardas* is further signalled in the ironic use of the poetic term *magorinc* (26a) to describe the Roman citizens, who desire to resist the invaders, but dare not do so (26-7).⁹⁹

⁹⁷ *Old English Boethius* CM.1:8-10a, 'Then many a Goth, full of pride, was tempted over the Alps, attracted by war, by combat.'

⁹⁸ A seemingly straightforward compound, *eðelweard* is attested only six times, three of which are found in *Beowulf*, all singular, to describe a king (616b, 1702a, 2210a). Of the remaining two, one is the reference to the Bethulians in *Judith* and the other occurs in the Old Testament poem *Daniel* (55b). As in Metre 1, the use of the word in *Daniel* has apparently ironic overtones, describing the inhabitants of Jerusalem during an account of the Babylonian destruction of the city (52-8a). As is the case in Metre 1, therefore, the use of the compound *eðelweard* coincides with a *failure* of the native inhabitants of a city to defend their territory. The text of *Daniel* is cited from *Daniel and Azarias*, ed. Farrell.

⁹⁹ It is tempting to read the descriptions of Boethius later in Metre 1 in a similar way. Boethius is recast in the role of a Germanic lord (*hlaford*, 47b; *sincgeofa*, 50a), one who has achieved fame (*se þone hlisan gebah*, 52b) but who was nonetheless in a subordinate position below the Caesar (*his eldran*, 58a); his subsequent treatment by Theoderic, however, suggests a less exalted position (*þone þegn oferfeng*, 69b), and despite the

The description of the Gothic entry into Rome itself makes this failure clear:

Da wæs Romana	rice gewonnen,
abrocen burga cyst;	beadurincum wæs
Rom gerymed.	Rædgot and Aleric
foron on ðæt fæsten;	fleah casere
mid þam æþelingum	ut on Crecas. ¹⁰⁰

The use of the verb *abrecan* may be influenced by the wording of the prose source (*Romane burig abræcon*), but the reference to the city as *ðæt fæsten* at this point seems to invite ironic interpretation. The capital, by way of synecdoche standing for the entire kingdom, is no longer “fast”.¹⁰¹ The statement that the city *wæs [...] gerymed* perhaps means more than simply that the defences were opened (or forced open). The connotations of (*ge-*)*ryman* are diverse and difficult to define precisely. The term’s semantic range takes in ‘extend’, ‘enlarge’, ‘make clear’, ‘manifest’, and ‘open’.¹⁰² It is, however, possible to demonstrate a specific meaning relating to the clearing of land to allow for occupation.¹⁰³ Far from asserting control over access to Roman territory, therefore, the flight of the emperor and his followers *ut on Crecas* dramatizes their loss of territorial authority. Moreover, in contrast to the opposing movements away from the battlefield of the armies in both *Elene* and *Judith*, the opposition between the Goths’ triumphant entry into Rome and the flight of the Roman leaders reverses expected territorial dynamics as the native ruling elite is literally displaced by the invading forces.

suggestion that Boethius is a military leader (*heretoga*, 46a; *hererinc*, 71a), he is unable to act openly, and resorts to sending a message to his former lord in secret (*degelice*, 64a). It seems possible, however, that the inconsistencies in this presentation deliberately reflect the vicissitudes of fortune that motivate Boethius’ complaint. The presentation of the Assyrian retainers of Holofernes in the Old English *Judith* provides a parallel for the mock-heroic use of poetic diction: cf. Heinemann, ‘*Judith* 236-291a’; Elizabeth M. Tyler, ‘Style and Meaning in *Judith*’, *N&Q* ns 39 (1992), 16-19; *Judith*, ed. Griffith, 65-7.

¹⁰⁰ *Old English Boethius* CM.1:17-21, ‘Then the kingdom of Rome was won by force, the best of cities conquered; Rome was opened for the warriors. Rædgota and Alaric advanced into that stronghold; the emperor fled with the nobles out to the Greeks.’

¹⁰¹ The administrative centre of the empire at this time was in fact Ravenna, not Rome, but the versification clearly presents the city as the seat of the emperor (*cynestole*, 48a).

¹⁰² Cf. *BT*, *ryman*; *ge-ryman*.

¹⁰³ *BTS*, *ge-ryman*, II. (2): ‘to remove obstruction from so as to allow occupation, to clear a space’.

The way in which the versifier of Metre 1 elaborates on his immediate source text, developing the topographical emphasis from the sparse prose of the B-text and stressing the specifically territorial threat posed by the Goths, is broadly reminiscent of the treatment of battle in both *Elene* and *Judith*. However, in contrast to the former accounts, the description of the invasion in Metre 1 does not focus upon a single battle located in the liminal spaces at the periphery of the territory at stake, but instead characterizes the attack as the total conquest of Roman territory. Metre 1 is not concerned with describing a heroic defence against invasion from without, but with explaining the conquest of Italy in terms of the failure of the Roman leaders to assert and maintain their territorial authority. It is striking that the spatial invention of the Roman *eðel* achieved in Metre 1 through reference to its topographical boundaries is inseparable from the account of its conquest: Roman territory is defined as the area conquered by the Gothic armies.

External pressures may again help to explain the territorial focus of the poetic narrative in Metre 1. As Godden has shown, the account of the sack of Rome in both texts of *The Old English Boethius* re-imagines the event in a way that reflects the developing significance ascribed to this event in Anglo-Saxon England from the time of Bede onwards. Writing specifically about the prose B-text, Godden has suggested that the account of the conquest and rule of Italy by Gothic forces challenges ‘crude providential readings’ of history by placing these events ‘in the context of a divine dispensation which has no concern with the flourishing of empires’.¹⁰⁴ Whether the versifier of the Metres recognized this implication of the prose account is impossible to say with any certainty. However, in such a context the contrast between the divinely-inspired defence of territory presented in both *Elene* and *Judith* and the conquest of an apparently undefended Christian

¹⁰⁴ Godden, ‘Anglo-Saxons and Goths’, 67. In support of Godden’s view we might note that following the conquest the Gothic forces continue to be identified as ‘other’: Theoderic is consistently identified by his Gothic ethnicity (38b, 45a, 69a), and is, in juxtaposition with the *Romwara* (34a, 49b, 67a), still seen as a foreign king by Boethius (*elðeodge / kyningas*, 55b-6a).

Roman empire by the heretical Goths in Metre 1 is particularly striking. What an intertextual reading of the presentation of the conquest in Metre 1 does unquestionably show, however, is the flexibility of vernacular poetic responses to battle. The topographical focus of Metre 1 shares with *Elene* and *Judith* an interest in the localization of battle and a focus on the ramifications of territorial conflict, but the manipulation of setting in this poem is once again tailored precisely to fit its immediate context.

THE BATTLE OF MALDON AND THE BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

Each of the poems discussed so far describes a battle distant from the poet and original audience in both space and time. Each of these battle scenes therefore involves a degree of translation that might be not only linguistic but also cultural and aesthetic. Similar techniques and conventions are also evident, however, in two Old English poetic descriptions of battle closely contemporary—in relative terms at least—to both the poet and the original audience and which took place against a cultural, political, and geographical backdrop with which they would have been familiar: *The Battle of Maldon* and *The Battle of Brunanburh*.

The differences between these two poems are considerable. As the entry for the year 937, *Brunanburh* is preserved in four manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and records the victory of the Anglo-Saxon king Æthelstan and his brother Eadmund over a combined force of Scots and Dublin Norse that was challenging Æthelstan's rule in the north of England.¹⁰⁵ The plurality of the manuscript survival of *Brunanburh* contrasts starkly with the transmission of *Maldon*, the only known manuscript copy of which, already

¹⁰⁵ ASC A.937; B.937; C.937; D.937. For a concise summary of the relationships between these manuscripts, see *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, ASPR VI (London and New York, 1942), xxxii-xxxviii. The text of *Brunanburh* is cited from this edition.

missing its head and tail, was destroyed in the Cottonian fire in 1731, and which is known today only from a transcript made before the fire by David Casley.¹⁰⁶ The poems thus represent one of the best witnessed of Old English poems and one of the worst. The two differ also in the nature of the battle each was to record. In contrast to the glorious achievements of Æthelstan and Eadmund recounted in *Brunanburh*, the fragmentary *Maldon* recounts what is known to have been a devastating defeat of an Anglo-Saxon army led by Ealdorman Byrhtnoth by a Viking raiding party in 991.

Despite these differences, however, both of these accounts of historical tenth-century battles fought in Anglo-Saxon England share with each other and with the other examples considered above several of the same techniques for the construction of a sense of place, as well as an interest in territorial dynamics more generally. While the account of the battle in each of these poems has at various times been proposed as an accurate and reliable account of both the setting and general course of events of the historical battle commemorated, the following analysis argues the need to recognize the extent to which these accounts engage with conventions and techniques for narrating battle in Old English poetry.

The Battle of Maldon

The Battle of Maldon has generated a significant volume of scholarly activity relating to the site of the battle described. Despite Magennis' reservations cited at the beginning of this chapter, much of this activity has been predicated on the assumption that the description of the setting and course of the battle in the poetic account is (and is intended to be) an accurate representation of the events of the battle fought in 991 and recorded in

¹⁰⁶ H. L. Rogers, 'The Battle of Maldon: David Casley's Transcript', *N&Q* ns 32 (1985), 147-55. For a facsimile of the transcript, see ed. Donald Scragg, *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991* (Oxford, 1991), 3-14.

five texts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.¹⁰⁷ Reference in the poem to the river Blackwater (identified by the Old English toponym *Pantan stream*, 68a)¹⁰⁸ accords with the statement in the *Chronicle* that the historical battle was fought close to the town of Maldon in Essex, and has led scholars to consult the poet's description of the battlefield for clues as to the precise site of the battle. Since 1925, attention has been focused primarily on the Northey Island site first proposed by E. D. Laborde.¹⁰⁹ Located some two miles downriver from the town of Maldon itself in the tidal estuary of the Blackwater, the island is entirely cut off from the mainland at high-tide. At low-tide, access to the island from its south-western tip is afforded by a raised causeway. Such a causeway seemingly corresponds well with the feature described in the poem as both *ford* (81a, 88a) and *bricg* (74b, 78b – cf. *bricgweardas*, 85a).¹¹⁰

Such attempts to decode the 'real' locations supposedly described in the text are in part based on the desire to better understand the historical and literary significance of the events described.¹¹¹ Equally, though less frequently acknowledged, they are motivated by the appeal of the tangible, of having some concrete place in which and through which to

¹⁰⁷ ASC A.993; C.991; D.991; E.991; F.991. On the confusion over the date of the battle in version A, see *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Vol. 5 MS. C*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (Cambridge, 2001), lix-lxii. The question of the accuracy of the poetic account is closely connected to scholarly debate concerning the date of the poem's composition. Cf. John McKinnell, 'The Date of The Battle of Maldon', *MÆ* 44 (1975), 121-36; M. A. L. Locherbie-Cameron, 'Byrhtnoth, his Noble Companion and his Sister's Son', *MÆ* 57 (1988), 159-71; D. G. Scragg, 'The Battle of Maldon: Fact of Fiction?', in ed. Janet Cooper, *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact* (London and Rio Grande, 1993), 19-31, at 25-8.

¹⁰⁸ Cited from *The Battle of Maldon*, ed. D. G. Scragg, reprinted ed. (Manchester, 1991).

¹⁰⁹ E. D. Laborde, 'The Site of the Battle of Maldon', *EHR* 40 (1925), 161-73; *id.*, *Byrhtnoth and Maldon* (London, 1936), esp. 39-43. Cf. George R. Petty, Jr. and Susan Petty, 'Geology and *The Battle of Maldon*', *Speculum* 51 (1976), 435-46; *id.*, 'A Geological Reconstruction of the Site of the Battle of Maldon', in ed. Cooper, *The Battle of Maldon*, 159-69; John Scattergood, 'The Battle of Maldon and History', in ed. *id.*, *Literature and Learning in Medieval and Renaissance England: Essays Presented to Fitzroy Pyle* (Dublin, 1984), 11-24, at 12; David Cartwright and Charles Abbott Conway, 'Maldon and the Tides', *The Cambridge Review* 112 (1991), 180-83; John McN. Dodgson, 'The Site of the Battle of Maldon', in ed. Scragg, *Maldon, AD 991*, 170-79; Hans Erik Andersen, *The Battle of Maldon: The Meaning, Dating & Historicity of an Old English Poem* (Copenhagen, 1991), 113-20; Chris Altman, 'Making Use of the Terrain: Byrhtnoð's Strategy in "The Battle of Maldon"', *ANQ* 20 (2007), 3-8.

¹¹⁰ On the use of these terms, see Laborde, 'Site of the Battle', 168-169; *id.*, *Byrhtnoth and Maldon*, 4.

¹¹¹ Debate over the location of the battlefields of Anglo-Saxon England is not limited to those instances in which the battle in question was memorialized in verse. On the debate concerning the location of the battle of Assandun, see Warwick Rodwell, 'The Battle of Assandun and its Memorial Church: A Reappraisal', in ed. Cooper, *The Battle of Maldon*, 127-58. See too Ryan Lavelle, *Alfred's Wars: Sources and Interpretations of Anglo-Saxon Warfare in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge, 2010), 298-314.

relate experientially to much-studied and well-loved texts. This desire is discussed by Gillian Overing and Marijane Osborn in the introduction to their account of their own attempts to match the events of both *Beowulf* and *Grettir's saga* to present-day locations in the Scandinavian nations of Northern Europe.¹¹² Motivated by a belief in 'the experience of place as a negotiative activity whereby we may extend, develop, or invent our dialogue with the past',¹¹³ Overing and Osborn's endeavours are predicated on the conviction that the value of such experiences is in spite of, rather than contingent upon, the accuracy of the association of present-day location with fictional place.¹¹⁴ In their attempt to replicate the voyages undertaken in the narratives in question, Overing and Osborn are avowedly 'not attempting to prove anything about the texts themselves' and acknowledge the potential dangers of attempting to do so.¹¹⁵ Discussing the 'Eureka impulse' behind the desire to identify the "real" places referred to in medieval texts, Overing describes the potentially restrictive tendencies of such an attitude in terms of the deconstructive approach to Old English literature advocated by Allen Frantzen:¹¹⁶

The excitement of exactitude, or replication, is of course a variant on the search for origins [*pace* Frantzen], and as such it partakes of nostalgia and closure of meaning, not to mention illusion.¹¹⁷

The readiness with which Laborde's identification has been accepted by subsequent scholars is testimony to the powerful desire of which Overing and Osborn speak.¹¹⁸ Equally evident is the degree to which this acceptance has been motivated by nostalgia. The location of the battle-site has been described as 'a solid link in what otherwise is a chain of circumstances [...] for Anglo-Saxonists who need some palpable reassurance that

¹¹² Gillian R. Overing and Marijane Osborn, *Landscape of Desire: Partial Stories of the Medieval Scandinavian World* (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1994), xiii-xxii.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, xiv.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, xv-xvi, 1-2.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, xviii.

¹¹⁶ Allen J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1994).

¹¹⁷ Overing and Osborn, *Landscape of Desire*, xvi.

¹¹⁸ Cf. the remarkable statement by Cartwright and Conway that they accept the identification of Northey Island 'since none better has been offered' ('Maldon and the Tides', 180).

the words they love were once spoken or shouted by flesh and blood Englishmen'.¹¹⁹ This sentiment is explicit in the account of a personal visit to the Blackwater estuary by no less a scholar than R. W. Burchfield. Having 'lived with the poem, loved it, and taught it to undergraduates for more than forty years', Burchfield delights in the opportunity of sitting 'just where the messenger of the Viking, the *wicinga ar*, had shouted threateningly to the English'.¹²⁰

More worrying than this scholarly nostalgia is the degree to which the characteristics of the proposed site are frequently implicated in critical interpretations of the poem. A perhaps trivial example is the extent to which the vocabulary of Northey Island has become that of the text, with references to the 'causeway'¹²¹ and to the 'island'¹²² abounding in the secondary literature. There is a jump here from theory to fact which precludes diverse interpretation of the poetic description of the battlefield. More significantly, the closure of meaning referred to by Overing and Osborn is evident in the way in which the topography of Northey Island has come to influence key critical issues on which debate concerning *Maldon* has focused. The detailed description of the site of the battle by the river Blackwater has been cited as evidence for the poet's accurate knowledge of the course of the battle, in turn an argument for the composition of the poem close to the date of the battle in 991.¹²³ Similarly, the identification of Northey causeway has influenced the infamous critical debate regarding Byrhtnoth's *ofermod*: his culpability or

¹¹⁹ Petty and Petty, 'Geology and *Maldon*', 436.

¹²⁰ R. W. Burchfield, 'A Visit to Maldon: a Personal Note', *Old English Newsletter* 22 (1989), 29-30, at 29.

¹²¹ Cf. Scragg's use of this term to gloss *bricg* (*Maldon*, 91). *DOE* cites the use of this word in *Maldon* as evidence for a poetic sense 'thought to be used here with reference to a natural causeway' (1.c.).

¹²² Cf. O. D. MacRae-Gibson, 'How Historical in *The Battle of Maldon?*', *MÆ* 39 (1970), 89-107, at 91: 'the evidence of the poem strongly suggests that the Danes has established themselves on an island'. By contrast, J. B. Bessinger notes that '*Maldon* nowhere mentions an island, but [...] an island has been supplied from modern topography to explicate the poem's actions' ('*Maldon* and the *Óláfsdrápa*: An Historical Caveat', *Comparative Literature* 14 (1962), 23-35, at 33).

¹²³ Cf. Locherbie-Cameron, 'Noble Companion', 161: 'the poet's description of the battle site is almost certainly accurate; he is unlikely to have invented a site corresponding so minutely to an actual location'.

otherwise for the defeat suffered by the Anglo-Saxon army.¹²⁴ Following Laborde's work, strategic considerations suggested by the Northey Island site have formed the basis of several studies of the tactics adopted by Byrhtnoth, primarily by scholars wishing to exculpate the *ealdorman* from the criticism implicit in the statement that he allowed *landes to fela* (90a) to the Viking army.¹²⁵ The danger of these imaginative recreations, however, becomes apparent when critics allow themselves to privilege their own reconstructed narrative over that of the poem itself, as seen in Richard North's evaluation of Byrhtnoth's generalship:

If we credit the poet's words of blame, Byrhtnoð was a gullible general; if the local topography, then Byrhtnoð was competent, having no option but to let the Vikings cross, whether or not they requested it. The site of this battle is probably a better witness than the poet.¹²⁶

As these examples suggest, the desire to associate the events recounted in *Maldon* with a specific location on the ground in present-day Essex is potentially reductive. It is also, I suggest, misleading, based on the false assumption that the setting of the poem is intended to reflect an identifiable external reality. The first half of this chapter has shown that manipulation of setting was a common technique for the construction of significant spatial relationships in Old English poetic descriptions of battle. There is no reason to imagine that similar techniques could not be applied to poetic descriptions of battles fought in late Anglo-Saxon England. Indeed, an intertextual reading of the spatial poetics of *Maldon* strongly suggests that they could be and were.

¹²⁴ The literature on this subject is notoriously extensive. For a survey of critical responses, see Helmut Gneuss, 'The Battle of Maldon 89: Byrhtnoð's *ofermod* Once Again', *SP* 73 (1976), 117-37; John Halbrooks, 'Byrhtnoth's Great-Hearted Mirth, or Praise and Blame in *The Battle of Maldon*', *PQ* 82 (2003), 235-55.

¹²⁵ Cf. MacRae-Gibson, 'How Historical?', 96-105; Capt. Warren A. Samouce, 'General Byrhtnoth', *JEGP* 62 (1963), 129-35; Cartwright and Conway, 'Maldon and the Tides', 182-83; Richard North, 'Getting to Know the General in *The Battle of Maldon*', *MÆ* 60 (1991), 1-15; I. J. Kirby, 'In Defence of Byrhtnoth', *Florilegium* 11 (1992), 53-60; Altman, 'Making Use of the Terrain'. For an unfavourable evaluation of Byrhtnoth's use of the terrain, see A. D. Mills, 'Byrhtnoð's Mistake in Generalship', *NM* 67 (1966), 14-27.

¹²⁶ North, 'Getting to Know the General', 10. Cf. MacRae-Gibson, 'How Historical?', 101: 'If the poet's use of *ofermod* charges Byrhtnoð with rashness here, it is a misjudgement; the fact that Byrhtnoð's plan later went wrong does not make it rash to have embarked on it.'

The construction of place in *Maldon* is largely dependent upon a close topographical description of the battle-site. This detailed description has frequently been cited as evidence that the poet was describing a specific, well-known landscape, contributing to the ‘powerful sense of verisimilitude’ conveyed by the poem.¹²⁷ Other critics have pointed out that verisimilitude does not necessarily equate with reality;¹²⁸ what I would wish to stress, however, is that the sense of verisimilitude itself arises from the careful sense of place established by the poetic account.

Reference to place in *Maldon* is insistent, and goes beyond the allusion to *Pantan stream* and the tidal crossing. The use of local adverbs, which continually tie action to place, is particularly striking. In direct speech, the adverb *her* (36b, 51a, 241a, 243a, 314a) is used five times in this manner, and both *hider* (57b) and *heonon* (246b) are used once to describe movement (actual or potential) to or from the *her* of the poem. In the narrated text, the local adverb *þær* is used a total of 19 times.¹²⁹ Although comparisons based on word frequency can be misleading, the equivalent figure of only 71 occurrences in *Beowulf*, a poem ten times the length of *Maldon*, perhaps indicates that the *Maldon*-poet’s insistence on location is unusual.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Edward B. Irving, Jr., ‘Heroic Style in *The Battle of Maldon*’, *SP* 58 (1961), 457-67, at 458.

¹²⁸ Cf. Bessinger, ‘*Maldon* and *Óláfsdrápa*’; George Clark, ‘*The Battle of Maldon*: A Heroic Poem’, *Speculum* 43 (1968), 52-71; N. F. Blake, ‘The genesis of *The Battle of Maldon*’, *ASE* 7 (1978), 119-29; Edward I. Condren, ‘From Politics to Poetry: Ambivalent Ethics in *The Battle of Maldon*’, *Medievalia* 17 (1994 for 1991), 53-66. *Brunanburh* itself provides an indirect parallel: many attempts to locate the site of the battle commemorated in the poem have drawn heavily on the description of the topography of the battle of *Vínheiðr* in the Old Norse text *Egilssaga*, thought to represent the same historical conflict. A study of the *Vínheiðr* episode in 1933 highlighted the localization of the battle as ‘the only realistic feature in the episode’ (L. M. Hollander, ‘The Battle on the Vin-Heath and the Battle of the Huns’, *JEGP* 32 (1933), 33-43, at 40); subsequent research, however, has shown conclusively that the detailed topography of *Vínheiðr* is in fact demanded by certain time-wasting ruses employed by the Anglo-Saxon army which can be shown to derive from established literary and folk-loric motifs. Cf. Ian McDougall, ‘Discretion and deceit: a re-examination of a military stratagem in *Egils saga*’, in eds. Tom Scott and Pat Starkey, *The Middle Ages in the North-West: Papers presented at an International conference sponsored jointly by the Centres of Medieval Studies of the Universities of Liverpool and Toronto* (Oxford, 1995), 109-42.

¹²⁹ *Maldon* 17a, 64a, 65a, 68a, 78a, 79a, 85a, 100a, 105a, 106a, 116a, 124a, 185b, 186a, 200a, 205a, 287a, 301a, 307a.

¹³⁰ In terms of averages, the adverb appears once for every 44.8 lines of *Beowulf*, compared to once every 17.1 lines in *Maldon*.

The grouping of these adverbs in adjacent or near-adjacent lines also serves to foster a highly localized sense of place. The adverb *þær* occurs repeatedly in clusters of lines with reference to a particular location in the poetic topography: the barrier of water by which the armies are divided (64a, 65a, 68a), the *bricg* (78a, 79a, 85a), and the battle-field on which men die (105a, 106a) and from which men flee (185b, 186a). In direct speech, a similar clustering is evident in Offa's use of *her* twice in three lines in reference to the battle-field from which the deserters have fled (241a, 243a); it is perhaps also evident in the three occurrences of the conjunction *þær* ('where') in the poem, each of which refers to Byrhtnoth's position at the outset of the exchange with the Viking messenger (23b, 24a, 28b).

This concentration of local adverbs establishes the action of the poem firmly within an imaginative locative context, that of the *wælstow* (95a, 293a).¹³¹ The further description of this setting sees the poet of *Maldon* drawing on established Anglo-Saxon traditions for the written invention of place to "map" the battlefield. Nicholas Howe has argued recently that Anglo-Saxon cartography was 'far more narrative than visual',¹³² and that language rather than image was the medium through which a sense of place was 'created, transmitted, and preserved'.¹³³ Howe illustrates his point with reference to the practice of boundary clauses attached to Anglo-Saxon land charters, and it is the technique for the construction of place employed in these documents that provide the clearest example of how to read the landscape description in *Maldon*.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Shippey argues that the use of 'exophoric' words 'whose meaning is determined by the viewpoint for the speaker' is a recurrent stylistic device in Old English verse whereby 'strong generalization is combined with equally strong assertion of closeness, immediacy, particularity' ('Fall of King Hæðcyn', 264).

¹³² Howe, *Writing the Map*, 16. A similar point is made by Kelly M. Wickham-Crowley, 'Living on the *Ecg*: the Mutable Boundaries of Land and Water in Anglo-Saxon Contexts', in eds. Lees and Overing, *A Place to Believe In*, 85-110, at 89.

¹³³ Howe, *Writing the Map*, 3.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 29-46. For an introduction to Anglo-Saxon charters, see *English Historical Documents Vol. I: c. 500 – c. 1042*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock, 2nd ed. (London, 1979), 369-82; Michael Reed, 'Anglo-Saxon Charter Boundaries', in ed. *id.*, *Discovering Past Landscapes* (London, 1984), 261-306. A searchable database of Anglo-Saxon boundary clauses can be found at <http://www.langscape.org.uk/index.html> (accessed 19 March

Howe points out that by their nature, boundary clauses are not concerned with the description of terrain, but with the demarcation of specific units of land: their purpose is ‘to invent a place for legal purposes’.¹³⁵ Boundary clauses accomplish this goal by describing a perambulation of the boundaries of the land unit, orientated by reference to man-made markers or natural topographical features. Two features of such clauses identified by Howe are particularly relevant here. Firstly, their vernacularity: although the majority of land charters containing boundary clauses are written in Latin, it is very common for the boundary clauses themselves to be composed in English.¹³⁶ Whether this preference for the vernacular was motivated by the need for boundary clauses to be widely intelligible for practical purposes, by a traditional oral origin of the written bounds, or by a greater facility with precise topographical terms in Old English as opposed to Latin is not clear, but it was vernacular terminology, not Latin, that was most often associated with the legal invention of place in Anglo-Saxon boundary clauses.¹³⁷

The second feature of boundary clauses relevant here is their locality. Descriptions of bounds are notoriously allusive. References to ‘the stream’, ‘the hill’, or ‘the big oak’ require and assume a detailed local knowledge of the distinguishing features of the area being described. Added to this is the transitory nature of many of the designated markers. Gates may be moved or removed, streams may change their course, and trees may be felled. Clauses repeatedly refer to landmarks associated with specific individuals, who are referenced by name. Such a practice again assumes a local knowledge, and also situates

2012). For an online corpus of all royal diplomas for the years 670-1066 edited by Sean Millar, see <http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/chartwww/NewRegReg.html> (accessed 19 March 2012).

¹³⁵ Howe, *Writing the Map*, 38.

¹³⁶ Reed argues that ‘by the middle years of the ninth century the use of Old English instead of Latin [in boundary clauses] has become established practice’ (‘Charter Boundaries’, 277).

¹³⁷ Howe, *Writing the Map*, 32-3. For the use of boundary clauses in legal disputes over land ownership, see for example S 1460, S 1441.

the description in time as well as space: the boundary described will be explicable for only so long as these features continue to be associated with the individual in question.¹³⁸

Boundary clauses, therefore, construct a sense of place that is intrinsically local through the use of vernacular terminology in potentially ambiguous references to topographical markers. A similar technique is evident in the setting of *Maldon*, in which the battlefield is populated by a profusion of topographical features described in terminology familiar from vernacular boundary clauses. With the exception of the *Panta* (68a, 97b), each of the features described is purely generic. We hear of a *holt* ('copse', 8a) and a *wudu* ('wood', 193b; also called a *fæsten* ('safe place', 194a)), a *bricg(-)* ('bridge', 74b, 78b, 85a) and a *ford* ('ford', 81a, 88a), the *ofer* ('bank', 28b) on one side of the *(-)stream* ('river', 66a, 68a) and the *(-)stæð* ('shore', 25a, 63a) on both, and finally the *feld* ('field', 241a) on which the fighting takes place.

These references combine to establish an implicit topography of the battle-site that is traced by the movements of men and animals across the ground. Following the exchange across the river, the Anglo-Saxon army moves forward to the river bank (*þæt hi on þam easteðe ealle stodon*, 63), and from this position the triumvirate of Wulfstan, Ælfere and Maccus advance further to the bridge they are charged with defending (*on þa bricge stop*, 78b). Subsequently Byrhtnoth's infamous *ofermod* allows the Vikings to advance *west ofer Pantan* ('west over the Blackwater', 97b), and after the earl's death, the cowardly sons of Odda flee from the battlefield to the shelter of the wood (*wendon fram þam wige and þone wudu sohton*, 193)—a movement which, as has been frequently noted, parallels the opening description of the horses being driven away from the location of the battle (2-4) and especially the flight of the hawk *wið þæs holtes* ('towards the wood', 8a). The treachery of Godric and his brothers is a rejection of loyalty and obligation, but at the most

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, 33-4: 'The knowledge of place [in boundary clauses...] is at once local, because it is limited to those who know the property from personal experience, and immediate, because it could not be re-created or retraced by someone from outside the community in future years.'

immediate level it is a rejection of place: *Hi bugon þa fram beaduwe þe þær beon noldon* ('they turned then from the battle who did not intend to be there', 185).¹³⁹

These allusive topographical references were interpreted by Laborde as evidence for first-hand knowledge of the battle-site on the part of both poet and, implicitly, the intended audience:

[the poet's] allusive reference to the wood, the river-crossing, and the peculiarity of the rising tide at this point are due to the assumption of common knowledge of these geographical details among his audience. An Essex man, composing his poem for Essex men, might thus omit all details which would be deemed superfluous.¹⁴⁰

The method of composition that Laborde theorizes here is largely identical to that of a boundary clause: a written invention of a sense of place dependent upon explicitly local knowledge. I would argue, however, that the sense of locality engendered by this description of setting is illusory. In his analysis of the description of landscape in *The Wife's Lament*, Howe argues that the terminology employed there points to 'a kind of cultural familiarity with boundary clauses underlying the poem's description of place'.¹⁴¹ Howe suggests that through an engagement with the techniques of boundary clauses, the poet imbues the speaker's isolation with a sense of 'local habitation'.¹⁴² If, as I think, Howe means by this that the description of the speaker's dwelling invents a fictitious sense of familiarity on the part of the audience, then this is the same technique that I see in the description of the battle-site in *Maldon*. The poet is establishing a sense of locality that need not refer to external reality except in so far as it is placed in the general geographical context of the river Blackwater.

¹³⁹ It may not be a coincidence that the adverb *þær*, which occurs 18 times in the poem, occurs 17 times in the a-verse and only here in this rejection of place in the b-verse.

¹⁴⁰ Laborde, *Byrhtnoth and Maldon*, 70. Cf. *id.*, 'Site of the Battle', 173; Locherbie-Cameron, 'Noble Companion', 161. For a common-sense objection to this, see Allan Metcalf, "'West" in *Maldon*', *Papers on Language & Literature* 6:3 (1970), 314-16, at 315 and n. 6.

¹⁴¹ Howe, *Writing the Map*, 67.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

Significantly, a very similar technique for the invention of local place is evident in the poetic account of the battle of Ravenswood in *Beowulf* (2922-98).¹⁴³ The events of this passage—which has rightly been called the poem’s ‘only fully-fledged battle scene’¹⁴⁴—are summarized by Klaeber thus:

An expedition of revenge into the land of the Swedes undertaken by Hæðcyn and Hygelac, though at first successful (even Ongenþeow’s queen is taken prisoner), seems destined to utter failure; the ‘old, terrible’ king of the Swedes falls upon Hæðcyn’s army, rescues the queen, kills the Geat king and forces his troops to seek refuge in the woods (*Hrefnesholt* 2935), threatening them all night long with death in the morning by the sword and the gallows. But at dawn the valorous Hygelac appears with his division and inspires such a terror that the Swedes flee to their fastness, pursued by the Geats. Ongenþeow in a brave fight against two brothers, Eofor and Wulf, loses his life. Hygelac, now king of the Geats, after his homecoming richly repaid the brothers and gave his only daughter as wife to Eofor.¹⁴⁵

As in *Maldon*, the *Beowulf*-poet gives an unusually precise description of the site of the action in this episode. Most obviously, the battlefield is located in relation to the wood from which the episode takes its habitual name: *wið Hrefna Wudu* (2925b).¹⁴⁶ This obscure place-name functions both as a geographical and topographical term, locating the site of the battle on an imagined map of Sweden and populating the landscape with the topographical feature of the wood to which it applies. The illusory geographical precision implied here is paralleled elsewhere in the poem in the references to another conflict fought around *Hreosna Beorh* (2477b), to the ‘Eagle’s Headland’ (*Earna Næs*, 3031b) on which the bodies of Beowulf and the dragon are displayed, and to the ‘Whale’s Headland’

¹⁴³ The similarities described here complicate Clemons’ distinction between the *Beowulf*-poet’s ‘primary involvement with actors’ inherent states of mind within time’ and the ‘outward view of what happened within a spatial field of action’ that he sees as characteristic of narrative technique in *Maldon* (*Interactions of Thought and Language*, 426).

¹⁴⁴ A. Leslie Harris, ‘Techniques of Pacing in *Beowulf*’, *ES* 63 (1982), 97-108, at 102.

¹⁴⁵ *Beowulf*, ed. Klaeber, xxxix.

¹⁴⁶ For the decompounded form of the place names here, see *Klaeber’s Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, 327 and n. 3. This emendation does not imply any devaluation of the place names as geographical markers.

(*Hrones Næs*, 2805b; 3136b) on which Beowulf's burial mound is constructed, a fact which suggests that the technique was a familiar one for the poet.¹⁴⁷

In the following account, the topography of the battlefield is again traced by the movement of the two forces amongst the features of the terrain. The action opens with a description of the leaderless Geats fleeing into the wood (*in Hrefnes holt*, 2935a) and the Swedish forces besieging them therein (*Besæt ða sinherge*, 2936a). As dawn breaks the following day, Hygelac and his Geatish reinforcements appear on the horizon, following the bloody path taken by his country-men and their Swedish pursuers (*on last*, 2945b; *sio swatswaðu*, 2946a). Whether or not this path should be interpreted literally as a topographical feature, Hygelac's approach adds a sense of perspective to the landscape as the view widens suddenly from a close focus on the wood and its immediate surroundings to a broad, panoramic view. Further detail is immediately added to the scene by the description of Ongentheow, in response to the new threat, moving to higher ground (*ufor oncirde*, 2951b). The Swedish king retreats to a stronghold (*fæsten secean*, 2950b), in the process moving *under eorðweall* (2957a), presumably a reference to an outlying fortification. In pursuit, the Geats swarm against the enclosure (*to hagan þrungon*, 2960b), a description which presumably refers again to the *eorðweall*, and overrun the protected area of land enclosed within (*segn Higelaces / freoðowong þone forð ofereodon*, 2958b-9).

The catalogue of troop movements amongst various topographical features here establishes a strong sense of the place of the battle, including depth of field and elevation, populated by the wood, the earthworks, the plain and the fortress.¹⁴⁸ The technique is

¹⁴⁷ The meaning of *Hreosna Beorh* is unclear. Orchard (*Critical Companion*, 172), who cites the erroneous form *Hreosnaburh*, suggests emendation of the first element to *Hrefna*-. Klaeber, by contrast, attributes this and the other toponyms considered here to 'nothing but poetic invention' (*Beowulf*, xlvii).

¹⁴⁸ Brodeur has highlighted a lack of scenic description in the second half of the poem in comparison with the first half; his explanation is that the second half is concerned predominantly with elements of Geatish history 'disclosed as recollection or things past or as prediction of things to come', and that such details 'require no setting' (*Art of Beowulf*, 124). This statement is not true of the present passage, however, in which the lack of explicit landscape description does not constitute lack of setting.

analogous to that of *Maldon*, involving allusive reference to generic topographical features. Like *Maldon*, the setting of the Ravenswood episode has been praised for its ‘grimly realistic’ narrative,¹⁴⁹ none the less powerful for being wholly imaginative.¹⁵⁰ The example of Ravenswood, therefore, establishes a parallel for the use of techniques for the written invention of place in *Maldon* which bears no discernable relation to external topographical realities.

If it is once accepted that the strong sense of local place constructed in *Maldon* is not the result of eye-witness description of a real and well-known Essex location, it can be seen that the invented place is here again presented specifically as a homeland under threat. From the outset, territorial concerns are foregrounded in the description of the conflict. Organizing his troops for the coming encounter, Byrhtnoth instructs his men in their defence of *þone stede* (19b). As Michelet has noted, the meaning of the term *stede* is ‘quite specific’, denoting not an abstract sense of space, but ‘a precise location on the ground’.¹⁵¹ In the subsequent exchange between Byrhtnoth and the Viking messenger, moreover, a threat expressed by the Viking in terms of tribute and loss of life (31b-5) is specifically reconfigured as a territorial threat in Byrhtnoth’s reply:

¹⁴⁹ Thomas A. Carnicelli, ‘The Function of the Messenger in *Beowulf*’, *SP* 72 (1975), 246-57, at 252. Edward B. Irving (*A Reading of Beowulf* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1968), 191) has also noted the ‘startling sense of life and reality in the narrative of the battle, its greater vividness and concreteness of detail in a poem where so much is half-veiled in misty hints’. Cf. *id.*, *Rereading Beowulf* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1989), 120; Harris, ‘Techniques of Pacing’, 103.

¹⁵⁰ The fictitious nature of the description of the battle is not now a matter of debate; for earlier attempts to identify the site of Ravenswood see *Klaeber’s Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, lxi n.6, lxxvii and n.1.

¹⁵¹ Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 20.

‘Gehyrst þu, sælida, hwæt þis folc segeð?
 [...] her stynt unforcuð eorl mid his werode,
 þe wile gealgean eþel þysne,
 Æþelredes eard, ealdres mines
 folc and foldan. [.....
] To heanlic me þinceð
 þæt ge mid urum sceattum to scype gangon
 unbefohtene, nu ge þus feor hider
 on urne eard in becomon. [...]’¹⁵²

The use of the local adverb in the phrase *her stynt* invokes a sense of place which is subsequently explicitly configured territorially as a homeland: *eþel þysne*. Throughout Byrhtnoth’s words the identity of the defenders is consistently expressed in terms of territory and native status. The sense of collective identity evident in the phrase *urne eard* is enhanced, as Irving notes, by the unusual metrical stress on the possessive pronoun.¹⁵³ The strength of this statement has led John Dodgson to suggest that this phrase should be read literally to refer to land owned by Byrhtnoth and his men in the vicinity of the battlefield, but his sense of ‘something more than the general, national, possessive’ here perhaps reflects instead the sense of locality engendered by the poet.¹⁵⁴ At the same time, however, the appositional phrase *Æþelredes eard* places the battlefield within a wider geopolitical context, and the famous couplet *folc and foldan* makes the association of people and place in this passage explicit.

In contrast, the non-native status of the messenger is signalled by the use of the compound *sælida* in these lines. This compound is one of a succession of terms used in the poem to equate the Vikings with the sea, the effect of which is to stress the alterity of the attackers.¹⁵⁵ The association with the sea places the Vikings in clear juxtaposition with the

¹⁵² *Maldon* 45-58, “‘Do you hear, sailor, what this people says? [...] here stands amongst his troop an irreproachable earl who intends to defend this homeland, the country of Æthelræd, of my lord, the people and the land. [...] It seems to me too shameful that you should go unopposed to your ship with our coins, now that you have advanced so far hither into our country. [...]’”

¹⁵³ Irving, ‘Heroic Style’, 461.

¹⁵⁴ Dodgson, ‘Site of the Battle’, 176-8.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. *brimlipend* (27b), *brimman* (49a, 295b), *flota* (72b, 227a), *lidman* (99a, 164b), *sæman* (29b, 38a, 278b), *sælida* (45a, 286a), *særinc* (134a). To this list might be added the *æschere* (69b), a *hapax legomenon* the first element of which possibly means ‘ship’ (cf. William Sayers, ‘*Æschere* in *The Battle of Maldon*: Fleet, Warships’ Crews, Spearmen, or Oarsmen?’, *NM* 107 (2006), 199-205; *DOE* *æschere* and *æsc* 2).

land-based identity of the Anglo-Saxons: Byrhtnoth's army belongs on the *stede* on which the battle takes place; the Vikings do not. In this way, the Vikings in *Maldon*—like the Goths in Metre 1 or the Germanic tribes in *Elene*—fulfil the role of constituting other.¹⁵⁶ Their characterization as sea men enforces the sense of the place of the battle as an Anglo-Saxon homeland.

In the context of the peripheral battlefields identified above in both *Elene* and *Judith*, it is noticeable how vague the *Maldon*-poet is about the land which the Vikings occupy at the beginning of the extant narrative. Matto is correct in his observation that the topographical prominence of the river Blackwater in the early part of the poem 'creates two very clearly demarcated geographical spaces',¹⁵⁷ yet the point of view of the poem focuses solely on the side of the river occupied by the Anglo-Saxon forces. Byrhtnoth's statement that the Vikings have at the start of the narrative already penetrated some distance into *urne eard* suggests that the land they currently occupy is part of the homeland that the Anglo-Saxon forces are preparing to defend. However, while the terrain on the Anglo-Saxon side of the river is 'mapped' topographically, the space on the far bank is conceptually blank. Through a sort of poetic sleight of hand, the poet succeeds in both presenting the Viking attack—in reality only part of a series of plundering raids—as a territorial incursion, and suggesting that the threat currently posed by the invaders is located at a significant territorial boundary.

Like the Danube in *Elene*, the Blackwater here functions as a topographical boundary marker, and the stand-off along the river banks is not simply an excuse for introducing the common motif of an exchange across a barrier, nor a pretext for a character-enhancing

¹⁵⁶ A similar strategy of 'othering' is evident in the Ravenswood episode: the Geatish attackers are described as both sea-men (*sæmannum*, 2954a) and sea-warriors (*heaðolindum*, 2955a), and their leader Hæðcyn is referred to as the *brimwisa* ('sea-leader', 2930a).

¹⁵⁷ Michael Matto, 'A War of Containment: The Heroic Image in *The Battle of Maldon*', *SN 74* (2002), 60-75, at 66.

speech of defiance on the part of Byrhtnoth.¹⁵⁸ The use of the river as a boundary is more developed in *Maldon* than in *Elene*. In Cynewulf's poem, that the river is crossed by one side or the other is assumed in the subsequent description of the battle, but is not specifically described. In *Maldon*, however, the Viking crossing is a highly charged symbolic representation of incursion and of the breakdown of territorial dynamics.

As Kelly Wickham-Crowley has noted, Anglo-Saxon descriptions of intersections of land and water frequently depict 'permeable, dynamic boundaries', and the river Blackwater is just such a boundary.¹⁵⁹ At high-tide, the river is impassable and its integrity is secure:

Ne mihte þær for wætere werod to þam oðrum:
þær com flowende flod æfter ebban;
lucon lagustreamas.¹⁶⁰

The precise movement of water implied in these lines has been contested. Laborde interpreted the phrase *lucon lagustreamas* as a reference to the confluence of the channels encircling Northey Island.¹⁶¹ This interpretation has been questioned, however, by Petty and Petty, whose own experience of the Northey site does not support Laborde's observations in this instance, and Donald Scragg has similarly questioned Laborde's interpretation as being 'almost too perfect'.¹⁶² A more plausible interpretation of the force of these lines is that of Neil Isaacs, who has highlighted the irony implicit in the way that the confluence of the water in these lines serves to prevent the two armies from coming

¹⁵⁸ Blake, 'Genesis', 123.

¹⁵⁹ Wickham-Crowley, 'Living on the *Ecg*', 105.

¹⁶⁰ *Maldon* 64-6a, 'Troop could not advance to the other because of the water: the flood-tide came flowing after the ebb; the sea-streams mingled.'

¹⁶¹ Laborde, 'Site of the Battle', 171 and n. 1.

¹⁶² Petty and Petty, 'Geology and *Maldon*', 446; *Maldon*, ed. Scragg, 72 n. to line 66. Cf. Bessinger, 'Historical Caveat', 29-30.

into contact.¹⁶³ The overwhelming sense in these lines, I suggest, is of the solidity of the body of water as a barrier between the different forces.

When the tide recedes (*flod ut gewat*, 72a), the status of the river as boundary shifts. The introduction of the *bricg* at line 74 signals that the boundary is now, quite literally, negotiable, and it is not, I think, overly fanciful to see the indeterminacy of the *bricg* or *ford* as a reflection of this shifting value. The dynamics of the river as boundary are not solely dependent upon the tidal confluence, therefore, but also on the action of the defenders. As the Vikings prepare to cross the river (72b-3), the integrity of the boundary is dependent upon its continued reinforcement by the *bricgweardas* (85a). So long as the Anglo-Saxon guards continued to defend the permeable boundary (*hi fæstlice wið ða fynd weredon*, 82), the river was un-crossable. Once they are removed, however, the boundary is open for the Vikings to pass.

Rather than the mimetic description of a precise natural phenomenon posited by Laborde, the shifting status of the river as a permeable boundary—one that initially resists the Viking advance but subsequently allows their crossing—is best read as a mirror for the changing role played by Byrhtnoth himself, and it is in this context that Byrhtnoth's decision to allow the Vikings passage across the river must be viewed. Along with the description of Byrhtnoth's *ofermod* and the nature of the guile employed by the Vikings (*ongunnon lytegian*, 86a), the statement that the *ealdorman* allowed the Vikings *landes to fela* (90a) at the crossing has been among the most hotly contested lines of the poem. Interpretations of this phrase have generally focused upon tactical considerations, with critical opinion largely divided into two broad camps: those who read the words *to fela* as literally implying that Byrhtnoth was over-generous in allowing the Vikings room to

¹⁶³ Neil D. Isaacs, *Structural Principles in Old English Poetry* (Knoxville, Tennessee, 1968), 163. For the view that the battle-field represents a malignant influence threatening to disrupt the 'exchange' of the armies, see Bradley D. Ryner, 'Exchanging Battle: Subjective and Objective Conflicts in *The Battle of Maldon*', *ES* 87 (2006), 266-76, esp. at 269-70, 272.

manoeuvre,¹⁶⁴ and those who believe the words are a figure of *litotes* implying that the decision to allow the crossing in the first place was wrong.¹⁶⁵ I would suggest, though, that the anxiety of the phrase *landes to fela* transcends the immediate military considerations.

Byrhtnoth's decision is presented in terms of a distorted land grant. Irving notes that, by demanding tribute, the Viking messenger initially acts 'as if he and his men were the proprietors of the land', and his demands for tribute are ironically figured in Byrhtnoth's reply as the 'heriot' due to a rightful lord.¹⁶⁶ In their second communication with the Anglo-Saxon forces—not presented in direct speech—the Vikings apparently adopt an altogether less haughty demeanour (84-8). Here, the raiders are described as *laðe gystas* ('hateful guests', 86b), and the use of the verb *biddan* (87a) clearly signals the adoption of a more subordinate attitude. Indeed, the *DOE* notes that *biddan* can be used 'with reference to formal petitions, demands of various kinds',¹⁶⁷ and if the Vikings initially present themselves as the owners of the land, claiming 'heriot' from the English, it might be that the infamous Viking guile consists of their subsequent adoption of the role of supplicant guest.

The language used to describe Byrhtnoth's response to the Viking petition certainly maintains the fiction of an interaction between a lord and a guest:¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Paul Cavill, 'Interpretation of *The Battle of Maldon*, Lines 84-90: A Review and Reassessment', *SN* 67 (1995), 149-64, at 152: 'I take the poet to imply that Byrhtnoð allowed the Vikings the space they asked for, and that he gave them too much land, too much room to manoeuvre, and should have attacked them while they were down on the mud, or hemmed in around the causeway.'

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Mills, 'Byrhtnoð's Mistake', 27: 'His mistake in generalship was not that he failed to attack the Vikings after his promise of free passage, but that he allowed them a free passage in the first place.'

¹⁶⁶ Irving, 'Heroic Style', 460-1. On the reference to heriot, see Cyril Brett, 'Notes on Old and Middle English', *MLR* 22 (1927), 257-64, at 260. The present analysis is at odds with that of Condren, who believes that the Viking demands constitute '[a] serious proposal noticeably free of ridicule', in contrast to 'Byrhtnoth's epic reply, where there are heroic taunts aplenty' ('Ambivalent Ethics', 58-9).

¹⁶⁷ *DOE*, *biddan*, 3.

¹⁶⁸ Irving, 'Heroic's Style', 462: 'He "grants them land" and speaks with the courtesy of a noble and magnanimous lord bestowing on them the freedom of his hall'.

Ða se eorl ongan	for his ofermode
alyfan landes to fela	laþere ðeode;
ongan ceallian þa	ofer cald wæter
Byrhtelmes bearn	(beornas gehlyston):
‘Nu eow is gerymed:	gað ricene to us
guman to guþe.	God ana wat
hwa þære wælstowe	wealdan mote.’ ¹⁶⁹

The verb *alyfan*, glossed ‘allow’ by Scragg, has strong quasi-legalistic connotations of a formal grant, and in combination with the use of *biddan* to describe the Vikings’ petition, its use places Byrhtnoth in the position of a lord granting a petition.¹⁷⁰ By way of comparison, we might note that *biddan* is the verb Beowulf uses when he requests Hroðgar’s permission to guard Heorot (*Ic þe nuða [...] biddan wille*, 426b-7) and that *alyfan* is the verb Hroðgar subsequently uses to grant this request (*Næfre ic ænegum men ær alyfde*, 655).¹⁷¹

More specifically, *alyfan* is also attested in Old English verse in the context of grants of territory.¹⁷² This more specific interpretation is supported by the appearance of the verb *geryman* in the same passage, which—as was noted above—can be used both in the context of land grants and to refer to an area made clear for occupation.¹⁷³ Again, comparison with *Beowulf* is instructive. During the account of the battle of Ravenswood, the kinsmen of Wulf see to his wounds *ða him gerymed wearð, / þæt hie wælstowe wealdan moston* (‘when it was granted to them that they could control the battlefield’, 2983b-4). The use of *geryman* in collocation with the phrase for ‘possessing the battlefield’ is striking, and perhaps hints at a conventional association also reflected in the

¹⁶⁹ *Maldon* 89-95, ‘Then the earl, for his pride, began to grant too much land to the hated people; Byrhtelm’s son began then to call over the cold water (the warriors listened): ‘Now room is made for you: go quickly to us, men to battle. God alone knows who must possess the battlefield.’

¹⁷⁰ *Maldon*, ed. Scragg, 90. Cf. *DOE*, *alyfan*, C.

¹⁷¹ In a specifically religious context, we might compare the perhaps contemporary Old English *Life of St Neot*: ‘Soðlice þæt ilca gebed us is alefd, gyf we wylleð inwardlice to Gode clypigen 7 his mildheortnyse biddan’ (129:22-4). Cited by page and line number from *Early English Homilies from the Twelfth Century MS Vesp. D. xiv*, ed. R. D. N. Warner, EETS os 152 (London, 1917 for 1915), 129–34. On the early eleventh-century provenance of the *Life*, cf. Malcolm Godden, ‘The Old English *Life of St Neot* and the legends of King Alfred’, *ASE* 39 (2010), 193-225.

¹⁷² *DOE*, *alyfan*, C. 1. Cf. *Christ and Satan* 115-7; *Exodus* 556-7.

¹⁷³ The verb is used to describe a royal land grant in a charter describing the boundaries of the Old and New Minsters in Winchester dating from the second half of the tenth century (S 1449), and is used in *Genesis A* in God’s words granting a homeland (*eðelstol*, 1485a) to Noah after the Flood (1485-7a).

lines from *Maldon*. Later in *Beowulf*, the verb is again used in a passage that may cast light on the use of the verb in *Maldon*. In his speech to the cowardly retainers, Wiglaf describes how he had entered the dragon's barrow:

Ic wæs þær inne ond þæt eall geondseh,
 recedes geatwa, þa me gerymed wæs,
 nealles swæslice sið alyfed
 inn under eorðweall.¹⁷⁴

In both of these examples, the space in question is won by force, and in this latter passage, the verb *alyfan* stresses sardonically that the space was not willingly ceded. In contrast, Byrhtnoth is depicted freely—perhaps aristocratically—granting the enemy land that should be jealously guarded and hard-won. By granting *landes to fela* to the Viking army, Byrhtnoth's approach compares unfavourably with that of the loyal warriors after his death, epitomized by *Eadweard se lange* (273b), who refuses to retreat even a foot's space (*he nolde fleogan fotmæl landes*, 275).¹⁷⁵

Byrhtnoth's decision to allow the Vikings passage means that the river becomes fully permeable as a boundary and is no longer an obstacle for the invaders (*for wætere ne murnon*, 96b). The clear dichotomy previously established between the 'land men' and the 'sea men' is broken down as the Vikings cross the river (*lidmen to lande*, 99a), moving *west ofer Pantan* (97b). As Matto points out, the preposition *ofer* occurs four times in the space of eleven lines in relation to the Vikings' passage of the river (88a, 91b, 97b, 98a), a fact that may indicate the importance of the boundary the enemy are here crossing.¹⁷⁶ That they move *west* across the river has, however, been the cause of some critical debate. In his original identification of Northey Island, Laborde laid particular stress on this detail:

¹⁷⁴ *Beowulf* 3087-90a, 'I was within and examined all of that, the ornaments of the hall, when it was granted to me, allowed a not too pleasant journey inside under the fortification.'

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Joyce Tally Lionarons' observation that ideals of heroic behaviour in Old English and Old Norse literature frequently include the ability to 'defend and enforce [...] societal boundaries' ('Bodies, Buildings, and Boundaries: Metaphors of Liminality in Old English and Old Norse Literature', *Essays in Medieval Studies* 11 (1994), 43-50, at 49). Cf. Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 24.

¹⁷⁶ Matto, 'Heroic Image', 67.

A definitive statement such as the poet has made here cannot be ignored, and no site can be accepted which does not afford a westward passage over the stream.¹⁷⁷

Bessinger responded to this argument by pointing out that the causeway at Northey is in fact not aligned east to west, but north-east to south-west, and goes on to point out that the passage in which the phrase occurs features consistent heavy alliteration ‘to the key of *w-*’, suggesting that the use of *west* was motivated ‘not [...] so much by topography as by the elaborate verse tradition’ in which the poet worked.¹⁷⁸

This argument is fine so far as it goes, but it is only really half an answer. The particular resonance of the term *west* at this point has been highlighted by Allan Metcalf.¹⁷⁹ Metcalf notes that the Viking approach to Essex by sea would be (in general terms) from the east. As such, Byrhtnoth’s decision to grant the enemy passage over the tidal crossing allows them to continue a symbolic westward incursion into English land: in such a context, ‘westward movement would imply unblunted hostility on the part of the Vikings’.¹⁸⁰ Continued movement in this case represents (further) incursion into Anglo-Saxon territory. By allowing the Vikings free passage over the river, therefore, Byrhtnoth has become complicit in the disruption of the territorial dynamic between native landmen and foreign sea men that his own earlier speech served to construct.

The depiction of battle in *Maldon* has frequently been read in the context of issues of national politics and contemporary social disruption. Byrhtnoth’s fierce determination to defend *Æþelredes eard* and his defiant rejection of the Viking demand for tribute have been interpreted as a commentary on the policy of buying-off Viking raiders adopted by *Æthelræd*, whilst the implicit and explicit divisions in the Anglo-Saxon forces have been read in the context of the wide-spread treachery, personal cowardice, and lack of military

¹⁷⁷ Laborde, ‘Site of the Battle’, 164.

¹⁷⁸ Bessinger, ‘*Maldon* and *Óláfsdrápa*’, 28.

¹⁷⁹ Metcalf, “‘West’ in *Maldon*”.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 316.

organization that (apparently) characterized much of Æthelræd's reign.¹⁸¹ The foregoing analysis has shown, however, that the depiction of the threat posed by the Viking army in territorial terms and the techniques employed in the description of the battlefield can all be paralleled in other accounts of battle in Old English verse. In noting this, I do not mean to deny the specific resonances that this retelling of the battle might have had for a politically and socially aware audience in the decades around the turn of the eleventh century. On the contrary, what I wish to suggest is that the precise force of these resonances for a contemporary audience may have owed much to their perception of the dialectical relationships linking the spatial poetics of *Maldon* to the presentation of battle in other extant Old English poems. The very precise use of setting in this poem is not, as Magennis suggests, 'incidental', but is in fact central to the way in which the meaning of the events described is articulated.

The Battle of Brunanburh

The same may be true of the presentation of battle in *The Battle of Brunanburh*. In contrast to the devastating defeat which provides the subject matter for *Maldon*, this poem commemorates what was—according to the poet—a victory of unprecedented scale:

¹⁸¹ See especially, Simon Keynes, 'The Historical Context of the Battle of Maldon', in ed. Scragg, *Maldon, AD 991*, 81-113; Ann Williams, 'The Battle of Maldon and "The Battle of Maldon": History, Poetry and Propaganda', *Medieval History* 2 (1992), 35-44; John D. Niles, 'Maldon and Mythopoesis', *Mediaevalia* 17 (1994 for 1991), 89-121. See also, Craig R. Davis, 'Cultural Historicity in *The Battle of Maldon*', *PQ* 78 (1999), 151-69; Elizabeth M. Tyler, 'Poetics and the Past: Making History with Old English Poetry', in eds. Elizabeth M. Tyler and Ross Balzaretti, *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West* (Brepols, 2006), 225-50.

	Ne wearð wæl mare
on þis eiglande	æfre gieta
folces gefylled	beforan þissum
sweordes ecgum,	þæs þe us secgað bec,
ealde uðwitan,	sibban eastan hider
Engle and Seaxe	up becoman,
ofer brad brimu	Brytene sohtan,
wlance wigsmiþas,	Wealas ofercoman,
eorlas arhwate	eard begeatan. ¹⁸²

Æthelstan's victory in 937 can be seen as in many ways the high-water mark for West Saxon hegemony in the tenth century.¹⁸³ The poem itself has frequently been seen as an expression of this hegemony, and has been implicated in an emergent conception of national identity detected in the middle years of the century. In this vein, Donald Scragg has argued that palaeographical evidence implies that the entries for 924-55 in the A text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* were originally composed as a discrete textual unit, the thematic impulse of which was 'the unification of the English under an English dynasty'.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, Janet Thormann has seen the verse *Chronicle* entries as specifically implicated in a conscious and propagandist nationalistic drive.¹⁸⁵ According to Thormann, the use of traditional poetic techniques to cast the royal brothers Æthelstan and Eadmund in the role of heroic protagonists serves to naturalize their political ascendancy: 'The

¹⁸² *Brunanburh* 65b-73, 'There was not ever hitherto before this a greater slaughter in this island of people destroyed by the sword's edge, as books tell us, old scholars, since the Angles and Saxons, proud war-smiths, glorious warriors, came hither up from the east, sought Britain over the wide seas, defeated the Welshmen, won a country.' For a summary of the historical background and significance of the battle, see Michael Livingston, 'The Roads to Brunanburh', in ed. *id.*, *The Battle of Brunanburh: A Casebook* (Exeter, 2011), 1-26.

¹⁸³ Cf. Sarah Foot, *Æthelstan: The First King of England* (New Haven, Connecticut, and London, 2011), 171: 'Exaggerating the importance of this victory is difficult, for had Æthelstan's opponents won, the West Saxon hegemony over the whole mainland of Britain would have disintegrated.'

¹⁸⁴ Donald Scragg, 'A Reading of *Brunanburh*', in eds. Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr* (Toronto, 2003), 109-22, at 118. Cf. Simon Walker, 'A Context for 'Brunanburh'?', in ed. Timothy Reuter, *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Karl Leyser* (London and Rio Grande, 1992), 21-39, at 34-5.

¹⁸⁵ Janet Thormann, 'The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* Poems and the Making of the English Nation', in eds. Allen J. Frantzen and John D. Niles, *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity* (Gainesville, Florida, 1997), 60-85; *id.*, 'The Battle of Brunanburh and the Matter of History', *Mediaevalia* 17 (1994 for 1991), 5-13. Cf. Jennifer Neville, 'History, Poetry, and 'National' Identity in Anglo-Saxon England and the Carolingian Empire', in eds. K. E. Olsen, A. Harbus and T. Hofstra, *Germanic Texts and Latin Models: Medieval Reconstructions*, *Germania Latina* IV (Lauven, 2001), 107-26.

ideological effect of the poems is to produce West-Saxon domination as synonymous with England and to confirm West-Saxon power as traditional authority'.¹⁸⁶

In recent years further, more specific claims have been made regarding the perceived nationalistic agenda of *Brunanburh*. In an elaborate and not altogether convincing argument regarding the date and provenance of the poem, Simon Walker has related the closing hyperbole regarding the scale of the battle and its significance to the increasingly exulted and 'imperial' presentation of West Saxon authority in the charters and coinage of Æthelstan and his successors Eadmund and Eadred. Noting the prominence of the title *rex totius Britanniae* in the documentation of Æthelstan's reign, Walker argues that the king was endeavouring to present himself in the role of *bretwalda* by expressing an overlordship over all the inhabitants of Britain regardless of authority. *Brunanburh*, according to Walker, was a reflection of this imperial ambition from the later reign of Eadmund, intended to strengthen Eadmund's own authority by associating him with his more illustrious brother.¹⁸⁷ Building on this argument, and in a modification to her own earlier views, Sarah Foot has argued that *Brunanburh* reflects an ambition for authority over not the people of Britain, but the land itself.¹⁸⁸ In contrast to Walker, Foot interprets the imperial claims of Æthelstan's reign as the product of 'an ideology about Britain and rulership over the whole island of Britain'.¹⁸⁹

Key to arguments regarding the polemical nature of *Brunanburh* is the opening statement that the West Saxon royal brothers defended their land according to their hereditary wont:

¹⁸⁶ Thormann, 'Making of the English Nation', 64. Cf. Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto, 2001), 99-102.

¹⁸⁷ Walker, 'Context for 'Brunanburh'?', 31-2. On West Saxon imperial ambitions in the ninth and tenth centuries, see above 82-3.

¹⁸⁸ Foot, 'Rethinking Contexts for *Brunanburh*'. Cf. *id.*, 'Finding the Meaning of Form: Narrative in Annals and Chronicles', in ed. Nancy F. Partner, *Writing Medieval History* (London, 2005), 88-108, at 101-2.

¹⁸⁹ Foot, 'Rethinking Contexts for *Brunanburh*', 141.

	him geæbele wæs
from cneomægum,	þæt hi æt campe oft
wiþ laþra gehwæne	land ealgodon,
hord and hamas. ¹⁹⁰	

More than any of the examples examined in this chapter, the description of battle as territorial defence is entirely apposite to the historical realities of the battle commemorated in the poem. That the alliance of Scots and Dublin Norse defeated in 937 posed a real threat to Æthelstan's territorial authority cannot be doubted. It is clear too that this stress on the inherent nobility of the *afaren Eadweardes* (7a) tends towards the poetic glorification of the West Saxon dynasty: as was noted above, establishing and maintaining territorial authority is presented as an attribute of good kingship in the openings of both *Elene* and *Beowulf*. However, any attempt to ascribe special significance to the prominence of territorial concerns in *Brunanburh* must first acknowledge the extent to which the depiction of battle in the poem reflects the techniques and conventions discussed throughout this chapter.¹⁹¹

The description of Æthelstan and Eadmund's victory in terms of defence of land corresponds to a strong focus on place in the poem. As it survives today, *Brunanburh* opens with the common annalistic marker *Her*, an adverb that commonly has an extended temporal function referring to the year against which the entry is physically set in the manuscript.¹⁹² The adverb is not metrically necessary in *Brunanburh*, and is omitted from his critical text by Alistair Campbell.¹⁹³ It is not, however, *un*-metrical, and the example of the poem *The Coronation of Edgar* entered in the *Chronicle* for the year 973, in which the opening *Her* is required by the metre, should perhaps caution the critic from dismissing the

¹⁹⁰ *Brunanburh* 7b-10a, 'it was natural for them from their kinsmen, that they often defended the land, the hoard and homes, in battle against all enemies.'

¹⁹¹ Cf. Foot, *Æthelstan*, 174. My analysis is once again at odds with Magennis, who argues that *Brunanburh* 'has nothing about location' (*Images of Community*, 122).

¹⁹² Cf. Howe, 'An Angle on this Earth', 16-17.

¹⁹³ *The Battle of Brunanburh*, ed. Alistair Campbell (London, 1938), 96.

adverb as irrelevant to the poetic text.¹⁹⁴ Whether an intrinsic part of a pre-existing text of *Brunanburh* or a formulaic addition by the Chronicler, the surviving texts of the poem all establish in the first four and a half lines that King Æthelstan and his brother Edmund won lasting renown in battle *Her [...] ymbe Brunanburh* (1-5a).

As with *Maldon*, *Brunanburh* has repeatedly been treated as a witness not only to the events of the battle in 937, but specifically to the location in which it was fought. Much scholarly endeavour has been brought to bear on identifying the place referred to by the toponym *Brunanburh*, and also that of the *Dinges mere* (54b) from which the defeated invaders flee.¹⁹⁵ As with the description of the battlefield in *Maldon*, however, I would argue that the importance of these references for the poem is that they provide a sense of specificity regarding the location of the battle. Isaacs has pointed out that the poem's opening displays a desire on the part of the poet 'to focus the attention of his audience on the place where the battle was fought',¹⁹⁶ and this focus is maintained throughout the following narrative through a succession of adverbial phrases that serve to link action to place: *on þam campstede* (29a), *on folcstede* (41b), *on wælstowe* (43a), *on campstede* (49a), *on wælfelda* (51b).¹⁹⁷ Even in the image of the progress of the sun across the sky

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'The Battle of Brunanburh in Old English Studies', in ed. Livingston, *A Casebook*, 285-94, at 285-6; Trilling, *Aesthetics of Nostalgia*, 201. Neil D. Isaacs likens the use of *her* to the common extrametrical use of *Hwæt* in Old English verse ('Battlefield Tour: "Brunanburg"', *NM* 63 (1962), 236-44, at 237).

¹⁹⁵ The secondary literature is vast, but for a recent summary and an argument in favour of Bromborough in the Wirral as the location of the battle, see Paul Cavill, 'The site of the battle of Brunanburh: manuscripts and maps, grammar and geography', in eds. O. J. Padel and David N. Parsons, *A Commodity of Good Names: Essays in Honour of Margaret Gelling* (Donington, 2008), 303-19; *id.*, 'The Place-Name Debate', in ed. Livingston, *A Casebook*, 327-49. On *Dinges mere*, see Paul Cavill, Stephen E. Harding and Judith Jesch, 'Revisiting *Dingesmere*', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 36 (2004), 25-38. Working on the assumption that the battle was fought in the vicinity of Bromborough, Stephen Harding has recently attempted to pin-point the precise location of the battlefield ('Wirral: Folklore and Locations', in ed. Livingston, *A Casebook*, 351-64).

¹⁹⁶ Isaacs, 'Battlefield Tour', 237. David N. Klausner also detects a 'precision in period of time and spatial dimension' at the beginning of the poem, although he believes this precision to be subsequently 'subsumed in a sense of occasion' ('Aspects of time in the battle poetry of early Britain', in eds. Scott and Starkey, *The Middle Ages in the North-West*, 85-107, at 89).

¹⁹⁷ Isaacs has commented upon the way in which the point of view established in the poem is aligned with a view from the battlefield: 'the poet stands there with us pointing out the sights and telling us causes and effects, historical background and significances' ('Battlefield Tour', 242). For a contrasting analysis of the

(13b-17a)—if this is more than simply a poetic circumlocution for the statement that the troops fought all day—a focus on place might be detected. The movement of the sun from horizon to horizon is described as a terrestrial journey (*glad ofer grundas*, 15a). The progress of the sun thus literally describes an area of terrain, specifically the *feld* (12b) on which the action occurs.¹⁹⁸

Strategies of ‘othering’ similar to those already discussed in this chapter are also employed in *Brunanburh*. Like the Vikings in *Maldon*, the Dublin Norse are repeatedly described in terms that stress their alterity. The invaders are both ‘sea men’ (*scipflotan*, 11b; *flotan*, 32a) and ‘north men’ (*guma norþerna*, 18b; *Norþmen*, 53a), and their leader Anlaf is described as *Norþmanna bregu* (‘chief of the north men’, 33a). The Scottish forces, though less prominent in the poem, are also associated with the north (38a), and their alterity is established both through the stress on their ethnic identity (*Scittisc*, 19b) and through their repeated association with the sea-faring Norse (*Sceotta leoda and scipflotan*, 11; *flotan and Sceotta*, 32a).

In opposition to the combined Norse and Scots forces stand the men of Wessex (*Wesseaxe*, 20b) and Mercia (*Myrce*, 24b). The reference to Mercian forces participating in the battle has been interpreted as part of the construction of a unified English identity in the poem.¹⁹⁹ More obviously, however, it is part of an extended parallelism between the invaders and defenders. The coalition of West Saxons and Mercians parallels that of Scots and Norse. Similarly, the presence of Eadmund in the poem, which has been taken as evidence for the composition of the poem after the death of Æthelstan in 939, can be seen

manipulation of point of view in the poem, see Frances R. Lipp, ‘Contrast and Point of View in *The Battle of Brunanburh*’, *PQ* 48 (1969), 166-77.

¹⁹⁸ More fancifully, Thormann (‘Matter of History’, 9) argues that the movement of the sun ‘provides coordinates of dimension to plot the site in a space-time continuum’.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Foot, ‘Rethinking Contexts for *Brunanburh*’, 134-7; Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, 100.

in terms of a further parallel between the royal brothers on one side and Anlaf and Constantine on the other.²⁰⁰

In contrast to the association of the West Saxons with defence of territory (*land ealgodon*), the invaders travel across the sea in search of land:

on lides bosme ofer æra gebland
land gesohtun²⁰¹

Like the crossing of the *Panta* in *Maldon*, the attack in *Brunanburh* represents a potential disruption of established territorial dynamics, but here this threat is nullified by the actions of the defenders. The non-native status of the invaders is affirmed through the description of the subsequent flight of both Anlaf (*cyning ut gewat / on fealene flod*, 35b-6a) and Constantine (*mid fleame com / on his cyþþe norð*, 37b-8a). There is a clear contrast established in the poet's juxtaposition of this flight with the victorious homecoming of the Anglo-Saxon nobility:

Gewitan him þa Norþmen nægledcnearrum,
dreorig daraða laf, on Dinges mere
ofer deop wæter Difelin secan,
eft Iraland, æwiscmode.
Swilce þa gebroþer begen ætsamne,
cyning and æþeling, cyþþe sohton,
Wesseaxena land, wiges hremige.²⁰²

The Norse departure to *Iraland* is paralleled by Æthelstan and Eadmund's return to *Wesseaxena land*, while the specification of *Difelin* matches the earlier reference to

²⁰⁰ Scragg, 'A Reading of *Brunanburh*', 116-7; Walker, 'Context for 'Brunanburh'?', 31-3. That this parallelism is deliberate is perhaps indicated by the absence from the poem of reference to the Strathclyde Britons and their king Eugenius who, according to Simeon of Durham, were also part of the Scots-Norse alliance. Cf. Dolores Warwick Frese, 'Poetic Prowess in *Brunanburh* and *Maldon*: Winning, Losing, and Literary Outcome', in eds. Phyllis Rugg Brown, Georgia Ronan Crampton and Fred C. Robinson, *Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature: Essays in Honour of Stanley B. Greenfield* (Toronto, 1986), 83-99, at 87-8.

²⁰¹ *Brunanburh* 26b-7, 'they sought land over the sea's tumult in the ship's bosom'.

²⁰² *Brunanburh* 53-9, 'The Northmen, the dreary remnant of spears, took themselves, abashed, by ship on Dingesmere, over the deep water, to seek Dublin, Ireland again. So the brothers, king and prince, sought their home both together, West Saxon land, exulting in war.'

Brunanburh.²⁰³ Discussing this parallelism, Warwick Frese has stated that ‘the named city of Brunanburh engenders the explicit naming of the counter city of Dublin’.²⁰⁴ The phrase ‘counter city’ here points towards the role of Dublin and Ireland as the constituting other of the West Saxon homeland, just as the Norse and Scots invaders represent a constituting other for the people of Wessex and Mercia.

A striking feature of this paralleled departure from the battlefield is that the West Saxon forces leave the battlefield in order to return to their homeland (*cyððe sohton, / Wesseaxena land*). On the one hand, this double departure obviously recalls the by now familiar technique of juxtaposing the triumphant return of the victor with the pitiful homecoming of the defeated. On the other hand, however, the suggestion that the battle took place outside of West Saxon territory is reminiscent of the sleight of hand whereby the *Maldon*-poet locates the Viking threat both within and without the Anglo-Saxon *earð*. It is, of course, possible to discount this detail with the argument that the battle simply took place in a part of Britain outside the traditional boundaries of Wessex. However, given the territorial emphases evident throughout the poem, and the implicit concern with reinforcing West Saxon territorial authority over (at least) the whole of England, this does not seem a satisfactory explanation for this explicit reference to the brothers’ homecoming. The effect of this sleight of hand is to once again locate the site of the battle in a liminal and peripheral space the relationship of which to the territory under threat is ambiguous.

Janet Thormann has pointed out that the insistent reference to the armies departing from the battlefield means that the site ‘takes on the status of a vacated place’.²⁰⁵ Thormann’s application of modern techniques of political analysis to the study of the poem leads her to see the battlefield as a ‘memorial space’ in which nationalistic ideologies are ‘inscribed in

²⁰³ On the possible derivation of the forms *Ireland* and *Difelin* from Old Norse toponyms, see John D. Niles, ‘Skaldic Technique in *Brunanburh*’, *Scandinavian Studies* 59 (1987), 356-66, at 360.

²⁰⁴ Warwick Frese, ‘Poetic Prowess’, 88.

²⁰⁵ Thormann, ‘Matter of History’, 8. Cf. Warwick Frese, ‘Poetic Prowess’, 88.

blood'.²⁰⁶ In light of the discussion in this chapter, however, it seems more plausible to suggest that the setting of *Brunanburh* conceptualizes the place of the battle as itself a symbolic boundary. Like the emperor in *Elene* and the Bethulians in *Judith*, and in contrast to the inhabitants of Rome in *Metre 1* and Byrhtnoth in *Maldon*, the West Saxons in *Brunanburh* assert their territorial authority by repelling the foreign threat.

Returning to the closing lines of the poem, the reference to the *adventus Saxonum* has been seen as an attempt to establish a sense of national past extending into a present of unity under West Saxon rule.²⁰⁷ The lines can also be read, however, in terms of establishing the native credentials of the West Saxon defenders. The *adventus* is described in terms of territorial conquest: the non-native Angles and Saxons arrive from the East (*eastan hider [...] up becoman*) and defeat the native inhabitants (*Wealas ofercoman*), and the poem ends with an image of territorial appropriation: *eard begeatan*.

Isaacs would link this ending to the poem's opening evocation of place: 'The word *eard* "homeland" in the last half-line of the poem gives added meaning to the word *Hér* "here" with which the poem begins'.²⁰⁸ However, whereas Isaacs interprets this as an indicator of the national significance of the victory at Brunanburh, I would stress that the relationship between the beginning and the end of the poem can equally be seen to depend upon conceptions of territorial identity. The achievement of Æthelstan and Eadmund at Brunanburh is that they enforce a territorial dynamic that was established by the successful conquest at the time of the *adventus*. In this way, the ending of the poem is a reminder not only of the defenders' native status and territorial authority, but also of the potential fragility of that authority. There is something disturbing about the poet's reminder that there has 'never yet' (*ne [...] æfre gieta*) been greater slaughter in England since the time

²⁰⁶ Thormann, 'Matter of History', 8, 5.

²⁰⁷ Cf. for example, *ibid.*, 10-12; Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, 101.

²⁰⁸ Isaacs, 'Battlefield Tour', 244.

of the *adventus*. Like *Maldon*, *Brunanburh* insists on the need for native inhabitants to act to maintain their privileged status.

CONCLUSION

The examples of battle poetry considered in this chapter have consisted primarily of instances in which the poet's interests and sympathies are engaged with the defence of territory. This is not, of course, always the case, and Old English poets also display an interest in the acquisition of territory. This is clearly suggested by the opening of *Beowulf*, whose celebration of the expansionist achievements of Scyld Scefing is categorical. Similarly, whilst Cynewulf vividly presents the territorial threat posed by the Germanic tribes in *Elene*, he too celebrates territorial aggression as a key facet of Constantine's leadership, and while the focus of *Brunanburh* is the affirmation of established territorial identities the ending of the poem can again be seen to glorify the act of territorial conquest.

This recognition of the achievements of both conquest and defence is to be expected. The territorial emphasis in the depiction of battle examined in this chapter represents, as was noted above, only one possible model for vernacular poets. What I hope to have shown here, however, is that the use of the territorial model is not governed solely by the influence of tradition and convention, but that, on the contrary, this model could be employed by different poets in different circumstances in ways that draw upon the 'complex collective formation' of the poetic tradition in order to contribute to the meaning ascribed to the events described in individual poems. As a final corollary to the argument of this chapter, therefore, I would like to turn now to an example in which an interest in territorial dynamics and a focus on militaristic imagery and diction are drawn together

creatively in a way that has, I think, caused some confusion on the part of scholarly readers.

Much of the discussion of the closing lines of *Brunanburh* in the last twenty years has been based—implicitly or explicitly—upon an understanding of the significance of the *adventus* in Anglo-Saxon literature proposed by Nicholas Howe.²⁰⁹ Howe argued that the historical *adventus* came to be refigured, particularly in Bede's influential *Historia ecclesiastica* and its Old English translation, as a 'myth' of shared origins that 'gave the English as a folc a common identity by teaching them that they were descended from those who had made the exodus of the mid fifth century'.²¹⁰ Howe's use of the term exodus reflects his further suggestion that the construction of the 'migration myth' involved an association of the migration of Germanic settlers and the Israelite migrations which comprise the biblical Exodus. According to Howe, the 'centrality and vitality' of the migration myth in Anglo-Saxon culture derived from its representation of the population of Anglo-Saxon England as a single, divinely appointed race.²¹¹

Howe supported his claims with an extended analysis of the Old English poetic *Exodus*.²¹² In this poem, the flight of the people of Israel out of Egypt is consistently described in language appropriate for a sea-journey. Not only are the Israelites themselves described repeatedly as sailors (*flotan*, 133a, 223a, 331b; *sæmen*, 105b, 479a; *sæwicingas*,

²⁰⁹ Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*. For Howe's own analysis of these lines as 'a beautifully achieved confluence of past and present', see *ibid.*, 30-1. Though influential, Howe's argument has not been universally accepted. For a range of objections, see the reviews by Rolf H. Bremmer, Jr ('[Review]', *ES* 73 (1992), 479-80), J. C. Crick ('[Review]', *EHR* 108 (1993), 694-5), Nicolas Jacobs ('[Review]', *N&Q* ns 37 (1990), 452-3), and Kari M. Schoening ('[Review]', *Comitatus* 21 (1990), 128-32). For a recent challenge to Howe's assertion that the migration myth underlies a conception of an 'ancestral homeland' in *Beowulf* (*Migration and Mythmaking*, 143-80), see Hiatt, 'Beowulf off the map', 36-8.

²¹⁰ Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, 179.

²¹¹ *Ibid.* For a closely related argument regarding the Anglo-Saxon self-image as a chosen race, see Patrick Wormald, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English"', in ed. Geoffrey Rowell, *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism* (Oxford, 1992), 13-32; *id.*, 'Engla Lond: The Making of an Allegiance', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 7 (1994), 1-24. For a recent critique of Wormald's theories, see George Molyneaux, 'The Old English Bede: English Ideology of Christian Instruction?', *EHR* 124 (2009), 1289-1323.

²¹² Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, 72-107; cf. Michelet, 'Lost at Sea', 67-72. The poem is cited from *Exodus*, ed. Peter J. Lucas, rev. ed. (Exeter, 1994).

333a), but the biblical pillar of cloud which guides the people is presented in nautical terms as a sail (*mæstrap*, 82a; *seglrod*, 83a; *segl*, 81b, 89b, 105a). Rejecting more common allegorical interpretations, Howe understood the allusion to a sea-journey as indicative of a kind of condensation of the biblical exodus and a cultural conception of the *adventus*: ‘the poet’s imagery adds a dimension of ancestral history to the more obvious biblical dimension of *Exodus*’.²¹³

In light of the argument of this chapter, however, it is suggestive that the association of the Israelites with the sea contrasts strongly with the poet’s stress on the native status of the Egyptians (*ingefolc*, 142b; *ingemen*, 190a; *ingeðeod*, 444b; *landmann*, 179b). This contrast has not gone unnoticed. Lucas, for example, has suggested that the distinction ‘implies that the Egyptians will never undertake the journey to the Promised Land and that allegorically they will never enter heaven but rather be confined in hell’.²¹⁴ In the first place, Howe’s analysis of the poem accepts the allegorical understanding of this opposition: ‘The Egyptians, then, are natives of the land from which the Israelites flee in quest of their homeland; they are also natives of this earth and not of heaven.’²¹⁵ Subsequently, however, Howe argues for the applicability of this contrast to the *adventus* paradigm, likening the native Egyptians to the inhabitants of the ‘ancestral homeland’ who were left behind by the Anglo-Saxon emigrants, and who remained pagan after the Anglo-Saxon conversion.²¹⁶

More plausibly, however, this contrast may be interpreted in terms of the techniques for the representation of battle identified in this chapter. In an adaptation of the biblical source

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 89. For the standard allegorical interpretation of these details, see *Exodus*, ed. Lucas, 58, 66-9; Hermann, *Allegories of War*, 65-8.

²¹⁴ *Exodus*, ed. Lucas, 97 n. to line 136. Cf. Catherine A. M. Clarke, ‘Edges and Otherworlds: Imagining Tidal Spaces in Early Medieval Britain’, in ed. Sobocki, *The Sea and Englishness*, 81-101, at 89-90.

²¹⁵ Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, 94.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 94-5. Howe acknowledges but glosses over the imprecision of this analogy: ‘Although their ancestors did not flee a land of oppression when they crossed the North Sea, they did leave behind kindred peoples, those who remained as the *ingefolc* of Germania’ (*ibid.*, 94).

text, militaristic imagery and diction is very prominent in the poetic description of the exodus and the Egyptian pursuit—including a detailed reference to the ‘beasts of battle’ that accompany the armies at lines 161-9—and the final defeat of the latter is detailed in part in the language of battle.²¹⁷ As Godden has noted, to a modern reader at least, these adaptations are difficult to interpret:

Is the poet implying that, contrary to the Bible’s emphasis on God’s protecting hand, the Hebrews had to fight their way to the Red Sea? Or is he pointing to a figurative meaning, a reference to spiritual conflict with the devil? Or is it simply that the imagery of warfare, of blood and wounds and weapons, is his imaginative way of suggesting the grandeur of the conflict between Hebrews and Egyptians?²¹⁸

This interpretative difficulty is reflected in the variety of approaches evident in critical responses to this feature of *Exodus*. In contrast to Lucas’ view that ‘the doom-laden atmosphere indicates what might have happened to the Israelites without God to direct events in their favour’,²¹⁹ Neville has argued that the presentation of the Israelites as a martial force in fact suggests that they ‘might have miraculously overcome their human enemies in a conventional, human battle’.²²⁰ For Neville, it is not against the Egyptians, but against the threat posed by a hostile natural environment that God’s assistance is required.²²¹ As Anlezark points out, however, the natural world, in the form of the Red Sea, actually forms the weapon with which God destroys the Egyptian forces.²²² Anlezark argues that the heroic presentation of the flight of the Israelites represents the poet’s attempt to exculpate them before an audience ‘which would have had little sympathy for those fleeing a battle’, whilst nevertheless insisting that the true conflict takes place between God and the Egyptian forces.²²³ By contrast, Trilling draws explicitly on Howe’s interpretation of the poem, describing the use of traditional martial diction as ‘a

²¹⁷ Cf. John F. Vickrey, ‘Exodus and the Battle in the Sea’, *Traditio* 28 (1972), 119-40; Hermann, *Allegories of War*, 63-76.

²¹⁸ Godden, ‘Biblical literature’, 218.

²¹⁹ *Exodus*, ed. Lucas, 101 n. to lines 161-9.

²²⁰ Neville, *Natural World*, 173-4.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 174.

²²² Anlezark, *Water and fire*, 204-5.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 201-2.

deliberately historicizing motif' which, she argues, is employed 'in order to facilitate readers' understanding of their historical relationship to the biblical narrative'.²²⁴

What I should wish to emphasize, however, is that here again the imagery and language of battle is associated with an attempt to exercise territorial control. In comparison to the examples considered in this chapter, the territorial dynamics are here reversed: the native Egyptians attempt to assert their territorial authority not by preventing the non-native Israelites from *entering* their homeland, but by preventing them from *leaving* it.

This is evident in the emphasis placed on borderlands in the poem. In their flight from Egypt, the Israelites are depicted crossing border regions (*mering*, 62a; *mearcland*, 67b), over-running border-dwellings (*mearchof*, 61a), and battling the hostile inhabitants of these regions (*guðmyrce*, 59a).²²⁵ In pursuit, the Egyptians are also depicted traversing a border region (*þeod mearc tredan*, 160b); their army is described as a border-army (*mearcþreat*, 173b) and the beasts of battle that accompany them are border-guardians (*mearcweardas*, 168a). This emphasis, which Lucas notes 'has caused puzzlement',²²⁶ is explained by Howe as an expression of the exodus as 'a journey through dangerous wilderness'.²²⁷ However, in light of the above discussion, the description of the peripheral regions through which the armies pass recalls the liminal spaces in which territorial conflicts are frequently located in Old English poetry.

This similarity is enhanced, moreover, by the prominence in *Exodus* of a natural topographical boundary in the form of the Red Sea (*sæfæsten*, 127b). Located *landes at ende* ('at the end of the land', 128a), the seashore apparently marks the symbolic extent of the territory of the Egyptian 'landmen'. Expectations are again reversed, however, when the topographical boundary forms an obstacle to an army wishing to exit rather than enter

²²⁴ Trilling, *Aesthetics of Nostalgia*, 102-3.

²²⁵ On this last compound, see *Exodus*, ed. Lucas, 84 n. to line 59.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 83-4 n. to lines 56ff.

²²⁷ Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, 83. Cf. Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 220.

the territory in question. Moreover, like the river Blackwater in *Maldon*, the Red Sea represents a mutable boundary.²²⁸ Initially, the sea is an impermeable obstacle, blocking or even resisting the Israelites' advance (*leodmægne forstod*, 128b).²²⁹ Subsequently, divine agency renders the boundary permeable (*holm gerymed*, 284b), if only temporarily, and the Israelites are able to pass.

This is territorial invasion in reverse. Yet while the Israelites flee from one native land, they are also travelling towards a promised homeland previously denied them. The exercise of Egyptian territorial authority, by containing the tribes of Israel within the borders of Egyptian land, denies them their *eðelriht* ('right to a homeland', 211b), keeping the Israelites *eðelleas* ('deprived of homeland', 139a). From the opening of the poem, however, the exodus is expressed in terms of a divine gift of a homeland in fulfilment of God's Covenant: *gesealde sigora Waldend [...] onwist eðles Abrahames sunum* ('the Ruler of victories granted the inhabitation of the homeland to the sons of Abraham', 16-8). The journey of the Israelites to the promised land in *Exodus* is explicitly, though not consistently, allegorized in terms of the journey of the soul to heaven,²³⁰ and the presentation of this journey as a sea-voyage has been read in terms of a typological association of the Church as a ship.²³¹ Without wishing to deny this level of allegory, however, I would suggest that the depiction of the Israelites as sailors, like the description of the Vikings in *Maldon*, establishes an opposition between the native and non-native inhabitants of the land.

The example of *Exodus* stands, I suggest, as testimony to the flexibility with which the territorial model for the presentation of battle could be employed by Old English poets.

²²⁸ Stephen J. Harris has in fact argued that the crossing of the *Panta* should be read as a figural re-enactment of the crossing of the Red Sea (*Race and Ethnicity in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (New York and London, 2003), 157-84, esp. at 171-82). Harris' analysis is, however, extremely selective, and his conclusions not convincing.

²²⁹ Cf. *DOE*, *forstandan*, 1, 3.

²³⁰ Cf. especially *Exodus* 4-6; 103b-4; 530b ff.

²³¹ Cf. *Exodus*, ed. Lucas, 67; Anlezark, *Water and fire*, 201.

The use of militaristic diction and imagery in association with the Egyptian pursuit of the Israelites, together with the emphasis on border areas, and the presentation of the Red Sea as a topographical boundary, presents the biblical narrative as a territorial conflict in which native inhabitants seek to assert territorial authority by forcibly containing non-native foreigners with their borders. My argument here does not refute Howe's analysis of the importance of the migration as a touchstone in Anglo-Saxon literary consciousness, or even necessarily call into question his suggestion that the poet of *Exodus* is consciously drawing parallels between the Anglo-Saxon past and the biblical exodus. It does indicate, however, the value of an intertextual reading of Old English poetry that pays attention to the complex dialectics associated with spatial representation in this tradition. What such a reading suggests is that the power of the poetic account of the Israelites' flight in *Exodus* for a contemporary audience may have derived less from an underlying association with the *adventus Saxonum* than from the unfamiliar expression of a familiar poetic technique for the spatial representation of battle.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE: ENCLOSURE AND THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE PRISON

INTRODUCTION

In chapter two, I examined the significant use of spatial relationships in poetic accounts of the angelic rebellion, arguing that the presentation of the rebellion frequently reflects implicit tensions regarding the understanding of lordship in the post-conversion era. In chapter three, my discussion of the use of setting in Old English battle poetry focused more specifically on geographical and topographical elements of spatial representation, suggesting that an awareness of the dialectical relationships of and between the depiction of battle in these texts may contribute significantly to the way in which meaning is both encoded and interpreted. In each case, my analysis not only drew attention to certain clear similarities in the representation of space and setting in these contexts, but also highlighted the significant differences between individual poetic responses.

Chapter four maintains the trajectory implicit in these chapters from the discussion of the more abstract use of spatial relationships towards the examination of more precise narrative settings by focusing exclusively upon the presentation of a single, very specific setting, namely the prison. What this more precise focus reveals, however, is an interest in what might be called the politics of space that in fact accords closely to that which has been seen in both the various poetic accounts of the angelic rebellion, and the territorial presentation of battle in poems such as *Maldon* and *Elene*. The ability to restrict, confine, and imprison suggests a spatial expression of power that reflects distantly the divine appointment of spatial relationships, resentment of which plays such a key role in Old

English accounts of Lucifer's rebellion. Similarly, the act of delimiting another's spatial existence that lies at the heart of any act of incarceration recalls the concern with the control of boundaries—symbolic or actual—that has been seen so prominently in several Old English poetic depictions of battle. In particular, the attempted confinement of the Israelites within Egyptian territory in *Exodus*—an account that engages with issues of both slavery and exile—represents an attempted spatial expression of power very similar to the practice of imprisonment.

In exploring the ways in which incarceration are conceptualized in Old English verse, my approach in this chapter differs from that of the preceding chapters in that, more so than in the previous two chapters, my analysis here focuses on the ways in which Anglo-Saxon poets engage with the symbolic role and associations with which particular settings might be imbued, drawing not only on the poetic tradition, but also on wider literary and cultural models. The chapter begins, therefore, with a detailed consideration of the role and representation of the prison as a *locus* in contemporary Anglo-Saxon literature and culture—a particularly pressing requirement given both the ambiguous evidence for the role of the prison within Anglo-Saxon society and also the general lack of attention that has been paid to the significance of this setting in studies of the literature of this period.¹ In the first two sections of this chapter, therefore, I shall discuss at length the historical and cultural contexts in which the poetic representations of the prison must be viewed. In the first place, this involves an examination of Anglo-Saxon documentary texts—legal and ecclesiastical—in which the prison features. In the second place, I shall focus more

¹ Given the frequent difficulty in distinguishing between incarceration in a strict sense and captivity or bondage more generally in Old English texts, I have confined my attention to examples in which the reference to prison facilities is clear. The Old English lexicon contained two words that specifically denote the prison: *carcern* and *cweartern*. With the exception of one instance in *Judgement Day II* (on which see below 182-3), *carcern* is the term employed in Old English verse, whilst *cweartern* is restricted primarily to late West Saxon prose texts. Both of these terms appear to represent compound borrowings, combining the Old English element *-ærn* ('building') with Latin *carcer* and (more doubtfully) *quarterium* respectively. Cf. *DOE*, *carcern*; *cweartern*. On the derivation of *cweartern*, see Helmut Gneuss, 'Anglicae linguae interpretatio: Language Contact, Lexical Borrowing and Glossing in Anglo-Saxon England', Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 82 (1993), 107-48, at 140 and n. 130.

precisely on the influence of Christian and doctrinal discourses on the presentation of the prison in vernacular texts from this period.

To return to the theoretical model outlined in the introduction to this thesis, these contexts represent what Said would call the ‘complex collective formation’ to which the poetic representations of the prison *locus* contribute and against which they must be interpreted. The purpose of the third section of this chapter, therefore, will be to analyse the dialectical relationships that exist between the presentation of the prison in these poetic texts and this complex formation. I shall argue, firstly, that, while the lack of evidence for the systematic use of dedicated prison facilities in Anglo-Saxon England suggests that resonances inherited from Christian and biblical traditions might have contributed more significantly to this complex formation than any actuality of incarceration, the sensibility of Anglo-Saxon poets to the significance of spatial representation is revealed through the ways in which they engage with this formation in their presentation of the prison *locus*. I shall also suggest, however, that the poetic representations of the prison contribute to this complex formation through their wider examination of the nature and valence of enclosure in relation to the prison setting.

The idea of enclosure is, of course, inherent in the representation of any architectural interior, and the very notion of interiority necessitates an opposition between that which is interior and that which is exterior. In Old English verse, this opposition is particularly emphatic as a result of what Earl Anderson has called the ‘uncarpentered’ depiction of constructed landscapes.² Highlighting the lack of a detailed geometric or architectural vocabulary in Old English, Anderson notes that poetic depiction of the exterior of a structure is generally limited to expressions of size. As a corollary, however, architectural descriptions in Old English verse tend to focus prominently on the interior space of the

² Earl R. Anderson, ‘The uncarpentered world of Old English poetry’, *ASE* 20 (1991), 65-80.

structure, and Anderson notes that the lack of geometrical terminology further tends towards a depiction of interiority as an encircling enclosure.³

The result of this focus on interiority is a tendency to privilege the demarcated space within an enclosing structure in opposition to the space exterior to it, a tendency that we might expect to be particularly strongly felt in the case of the prison. By its nature, the prison is a structure that not only encloses, but contains. Containment within the prison is, moreover, almost inevitably imposed and enforced. As a result, the prison space is, theoretically at least, an absolute interiority, divorced (albeit temporarily) from exterior reality. Moreover, as a place of punishment and captivity, enclosure within the prison space is *a priori* conceptually negative, while release from prison is *a priori* conceptually positive.

As we shall see, however, the sophistication of the responses to enclosure within the prison in Old English verse belies this apparent simplicity. The prison features as a significant setting in only three hagiographical poem: *Juliana*, *Elene*, and *Andreas*. My analysis will, however, indicate not only the similarities between the presentation of the prison in these texts, but also the subtlety and variation evident in the poetic responses to this single basic narrative setting. The discussion of these texts will again suggest the importance of an intertextual approach to the issue of spatial representation in Old English verse. I shall not only explore the possible connections between these three hagiographical poems, but also consider how the dialectical relationships between particular poems and a conventional verse tradition contributes to what Said might call the ‘referential power’ of the individual texts.

³ *Ibid.*, 68-9, 77-9.

THE PRISON IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

The Old English translation of the *Soliloquies* of St Augustine contains the following passage on the different experiences of those who set out to seek wisdom:

swa hit bið æac be þam wisdom: ælc þara þe hys wilnað and þe hys geornful byt,
he hym mæg cuman to and on hys hyrede wunian and be lybbam, þeah hi hym sume
nær sian, sume fyer. swa swa ælces cynges hama beoð sume on bure, sume on
healle, sum on odene, sume on carcerne, and lybbað þeah æalle be anes hlafordes
are⁴

An expansion of the equivalent passage in Augustine's Latin prose, this is one of a series of analogies added to the Old English text drawn from the courtly world of Anglo-Saxon England.⁵ As such, the casual reference to the presence of a prison on a king's estate might be taken as evidence for the contemporary practice of incarceration and the availability of prison facilities in the late ninth or early tenth century.⁶ However, while the implication of this passage regarding the relative status of those occupying the king's prison compared even to those engaged in menial labour in the threshing house is clear, the text is less clear on what the purpose, nature or duration of such incarceration might have been.

Documentary evidence for the practice of incarceration in Anglo-Saxon England is at best ambiguous. As a custodial measure for detaining those accused of a crime or as a summary measure by which kings and lords might remove personal or political threats, it

⁴ *Soliloquies* 77:15-19, 'So it is too concerning wisdom: each one who desires it and is eager for it, he may come to it and dwell and live in its company, yet some of them shall be near to it and some further off. Just so in the estate of every king there are some in the chamber, some in the hall, some in the threshing house, some in prison, and nevertheless they all live according to a single lord's grace.' Cited by page and line number from *King Alfred's Version of St Augustine's Soliloquies*, ed. Thomas A. Carnicelli (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969).

⁵ Malcolm Godden, 'The player king: identification and self-representation in King Alfred's writings', in ed. Reuter, *Alfred the Great*, 137-50, at 148-50. Cf. *id.*, 'The Sources of the Old English Soliloquies (Cameron B.9.4.2)', *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register* (2000), <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk>, accessed 19 March 2012.

⁶ On the date and authorship of the translation, see Malcolm Godden, 'Did King Alfred Write Anything?', *MÆ* 76 (2007), 1-23; *id.*, 'The Alfredian Project and its Aftermath: Rethinking the Literary History of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 162 (2009), 93-122.

seems likely that imprisonment in some form was practiced throughout this period.⁷ There is, however, no evidence that this practice involved the use of dedicated prison facilities. Typical in this regard is the reference in the *Chronicle* to the detention of the widow of the powerful Northern ealdorman Sigeferð, murdered together with his brother Morcar by Eadric Streona, possibly with the connivance of the king, in 1015. Æthelræd's order that this unfortunate woman be seized and taken to Malmesbury (*het nimon Sigeferðes lafe 7 gebringon binnon Mealdelmesbyrig*, E.1015) is almost certainly a reference to the summary detention of a political threat, an ultimately futile attempt to remove a dangerous opponent from the sphere of public action.⁸ There is, however, nothing in the *Chronicle* account to suggest the manner of detention involved.

Such negative evidence does not, of course, amount to proof that custodial or summary incarceration was not practiced in Anglo-Saxon England, and it is perhaps because the practice was so ubiquitous that it fails to merit explicit mention in the surviving documentation. It is possible, however, either that custodial and summary detention was habitually practiced without recourse to dedicated prison facilities, or that alternative strategies were employed to avoid the need for such facilities.⁹ For temporary custodial purposes, it is possible that the prevalence of systems of surety and oath-swearing in Anglo-Saxon legal practice reduced the need for the detention of those suspected of

⁷ On the ubiquity of custodial incarceration in non-summary systems of justice, see Christopher Harding, Bill Hines, Richard Ireland and Philip Rawlings, *Imprisonment in England and Wales. A Concise History* (London, 2001), 3.

⁸ The political threat posed by Sigeferð's widow is demonstrated by her subsequent rescue by and marriage to Æthelræd's rebellious son Edmund Ironside in an apparently successful attempt to gain the support of the aristocracy of the Five Boroughs (as well as the lands and goods previously belonging to Sigeferð and Morcar). Cf. P. A. Stafford, 'The Reign of Æthelred II, A Study in the Limitations on Royal Policy and Action', in ed. David Hill, *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference* (Oxford, 1978), 15-46, at 35-6.

⁹ Cf. Margaret Deanesly, *The Pre-Conquest Church in England* (London, 1961), 330. Andrew Reynolds states somewhat equivocally that a dedicated prison structure 'might be expected at a royal estate centre and was surely a necessity, although fettering within any secure building could have served such a purpose adequately' (*Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs, Medieval History and Archaeology* (Oxford, 2009), 12).

crimes.¹⁰ Similarly, the availability of more cost-effective methods for the control of political opponents—such as exile, mutilation, enforced tonsuring or confinement within a monastery—may account for the lack of explicit references to summary incarceration during this period.¹¹ The availability of such alternative strategies (though perhaps not their efficacy) is suggested by the chequered career of the Kentish rebel Eadberht Præn in the late 790s. Exiled and perhaps tonsured by his Mercian overlord Offa, Præn's attempt to re-establish himself in Kent following Offa's death ultimately resulted in his capture by the new Mercian king Cenwulf, who ordered Præn to be both blinded and mutilated (ASC F.796 [*recto* 798]). According to later traditions, Præn was finally committed to exile within a monastery.¹²

More certainly, the use of prison facilities is suggested by the prescription of incarceration as a punishment in a small number of extant Anglo-Saxon legal codes. As a judicial measure for the punishment of the laity, incarceration was opposed by the church until as late as 1298,¹³ but where Anglo-Saxon law-codes mention imprisonment it is as a specifically punitive measure.¹⁴ So, in the late ninth century *Domboc* issued in the name of

¹⁰ Cf. Harold D. Hazeltine, 'The Formal Contract of Early English Laws', *Columbia Law Review* 10 (1910), 608-17; John Hudson, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England: Volume II: 871-1216* (Oxford, 2012), 195. This claim is perhaps supported by Lisi Oliver's recent suggestion that the debated Old English legal term *healsfang* refers specifically to a fine levied in place of imprisonment (*The Beginnings of English Law* (Toronto, 2002), 171).

¹¹ On the ubiquity of summary exile as a political expedient, see James Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1986), 136-7. On the use of 'monastic exile' and for an argument against the view that 'monasteries were the prisons *avant la lettre* of early medieval states', see Mayke de Jong, 'Monastic Prisoners or Opting Out? Political Coercion and Honour in the Frankish Kingdoms', in eds. Mayke de Jong and Frans Theuws, with Carine van Rhijn, *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, *Transformation of the Roman World* 6 (Leiden, 2001), 291-328 (quotation at 293).

¹² Cf. D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, rev. ed. (London, 2000), 147-9; Story, *Carolingian Connections*, 139-42.

¹³ Guy Geltner, 'Detrusio, Penal Cloistering in the Middle Ages', *Revue Bénédictine* 118 (2008), 89-108, at 89.

¹⁴ The law-codes are cited by statute number from *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. Felix Liebermann, 3 vols. (Halle, 1903-1916). Much-needed re-editing of the corpus of surviving codes issued up until 1215 is to be undertaken for the Early English Laws project. For details of the project, see <http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/index.html> (accessed 19 March 2012). The statement in Frederick Pollock and Frederic William Maitland's monumental history of early medieval English law that '[i]mprisonment occurs in the Anglo-Saxon laws only as a means of temporary security' is at odds with the evidence presented here (*The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1898), I, 49).

King Alfred, a term of forty nights in prison in the king's town is prescribed for those who fail to keep their oath and pledge (*beo feowertig nihta on carcerne on cyninges tune*, 1.2).¹⁵ Similarly, two codes issued in the first half of the tenth century in the name of Alfred's grandson Æthelstan make provision for the incarceration of offenders. The code known as *II Æthelstan*, or the Grately code, prescribes an identical term of forty nights imprisonment as a punishment for theft (*Gif mon ðeof on carcerne gebringe, ðæt he beo xl nihta on carcerne*, 1.3), and a longer term of 120 nights for those accused of causing death through sorcery, of arson, or of taking personal vengeance against a thief, if they are convicted through a threefold ordeal (6-6.3).¹⁶ The later London-based composite code known as *VI Æthelstan* explicitly refers back to the earlier legislation on the imprisonment of thieves, stating that those under the age of fifteen caught stealing who do not resist arrest should be imprisoned as declared in the Grately legislation (*swa hit at Greatanlea gecweden wæs*, 12.1). Finally, whilst it does not explicitly refer to incarceration, the code known as *II Edward* states that those guilty of breaking their oath or pledge must atone for it 'as the *Domboc* teaches' (*swa domboc tæce*, 5). If, as I think it must be, this is accepted as a specific reference back to the Alfredian code, then this code too can be taken as at least sanctioning the use of incarceration as a judicial punishment.

In these statutes, incarceration is clearly envisaged as a punitive measure, and possibly as a particularly severe punishment. It is noticeable that in both the *Domboc* and *II Æthelstan* incarceration is invoked in the first statute of the code, and in both cases the crimes addressed in these statutes—oath-breaking and theft—appear to have been

¹⁵ Cf. Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century Vol. I: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford, 1999), 272-277. For the argument against Alfred's authorship of this code, see Alfred P. Smyth, *King Alfred the Great* (Oxford, 1995), 238; Godden, 'Did King Alfred Write Anything?', 6. On the unlikelihood of medieval rulers participating in the composition of the law-codes issued in their names more generally, see Mary P. Richards, 'The Manuscript Contexts of the Old English Laws: Tradition and Innovation', in ed. Paul E. Szarmach, *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose* (New York, 1986), 171-92, at 172.

¹⁶ On the use of the ordeal in Anglo-Saxon judicial proceedings, see Sarah Larratt Keefer, '*Donne se cirlicca man ordales weddigeð*: the Anglo-Saxon lay ordeal', in eds. Baxter *et al*, *Early Medieval Studies*, 353-68.

particular concerns of the respective codes as a whole. The first statute of the *Domboc* clearly sets out the significance of keeping one's oath and pledge, describing this as 'that which is most necessary' (*þæt mæst ðearf is*, 1), while the first statute of *II Æthelstan* reflects a concern with theft that became 'almost an obsession' in the legislation of Æthelstan's reign.¹⁷ The inclusion of specific tariffs, and, in the case of *II Æthelstan*, variable tariffs, may suggest an equation between the severity of the crime and the length of the punishment, and both the Alfredian reference to the existence of a prison *on cyninges tune* and the assumption that the prison was a specific location to which criminals could be brought in *II Æthelstan* (*Gif mon ðeof on carcerne gebringe*) perhaps support the near contemporary reference in the *Soliloquies* to the habitual presence of a prison on a royal estate.¹⁸

However, the extent to which these prescriptions were ever applied in practice is far from clear, and the evidence for punitive imprisonment as a legal practice during the Anglo-Saxon period is strikingly thin. The small number of codes in which incarceration is mentioned might itself suggest the relative rarity of this practice, and clear evidence for the actual practice of judicial incarceration during this period is difficult to discover. One possible example of this practice may be found in the apparent reference to the detention of Archbishop Wulfstan I of York by King Eadred in the entry for 952 in the D text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*:

Her on þyssum geare het Eadred cyning gebringan Wulstan arcebiscop in Iudanbyrig on þam fæstene, for þam he was oft to þam cyninge forwregeð.¹⁹

The wording of this entry is ambiguous, but while the noun *fæsten* usually means 'stronghold', it is also attested referring explicitly to a prison.²⁰ That Eadred would wish to

¹⁷ Wormald, *Making of English Law*, 305.

¹⁸ It is this combination of evidence that presumably lies behind Frank Stenton's statement that 'the *cyniges tun* usually contained a prison' (*Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edition (Oxford, 1971), 482).

¹⁹ ASC D.952, 'In this year King Eadred ordered Archbishop Wulfstan to be brought into the stronghold in *Iudanbyrig*, because he was frequently accused to the king.' The place-name *Iudanbyrig* has not been convincingly identified.

delimit Wulfstan's capacity for political action at this time is not implausible given the archbishop's largely subversive influence on Northumbrian politics in the 940s and early 950s,²¹ and the claim that the archbishop was imprisoned by the king is repeated in the twelfth century by William of Malmesbury.²² It is of particular interest, therefore, that while the *Chronicle* entry for 952 is somewhat vague about the precise justification for the (possible) imprisonment of the archbishop, an earlier entry records that Wulfstan had, together with the Northumbrian *witan*, sworn an oath to Eadred, and that they had subsequently reneged on their pledge (*hit eall alugon, ge wed 7 eac aþas*, D.947). The wording here is strikingly similar to the statutes on oath-breaking contained in the *Domboc*, and it might be that the entry for 952 describes the enactment of a legal principle encoded half a century previously in the legislation of Alfred's reign.

This is, however, an isolated and perhaps tentative example. The exhaustive catalogue of Anglo-Saxon law-suits compiled by Patrick Wormald contains no certain instance of the incarceration of offenders.²³ Moreover, while casual references to prisons in texts such as the *Soliloquies* do hint at the existence of dedicated prison facilities in England at least in the late ninth- and tenth-centuries, how common these facilities were or how frequently they were used is unclear. Documentary and archaeological evidence for the existence of identifiable prison facilities in England postdates the Anglo-Saxon period.²⁴ In 1166, the 'Assize of Clarendon' made provision for the construction of prisons in those counties

²⁰ *DOE*, *fæsten*, 3.b.i. See below 226-7 for the use of this term in *Andreas*.

²¹ A. Campbell, 'Two Notes on the Norse Kingdoms in Northumbria', *EHR* 57 (1942), 85-97, at 91-5; Simon Keynes, 'Wulfstan I', in eds. Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes, and Donald Scragg, *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, paperback ed. (Oxford, 2001), 492-3.

²² *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* iii. 114. Cited by book and section number from *William of Malmesbury: Gesta Pontificum Anglorum Volume I: Text and Translation*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, 2007).

²³ Patrick Wormald, 'A handlist of Anglo-Saxon lawsuits', *ASE* 17 (1988), 247-81. Wormald does describe one case of the '[f]logging and imprisonment of a thief' (*ibid.*, 269, no. 158), but this refers here to an episode in chapter 46 of Wulfstan of Winchester's *Vita Æthelwoldi* in which the reference is to the use of stocks rather than to incarceration. Cf. *Wulfstan of Winchester: The Life of St Æthelwold*, ed. and trans. Michael Lapidge and Michael Winterbottom, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, 1991), 68-9.

²⁴ Ralph B. Pugh does not support his assertion that 'the Normans found a number of prisons in the England they invaded' (*Imprisonment in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1968), 3).

which did not already have such facilities, but this is hardly evidence for the existence of prisons in the period before the Norman invasion.²⁵ The *Winton Domesday* (c.1110), commissioned by Henry I to enquire into the lands previously held in Winchester by Edward the Confessor, contains a reference to *le balcheus regis, ubi latrones ponebantur in prisone* ('the king's *balchus* where thieves used to be placed in custody'), a feature that has been interpreted as 'a fenced gaol compound or prison cage'.²⁶ The form of the compound word *balcheus* seems to support an Anglo-Saxon origin for this feature. The first element of this compound is apparently the rare Old English noun *balc*, which is elsewhere twice attested referring to a means of punishment or constraint apparently equivalent to fettering.²⁷ However, in light of the date and imprecision of this reference, the identification of this feature as a pre-Conquest prison facility cannot be asserted with any great confidence. The surviving toponyms *Balkerne Hill* and *Balkern Gate* in Colchester might similarly suggest an association with prison facilities, but again the earliest extant references to these place-names date from the middle of the twelfth century.²⁸

However, despite this uncertainty regarding the practical application of the extant judicial prescriptions of incarceration, the wording of the statute on oath-breaking in the *Domboc* may provide important information about one way in which the practice of incarceration contributed to the complex collective formation of the prison in Anglo-Saxon England. The statute prescribing imprisonment for oath-breakers continues with the

²⁵ *English Historical Documents Vol. II: 1042-1189*, ed. David C. Douglas and George W. Greenaway, 2nd ed. (London, 1981), 440-3, at 441-2. Cf. Harding *et al*, *Imprisonment in England and Wales*, 4-5.

²⁶ *Winchester in the Early Middle Ages: An Edition and Discussion of the Winton Domesday*, ed. Martin Biddle, *Winchester Studies* 1 (Oxford, 1976), 37. For discussion of this feature, see *ibid.*, 37 n. 19.3, 75, 236, 305-6. On the identification of this feature as a prison, see also Ralph Pugh, 'The King's Prisons Before 1250', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 5 (1955), 1-22, at 1

²⁷ Cf. *DOE*, *balc*, 2; Michael Korhammer, 'Old English *bolca* and *Mægþa land* – Two Problems, One Solved', in eds. Michael Korhammer with Karl Reichl and Hans Sauer, *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Cambridge, 1992), 305-24, at 307-9.

²⁸ P. H. Reaney, *The Place-Names of Essex*, *English Place-Name Society Vol. XII* (Cambridge, 1935), 369-70.

requirement that the prisoner *ðrowige ðær swa biscep him scrife* ('atone there as the bishop prescribes for him', 1.2). This is a clear reference to penance.²⁹ The verb *scrifan* is part of a well-developed Old English vocabulary relating to the operation of penance,³⁰ and the stipulation in this same statute that the offender relinquish his weapons (*selle mid eaðmedum his wæpn 7 his æhta his freondum to gehealdanne*) mirrors the prescriptions associated with the performance of public penance as recorded, primarily, in the later Anglo-Saxon period.³¹ Moreover, the sentence of forty nights imprisonment is instantly suggestive of the Lenten period during which those undertaking public penance were excluded from the Church.³²

The *Domboc* as a whole displays a consistent interest in the dual operation of judicial punishment and penitential expiation. Frantzen in particular has argued that the Alfredian legislation is 'the first to make ecclesiastical penance a part of secular punishment'.³³ It is not implausible, therefore, that the prescription of what may have been an uncommon judicial punishment in the first law of the *Domboc* was influenced by contemporary ecclesiastical conceptions of imprisonment as a penitential experience. The use of incarceration as a penitential measure for those in both monastic and secular orders has a long history in the practices of the early Church, at first as a voluntary undertaking, but later as an enforced prescription.³⁴ By 816, the practice was sufficiently well established to

²⁹ Cf. Allen J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1983), 124-9; Sarah Hamilton, 'Rites for Public Penance in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in eds. Helen Gittos and M. Bradford Bedingfield, *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, Henry Bradshaw Society subsidia V (London, 2005), 65-103, esp. 83-7.

³⁰ Catherine Cubitt, 'Bishop, priests and penance in late Saxon England', *Early Medieval Europe* 14 (2006), 41-63, at 44-8.

³¹ Hamilton, 'Rites for Public Penance', 84 and n. 90.

³² On the nature of public penance and the evidence for the use of the practice in Anglo-Saxon England, see Hamilton, 'Rites for Public Penance', 69-83; Brad Bedingfield, 'Public penance in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 31 (2002), 223-55.

³³ Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance*, 126 and n. 11. Richards has similarly argued that that the presentation of the Alfredian laws as a continuation of Mosaic legal traditions in the *Domboc* gave them 'the force of moral precepts', establishing a close association between legal documentation and the instructional work of the church ('Manuscript Contexts', 187). Cf. Hudson, *Laws of England: 871-1216*, 195-6.

³⁴ Cf. Pugh, *Imprisonment in Medieval England*, 374-85; Edward M. Peters, 'Prison before the Prison: the Ancient and Medieval Worlds', in eds. Norval Morris and David J. Rothman, *The Oxford History of the*

be taken for granted in the Statutes of Murbach,³⁵ while in 895 the practice was given Papal authority by the Synod of Tribur.³⁶ In England, the practice was known from at least the tenth century. Chapter sixteen of the *Capitula* of Theodulf of Orléans, which was copied and translated in England in the tenth and eleventh centuries, states that any priest guilty of attempting to supplant a fellow priest and take control of his church must either forfeit his holy orders, or ‘make restitution for it in prison with very long and strenuous repentance’ (*on cwearterne hit mid swiðe langre ond strengre hreowsunge betan*, XVI:6-7).³⁷ During the same period, the enlarged version of the *Regula canonicorum* associated with Chrodegang of Metz was also being copied and translated in England.³⁸ Chapter twenty-seven of this rule for secular clergy states that any priest guilty of a serious crime—which included murder, fornication, and theft—should be incarcerated for a length of time to be determined by the bishop or the elders of the community of canons (*þolige he cwearternes wræcsyð þa hwile þe þam bisceope oððe þam ealdre þence*, XXVII:3-4). The text goes on to emphasize that whilst in prison, the priest should be left alone in penitence (*ana þurhwunige he þara on hreowsunge*, XXVII:8-9). In the decades before the Conquest, the *Regula canonicorum* was adopted at Exeter, and possibly elsewhere,³⁹ and in the immediate post-Conquest period the use of imprisonment as a corrective is recorded

Prison: the Practice of Punishment in Western Society (Oxford, 1995), 3-47, at 27-30; Guy Geltner, ‘Medieval Prisons: Between Myth and Reality, Hell and Purgatory’, *History Compass* 4 (2006), 261-74, at 262.

³⁵ Pugh, *Imprisonment in Medieval England*, 374.

³⁶ Peters, ‘Prison before the Prison’, 28.

³⁷ Cited by chapter and line number from *Theodulfi Capitula in England: Die altenglischen Übersetzungen, zusammen mit dem lateinischen Text*, ed. Hans Sauer, Münchener Universitätsschriften: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Englischen Philologie 8 (München, 1978). On the reception of this text in Anglo-Saxon England, cf. *ibid.* 508-13.

³⁸ Cited by chapter and line number from *The Old English Version of the Enlarged Rule of Chrodegang Edited Together with the Latin Text and an English Translation*, ed. and trans. Brigitte Langefeld, Münchener Universitätsschriften: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Englischen Philologie 26 (Frankfurt, 2003), 224-5. On the reception of this text in Anglo-Saxon England, cf. *ibid.*, 44-7.

³⁹ Brigitte Langefeld, ‘*Regula canonicorum* or *Regula monasterialis uitae*? The Rule of Chrodegang and Archbishop Wulfred’s reforms at Canterbury’, *ASE* 25 (1996), 21-36.

in the *Constitutions* drawn up for use at Christ Church, Canterbury by Archbishop Lanfranc.⁴⁰

However, as with judicial incarceration, it is impossible to determine to what extent these normative strictures were mirrored in practice and there is no evidence for the existence of dedicated prison cells in Anglo-Saxon monasteries before the Conquest.⁴¹ The association of incarceration with penitential practice—at least in the late Anglo-Saxon period—is suggested, however, by two documents associated with Archbishop Wulfstan, whose own interest in the practice of penance has been well-documented.⁴² Like the *Regula canonicorum*, the spurious eleventh century legal document known as the *Laws of Edward and Guthrum*, probably the work of Wulfstan himself, states that those in holy orders guilty of serious offenses, if they are unable to provide sureties for their behaviour, must submit to prison (*carcern gebuge*, 3) as part of a penitential redress.⁴³ Similarly, an addition to one manuscript of the vernacular penitential known as the *Handbook for Use of a Confessor*, which may also have been compiled by Wulfstan, recommends incarceration—alongside darkness, bondage, mutilation and spiders—as a penitential method for the punishment of sins.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, ed. and trans. David Knowles, rev. ed. Christopher N. L. Brooke, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, 2002), 146-53. The imprisonment of rebellious monks in both secular and monastic prisons is recorded in the account of a dispute between Lanfranc and the monks of St Augustine's, Canterbury in 1087 contained in the early twelfth-century *Acta Lanfranci*. However, the combined late date and questionable historical reliability of the *Acta* mitigate the relevance of this document to the present study. Cf. Paul A. Hayward, 'Some reflections on the historical value of the so-called *Acta Lanfranci*', *Historical Research* 77 (2004), 141-60.

⁴¹ Cf. Pugh, *Imprisonment in Medieval England*, 375.

⁴² Cf. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance*, 161; Beddingfield, 'Public penance', 233-7.

⁴³ On Wulfstan's authorship of this document, see Dorothy Whitelock, 'Wulfstan and the so-called Laws of Edward and Guthrum', *EHR* 56 (1941), 1-21. Patrick Wormald would date the composition of the text to c.1006-1008 ('Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleventh-Century State-Builder', in ed. Matthew Townend, *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, York Studies in the Early Middle Ages 10 (Turnhout, 2004), 9-27, at 10, 15-16, 26).

⁴⁴ Roger Fowler, 'A Late Old English Handbook for the Use of a Confessor', *Anglia* 83 (1965), 1-34, at 27 n. to line 316. The manuscript in question is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121 (fols. 23^v-4^r, 54^v-7^v). Cf. Allen J. Frantzen, *The Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A cultural database* (2007), <http://www.anglo-saxon.net/penance/index.html>, accessed 19 March 2012. On Wulfstan's connection with the *Handbook*, see Fowler, 'Late Old English Handbook', 6-12; Cubitt, 'Bishop, priests and penance', 54; Joyce Tally Lionarons, *The Homiletic Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan: A Critical Study*, Anglo-Saxon Studies 14 (Woodbridge, 2010), 133-6.

In conclusion, therefore, it must be admitted that there is little evidence for the widespread or systematic practice of incarceration in Anglo-Saxon England. While imprisonment may have been practiced either for the temporary custody of offenders or as a long-term means of summarily controlling dangerous political rivals, the evidence for such practices is sketchy and contributes little to our understanding of the complex formation of the prison in this period. Incarceration was, in theory at least, available as a temporary measure for both legal and penitential redress in the late ninth and tenth centuries. Moreover, the punitive and penitential functions of the prison appear to have overlapped to a significant degree, and, in view of the late tenth-century provenance of the manuscript witnesses of the three hagiographical poems to be discussed in this chapter, it is possible that such an association may well have contributed to the complex formation in relation to which the poetic descriptions were read by a late Anglo-Saxon audience.⁴⁵ Whether such a context is also relevant for the composition of these poems is less clear, however, and it might be that the rich tradition of interpreting the prison in Christian literature provided a more prevalent influence on the presentation of the prison in these texts.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The Vercelli Book (Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare MS CXVII), which contains both *Elene* and *Andreas*, has been dated to the second half of the tenth century by N. R. Ker (*Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957), 460) and following him Scragg (*Vercelli Homilies*, xxiii). *Juliana* is preserved in the Exeter Book (Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS 3501), which Patrick W. Conn3r (*Anglo-Saxon Exeter: A Tenth-Century Cultural History*, Studies in Anglo-Saxon History (Woodbridge, 1993), 48-94) dates to the third quarter of the tenth century.

⁴⁶ The difficulties of dating Old English verse have already been mentioned. The most recent editor of *Andreas* has argued on linguistic grounds that the poem could not have been composed much before the mid-ninth century (*Andreas and the Fates of the Apostles*, ed. Brook, xxii, xxxix). Cynewulf's poetry has traditionally been dated to the ninth century (cf. Daniel G. Calder, *Cynewulf* (Boston, Massachusetts, 1981), 17) but Patrick W. Conner would locate Cynewulf within the tenth-century Benedictine revival (*Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, 163-4; *id.*, 'On Dating Cynewulf', in ed. Robert E. Bjork, *Cynewulf: Basic Readings*, Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England 4 (New York, 1996), 23-55). See, however, R. D. Fulk, 'Cynewulf: Canon, Dialect, and Date', in ed. Bjork, *Cynewulf*, 3-21, at 16; John M. McCulloh, 'Did Cynewulf use a martyrology? Reconsidering the sources of *The Fates of the Apostles*', *ASE* 29 (2000), 67-83.

REPRESENTING THE PRISON IN ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

As has been pointed out by Guy Geltner, the use of prison imagery and carceral language in religious contexts forms ‘part of the Judeo-Christian tradition’.⁴⁷ Imprisonment features in the scriptures of this tradition not only in examples of the literal imprisonment of individuals, but also in metaphorical expressions of isolation, despair and helplessness, particularly in the Psalms, and in references to the captivity and imprisonment appointed for both Satan and his followers and the souls of those damned on Judgement Day.⁴⁸ This inheritance is widely reflected in the Christian tradition from the earliest period and is a major influence on the complex formation of the prison in Anglo-Saxon England.

In vernacular Anglo-Saxon literature, the prison is commonly invoked in three separate but conceptually related contexts. Firstly, and most pervasively, the prison is commonly invoked as part of what Thomas Rendall, in a now classic study, has described as a ‘pervasive Anglo-Saxon and medieval Christian metaphor for the plight of fallen man’.⁴⁹ Following the Fall, mankind suffered the captivity of sin and death in the world during life and captivity in hell after death. The state of captivity within the world, frequently figured in terms of exile from Paradise, is rendered temporary by the Incarnation and death of Christ. According to the Redemption Theory first articulated by Irenaeus of Lyons, Christ’s actions release mankind from the captivity of death and open up the path by which we may return to Paradise. The ‘concrete expression’ of this redemption is the Harrowing of Hell, when Christ binds the devil and releases the souls of the righteous who had lived

⁴⁷ Guy Geltner, *The Medieval Prison: A Social History* (Princeton, New Jersey, 2008), 83.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Job 7:12; Psalms 68:34, 78:11, 141:8; Isaiah 14:17, 24:22; Ezekiel 19:9; Matthew 5:25, 25:36; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelations 2:10, 20:1-3, 7.

⁴⁹ Thomas Rendall, ‘Bondage and Freeing From Bondage in Old English Religious Poetry’, *JEGP* 73 (1974), 497-512, at 497.

before His coming from the prison of hell.⁵⁰ Secondly, the prison is frequently employed as an analogy for the torments of the souls damned on Judgement Day, either as one amongst many of the punishments inflicted upon the suffers in hell or as a description of the totality of hell itself in which the torments are located. The incarceration in this context is both punitive and permanent, without hope of release or respite, and is directly imposed by God himself. Thirdly, the prison features prominently as a setting in the extensive genre of medieval hagiography.⁵¹ Drawing on a reality of the persecution of the early church that frequently included incarceration, hagiographical narratives detailing the torments and martyrdom of Christian saints commonly present incarceration as a custodial measure. The victims of heathen persecution may be held in prison awaiting trial, (further) torment, or execution in narratives in which little attention is often paid to the prison as a setting. Elsewhere, as we shall see below, the prison is presented not merely as a holding cell, but as a part of the torment inflicted on the saint. As with the analogy between the prison and the torments of hell, these accounts variously present incarceration as itself a torment or imagine the prison primarily as a space in which a range of imaginative tortures may be inflicted.

The Harrowing of Hell and the post-lapsarian prison

Inherent in the doctrine of Redemption is the interplay between a conceptualization of imprisonment as spiritual bondage and that of release from imprisonment as a figure for divine mercy. Particularly in Old English accounts of the Harrowing of Hell, it is this latter

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 498-500. On the development of the doctrine of the Harrowing, see Judith N. Garde, *Old English Poetry in Medieval Christian Perspective: a Doctrinal Approach* (Cambridge, 1991), 117-24. On the influence of the Harrowing in Anglo-Saxon England, see Karl Tamburr, *The Harrowing of Hell in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2007), 14-83; Jackson J. Campbell, 'To Hell and Back: Latin Tradition and the Literary Use of the "Descensus ad Inferos" in Old English', *Viator* 13 (1982), 107-58.

⁵¹ Cf. Gail Ashton, *The Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography: Speaking the Saint* (London, 2000), 81-3.

aspect that is especially emphasized. For example, the image of release from captivity figures prominently in the account of the Harrowing in the Easter homily Blickling VII.⁵² This homily, which draws upon the same Pseudo-Augustinian tradition as the Latin account of the Harrowing in the Book of Cerne,⁵³ presents as a sign of mankind's redemption Christ's Resurrection from 'the bonds of his death and the chains of hell's darkness' (*æfter þæm bendum his deapes, & æfter þæm clammum helle þeostra*, 83). In the account that follows, the homilist describes how through his death Christ 'bought' mankind from the captivity of hell (*he us mid his blode abohte of helle hæftede*, 91), but also gives a very physical account of the destruction of the infernal prison. In two separate passages, the homilist describes how Christ broke not only the gates of hell (*helle geatu*, 85), but also more specifically their iron bolts (*þa ærenan scyttelas*, 85; *þa isenan scyttelas*, 87) and their locks (*helle loca*, 87). In the devils' complaint to Satan which forms a traditional element of Harrowing narratives, the speakers note that the prison of hell, here a specific location within hell rather than hell itself, has been broken open (*eal þin carcern he hafap tobrocen*, 85).

However, if the emphasis of Old English accounts of the Harrowing is commonly on the conceptualization of release from prison, it is noticeable that their representation of the experience of incarceration not infrequently reflects an association of imprisonment with penitence similar to that evident in legal and ecclesiastical sources discussed above.⁵⁴ This is evident in Blickling VII in the speeches made by both Adam and Eve, another feature common to many medieval accounts of the Harrowing. Following Christ's triumphant

⁵² Cf. Donald Scragg, 'A Late Old English Harrowing of Hell Homily from Worcester and Blickling Homily VII', in eds. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe and Andy Orchard, *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, 2 vols. (Toronto, 2005), II, 197-211; Anna Maria Luiselli Fadda, "'De descensu Christi ad inferos': una inedita omelia anglosassone", *Studi Medievali* 13 (1972), 989-1011.

⁵³ Milton McCormick Gatch, 'Two Uses of Apocrypha in Old English Homilies', *Church History* 33 (1964), 379-91, at 381-2; David N. Dumville, 'Liturgical Drama and Panegyric Responsory from the Eight Century? A Re-Examination of the Origin and Contents of the Ninth-Century Section of the Book of Cerne', *Journal of Theological Studies* 23 (1972), 374-406.

⁵⁴ Cf. Tamburr, *The Harrowing of Hell*, 44-83.

entry into hell, neither Adam nor Eve is initially included in the general release of the prisoners. Each subsequently implores Christ's mercy and begs to be released and allowed to journey to heaven, whereupon Christ frees them from captivity. Central to each of these speeches is the speaker's confession of guilt:

‘Miltsa me, Drihten; miltsa me for þinre mycclan mildheortnesse, & adilega mine unrihtwisnessa; forþon þe anum ic gesyngade, & mycel yfel beforan þe ic gedyde. [...’]⁵⁵

‘Soþfæst eart þu, Drihten, & rihte syndon þine domas; forþon þe mid gewyrhtum ic þas þrowige [...’]⁵⁶

As Karl Tamburr has noted, the element of confession in the speeches of Adam and Eve, and their repeated pleas for mercy and forgiveness, strike a clear penitential note that provides a link to the second half of Blickling VII, in which the homilist shifts his focus from the Harrowing to Judgement Day.⁵⁷ In his account of the terrors of Judgement, the homilist stresses that before God all men will have to make amends for the things they have done in opposition to his commandments (*sceolan we mid ure anre saule forgyldan & gebetan ealle þa þing þe we ær ofor his bebod gedydon*, 91) and notes that it will then be too late to repent for one's sins: *God sylfa þone ne gymeþ nænges mannes hreowe* ('God Himself will not then give heed to any man's penitence', 95). The example of Adam and Eve is one that must be followed before it is too late.

This concern with penitence is also evident in Abbo of Saint-Germain's *Sermo in cena Domini ad penitentes*, of which a careful translation, possibly commissioned by Wulfstan, survives in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 190.⁵⁸ A defence of the Lenten practice of public penance, this homily equates the expulsion of the penitents from the

⁵⁵ Blickling VII 87, 'Have mercy on me, Lord; have mercy out of Your great pity, and remove my unrighteousness, for against You alone have I sinned, and I have done great evil before You.' Cf. Eve's corresponding speech in *Christ and Satan*: 'Ic þe æne abealh, ece Drihten' ('against You alone I offended, eternal Lord', 410).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 89, 'You are righteous, Lord, and Your judgements are just; therefore I suffer this deservedly.'

⁵⁷ Tamburr, *The Harrowing of Hell*, 75-6.

⁵⁸ Cited by line number from *Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. Bethurum, Appendix 1, 366-73. On the connection to Wulfstan, cf. *ibid.*, 345-6; *id.*, 'Wulfstan's Commonplace Book', *PMLA* 57 (1942), 916-29, at 925-7.

church on Ash Wednesday to Adam's exile from Paradise and describes the acts of penance, both in the world during his life and in hell after his death, through which Adam expiated his sin:

Gewislice he dide swyðe lange dædbote geond syx hundred geara fæc 7 þonne gyt mare. Æt nyhstan æfter his forðside he wæs asend on hellicne cweartern, þær he lange tyd heofode 7 besargode þæt he for his gilte forleas neorxnawang. And swa lange he wæs ðær besargiende 7 behreowisende, oð þæt ure Drihten Hælend Crist, se ðe is ealra bisceopa biscseop, hine unband þurh his halgan ðrowunge 7 hine alyside of witum hellicra ðeostra 7 him eft ageaf neorxnawang.⁵⁹

What is striking about these lines is the way in which the analogy with public penance introduces an implicit causality to the narrative of salvation. While it is through Christ's Passion that Adam is redeemed (*þurh his halgan ðrowunge*), Adam's penitence is presented as a necessary precondition for this (*swa lange [...] oð þæt*). Just as a penitent is made worthy of readmission to the church during Lent, so logically it is through his penitence in the hellish prison that Adam "earns" his readmission to Paradise. The clear parallels between this account and the statute on oath-breaking in the *Domboc*—in which incarceration and penitence are similarly linked—thus lend weight to the suggestion that the complex formation of the prison during the later Anglo-Saxon period (at least) included an association between the prison *locus* and penitence.

The penitential message of both Blickling VII and *Sermo in cena Domini ad penitentes* develops an analogy between the situation of the souls of the righteous at the Harrowing and that of the homilies' contemporary Christian audiences. Through a liturgical echo, this analogy is evident in Adam's plea for release as recorded in Blickling VII: *alæd me ut of þyssum bendum, & of þyses carcernes huse, & of deapæs scuan* ('lead me out from these bonds, and from this house of prison, and from the shadow of death', 87). The text of

⁵⁹ *Sermon in cena Domini ad penitentes* 31-9, 'Truly, he did very long penance throughout a period of six-hundred years and then more still. At last, he was sent into the hellish prison after his death, where for a long time he bewailed and lamented that he forsook Paradise on account of his sin. And he was lamenting and repenting there for so long, until our Lord Christ the Saviour, Who is Bishop of all bishops, freed him through His holy Passion and released him from the torments of the hellish darkness and gave him Paradise once more.'

Blickling VII at this point parallels closely the Latin account in the Book of Cerne, where Adam's words are as follows: *et educ [me] uinctum de domo carceris et umbrae mortis*.⁶⁰ According to David Dumville, the phraseology here represents a conflation of the text of Psalm 141:8 (*educ de carcere animam meam* ['Bring my soul out of prison']) and that of Psalm 106:14 (*et eduxit eos de tenebris et umbra mortis et vincula eorum dirupit* ['And he brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death; and broke their bonds in sunder']).⁶¹ However, more obviously the Cerne text is a quotation from the antiphon *O clavis David* from the *Liber Responsalis*:

O clavis David, et sceptrum domus Israel! qui aperis et nemo claudit, claudis et nemo aperit, veni **et educ vinctum de domo carceris**, sedentem in tenebris, et **umbra mortis**.⁶²

The use of this text in the Book of Cerne and Blickling VII is particularly apposite. The *O clavis David* antiphon forms part of the liturgy for the season of Advent, a period in which 'awareness of man's sinful condition and the necessity of repentance is mitigated by rejoicing that the coming of Christ has provided mankind a means of redemption'.⁶³ In medieval Christian literature, the parallelism of Christ's descent into the world to free fallen mankind from the captivity of death and his descent to hell to free the souls of the righteous from the infernal prison is something of a commonplace.⁶⁴

This parallelism is notably exploited in the second of the *Advent Lyrics*, inspired by the antiphon *O clavis David*:⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Dumville, 'Liturgical Drama', 377.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 379.

⁶² *The Advent Lyrics of the Exeter Book*, ed. Jackson C. Campbell (Princeton, New Jersey, 1959), 7 (emphasis added). Cf. *Sources and Analogues*, trans. Allen and Calder, 73: 'O Key of David and Sceptre of the house of Israel; you who open and no one closes; you who close and no one opens, come and lead out the prisoner from the prison-house, where he sits in darkness and the shadow of death'.

⁶³ Rendall, 'Freeing from Bondage', 502.

⁶⁴ Campbell, 'To Hell and Back', 119: 'The descent into hell for purposes of saving people [...] is distinctly similar to Christ's descent from heaven to earth at the time of the incarnation. This world by analogy is hell, and the waiting patriarchs are all mortal men whom Christ came to save when he was born in Bethlehem'. Cf. Tamburr, *The Harrowing of Hell*, 45-5.

⁶⁵ Cited from *Advent Lyrics*, ed. Campbell. On the relation of the *Advent Lyrics* to the antiphons of the *Liber Responsalis*, see *The Christ of Cynewulf*, ed. Cook, xxxv-xliii, 71-3; Edward Burgert, *The Dependence of*

Huru we for þearfe	þas word sprecað
ond m[...]giað	þone þe mon gescop
þæt he ne [...]ete	[...]ceose weorðan
cearfulra þing,	þe we in carcerne
sittað sorgende.	Sunnon wenað,
hwonne us liffrea	leoht ontyne,
weorðe ussum mode	to mundboran,
ond þæt tydre gewitt	tire bewinde,
gedo usic þæs wyrðe	þe he to wuldre forlet
þa þe heanlice	hweorfan sceoldan
to þis enge lond,	eðle bescyrede. ⁶⁶

This description of prisoners yearning for light clearly recalls the situation of the patriarchs awaiting Christ's coming in the prison of hell, a situation explicitly represented elsewhere in the *Advent Lyrics*.⁶⁷ Yet the elaboration on the antiphonal *domo carceris* in these lines also reflects a key theme of the *Advent Lyrics* as a whole: 'the expectancy of Christians awaiting the coming of the Messiah, and their great need of a saviour'.⁶⁸ There is a conflation of time schemes evident in this lyric, with the result that 'the narrator represents the souls of the patriarchs in hell *and* present Christians in that both are enlightened by the coming of Christ'.⁶⁹

This conflation reflects, moreover, a common analogy between imprisonment and the state of fallen man in the world. This analogy is variously particularized either as imprisonment within the world as a whole, or more specifically as the soul's imprisonment within the body. As with the depiction of the incarceration of the patriarchs, this imprisonment is widely conceived as a state of exile that is, for the righteous, rendered temporary by Christ's promise of salvation. The use of this analogy therefore allows Christian authors to re-imagine death as the moment of longed-for release from the soul's

Part I of Cynewulf's Christ upon the Antiphony (Washington D. C., 1921); *The Advent Lyrics*, ed. Campbell, 3-8; Susan Rankin, 'The liturgical background of the Old English Advent Lyrics: a reappraisal', in eds. Lapidge and Gneuss, *Learning and Literature*, 317-40.

⁶⁶ *Advent Lyrics* II 5-15, 'Indeed, we speak these words from necessity [...] we who sit sorrowing in prison. We yearn for the sun, when the Lord of Life will unlock light for us, become a protector to our mind, and encompass our weak intellect with glory, make us worthy that He should admit to glory those who had to turn wretchedly to this narrow land, cut off from a homeland.' No satisfactory sense has been made of the obscured text of lines 6-8a.

⁶⁷ *Advent Lyrics* VI 17b-34.

⁶⁸ Rankin, 'Liturgical background', 317.

⁶⁹ Tamburr, *The Harrowing of Hell*, 49. Cf. Rendall, 'Freeing from Bondage', 505.

exile in the physical prison of the world, freeing it to travel to God. Thus, the Old English *Life of St Chad* describes the release of the saint's soul from the prison of the body:

seo halige sawel wes onlesedu of þam carcerne þæs lichaman & hio wes gelededu
swa hit riht is to geleafenne mid engla þreatum to þam ecan gefean⁷⁰

Again, after a long discussion of the limitations of earthly fame, the author of the *Old English Boethius* explains that at the death of the body the soul will be freed to travel to heaven:

Ac seo sawl færð swiðe freolice to heofonum siððan heo ontiged bið and of þam
carcerne þæs lichoman onliesed bið. Heo forseohð þonne ealle ðas eorðlican þing
and fagenað þæs þæt heo mot brucan þæs heofenlican siððan heo bið abrogden from
þam eorðlican.⁷¹

However, in addition to this focus on the image of release from exile in the prison of the world, the prison analogy is also frequently employed to express the limitations of mankind's fallen state, particularly the epistemological limitations. In the Old English version of the *Soliloquies*, whose author may also have been responsible for the *Old English Boethius*,⁷² Reason challenges Augustine's desire for knowledge that is denied to mankind in 'the prison of this present life':

ic wundrige hwi ðu swa swiðe georne and swa gewislice þæt to witanne, þætte nefre
nan man of ðisse carcerne þises andweardan lyfes swa gewislice witan ne myhte
swa swa ðu wilnast⁷³

In a later passage, however, Reason reassures Augustine that after its release from 'the prison of the body', the soul will know everything that it now desires to know:

⁷⁰ *The Life of St Chad: An Old English Homily*, ed. R. Vleeskruger (Amsterdam, 1953), 174:144-8, 'The holy soul was released from the prison of the body and it was led to the eternal bliss amongst a troop of angels, as it is fitting to believe.'

⁷¹ *Old English Boethius* B.18:129-32, 'But the soul travels very freely to heaven after it is untied and is released from the prison of the body. It then scorns all these earthly things and rejoices that it might enjoy the heavenly things after it is removed from the earthly.' Cf. *Ibid.* CP.9:154-8. On the relationship of this passage to the Latin source, see *OEB*, II, 325.

⁷² Cf. above 160 n. 6.

⁷³ *Soliloquies* 86:24-87:2, 'I wonder why you yearn to know so greatly and so certainly that which no man from the prison of this current life might ever know so surely as you desire.'

Ac us ys gehaten butan ælcum tweon, swa swa we of þisse weorulde weorðað and seo sawle of þære carcerne gæð þæs lichaman and aletan byd, þæt we witon ælces þinges þe we nu wilniað to witanne⁷⁴

Neither of these passages draws directly on either Augustine's Latin text nor on any other identified source.⁷⁵ Rather, these passages reflect the interests of an author 'fascinated by issues of epistemology'.⁷⁶ The question of the post-mortem knowledge of the soul is, as Godden has shown, of particular importance to the Anglo-Saxon translator's response to Augustine's Latin text,⁷⁷ but his use of the prison metaphor to explore these issues reflects a conception of incarceration that is closely related to contemporary ideas of exile in its emphasis on the limitations placed upon the inhabitants of the earthly or bodily prison.

In an extended simile, the Old English translation of the *Dialogi* of Gregory the Great again equates the situation of fallen humanity's imperfect knowledge to incarceration (260:7-262:9).⁷⁸ Following closely its Latin source, the vernacular text explains that following Adam's exile from Paradise, humanity has no direct knowledge of the spiritual mysteries of the faith (261:2-9).⁷⁹ This situation is likened to that of a man born in prison, who learns from his mother of the existence of features of the outside world such as the sun and the moon, but struggles to believe in them because of his lack of personal experience thereof (261:9-19). In contrast to the use of the prison analogy in the *Soliloquies*, however, Gregory's concern, reflected in the Old English text, is not with the perfection of the soul's knowledge after death, but with the necessity of faith in the present life. According to Gregory, Christ's coming and the gift of the Holy Spirit is a sufficient

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 93:14-16, 'But it is promised to us without any doubt, when we come from this world and the soul goes out of the prison of the body and is released, that we shall know all of those things that we now desire to know.'

⁷⁵ Cf. Godden, 'Sources of the *Soliloquies*'.

⁷⁶ Godden, 'The Alfredian Project', 116.

⁷⁷ Malcolm Godden, 'Text and Eschatology in Book III of the Old English *Soliloquies*', *Anglia* 121 (2003), 177-209.

⁷⁸ Cited by page and line numbers from *Bischof Wærferth von Worcester Übersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen*, ed. Hans Hecht, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 5 (Leipzig, 1900-7).

⁷⁹ On the relationship of the Old English to Gregory's Latin, see Rohini Jayatilaka, 'The Sources of the Old English *Dialogues* (Cameron B. 9. 5)', *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register* (2000), <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk>, accessed 19 March 2012).

proof of the spiritual mysteries, even though mankind cannot experience them in the world (261:24-9).⁸⁰ Those who disbelieve the teachings of Christ are like the foolish youth who does not believe his mother's account of life outside the prison because he has never known it himself:

witodlice dysig byþ se cniht, gif he weneþ, þeh he sylf in carcerne sy, þæt seo
modor hine forþon leoge be þam leohte 7 plegan, þe uppe on lande byð, forþon þe
he sylfa naht elles ne geseah ne ne ongæt buton þæs carcerne þystru⁸¹

For Gregory, therefore, the point of the prison analogy is to emphasize the coming of Christ as a clear token of salvation. However, the treatment of Gregory's analogy in the vernacular homily Napier I develops a markedly different emphasis for the prison simile.⁸² In place of the vague reference in the *Dialogues* to a pregnant woman being seized and taken to prison (*man hwylc bearneacen wif genime 7 sænde in carcern*, 261:10-11), the anonymous homilist particularizes the situation by expressing the woman's guilt (*sum forworht wif*, 2:19) and by having her imprisoned specifically at the command of a king (*sum cyning*, 19)—a detail that perhaps supports the association of incarceration and royal prerogative suggested in the references to the 'king's prison' in the examples discussed above. Rather than following Gregory in decrying the folly of the youth who will not believe in his mother's testimony, the homilist extends the analogy by stating that should the youth himself have children in prison, they will be that much less willing to believe his second-hand account of the joys of the outside world recounted to the youth by his mother (3:8-11). The homilist here relates back to an earlier passage in which he again expands on

⁸⁰ Gregory's use of this analogy may have been the ultimate source for Ælfric's use of a similar prison analogy in his exposition of the account of Christ's curing a blind man in Luke 18:31-43 (CH 1 X:38-50). Cf. Godden, *Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, 77-84. On Ælfric's use of the *Dialogi* and his knowledge of the Old English translation, see *id.*, 'Ælfric and the Vernacular Prose Tradition', in eds. Bernard F. Huppé and Paul E. Szarmach, *The Old English Homily and its Backgrounds* (New York, 1978), 99-117, at 104.

⁸¹ *Dialogues* 262:6-9, 'That youth is foolish indeed if he expects, though he himself is in prison, that his mother therefore lies about that light and festivity that there is in the land above because he himself neither sees nor perceives anything else except the darkness of the prison'.

⁸² On the homilist's use of Gregory's *Dialogi*, see David Yerkes, 'The Place of Composition of the Opening of Napier Homily I', *Neophilologus* 60 (1976), 452-54; Paul E. Szarmach, 'Another Old English Translation of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*?', *ES* 62 (1981), 97-109.

his source text by noting that with every passing generation, Adam's first-hand testimony of the joys of Paradise becomes more and more doubtful to those who have never experienced them personally (2:14-17). Whereas, therefore, the testimony of the mother in Gregory's account stands ultimately in place of the corroboration of the spiritual mysteries through the coming of Christ and the teaching of the Holy Spirit, in Napier I the testimony of the 'guilty woman' is clearly equated to Adam's account of Paradise after his expulsion thence.

To an extent, the adaptations of Gregory's text in Napier I actually clarify the use of the prison analogy. There is something unsatisfying about Gregory's argument, which starts from the position that the youth's doubts are natural and inevitable and ends by chastising him for not believing his mother's testimony. In its adapted conclusion, however, the prison analogy in Napier I obscures what was Gregory's principal point, namely that it is possible to believe in the holy mysteries without the need for the sort of perfect knowledge that can be acquired only after death:

Hu ne mæg se cyning þonne þæne tweon eaðe gebetan? onlucan þæs carceres duru: þonne magan hy þæt eall geseon, þæt him ær gesæd wæs. ðæt is þonne þæm gelicost, þe we nu on carcerne syn betynede on þisse worulde, and eft þonne se gast wyrð ut of ðam lichoman alæd, þe he nu mid befangen is, þonne bið us gesawen, þæt us ær gesæd wæs, þeah þe we hit nu geortrywan, forðy þe we hit geseon ne magon.⁸³

Although the homilist subsequently offers a concluding passage affirming the 'manifold tokens' (*mistlican tacnan*, 4:5) and 'clear examples' (*swutele bysene*, 4:9) by which the truth is proclaimed to those wise enough to perceive it, this does not follow logically from the adapted analogy of the prison. Rather, the analogy culminates in a powerful image of release from captivity that seems to draw simultaneously on the common conceptualization

⁸³ Napier I 3:11-18, 'Might not that king then easily amend that doubt? Unlock that prison's door: then might they see all that which was previously told to them. That is, then, most like that we are now enclosed in prison in this world, and after the spirit is lead out of the body with which he is now enveloped, then that which was previously told to us will be made manifest to us, although we now doubt it because we cannot see it.'

of death as release from the prison of the body and on the idea that Christ through his Advent and Passion freed mankind from the post-lapsarian prison of mortality and death.

Judgement Day and the infernal prison

The conceptualization of release from prison as an act of divine mercy and a sign of spiritual rehabilitation can thus be seen to figure prominently in the treatment of mankind's post-lapsarian captivity in what the Vercelli I homilist calls, somewhat ironically, 'the secure prison of eternal death' (*þa fæstan carcern [...] þæs ecan deaþes*, 40:90). By contrast, however, the use of prison imagery and carceral language as an analogy for the torments of the damned in the literature of Anglo-Saxon England, though surprisingly uncommon, not only reflects a strong association of the prison space with punitive torment, but also consistently stresses the lack of any hope of release. The description of the punishments of hell in terms of incarceration reflects a dual conceptualization of the prison as both a punishment in itself, and also a space in which punishment and torment might be experienced. That is to say, either hell itself is figured as a prison in which the damned are tormented, or imprisonment is presented as one amongst many of the torments of hell.

An example of the former alternative—hell as a prison—is the following passage from *Judgement Day II*, in which the futile knowledge of their own culpability is presented as the greatest of the pains suffered by the souls of the damned:

The prison here is a personal punishment and a discrete location within hell, rather than an analogy for hell itself. So too is the prison referred to in the account of Judgement Day in the poem *Christ and Satan*:

	And no seoððan
þæt hie up þonan	æfre moton,
ah þær gepolian sceolon	þearlic wite,
clom and carcern,	and þone caldan grund
deopnes adreogan	and deofles spellunge ⁸⁷

Here again, prison and bondage are presented as two examples of the torments suffered by the damned within hell (*þær gepolian*). As in *Judgement Day II*, the punishment of the damned is emphatically permanent.

Whether this distinction between the prison as torment or as place of torment reflects any distinction in the practice of incarceration in Anglo-Saxon England is, as the above discussion makes clear, impossible to determine with any certainty, and any attempt to draw conclusions from what may be merely different approaches by different authors—or by the same author at different times—is liable to overstate the distinction between these accounts. It is perhaps worth noting, however, that the dual conceptualization of the prison that these different presentations suggest does recall the double role of the prison in the *Domboc* as both a place of secular punishment and a place in which prisoners were required (forced?) to undertake such penance as was prescribed for them by the bishop.

In this context, it is intriguing to note that in his use of the prison as an analogy for hell in a Rogationtide homily on the meaning of the Pater Noster, Ælfric presents a vision of the prison of hell as both punishment and place of punishment (CH 1.XIX). Interpreting

line number from *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Thomas Miller, EETS os 95, 96, 110, 111, 2 vols. (London, 1890-98). On the vividly visual nature of the vision as recounted by Bede, see George Henderson, 'Bede and the Visual Arts', Jarrow Lecture, 1980 (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne), 12.

⁸⁷ *Christ and Satan* 634b-8, 'And never again after that will they be able to go up thence, but they must suffer dreadful torments there, bondage and prison, and endure that deep, cold abyss and the [evil] speech of devils.'

the phrase *et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris*, Ælfric draws on the words of Christ from Matthew 5:25-6:⁸⁸

esto consentiens adversario tuo cito dum es in via cum eo ne forte tradat te
adversarius iudici et iudex tradat te ministro et in carcerem mittaris amen dico tibi
non exies inde donec reddas novissimum quadrantem⁸⁹

In his use of this passage, however, Ælfric literalizes the analogy in such a way as to leave no doubt that the prison in question is hell:

Gif ge þonne nellað forgifan. mid inweardre heortan þam þe eow gremiað. þonne
eac eower fæder þe on heofenum is nele eow forgyfan eowre synna. ac he het eow
gebindan. 7 on cwearterne settan. þæt is on hellewite. 7 eow þær deofol getintregað
oð ðæt ge habbon ealle eowre gyltas geþrowade oð ðæt ge cumon to anum
feorðline⁹⁰

The prison of hell is here clearly envisaged as a type of punishment (*on hellewite*), but it is also a place in which additional torments are suffered (*eow þær deofol getintregað*).

Moreover, Ælfric's statement that sinners will be tormented in hell until they have atoned for all of their transgressions (*oð ðæt ge habbon ealle eowre gyltas geþrowade*) is suggestive of the practice of penance, recalling the stipulation that prisoners must atone for their actions according to the dictates of the bishop (*ðrowige ðær swa biscep him scrife*).

This penitential note is, however, quite inappropriate to the context. By literalizing Christ's analogy, Ælfric has imbued his description of the prison of hell with a worryingly temporary feel. The repetition of the phrase *oð ðæt* ('until') in this passage potentially suggests that the process of atonement in hell may come to an end. That this dangerously heterodox implication represents a local failure of Ælfric's use of the biblical analogy is suggested, however, by comparison with his more extensive treatment of the passage in his

⁸⁸ Cf. Godden, *Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, 157.

⁸⁹ Matthew 5:25-6, 'Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him: lest perhaps the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing'.

⁹⁰ CH 1 XIX:137-42, 'If you will not then forgive with your innermost heart those who offend you, then likewise your Father who is in heaven will not forgive you your sins. But He will order you bound and thrust into prison, that is to say, into the torments of hell. And the devil will torment you there until you have atoned for all your transgressions, until you come to the last farthing.'

Letter to Wulfgeat.⁹¹ Here again, Ælfric is explicit in his alignment of the prison and hell (*þam blindan cwearterne / þære hellican susle*, 8:204-5). A penitential note is again struck in the image of prisoners making amends for their evil deeds (*þær hi magon behreowsian on ðam reðum witum / heora yfelan dæda*, 8:6-7). In the *Letter*, however, Ælfric adds a telling gloss to his use of the prison image:

Ac þær ne byð nan dædbot,
ne nan liðe miltsung þam manfullum næfre.⁹²

Again, the homilist stresses the unending nature of incarceration in hell. Moreover, in contrast to the association of the penitence of the patriarchs with their redemption at the Harrowing, Ælfric here engages with the language of penitence (*dædbot*) and forgiveness of sins (*miltsung*) whilst at the same time explicitly denying that the suffering of the damned in the prison of hell will ever be sufficient expiation for their sins.

The hagiographical prison

One principal model for the presentation of the hagiographical prison is found in the accounts in the Acts of the Apostles of the angelic release of, firstly, the apostles as a group (Acts 5:17-23), and later of St Peter individually (Acts 12:1-19). Each of these accounts is well-represented in vernacular sources from Anglo-Saxon England. In his *Catholic Homilies*, Ælfric refers to the release of the apostles twice and to that of Peter on no less than four occasions.⁹³ The latter example is also described in the Old English

⁹¹ Cited by page and line number from *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, ed. Bruno Assmann, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 3 (Kassel, 1889), 1-12.

⁹² *Letter to Wulfgeat* 8:7-8, 'But there shall never be any repentance nor any easy mercy for the wicked ones.'

⁹³ On the apostles, see CH 1 XVI:34-7; XXXVII: 230-239; on St Peter, see CH 1 XXXIV:247-52; XXXV:101-5; XXXVII:240-5; CH 2 XXIV:1-41.

Dialogues (107:16-27), and in the anonymous homily Vercelli III (80:111-3).⁹⁴ This model of angelic release is also paralleled in other hagiographic texts. In the *Old English Martyrology*, a ninth-century collection of hagiographical narratives, the anonymous compiler includes accounts of the release from prison of St Felix by an unnamed angel (II.15:19-16:7) and that of St Erasmus by the archangel Michael himself (II.112:10-114:13).⁹⁵ The conception of release from prison as an act of divine favour evident in this hagiographical model is clearly similar to the way in which the release of the patriarchs at the Harrowing of Hell is figured as the ultimate act of God's mercy towards humanity. The particular difference between the two situations, however, is in the assumption of guilt. Whereas the situation of the patriarchs in hell, and of mankind in the world, is the result of human fallibility and culpability, the imprisonment of the saints is fundamentally characterized as unjust. However, the surviving hagiographical narratives from Anglo-Saxon England also bear witness to a long Christian tradition of re-imagining the hagiographical prison as a space, characterizing it less as a *locus* of torment than as a *locus* of grace. In the words of Guy Geltner, the presentation of the prison in the hagiographical tradition magnifies its significance as 'a *Sonderwelt*, "a special place" straddling heaven and earth, where miracles multiplied'.⁹⁶

This tendency to imagine the hagiographical prison as a space in which miraculous events are more than usually likely to occur is particularly evident in the *Old English Martyrology*. Reflecting the compiler's 'idiosyncratic' interest in wondrous happenings,⁹⁷

⁹⁴ For a close variant of this passage from Vercelli III, see *Twelfth-Century Homilies in MS. Bodley 343*, ed. A. O. Belfour, EETS os 137 (London, 1909), at 46:19-20. On the relationship of these two texts, see *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. D. G. Scragg, EETS os 300 (Oxford, 1992), 70-2; *id.*, 'The corpus of vernacular homilies and prose saints' lives before Ælfric', *ASE* 8 (1979), 223-77, at 229, 238-9, 244.

⁹⁵ Cited by volume, page and line number from *Das altenglische Martyrologium*, ed. G. Kozar, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, Neue Forschung 88, 2 vols., (Munich, 1981). On the date and the apparently Anglian origin of this text, see Celia Sisam, 'An Early Fragment of the *Old English Martyrology*', *RES* 4 (1953), 209-20; Janet M. Bately, 'Old English prose before and during the reign of Alfred', *ASE* 17 (1988), 93-138, esp. 103, 114, 119-20.

⁹⁶ Geltner, *The Medieval Prison*, 84.

⁹⁷ Christine Rauer, 'The sources of the *Old English Martyrology*', *ASE* 32 (2003), 89-109, at 97.

the *Martyrology* establishes a strong connection between the prison and divine visitation, but also presents the prison as a *locus* for other wondrous events, including conversion. The narratives in the collection include Christ's miraculous appearance in prison to comfort St Eugenia (II.3:13-5:10), the appearance of both Christ and an angel to the imprisoned evangelist St Mark (II.64:3-66:2), and that of St Theodote to St Anastasia (II.2:17-3:12). However, the *Martyrology* also contains a description of how Pope Silvester I, imprisoned by the reeve Tarquinius, successfully foretold the death of his persecutor (II.8:7-15) and an account of the incarceration of St Ananias, whose jailor is converted to Christianity by a vision of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove visiting the saint in prison (II.20:7-21:10). More spectacularly still, the anonymous compiler includes an account of how the twelve hungry dogs with whom St Benignus is imprisoned are miraculously prevented from harming him (II.245:3-246:5) and a fragmentary account of the miraculous and frankly bizarre appearance of a wild bear in the prison in which St Columba is about to be raped by her jailor, after which her jailor is converted and confesses his faith (II.9:1-13).

This re-imagination of the prison as a site in which God's grace may be more keenly felt is frequently represented as a transformation in the valence of the prison space consequent upon the presence of the saint.⁹⁸ In hagiographical narratives, this transformation is frequently expressed as a very precise kind of 'literary "sweet inversion"'.⁹⁹ Despite his apparent misgivings about such unauthorized miracle stories, this 'sweet inversion' is evident in Ælfric's hagiography in the transformation of the prison

⁹⁸ For Tertullian's classic expression of this transformation of the prison space, see *Ad martyres* II. 4: 'Habet tenebras, sed lumen estis ipsi; habet uincula, sed uos soluti Deo estis. Triste illic expirat, sed uos odor estis sua uitatis' (cited by chapter and section number from *Tertulliani Opera. Pars I, Opera catholica. Adversus Marcionem*, ed. E. Dekkers et al, CCSL 1 (Turnhout, 1954)). Cf. *The Epistle of the Gallican Churches: Lugdunum and Vienna with an appendix containing Tertullian's Address to Martyrs and The Passion of St. Perpetua*, trans. T. Herbert Bindley, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (London, 1900), 53: 'It has its darkness, but ye yourselves are light; it has its chains, but ye have been freed by God. Its breath is evil, but ye are an odour of sweet savour.'

⁹⁹ Geltner, *The Medieval Prison*, 83-4.

space that occurs immediately upon the saint's entrance in the account of the passion of St Julian.¹⁰⁰ Together with the son of his persecutor, whom he has converted to Christianity, Julian is cast into a dark prison filled with the stinking corpses of previously-executed prisoners:

Ða fore-sceawode godes gifu . þæt þær scean mycel leoht .
and se stenc wearð awend . to wynsumum bræðe .
and eall se unwynsumnyss him wearð to blysse¹⁰¹

In the change that the prison space undergoes here—from *unwynsumnyss* to *blysse*—the theoretical re-imagining of the prison space in Christian hagiography is reflected on a literal level. In the continuing narrative of Julian's passion, seven Christian brothers who have hitherto escaped persecution on account of their high-birth voluntarily join the saint in prison and receive baptism from him. The remarkable thing about this act of solidarity is not so much that the brothers should willingly submit to the persecutions and death of martyrdom, which is common enough in medieval hagiography, but rather the way in which the brothers' entrance into the prison is accomplished:

Hi eoden þa on niht . and godes ængel hi lædde .
and þæt cweartern geopenade . mid his handa hrepunge.¹⁰²

The inversion here of the homiletic motif of angelic release from prison is a striking and effective indicator of the re-imagining of the prison *locus* as a positive and desirable space to inhabit.

A similar effect is achieved, moreover, in Ælfric's account of the persecution of St Agatha. Here again, the prison in which the saint is confined is the site of a literal inversion when darkness is again displaced by a dazzlingly bright light and Agatha's

¹⁰⁰ On Ælfric's attitude towards the miraculous, see M. R. Godden, 'Ælfric's Saints' Lives and the Problem of Miracles', *LSE* ns 16 (1985), 83-100.

¹⁰¹ LS IV:213-15, 'Then the gift of God ordained that there shone a great light, and the stench was changed to a pleasant odour, and all the unpleasantness became joy for them.'

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 233-4, 'They then went at night and God's angel led them and opened that prison with the touch of his hands.'

amputated breast is miraculously restored (LS VIII:122-48). In the following passage, the transformation of the valence of the prison space is clearly signalled. Her jailors having been frightened away by the sudden heavenly light that illuminates the prison, Agatha is urged to flee by her fellow captives. The saint refuses, however, to give up her crown of martyrdom and remains in the prison awaiting her execution: *Nelle ic amyrran mine kynehelm / [...] ac ic þurh-wunige her* ('I do not wish to mar my crown, [...] but I will remain here', LS VIII:152-3). Here again, though in a different manner, the motif of divinely facilitated release is invoked in the flight of Agatha's jailors, but the saint's resolve to remain in the prison and her eagerness to attain martyrdom reflects a particularly Christian imaginary of the prison.

As this survey has hopefully demonstrated, the prison features more prominently in vernacular literature from the Anglo-Saxon period than has perhaps hitherto been acknowledged. Imprisonment is frequently used as an analogy for the torments of hell, especially in accounts of the Harrowing of Hell and the torments of the damned. These accounts not only freely employ carceral language and imagery but also at times present the prison as a place of penitence, a detail which may be related to the conceptualization of the prison in Anglo-Saxon documentary texts. At the same time, the prison commonly serves as a metaphor for the state of post-lapsarian man exiled to the prison of the world, and of the soul confined within the prison of the body. In such metaphors, release from the prison enclosure is figured as an act of divine mercy, as it frequently is in Old English hagiographical texts. However, in many of these hagiographical narratives a different conceptualization of the prison *locus* is also evident, namely a reappraisal of the meaning of the prison space from a Christian soteriological perspective. Through the 'sweet inversion' brought about by the presence of the saint, the hagiographical prison is transformed into a privileged place in which God's grace might be directly manifest.

Such different conceptualizations of the prison *locus* will all have contributed to the evolving complex collective formation of the prison during the Anglo-Saxon period—indeed, given the ambiguous evidence for the widespread use of prisons in England before the Norman Conquest it seems reasonable to assume that such literary and Christian traditions may have been a dominant influence on this formation. It is important to note, however, that although I have identified three specific contexts in which the prison is habitually invoked in Old English texts, the three are closely interrelated and the treatment of incarceration or of carceral imagery in any given instance might draw upon multiple different associations of the prison simultaneously. One example of this has been discussed already in the use of prison imagery in *Advent Lyrics II*. A more significant example, however, is treatment of the prison setting in the independent Old English prose versions of the *Life of St Margaret*.¹⁰³

In contrast to the representation of the prison space in the *Old English Martyrology*, in which miraculous visitations are consistently and unambiguously presented as expressions of grace, the prison in which Margaret is enclosed by her heathen suitor provides the location for the appearance of not only an angel (or in one version a dove), but also the appearance of two devils, one in the shape of a ferocious dragon.¹⁰⁴ Through her subsequent defeat of these devils, the ‘sweet inversion’ associated with the hagiographical prison is evident in Margaret’s transformation of the prison from a place of defeat to a place of victory. More precisely, however, her victory over the devils in the prison also acts as a post-figuration of Christ’s victory during his descent into the prison of hell. The

¹⁰³ Cited by page and section number from *The Old English Lives of St Margaret*, ed. Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, CSASE 9 (Cambridge, 1994).

¹⁰⁴ It is perhaps telling that while the *Martyrology* does contain an account of the martyrdom of Margaret, there called Marina (*Martyrologium*, ed. Kozar, II, 141:13-144:15), this account omits entirely the prison scene. Cf. *Lives of Margaret*, ed. Clayton and Magennis, 54-5. Clayton and Magennis explain that the author of the *Martyrology* ‘is evidently interested in tailoring the account to suit particular devotional needs, which do not include a cultivation of sensational elements’ (*ibid.*, 55), but this suggestion does not square with the compiler’s practice in general and it seems more plausible that the appearance of the devils did not fit the compiler’s conception of the prison as a *locus* for specifically divine visitation.

figural relationship between the two events is strongly emphasized in the version of the *Life* contained in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 303 in the saint's prayer following the appearance of the dragon in the prison:

‘Drihten God Ælmihtig, þu þe gesceope heofona and eorþa and eal mancyn and heora lif, þe on heom syndon, and þa þu on rode wære gehangen and þu to helle astige and þu þine halgan utgedydost and þone mycele deofol Sathan fæste gebunde, gehelp þu me, leofe Drihten, þæt ic þisne deofol fæste mote gebindan.’¹⁰⁵

This passage is quite unlike the corresponding prayer in the version of the *Life* found in London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius A. iii, in which Margaret prays for mercy and asks that God shield her from the dragon.¹⁰⁶ Whilst the Latin analogues to the Corpus text do include the reference to Christ's defeat of the devil, in these texts Margaret prays only that she might be able to overcome the demon.¹⁰⁷ As the precise analogy between the binding of Satan and Margaret's defeat of the demon occurs only in the Corpus text, it therefore seems likely that the vernacular author of the *Life* is here responding to the common use of carceral imagery in the context of the Harrowing of Hell to emphasize a precise typological relationship between the victory of the saint and that of Christ.¹⁰⁸ As will be seen in the following section, moreover, such typological connections between the hagiographical prison and the Harrowing of Hell also feature prominently in Old English verse hagiographical texts.

¹⁰⁵ *Life of St Margaret* 162:12, ‘Lord God Almighty, you who shaped the heavens and earth and all mankind and their life, which is within them, and then you were hanged on the cross and you descended to hell and you released your saints and securely bound Satan, the great devil, help me, beloved Lord, that I might securely bind this devil.’

¹⁰⁶ *Lives of Margaret*, ed. Clayton and Magennis, 122. On the Tiberius text's selective abbreviation and simplification of the legend, see *ibid.*, 56-61.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 204. On the relation of the Corpus text to the various Latin analogues, see *ibid.*, 61-71.

¹⁰⁸ By contrast to the view presented here, Dendle would read the prison episode in both Old English texts allegorically as a representation of the inner, psychological struggles the saint faces during her passion (*Satan Unbound*, 45-57; *id.*, ‘Pain and Saint-Making in *Andreas*, Bede, and the Old English Lives of St. Margaret’, in ed. Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *Varieties of Devotion in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 7 (Turnhout, 2003), 39-52, at 48-50).

CONCEPTUALIZING ENCLOSURE: THE PRISON IN OLD ENGLISH

HAGIOGRAPHICAL VERSE

As noted above, the prison features as a significant setting in three Old English narrative poems: *Juliana*, *Elene* and *Andreas*. Connections between these texts might be unusually close. The common authorship of the first two poems is seemingly proclaimed by the runic ‘signatures’ appended to them and identifying them as the work of the poet Cynewulf. The presence of these ‘signatures’ is not in itself categorical proof of (common) authorship. Both Daniel Donoghue and, more recently, Jun Terasawa have challenged on linguistic grounds the assumption that the same poet was responsible for, on the one hand, *Juliana* and *Elene*, and, on the other hand, *The Ascension* and *The Fates of the Apostles*—which both contain comparable ‘signatures.’¹⁰⁹ However, both studies affirm the linguistic similarities of *Juliana* and *Elene*, and the common authorship of these two poems at least is not in any serious doubt.¹¹⁰ Moreover, as will be discussed in more detail below, verbal, thematic and stylistic similarities between *Andreas* and the four ‘signed’ poems have been frequently remarked. That *Andreas* too should be counted as a work of Cynewulf now seems unlikely, but the possibility that the anonymous poet responsible for *Andreas* was familiar with and influenced by Cynewulf’s verse will be considered below.

¹⁰⁹ Daniel Donoghue, *Style in Old English Poetry: The Test of the Auxiliary* (New Haven, Connecticut, and London, 1987), 107-16; Jun Terasawa, ‘Negative Constructions in Old English: The Question of Cynewulf’s Authorship’, in ed. Yoko Iyeiri, *Aspects of English Negation* (Amsterdam, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Tokyo, 2005), 15-25.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Terasawa, ‘Cynewulf’s Authorship’, 22: ‘*Elene* and *Juliana* show such striking similarities that it may be safe to assume the same author (probably Cynewulf) for the two poems.’ Both Donoghue (*Style in Old English Poetry*, 114-5) and Terasawa (‘Cynewulf’s Authorship’, 23) note the possibility that the apparent differences in practice they identify may be explained in terms of developments in a single author’s poetic style. In the absence of more positive evidence of separate authorship, this study will continue to use the name ‘Cynewulf’ to distinguish the poet responsible for the four poems which bear the distinctive ‘signature’. A recent attempt to use computer programmes to analyse possible literary relationships existing between surviving Old English poetic texts has suggested that the main text of *Juliana*—up until the passage containing the ‘signature’—differs in its lexical practice from the other ‘signed’ poems, but the authors of this study interpret this as indicating a heavier reliance on a (Latin) source text in this poem than in the other ‘signed’ poems (Michael D. C. Drout, Michael J. Kahn, Mark D. LeBlanc and Christina Nelson, ‘Of Dendrogrammatology: Lexomic Methods for Analyzing Relationships among Old English Poems’, *JEGP* 110 (2011), 301-36, at 333-4).

Beyond the issue of authorship, however, these three texts are alike in other significant ways. Each of these texts is associated with the genre of medieval hagiography. It has been argued that of these poems, only the account of the saint's *passio* in *Juliana* in fact observes the strict pattern of Christian hagiography.¹¹¹ However, as the following discussion will make clear, each of the three poems engages with a range of conventions and generic expectations associated with medieval hagiography. In addition to this generic similarity, each of these texts draws to a greater or lesser extent on Latin source texts. The extent to which each poem is dependent upon an identifiable source will be discussed below. What is immediately significant, however, is that the relationship of these poems to source texts from a Latinate Christian literary tradition, and the genre on which these texts primarily draw, may be significant influences on both the appearance of the prison as a setting in these narratives, and also on the way in which the prison is conceptualized in the poems.

What the following analysis aims to demonstrate, however, is—firstly—that in each of these three instances, the Old English poetic text builds significantly on the presentation of the prison setting in comparison to the Latin text on which it draws. In so doing, the authors of these texts not only display their sensibility to the poetic representation of space, but can also, I suggest, be seen to draw upon and contribute to the complex collective formation of the prison in Anglo-Saxon England as it has been reconstructed above. Unsurprisingly, a major influence on the presentation of the prison in these poems is the prose hagiographical tradition. However, as will be seen, the texts also reflect both the strong association between the prison *locus* and hell, and perhaps an interest in the prison as a site for the performance of penance. Ultimately, however, I shall argue that the response to the prison setting in each of these poems extends the symbolism of the prison

¹¹¹ Michael Lapidge, 'The saintly life in Anglo-Saxon England', in eds. Godden and Lapidge, *Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, 243-63, at 259-60.

locus in a way not evident in the prose and verse texts discussed above, focusing especially on the spatial implications of confinement and incarceration. Whilst there remain striking similarities in the presentation of the prison in these poems, I hope to demonstrate that, in spite of any possible connections between these texts, the treatment of confinement within the prison, and its relationship to the wider spatial poetics of each poem, can also be seen to differ significantly between individual texts.

Juliana

Of the 731 extant lines of Cynewulf's hagiographic poem *Juliana*, some three-hundred are set in the prison in which the saint is confined by her suitor-tormentor Eleusius (233b-534a).¹¹² Following a common hagiographic paradigm of the female virgin martyr, Juliana is persecuted and subjected to a variety of horrific tortures as a result of her refusal to recant her Christianity and marry the pagan prefect. During the course of these tortures, Eleusius has Juliana imprisoned, apparently to allow the saint time to reflect on the further torments she will endure if she does not relent. Once in prison, Juliana is confronted by a devil who attempts to persuade her to submit to Eleusius. Having prayed for support, Juliana attacks the devil and binds him, extracting from him a confession of the evil he has wrought in the world. Released from the prison, Juliana suffers further tortures and is finally beheaded. Her soul travels blissfully to God, in contrast to that of Eleusius, who dies immediately afterwards in a ship-wreck and is condemned to the punishments of hell.

While Juliana's confrontation with the devil has received abundant critical attention, the possible significance of the prison setting has gone largely unexplored.¹¹³ However, the

¹¹² This portion of the text also contains a lacuna after line 288 with a loss of perhaps seventy lines of text. Cf. *Juliana*, ed. Woolf, 1.

¹¹³ Notable exceptions are Joseph Wittig, 'Figural Narrative in Cynewulf's *Juliana*', *ASE* 4 (1975), 37-55 and Margaret Enid Bridges, *Generic Contrast in Old English Hagiographical Poetry*, *Anglistica* 22

presentation of the prison in *Juliana* can be shown to reflect elements of the Anglo-Saxon formation of the prison as it has been reconstructed above. As in the prose hagiographical narratives discussed previously, the prison in the poem is presented as a space in which the miraculous may be directly experienced. This is signalled by the apparition of the devil, who appears suddenly (*semminga*, 242b) immediately upon the saint's entry into the prison (242b-6). The appearance of a devil to an imprisoned saint may recall most clearly the *Life of St Margaret*, in the vernacular Anglo-Saxon corpus at least, and the parallels between the two narratives are significant. However, the wider association of miraculous apparitions with the prison setting is indicated in *Juliana* by the fact that the devil is initially disguised as an angel (*Hæfde engles hiw*, 244b) and attempts to pass himself off as such in counselling Juliana to submit to Eleusius, a detail which clearly recalls the trope of divine visitation so familiar from, particularly, the hagiographical narratives of the *Old English Martyrology*. Moreover, the account of Juliana's incarceration also provides an example of the 'sweet inversion' so frequently associated with the prison space in Anglo-Saxon hagiography. The rôle-reversal that takes place inside the prison has been commented upon by numerous scholars.¹¹⁴ Encouraged by a miraculous heavenly voice, Juliana turns the tables on the devil by subjecting him to bondage and physical confinement, and—again like her counterpart in the *Life of St Margaret*—Juliana's actions transform the prison into a place of victory.

(Copenhagen, 1984), 99-100, 112. While Allen J. Frantzen devotes considerable space to an analysis of the dramatic potential of the exchange between the saint and the devil, he does so without considering the implications of the setting of this scene ('Drama and Dialogue in Old English Poetry: The Scene of Cynewulf's *Juliana*', *Theatre Studies* 48 (2007), 99-119, at 110-13).

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, 29-30, 99-100; Donald G. Bzdyl, 'Juliana: Cynewulf's Dispeller of Delusion', *NM* 86 (1985), 165-75, at 172; Frantzen, 'Drama and Dialogue', 110-13. Cf. also Shari Horner's analysis of the inversion of gender roles in this passage ('Spiritual Truth and Sexual Violence: The Old English *Juliana*, Anglo-Saxon Nuns, and the Discourse of Female Monastic Enclosure', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 19 (1994), 658-75, at 670).

These narrative details are not, of course, unique to the Old English poem, being found also in the Latin *Passio S. Iulianae* which stands as Cynewulf's source for *Juliana*.¹¹⁵ However, a comparison of Cynewulf's text and his Latin source suggests that the depiction of the prison in the Old English poem—though in itself not extensive—does elaborate on that in the Latin prose.¹¹⁶ The *Passio* text mentions the prison setting only three times—once when Eleusius orders Juliana to be taken to prison (158:4), once when the devil (named Belial in the Latin) refers to the torments awaiting the saint when she leaves the prison (159:6), and once when she actually does leave it (162:12)—and the prison itself is wholly undescribed. In the poem, however, the prison is a barred or grated chamber (*hlinræced*, 243a) and the forged bolts with which the doors are fastened (*homra geweorc*, 237a) are described prominently; the poet also stresses the elements of compulsion (*nydcleafa*, 240a), darkness (*heolstre bihelmad*, 241a; *under hlinscuan*, 564a), and confinement (*þam engan hofe*, 532a) that characterize the saint's experience.

The changes and additions that Cynewulf makes to the setting and course of events in the account of Juliana's confrontation with the devil give the prison setting a significance in the poem that is not paralleled in the Latin prose text. In the Latin *Passio*, the description of Juliana tormenting the devil with her own chains is not only dramatically satisfying, but is also a naturalistic (if such a word can be used in relation to a conflict between a devil and a saint) and even humorous explanation of how the binding of the devil is achieved:

¹¹⁵ Cf. Michael Lapidge, 'Cynewulf and the *Passio S. Iulianae*', in eds. Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr* (Toronto, 2003), 147-71. Lapidge prints a text of the *Passio* from Paris, BNF MS. lat. 10861 which he argues is 'very similar to, and possibly identical with' Cynewulf's exemplar (*ibid.*, 147). The text of the *Passio* is cited by page and section number from Lapidge's text.

¹¹⁶ The following analysis is in contrast to the views of Magennis, who argues that 'Cynewulf shows little desire to enhance the presentation of the physical or social setting of his inherited story' (*Images of Community*, 171).

Tunc sancta Iuliana ligauit eum postergum minibus et posuit super terram et adpraehendens unum de uinculis de quibus ipsa fuerat ligata, cedebat ipsum daemonem.¹¹⁷

In Cynewulf's poem, Juliana herself is not in fact explicitly bound with chains before being imprisoned (231-3a). However, the Old English text lays significant emphasis on the fetters and bonds with which Juliana constrains the devil (*fetrum gebunde*, 433b; *bendum bilegde*, 519b; *bendum fæstne*, 535b; *bendum fæst*, 625a).¹¹⁸ In emphasizing this aspect of the scene, Cynewulf is, I suggest, playing on established associations of the prison as a setting in Anglo-Saxon literature. The adaptations that Cynewulf makes to his source serve to conflate the devil's bondage in the prison with his status as a 'captive of hell' (*helle hæftling*, 246a). Indeed, the characteristics of the prison in Cynewulf's text are paralleled in the descriptions of hell in the poem. Like the prison, hell is a place characterised by darkness (*of þystrum*, 333a; *þam þystran ham*, 683b). Similarly, the description of the prison as a 'narrow house' (*þam engan hofe*) not only recalls the commonplace characterisation of hell as a 'narrow' space in Old English poetry, but also specifically parallels the description of hell previously in the poem as a 'narrow home' (*þam engan ham*, 323a).¹¹⁹

The effect of this presentation is to align the description of the prison in which Juliana's confrontation with the devil occurs with the commonplace use of the prison as a setting analogous to hell, whether in the context of the confinement of the patriarchs, the devils or the souls of the damned. This imagistic condensation of the two *loci* in the prison-setting is

¹¹⁷ *Passio S. Iulianae* 161:10. Cf. *Source and Analogues*, trans. Allen and Calder, 128: 'Saint Juliana then bound his hands behind his back and threw him to the ground. Taking one of the ropes with which she herself was bound, she struck the demon.'

¹¹⁸ That there is in fact no account of the binding of the devil in the Old English text has been highlighted by Wittig ('Figural Narrative', 46-7). It is likely, however, that such a description has been lost in the lacuna following the statement in line 288b that Juliana seized the devil.

¹¹⁹ The adjective *enge* is used to characterize hell in both *Genesis B* (356a) and *Judgement Day I* (22a); in *Solomon and Saturn I* hell is called the 'narrowest of homelands' (*ðæs engestan eðelrices*, 106) and, as we have seen above, the ambiguous location of the speakers of *Advent Lyrics II* is described as *þis enge lond* (15a). Elsewhere, the torments of hell are described as a 'narrow strife' (*nearwan nið*, *Genesis B* 697a; cf. *Christ and Satan* 634a) and its inhabitants are said to be 'narrowly oppressed' (*nearwe gebeded*, *Christ and Satan* 446b). Death itself is described in terms of narrowness both in *The Phoenix* (*se enga dead*, 52b) and—as a personification—in *Guðlac B* (*enge anhog*, 997a).

not, moreover, evident in the Latin text: just as the characterization of the prison constitutes an addition to Cynewulf's source, so too the passages in which hell is described (321-4; 420b-4; 683-8a) all represent either an elaboration of or an addition to the Latin text.¹²⁰ The result of this presentation is not only the conflation of the two *loci* of prison and hell, but also the conflation of two time-frames, the human and the ontological, that inevitably points the reader towards a typological interpretation of the narrative.¹²¹

The prison scene in *Juliana*—like that in the *Life of St Margaret*—has been read as a post-figuration of Christ binding Satan at the Harrowing of Hell in such a way that the saint's action in the prison 'realizes on a literal level an eschatological reality'.¹²² This typological resonance is not made explicit in *Juliana* in the same way that it is in the *Corpus Life of St Margaret*, and it has been objected that Cynewulf 'does not emphasize or call attention to' the figural interpretation of this episode.¹²³ However, the typological link between the binding in the prison and the Harrowing of Hell is suggested in the devil's broken plea to Juliana as the saint leaves the prison:

'Ic þec halsige, hlæfdig min,
 Iuliana, fore Godes sibbum,
 þæt þu furþur me fraceþu ne wyrce,
 edwit for eorlum, þonne þu ær dydest,
 þa þu oferswiþdest þone snotrestan
 under hlinscuan, helwarena cyning,
 in feonda byrig; þæt is fæder user,
 morþres manfrea. [...?]¹²⁴

This passage, which Woolf finds 'inexplicable', elaborates a reference in the *Passio* to 'a vicarious defeat of the prince of devils'.¹²⁵ In the Old English text, however, the

¹²⁰ Bridges, by contrast, argues that the prison functions as 'the archetypal *witehus*, hell' in 'all versions of the legend' (*Generic Contrast*, 99), but such an association is not at all clear in the Latin text.

¹²¹ Cf. James W. Earl's discussion of '[t]he transcendence of time through the typological approach to historical events' ('Typology and Iconographic Style in Early Medieval Hagiography', *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 8 (1975), 15-46, at 18).

¹²² Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, 29. Cf. Wittig, 'Figural Narrative', 43-7.

¹²³ Bosse and Hinton, 'Apocalyptic Vision', 284.

¹²⁴ *Juliana* 539-46a, 'I pray you, my lady Juliana, by the peace of God, that you work no more insult against me, shame before the warriors, than you previously did, when you overcame in the shadow of prison, the most wise, the king of the inhabitants of hell, in the city of devils; that is our father, the lord of evil.'

ambiguous wording of this passage emphasizes the typological conflation that is taking place. In context, the compound *hlinscua* appears to refer specifically to the darkness of the prison in which the contest takes place. However, the subsequent reference to the ‘city of devils’ (*feonda byrig*) is a clear reference to hell, and Cynewulf uses the same phrase in his account of the Harrowing of Hell in *The Ascension* (569a). Although it would be possible to interpret this as a statement that Juliana in the prison overcame Satan in hell, the natural reading of these lines would be to take *under hlinscuan* and *in feonda byrig* in apposition to each other. To take both phrases as a literal reference to hell, however, is clearly unsatisfactory, since Juliana does not in any literal sense visit hell. The apposition of the two adverbial phrases, therefore, aligns grammatically and syntactically the two *loci* at this point, just as Juliana’s defeat and binding of the devil is aligned typologically with the Harrowing of Hell.

In its association of the prison space with miraculous events, in its use of the ‘sweet inversion’ trope, and in its typological connection between the hagiographical prison and the infernal prison, Cynewulf’s account of the incarceration of Juliana thus reflects the various ways in which the prison could be conceptualized in Anglo-Saxon literary culture. However, as I hope now to demonstrate, the treatment of the prison setting in *Juliana* nevertheless stands apart from the examples of prison settings and imagery discussed above in a way that emphasizes the poet’s keen awareness of the potential for the significant use of spatial setting. In Cynewulf’s poem, the description of the prison enclosure participates in a detailed exploration of the various—and even opposing—ways in which the idea of enclosure can be conceptualized.

In the Latin *Passio*, Juliana responds to her imprisonment with a long prayer in which she asks God to pity and strengthen her in her distress (158-9:5). The Old English poem,

¹²⁵ *Juliana*, ed. Woolf, 46 n. to line 541ff. Cf. *Passio S. Iulianae* 162:12: ‘Patrem meum superasti; me uinxisti.’

however, omits this prayer and any suggestion of the saint's despair, stressing instead her enduring faith:

	Hyre wæs Cristes lof
in ferðlocan	fæste biwunden,
milde modsefan,	mægen unbrice.
Ða wæs mid clustre	carcernes duru
behliden, homra geweorc;	halig þær inne
wærfæst wunade.	Symle heo Wuldorcyning
herede æt heortan,	heofonrices God,
in þam nydcleafan,	Nergend fira,
heolstre bihelmad;	hyre wæs Halig Gæst
singal gesið. ¹²⁶	

Noting Juliana's 'unflinching steadfastness' in these lines, Daniel Calder has argued that the change from the source is explained by Cynewulf's dependence on the 'ritual perspective' of hagiography at the expense of realistic depiction.¹²⁷ I would suggest, however, that the key to understanding these lines lies in the reference to Juliana's interior mental enclosure, her *ferðloca*.

In an important study of the depiction of the 'mind-as-enclosure' figure in Old English poetry, Brit Mize has drawn attention to the different ways in which the presentation of this mental enclosure is effected by a pair of 'binary variables' related to this figure.¹²⁸ The first of these variables is the capacity for either containment or exclusion of abstract mental qualities or experiences such as wisdom or sorrow. The second relates to the interaction of the mind-as-enclosure with the external reality and the (im-)permeability of the boundary between. As Mize has shown, the concept of permeability in this model can

¹²⁶ *Juliana* 233b-42a, 'The glory of Christ, an inviolate strength, was securely enclosed in her mind, her gentle mind. The prison's door was then closed with a bolt, the work of the hammer; the faithful saint remained therein. In her heart she continually praised the King of Glory, the God of heaven, Saviour of mankind, in that place of compulsion, enveloped by darkness; the Holy Spirit was her constant companion.'

¹²⁷ Daniel G. Calder, 'The Art of Cynewulf's *Juliana*', *MLQ* 34 (1973), 355-71, at 365.

¹²⁸ Brit Mize, 'The representation of the mind as an enclosure in Old English poetry', *ASE* 35 (2006), 57-90, at 73. Cf. *id.*, 'Manipulations of the Mind-as-Container Motif in *Beowulf*, *Homiletic Fragment II*, and Alfred's *Metrical Epilogue to the Pastoral Care*', *JEGP* 107 (2008), 25-56; *id.*, 'The Mental Container and the Cross of Christ: Revelation and Community in *The Dream of the Rood*', *SP* 107 (2010), 131-78. Important groundwork for this study was laid down in articles by Malcolm Godden ('Anglo-Saxons on the mind') and Peter Clemons ('*Mens absentia cogitans* in *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*', in eds. D. A. Pearsall and R. A. Waldron, *Medieval Literature and Civilization: Studies in Memory of G. N. Garmonsway* (London, 1969), 62-77).

be either positively or negatively valued, depending upon the particular circumstances in which the figure is employed.¹²⁹ According to Mize's schema, the use of the mind-as-enclosure figure in the prison scene in *Juliana* represents an example of the mind-as-enclosure containing, where impermeability is positively valued.¹³⁰ Juliana's *ferðloca* contains her awareness of Christ's glory (*Cristes lof*), a commodity that is both positively valued in a general sense as a Christian virtue and also specifically valuable to the saint as a support in the face of the torments still awaiting her (*mægen unbrice*). Consequently, impermeability is, in this instance, positively valued, and Juliana is successful in securing the integrity of her mental enclosure (*fæste biwunden; wærfæst*).

The description of the *ferðloca* thus represents a conceptualization of enclosure and enclosed space as something to be positively valued.¹³¹ In the immediate context in which this description occurs, however, this conceptualization contrasts sharply with a converse negative valuation of enclosure and enclosed space in relation to the prison.¹³² The physical enclosure of the prison is stressed in this passage both by the use of the compound *nydcleafa* (literally a room which one is compelled to occupy), and also by the emphasis on the bolted door (*mid clustre [...] bihliden*). The oppressive nature of the enclosure is also impressively signalled by the image of the enveloping or engulfing darkness (*heolstre bihelmad*). This contrast between the description of Juliana's inner fastness and her physical confinement within the prison represents a subtle variation on the 'sweet inversion' motif associated with the hagiographical prison. Not only is the captivity of the

¹²⁹ Mize, 'The mind as enclosure', 73-88.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹³¹ The term *ferðloca* is here understood as a 'pure' kenning according to the definition of C. L. Wrenn (ed., *Beowulf and the Finnesburg Fragment* (London, 1958), 81-2) in that its meaning derives from a simile equating the chest with a container. However, the spatial element of the description is not effaced in the resolution of the kenning. As Overing notes, it is the 'immediate impact' of kennings 'at face value' that the audience of a poem primarily responds to, rather than its 'figurative' association (*Language, Sign, and Gender*, 17). For a radically different understanding of the concept of interior space in Old English poetry, see Leslie Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular Tradition* (Toronto, 2011).

¹³² Similar points are made by both Bridges (*Generic Contrast*, 100) and (particularly) Horner ('Spiritual Truth and Sexual Violence', 667).

saint inverted through her subsequent role as captor in the exchange with the devil, but the valence of confinement is also inverted in the image of Juliana's *ferðloca*. The juxtaposition of the opposed conceptualizations of confinement re-imagines Juliana's imprisonment as something that is at both voluntary and desirable.

Such a reading is supported, moreover, by a recognition of the wider preoccupation in the poem with the issue of what it means to be 'secure' (*fæst*). This Old English term—as an adjective and also in its related adverbial (*fæste*, *fæstlice*) and verbal (*(ge-)fæstnian*) forms—occurs twenty-three times in the extant poem, and the use of these words reveals a dichotomy regarding the idea of “fastness” which mirrors the contrasting valuations of enclosed space identified above.¹³³ On the one hand, the idea of “fastness” is used repeatedly, as we have already seen, in the context of the physical constraint suffered by the devil. When he first appears to Juliana, a heavenly voice instructs the saint to seize the devil and hold him fast (*Forfoh þone frætgan 7 fæste geheald*, 284). The devil subsequently complains both that he has been thus securely seized (*fæste forfenge*, 522a), and that he has been bound fast with fetters (*fæste fetrum gebunde*, 433) and constrained with secure bonds (*bendum fæstne*, 535b). The negative connotations of being thus *fæst* in these examples is clear. By contrast, however, we may note the numerous instances in which the idea of “fastness” is employed in a positive sense. To the example of *Cristes lof* being *fæste biwunden* within Juliana's *ferðloca*, we might add the expression of the saint's resolution in terms of securing her heart (*fæstlice ferð stapelian*, 270) and also of her rejection of Eleusius' love in terms of fixing her affection on God (*hio to Gode hæfde / freondrædenne fæst gestapelad*, 106b-7a).

¹³³ The adjective appears as a simplex twice (535b, 625a) and nine times in four different compounds (always as the second element): *ginfæst* (168a), *soðfæst* (325b, 337b, 348b, 362b, 426a, 438b), *stapolfæst* (374b), *wærfæst* (238a). The adverbial form *fæste* appears seven times (42a, 107b, 234b, 284b, 389a, 433a, 522a) compared with just one instance of the suffixed form *fæstlice* (270a); the verb *(ge-)fæstnian* occurs four times (400a, 499a, 649a, 654b). According to Anderson, the adjective *fæst* is the second most commonly used word in *Juliana*; only *halig* is used more frequently (*Cynewulf*, 167).

This positive understanding of the concept of “fastness” is most evident in the long passage dealing with the devil’s attempts to corrupt mankind. Throughout this section, the ability to withstand the devil’s temptations is expressed in terms of being secure in the truth (*soðfæst*, 325b, 337b, 348b, 362b, 426a, 438b), and the devil repeatedly expresses his evil intentions in terms of moving believers from this steadfastness (*oncyrran*, 326b, 363b, 439b; *oðcyrran*, 338b). This spatial metaphor for temptation is dramatically expressed in the third of the devil’s confessions (352-417a). In a passage that draws on the Gregorian understanding of sin, the devil describes how he inflames Christians with sinfulness so that they can no longer remain steadfast (*stapolfæst*, 374b) in the ‘place of prayer’ (*gebedstowe*, 376a).¹³⁴ The devil goes on to explain, however, that it sometimes happens that he encounters a ‘champion of God’ (*Metodes cempan*, 383b) who will not yield before the devil’s assaults, but remains *fæste on feðan* (‘secure in formation’, 389a).

The conspicuous use of marital imagery in these lines establishes a metaphorical representation of temptation as battle that is fully exploited in the subsequent description of how the devil overcomes the defences of less resolute champions (*cempan sænran*, 395b):

¹³⁴ Cf. James F. Doubleday, ‘The Allegory of the Soul as Fortress in Old English Poetry’, *Anglia* 88 (1970), 503-8, at 503-4 and n.3; Anderson, *Cynewulf*, 89-90.

[‘...’] Ðeah he godes hwæt

onginne gæstlice,	ic beo gearo sona,
þæt ic ingehygd	eal geondwlite,
hu gefæstnad sy	ferð innanweard,
wipersteall geworht;	ic þæs wealles geat
ontyne þurh teonan;	bið se torr þyrel,
ingong geopenad,	þonne ic ærest him
þurh eargfare	in onsende
in breostsefan	bitre geþoncas,
þurh mislice	modes willan,
þæt him sylfum	selle þynceð
leahtras to fremman	ofer lof Godes
lices lustas. [...’] ¹³⁵	

The imagery of this passage has been linked to a common patristic allegory of the soul as a fortress.¹³⁶ As Mize has noted, however, a distinctive feature of the use of this motif in Old English verse is that it is the mind (*breostsefa*) rather than the soul that is represented as a fortress.¹³⁷ The depiction of the mind as a walled enclosure or tower (*torr*) dramatically recalls the earlier description of Juliana’s *ferðloca*, and once again there is revealed an understanding of enclosure as a positive, protective concept in these lines that is at odds with the way in which confinement and bondage within the prison has been presented.¹³⁸ In particular, the reference to the devil opening *þæs wealles geat* presents both an imagistic and a conceptual mirror for the emphasis placed earlier in the poem on the locked doors of the prison.

The juxtaposition of different conceptions of enclosure can be detected throughout *Juliana*. Even at the close of the narrative in the saint’s final speech this interest becomes apparent. Faced with immanent martyrdom, Juliana urges the crowd of witnesses to be steadfast in their faith:

¹³⁵ *Juliana* 397b-409a, ‘Though he attempt some good thing in the spirit, I am instantly prepared, that I should examine all his inward thought, how his mind is secured within, how his defences are constructed; by iniquity I open that wall’s gate; the tower is pierced, the entrance opened, then I first send into his mind evil thoughts as a flight of arrows, as various desires of the mind, so that performing sins, the lusts of the body, seems better to him than the praise of God.’

¹³⁶ Cf. Doubleday, ‘The Soul as Fortress in Old English Poetry’. For the image of the ‘devil’s darts’, see Stanley, ‘Poetic Diction’, 418-22.

¹³⁷ Mize, ‘The mind as enclosure’, 81.

¹³⁸ In Mize’s terms, this is an example of the mind-as-enclosure excluding something exterior to itself (the devil’s arrows) where impermeability is positively valued (though in this example the hypothetical Christian is unable to maintain this impermeability). Cf. *ibid.*, 80-2, 88.

Forþon ic, leof weorud, læran wille,
 ætfremmende, þæt ge eower hus
 gefæstnigen, þy læs hit ferblædum
 windas toweorpan; weal sceal þy trumra
 strong wiþstandan storma scurum,
 leahtra gehygdum.¹³⁹

This image of the storm-threatened house, which elaborates on the use in the *Passio* of the biblical image of the house founded on rock, inevitably recalls the earlier images of mental enclosure.¹⁴⁰ Kenneth Bleeth has argued that the elaboration of the storm imagery in this passage draws upon ‘a common stock of imagery linking harsh storms with the trials of an heroic character’ here adapted to fit patristic interpretations of the biblical image in terms of ‘spiritual steadfastness’.¹⁴¹ Like the earlier image of the soul-as-fortress, however, these lines invoke a conceptualization of enclosure as both positive and protective.

The idea of spiritual steadfastness and of mental enclosure are, of course, common in Old English poetry, but the specific contrasts of different conceptualizations of enclosure and enclosed space that are established in *Juliana* appear to represent an individual manipulation of these common ideas. There is nothing comparable in the Latin *Passio*: the prison in this text is a non-place, a blank space within which the encounter with the devil could take place. The model of the mental enclosure does not feature in the Latin, and the concept of mental stability is barely hinted at in the *Passio*’s description of the devil’s methodology.¹⁴² The account in *Juliana*, therefore, appears to represent an original response to the concept of enclosure suggested by the setting of a large part of the narrative within a prison.

In his analysis of the mind-as-enclosure figure, Mize notes that the inherent flexibility of this paradigm meant that individual poets had considerable freedom to determine the

¹³⁹ *Juliana* 647-52a, ‘Therefore, beloved company, I will instruct you, fulfilling the law, so that you secure your house, lest with sudden blasts the winds overthrow it; the strong wall will more firmly withstand the showers of storms, of sinful thoughts.’

¹⁴⁰ *Passio S. Iulianae* 164-5:20: ‘aedificate domus uestrass super petram uiuam, ne uenientibus uentis ualidis dirumpamini’. Cf. Matthew 7:24-27.

¹⁴¹ Kenneth A. Bleeth, ‘*Juliana*, 647-52’, *MÆ* 38 (1969), 119-22, at 121.

¹⁴² Cf. *Passio S. Iulianae* 160-1:9: ‘Et ubi inuenieremus prumtum ad opus Dei consistere, facimus eum desideria multa amplectere’.

values associated with the concepts of containment and exclusion in specific instances.¹⁴³ He concludes that ‘some of the more nuanced uses of the mind-as-enclosure model indicate that Anglo-Saxon poets and (in their estimation) their audiences were capable of not just recognizing its thematic associations, but considering them in creative local combinations with other ideas’.¹⁴⁴ The description of Juliana’s incarceration in conjunction with the description of her *ferðloca* represents exactly this type of creative local combination.

Elene

Of the three poems to be considered in this section, the prison setting ostensibly plays the least significant role in the account of the finding of the true cross in *Elene*.¹⁴⁵ Following Constantine’s dream and the battle with the Germanic invaders in the opening episode of the poem, *Elene* goes on to describe the discovery of the cross and the nails with which Christ was crucified by the eponymous heroine, the emperor’s mother. Presenting her mission in strikingly militaristic terms, Cynewulf describes how Elene’s attempts to elicit information regarding the location of the true Cross from a representation of Jewish wise-men culminates in her imprisonment of their spokesman Judas in a dried-up well without food or water. However, closer examination of this episode demonstrates that Cynewulf’s description of the prison *locus* again elaborates on that of his putative source, the *Acta Cyriaci*, in which the place of confinement is not in fact described as a prison at all.

¹⁴³ Mize, ‘The mind as an enclosure’, 73.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁴⁵ Part of the following section was delivered in a paper at the 2009 Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic which was subsequently published in the conference proceedings (‘Literal and Spiritual Depths: Re-Thinking the ‘drygne seað’ of *Elene*’, *Quaestio Insularis: Selected Proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon Norse and Celtic* 10 (2009), 27-44).

Moreover, the conceptualization of the prison setting and of the idea of enclosure in the poem closely mirrors Cynewulf's more expansive treatment in *Juliana*.

Elene's treatment of Judas has led to some disquiet amongst scholars. Modern readers have proved generally resistant to the aggressive devotion with which Elene pursues her goal, and the recognition that the imprisonment and starvation of a Jew by a Christian figure of authority distortedly reflects common medieval hagiographical tropes has made the presentation of the queen seem worryingly ambiguous. In the words of Rosemary Woolf, the imprisonment episode constitutes 'an inverted passion, in which the ruler is the Christian and the prisoner the pagan'.¹⁴⁶

The inversion of hagiographical norms evident here cannot, moreover, be wholly attributed to the narrative structure of the legend in the Latin tradition known to Cynewulf.¹⁴⁷ Comparison with the Latin *Acta*, suggests that the Old English poetic account in fact amplifies and emphasizes the oppressive nature of Judas' imprisonment. Indeed, the most striking thing about the Latin account is its brevity. The text is silent about the suffering endured by Judas and does not describe the place of his confinement except as a 'dry pit'. Judas does not voice any specific complaint about his treatment and the motivation behind his capitulation and plea for release is implicit rather than explicit:

Beata Helena dixit: Per Crucifixum, fame te interficiam, nisi dixeris ueritatem. Et cum haec dixisset, iussit eum mitti in lacum siccum, usque in septem dies, sic ut custodiretur a custodibus. Cum transissent autem septem dies, clamauit Judas de lacu, dicens, Obsecro uos, educite me, et ego ostendam uobis crucem Christi.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Rosemary Woolf, 'Saints' Lives', in ed. E. G. Stanley, *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature* (London, 1966), 37–66, reprinted in *id.*, *Art and Doctrine*, ed. O'Donoghue, 219–44, at 227–8. Cf. Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, 77–80; Robert DiNapoli, 'Poesis and Authority: Traces of an Anglo-Saxon Agon in Cynewulf's *Elene*', *Neophilologus* 82 (1998), 619–30, at 619–20. On the issue of Elene's use of torture, see especially Christina M. Heckman, 'Things in Doubt: *Inuentio*, Dialectic, and Jewish Secrets in Cynewulf's *Elene*', *JEGP* 108 (2009), 449–80, at 469–73.

¹⁴⁷ On Cynewulf's method of translation, see John Gardner, 'Cynewulf's *Elene*: Sources and Structure', *Neophilologus* 54 (1970), 65–76.

¹⁴⁸ *Acta Cyriaci* 84:3–7. Cf. *Sources and Analogues*, trans. Allen and Calder, 65: 'Blessed Helena said, "By Him who was crucified, I will kill you with hunger, unless you tell me the truth." When she had said this, she ordered him to be cast into a dry pit, and guarded by jailors for seven days. After seven days had elapsed, Judas cried out from the pit, "I implore you, take me out and I will show you Christ's Cross"'.¹⁴⁸

In the Old English prose Invention homily, the treatment of this episode is similarly cursory (85:185-93). By contrast, however, the corresponding passage in *Elene* occupies some thirty lines (685-715). This account both introduces details not present in the *Acta* and freely elaborates on the hardship suffered by the captive. The place of confinement itself, whilst still described as a dry pit (*drygne seað*, 693a), is more explicitly defined in terms of imprisonment: it is described not only as a place of torment (*hearmloca*, 695a) and, like the prison in *Juliana*, a place of compulsion (*nydcleofa*, 711b), but also explicitly as a prison (*carcern*, 715a); Judas is not only tormented by hunger (*hungre gepreatod*, 695b) but is also bound with fetters (*clommum beclungen*, 696a); he describes his confinement as an affliction (*proht*, 704b) but also as captivity (*hæft*, 703b). Stress is laid on Judas' isolation (*duguða leas*, 693b) and on both the emotional (*siomode in sorgum*, 694a) and the physical (*sarum besylced*, 697a) nature of his torment. Unlike in the Latin text, Judas' capitulation is explicitly linked to his inability to endure further torment (699-708), and his release from the pit, passed over in the *Acta*, is described in seven lines of verse (709-15).

What was, therefore, merely a narrative detail in the *Acta Cyriaci* becomes in the poem a significant episode. The principle effect of Cynewulf's treatment of this episode can moreover be shown to establish an equation between the pit-prison in which Judas suffers and hell.¹⁴⁹ As in *Juliana*, the description of the prison in *Elene* anticipates Cynewulf's subsequent description of the torments of hell. Following his conversion and release, Judas, weakened by his experience and unable to locate the precise point at which the Cross is buried, prays to God for guidance (725-801). As in the analogous portion of the Latin text, Judas here refers to the angelic rebellion as an example of the power of the Lord:

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, 246-8.

qui incredibiles Angelos profundo tartaro tradidisti; et ipsi sunt sub fundo abyssi a draconum foetore cruciandi, et tuo praecepto contradicere non possunt.¹⁵⁰

In his adaptation of these words, Cynewulf retains the Latin text's reference to the 'dragon' (*in dracan fæðme*, 765b), but interprets this specifically as a reference to Satan, the instigator of the rebellion (766b-71). In doing so, Cynewulf stresses the punishment of Satan in a manner that is reminiscent of that of Judas in the pit. Satan is compelled to suffer captivity (*þeowned*, 769a) and is described as being 'bound' by his torments (*in wítum fæst [...] susle gebunden*, 770b-1).

The elaboration of the description of Judas' confinement in the pit seems, therefore, to draw on the analogy between the prison and hell, and to once again invite a typological interpretation. In this vein, Thomas D. Hill has suggested that Judas' descent into the pit should be understood as a re-enactment of Joseph's confinement in a pit in Genesis 37:18-36, an episode that was itself commonly interpreted as a pre-figuration of the Harrowing.¹⁵¹ In particular, Hill notes that patristic readings of Joseph's confinement in the pit and Christ's three day sojourn in hell frequently present both episodes as 'a liminal period "between" two clearly defined periods in the various protagonists' lives'.¹⁵² In similar fashion, Hill suggests that Judas' descent into the pit represents a liminal period between his adherence of Judaism and his conversion to Christianity.

As satisfying as such a neat interpretation is, however, Hill's connection between Judas and both Christ and Joseph is not easily compatible with the presentation of the episode in the poem. In marked contrast to the innocence of Joseph and Christ, Judas' descent into the pit is explicitly presented as the result of his own guilt:

¹⁵⁰ *Acta Cyriaci* 86:8-10. Cf. *Sources and Analogues*, trans. Allen and Calder, 65: 'You cast the unbelieving angels into deep Tartarus and they dwell in the bottom of the abyss, tortured by the dragon's stench, unable to contradict your command.'

¹⁵¹ Thomas D. Hill, 'Sapiential Structure and Figural Narrative in the Old English *Elene*', *Traditio* 27 (1971), 159-77. Cf. E. Gordon Whatley, 'Bread and Stone: Cynewulf's *Elene*' 611-618', *NM* 76 (1975), 550-60; Thomas D. Hill, 'Bread and Stone, Again: *Elene* 611-18', *NM* 81 (1980), 252-7.

¹⁵² Hill, 'Bread and Stone, Again', 255.

Heht þa swa cwicne	corðre lædan,
scufan scyldigne—	scealcas ne gældon—
in drygne seað ¹⁵³	

This description of the culpable Judas being ‘shoved’ into a place of torment is paralleled subsequently in the poem in a further reference to the fall of Satan. Following his conversion and discovery of the true cross, Judas is confronted by a devil, apparently Satan himself, who complains that Christ has frequently enclosed him (*oft getynde*, 920b) in hell. The reference to confinement here is not paralleled in the *Acta Cyriaci*, and whereas in the Latin text Judas responds simply by praying that the devil be damned to the abyss, in *Elene* Judas goes on to taunt the devil with the past failure of his rebellion in heaven and his consequent torment in hell:

	[...] þec se mihtiga cyning
in neolnesse	nyðer bescufeð
synwyrcente [...] ¹⁵⁴	

The similarity of these two descriptions suggests that Judas’ descent into the pit-prison should be interpreted not as a post-figuration of Christ’s descent at the Harrowing, but in terms of captivity in hell.

The subsequent account of Judas’ speech within the pit and his release from it strongly suggests a typological association with the patriarchs redeemed from hell at the Harrowing. As Bridges has suggested, Judas’ plea and his complaint regarding the severity of his treatment here recall the motif of the prayers of the patriarchs which, as noted above, forms a common element of many Anglo-Saxon *descensus* narratives.¹⁵⁵ A significant component of this prayer not commented upon by Bridges is the confession that Judas uniquely makes in Cynewulf’s account of the error of his previous behaviour:

¹⁵³ *Elene* 691-3a, ‘Then she commanded them to take him thus alive from the company, to shove him, guilty, into a dry pit (the retainers did not hesitate)’

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 941b-3a, ‘The mighty King shoved you below, sinful, into the abyss.’ Cf. *Acta Cyriaci* 92:8-9: ‘Qui mortuos suscitavit Christus, ipse te damnet in abyssum ignis aeterni’.

¹⁵⁵ Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, 248.

[...] þeah ic ær mid dysige þurhdrifen wære
 7 ðæt soð to late seolf gecneowe.¹⁵⁶

The verb *gecnawan* can mean to ‘recognize’ or to ‘perceive’ something, a meaning which makes good sense in the current context. However, both this verb and the related adjective *gecnæwe*, meaning to be ‘aware’ of something, are frequently used with a more precise sense to describe the confession of sins.¹⁵⁷

The possibility that Judas’ speech within the pit should be read as an act of confession is particularly appropriate for the narrative situation. On the one hand, Samantha Zacher has noted an ‘extremely well-attested’ etymological gloss that equates the Hebrew name Judas with confession (Latin *confessio*).¹⁵⁸ Cynewulf’s emphasis throughout the poem on Judas’ role as one who confesses the truth thus represents one of a series of ‘highly learned and literate puns’ that Zacher discovers in *Elene*.¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, the confession within the pit-prison may also draw upon the association between the prison and acts of (sometimes enforced) atonement and penitence identified above.

Comparison of Judas’ confession in *Elene* to the speech of the devil bound by the saint in the prison scene in *Juliana* is instructive. In an important study of the use of dialogue in *Juliana*, Allen Frantzen has highlighted the extent to which the interaction between the saint and the devil, and particularly the latter’s successive speeches admitting culpability for a range of offenses within the world of men, apes contemporary confessional exchanges as represented in surviving penitential manuals.¹⁶⁰ In response to Juliana’s insistent questioning, the devil first ‘behaves like a reluctant penitent’, holding back from enumerating his full catalogue of sins.¹⁶¹ Pressed by Juliana, in her role as stern confessor, the devil gradually reveals the extent of his culpability. He ‘entreats Juliana as a sinner

¹⁵⁶ *Elene* 707-8, ‘Though I was previously pierced with foolishness, and myself confess that truth too late’.

¹⁵⁷ DOE, *ge-cnawan*, 4.b.i and 4.b.ii; *gecnæwe*, 2.b.i.

¹⁵⁸ Samantha Zacher, ‘Cynewulf at the Interface of Literacy and Orality: The Evidence of the Puns in *Elene*’, *Oral Tradition* 17 (2002), 346-87, at 378 and n. 88.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 378.

¹⁶⁰ Frantzen, ‘Drama and Dialogue’, 110-13.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

might entreat a confessor' and his prone position at the feet of the saint—though here necessitated by the bonds she has laid upon him—perhaps also mimics contemporary penitential injunctions for penitents to prostrate themselves before their confessors.¹⁶²

Of particular interest here, however, is the moment at which the devil 'parodies confessional prayer':¹⁶³

[...] Ic þæt sylf gecneow
 to late micles; sceal nu lange ofer þis,
 scyldwyrccende, scame þrowian.
 Forþon ic þec halsige þurh þæs Hyhstan meaht,
 Rodorcyninges giefe, se þe on rode treo
 geþrowade, þrymmes Ealdor,
 þæt þu miltsige me þearfendum,
 þæt unsælig eall ne forweorþe [...]'¹⁶⁴

As Frantzen points out, the tone of this speech is clearly penitential (*gecneow*; *scame*; *miltsige*). Like that of Judas in the pit, however, the context of this speech, allied to the penitential tone, again recalls the laments of the inhabitants of hell associated with the Harrowing. Moreover, not only is the verbal similarity between the first part of this passage and Judas' speech in *Elene* marked, but the narrative situation is very similar as well, to the extent that Zacher has suggested that the parallels between these two episodes 'reveal what looks like a deliberate pastiche within Cynewulf's own poetry'.¹⁶⁵

In Zacher's view, the effect of this 'pastiche' is the 'demonization' by association of Judas.¹⁶⁶ Together with the parallels noted above between Judas' descent into the pit and Satan's descent to hell, it does seem to indicate an analogy between the situation of Judas and that of those damned eternally to hell (whether specifically demonic or not). This is suggested, moreover, by the phrase *to late*, which appears in both the devil's speech in

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁶⁴ *Juliana* 443b-51, 'I myself confess that much too late; guilty of sin, I shall now suffer shame a long time because of this. Therefore I beseech you by the might of the Highest, the grace of the King of heaven, He who suffered on the rood tree, Leader of glory, that you have mercy on me at need, so that, wretched, I shall not perish utterly.'

¹⁶⁵ Zacher, 'The Evidence of Puns', 378 n. 89.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Juliana, and Judas' in *Elene*. On the face of it, this statement makes no sense in *Elene*. It is not too late for Judas to confess his previous error, acknowledge the truth of Christianity, and direct Elene to the whereabouts of the cross. The wording would be appropriate, however, as the lament of the captives of hell. In particular, the idea of futile confession fits the situation of the souls of the damned after Judgement for whom, as Ælfric notes, there is no prospect of an end to penitence and punishment.

As the example of Adam and Eve in Blickling VII suggests, however, it is also potentially appropriate to the position of the patriarchs before the Harrowing, uncertain of their ultimate salvation by Christ. In this context, the description of Judas' release from the pit—not described in the *Acta Cyriaci*—deserves particular attention:

Ða ðæt gehyrde sio þær hæleðum scead,
 beornes gebæro hio bebead hraðe
 þæt hine man of nearwe 7 of nydcleofan,
 fram þam engan hofe up forlete.
 Hie ðæt oftslice efnedon sona
 7 hine mid arum up gelæddon
 of carcerne swa him seo cwen bebead.¹⁶⁷

Judas is not only released *of carcerne* and *of nydcleofan*—both details that stress the enclosure of the pit-prison—but also *of nearwe* and *fram þam engan hofe*. As in *Juliana*, this stress on the narrowness of the prison foreshadows the later descriptions of hell in the poem. After Judas has identified the True Cross by using it to resurrect a dead man, Satan himself appears to complain about his confinement *in þam engan ham* ('in that narrow home', 920a) and to accuse Christ of having afflicted him with 'more narrow evils' (*niða nearolicra*, 912a). The parallelism in the description of the prison as *þam engan hofe* and of hell as *þam engan ham* mirrors precisely that noted above in *Juliana*, and this apparent stress on the typological resonances of the pit-prison as an analogue of hell at the moment

¹⁶⁷ *Elene* 709-15, 'When she who directed the warriors heard of the man's behaviour, she quickly commanded that one should draw him up out of narrowness and out of the place of compulsion, from that narrow house. They immediate did so in haste and mercifully led him up out of prison as the queen commanded.'

of Judas' release only serves to emphasise the links between this passage and the release of the patriarchs. The stress on Judas' passage upwards (*up forlete; up gelæddon*), though perfectly appropriate narratologically, is reminiscent of the patriarchs' ascent towards heaven, and the phrase *mid arum* invokes the idea of divine mercy of which the Harrowing is the ultimate example.

The resurrection of the dead man is, according to Earl, itself 'clearly and explicitly presented as a re-enactment of the Harrowing of Hell'.¹⁶⁸ This connection is suggested in Satan's subsequent complaint:

'Hwæt is þis, la, manna þe minne eft
 þurh fyrngeflit folgaþ wyrdeð,
 iceð ealdne nið, æhta strudeð?
 Þis is singal sacu; sawla ne moton,
 æhtum wunigan; nu cwom elþeodig
 þone ic ær on firenum fæstne talde,
 hafað mec bereafod rihta gehwylces,
 feohgestreona; nis ðæt fæger sið. [...]'¹⁶⁹

The devil's uncertainty regarding the identity of his adversary in these lines unmistakably echoes the speeches conventionally attributed to the demonic inhabitants of hell in Harrowing narratives.¹⁷⁰ Whilst the devil's use of the present tense clearly suggests that he is referring primarily to the actions of Judas—one he had previously believed secure in sin—through which he has been 'robbed' of the soul of the dead man, the references to 'ancient strife' and 'perpetual feud' simultaneously place Judas' action in the context of the ongoing conflict between Christ and Satan. There is a conflation of time-schemes evident in the devil's words that is not unlike that discussed above in relation to *Advent Lyrics II*. Unlike Christ, Judas does not literally journey to hell and the devil's reference to

¹⁶⁸ James W. Earl, 'The Typological Structure of *Andreas*', in ed. John D. Niles, *Old English Literature in Context: Ten Essays* (Cambridge, 1980), 66-89, at 77.

¹⁶⁹ *Elene* 902-10, 'Who is this man that once more destroys my following through ancient conflict, renews old discord, robs my possessions? This is perpetual feud; sinful souls could not dwell long in my possession; a foreigner has now come who I previously counted as secure in sins and he has deprived me of all my rights, my treasures; that was not a pleasant journey.'

¹⁷⁰ See further below 223-4.

the arrival of a foreigner (*nu cwom elþeodig*) can only be appropriate as a reference to the Harrowing.

As in *Juliana*, therefore, the presentation of the prison setting in *Elene* seems to draw on a conventional analogy between the prison and hell. More precisely, however, two distinct but related analogies can be detected. The connection between Judas' descent into the pit and Satan's descent into hell draws upon the conceptualization of enclosure in prison as a divinely-appointed punishment for sin. As a pre-figuration of the judgement of the damned in general, and perhaps of his own personal damnation if he continues to be obstinate in his dealings with Elene, Judas' speech in the pit mirrors the hopeless penitence of the damned who see the truth 'too late'. At the same time, however, the association of Judas' release with the release of the patriarchs equally draws upon the conceptualization of release from prison as a divinely-appointed act of mercy. Judas' penitence and his release can also be read, therefore, as a post-figuration of the Harrowing of Hell. Just as the Harrowing features in Redemption Theology as an expression of the defeat of death and the opening of the path of salvation for mankind, so Judas undergoes a similar but personal transformation from inevitable damnation to the hope of eternal life.

In the context of the poem as a whole, however, this presentation of the pit-prison episode can be seen to participate in a wider concern with the conceptualization of enclosure in *Elene* that again bears strong similarities to the example of *Juliana*. Earl Anderson has highlighted the development of a motif in *Elene* whereby spiritual growth is figured as 'movement from restriction or limitation to expansiveness'.¹⁷¹ In literal terms, this movement is evident not only in Judas' release from the pit, but also in the disclosure of both the nails used during the Crucifixion, and especially of the Cross itself.¹⁷² The

¹⁷¹ Earl R. Anderson, *Cynwulf: Structure, Style and Theme in His Poetry* (Rutherford, NJ, 1983), 160. Cf. Varda Fish, 'Theme and Pattern in Cynwulf's *Elene*', *NM* 76 (1975), 1-25.

¹⁷² Cf. D. G. Calder, 'Strife, Revelation, and Conversion: the Thematic Structure of *Elene*', *ES* 53 (1972), 201-10, at 205-6.

grave in which the Cross is enclosed in particular is, like the pit-prison, described in terms reminiscent of hell. Not only is it enclosed in a dark and sorrowful home (*in þeostorcofan*, 832a; *in þam reonian hofe*, 833a), but the description of its hiding place *under neolum niðer næsse* (831) both recalls stock descriptions of hell in Old English poetry generally and more specifically anticipates the later description of Satan's place of captivity *in neolnesse nyðer* (942). In spiritual terms too, movement from restriction to expansiveness is evident in the poem's ostensibly autobiographical epilogue (1236-1321). In a passage marked out rhetorically by the prominent use of rhyming half-lines, the speaker presents a contrast between his previous state of spiritual ignorance and his current enlightened situation (1242b-51a). Previously bound by sins (*synnum asæled*, 1243a; *bitrum gebunden*, 1244a), the speaker receives a gift of grace that is figured both in terms of a revelation of light (*torht ontynde*, 1248a) and specifically as a physical release (*bancofan onband*, *bresotlocan onwand*, 1249).¹⁷³

However, if there is a predominant valence according to which release from confinement is positively presented in the poem, there is also a countervailing emphasis on interior space according to which containment is positively valued.¹⁷⁴ As Sharma has shown, the poem contains two instances in which the image of the 'mind-as-enclosure' is reflected in a description of the Holy Spirit establishing a dwelling place (*wic*) in the heart of, respectively, Judas and Elene.¹⁷⁵ The first of the two passages consists of an affirmation of Judas' faith following his baptism:

¹⁷³ Cf. Fish, 'Theme and Pattern', 22-4.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Manish Sharma, 'The Reburial of the Cross in the Old English *Elene*', in eds. Samantha Zacher and Andy Orchard, *New Readings in the Vercelli Book* (Toronto, 2009), 280-97.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 284-6.

fæst on ferhðe	his geleafa wearð
wic gewunode	siððan frofre gast
bylde to bote ¹⁷⁶	in þæs weres breostum,

The emphasis here on penitence (*to bote*) perhaps supports the suggestion that Judas' incarceration is presented as an involuntary penitential act. Equally, however, the emphasis on the security of Judas' mind in these lines and the depiction of the Holy Spirit inhabiting his mental enclosure 'describes a vector which runs directly counter to the governing tropes of revelation, disclosure, and exodus upon which Cynewulf's version of the Invention of the Cross is founded'.¹⁷⁷ So too, in a later passage, the poet describes how the Holy Spirit 'occupied' Elene's heart (*hred̅er weardode*, 1144b) and 'inhabited' the space within (*þa wic beheold*, 1143b).

Sharma, who goes on to argue that the encasement of the cross in silver and jewels constitutes a further 'regressive movement towards enclosure',¹⁷⁸ reads this countervailing emphasis in light of his understanding of the poem's allegorical concern with movement from the restrictive literalism of the Old Law to the freedom of a more spiritual Christian understanding:

By means of a series of movements back into containment, particularly the locking of the cross, the text institutes a movement back within the bondage of the literal. The dynamic by which Christian wisdom is meant to transcend Judaic knowledge (emergence from confinement) is reversed and the oppositional structure ('*littera et spiritus*') which characterizes the opposition between the Old and the New in *Elene* is destabilized.¹⁷⁹

This is an ingenious interpretation, but it is perhaps one that fails to take into account the ways in which the contrast in the valence ascribed to confinement in *Elene* parallels the similarly contrastive conceptualization in *Juliana*. In each poem, Cynewulf elaborates the description of a prison by comparison with the equivalent Latin legend. In each poem too,

¹⁷⁶ *Elene* 1035b-8a, 'His faith was secure in his heart after the Spirit of Comfort occupied the place in that man's breast, encouraged him to repentance.'

¹⁷⁷ Sharma, 'Reburial of the Cross', 286.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 294.

the description of the prison seems to exploit the frequent use of the prison as an analogy for hell in contemporary Christian literature, and also to reflect a connection between incarceration and penitence that is evident also in Anglo-Saxon documentary texts.

However, in each poem Cynewulf's interest in the prison setting seems also to be linked to an artistic awareness of the potentially divergent ways in which confinement may be conceptualized, establishing strong contrasts between the presentation of physical confinement as oppressive and suggestive of spiritual limitation and an opposed conceptualization of mental enclosure as spiritual strength.

Andreas

The same is true, moreover, of the final poem to be considered here. The description of setting in *Andreas* is unusually detailed by the standards of Old English poetry and has been the focus of several recent studies.¹⁸⁰ By comparison with the Greek, Latin and Old English prose versions of the legend of St Andrew, *Andreas* gives considerable attention to the places and spaces in which the narrative is based.¹⁸¹ The central location described in

¹⁸⁰ See especially, Hines, *Voice in the Past*, 58-62; Lori Ann Garner, 'The Old English *Andreas* and the Mermedonian Cityscape', *Essays in Medieval Studies* 24 (2007), 53-63; Alexandra Bolintineanu, 'The Land of Mermedonia in the Old English *Andreas*', *Neophilologus* 93 (2009), 149-64; Michael D. J. Bintley, 'Demythologising Urban Landscapes in *Andreas*', *LSE* 40 (2009), 105-118. Studies which discuss particular details of the poem's setting include Oliver J. H. Grosz, 'The Island of Exiles: A Note on *Andreas* 15', *ELN* 7 (1970), 241-2; Michael Swisher, 'Beyond the Hoar Stone', *Neophilologus* 86 (2002), 133-6; William Cooke, 'Two Notes on *Beowulf* (With Glances at *Vafþrúdnismál*, Blickling Homily 16, and *Andreas*, Lines 839-846)', *MÆ* 72 (2003), 297-301, at 298-300.

¹⁸¹ The poet is unlikely to have had direct knowledge of the Greek *Praxeis Andreou kai Matheian eis ten polin ton anthropogon* which constitutes the ultimate source of the poem, but probably knew a Latin translation similar to the Casanatensis text of the *Acta Andreae et Matthiae apud anthropophagos*. The standard edition of both texts remains *Die lateinischen Bearbeitungen der Acta Andreae et Matthiae apud anthropophagos*, ed. F. Blatt, *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der ältern Kirche*, Beiheft 12 (Giessen, 1930). An Old English prose homiletic *Life of St Andrew* also survives in a fragmentary version as Blickling XIX and in a fuller version in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 198 (*Bright's Old English Grammar & Reader*, ed. Frederick G. Cassidy and Richard N. Ringler, 3rd ed. (New York, 1971), 203-19). The homily is cited by line number from this edition of the Corpus text. On the relationships between the poem and these texts, see *Andreas*, ed. Brooks, xv-xviii; *The Acts of Andrew in the Country of the Cannibals: Translations from the Greek, Latin, and Old English*, trans. Robert Boenig,

the poem is the Mermedonian prison, the site not only of the incarceration of St Matthew by the cannibalistic inhabitants of Mermedonia and his release by St Andrew, but also of Andrew's own subsequent incarceration, during the course of which the saint is confronted by the devil and six of his followers. It is unsurprising, therefore, that it is in *Andreas* that we find the most elaborate description of a prison not just in Old English verse, but in all extant written sources from the Anglo-Saxon period.

In contrast to the analogous Greek, Latin and Old English prose texts, in which the Mermedonian prison is not described in any detail, the prison in *Andreas* 'dominates the poem architecturally'.¹⁸² The building in which the saints are confined is described not only as a prison (*carcern*, 57a, 90a, 130a, 991b, 1075b, 1250a, 1460a, 1560a, 1578b), but also as a stronghold (*burgloca*, 940a, 1038a; *fæsten*, 1034a, 1068b, 1177b), a dwelling (*hof*, 1307b), and a hall (*ræced*, 1308b; *sele*, 1311b). The interior of the prison is lined with great columns (*swears unlytle*, 1493b) and the captives within are bound and fettered (*handa gebunden*, 48b, 1222b; *clommum fæste*, 130b; *belocen leoðubendum*, 164a; *bendum fæstne*, 184b, 1038b; *clommum belegdon*, 1560b). The prison has the capacity to contain in excess of two hundred people (1035-40),¹⁸³ but the subdivision of this significant interior space into individual cells is perhaps suggested by the description of Matthew sitting alone (*he ðær ana sæt*, 1007b).¹⁸⁴

Beyond these details, the poet's description of the prison consists in large part of a series of compounds and phrases referring to the various inherent qualities of the prison space rather than to the physical structure of the building. These descriptions focus

Garland Library of Medieval Literature Series B 70 (New York and London, 1991) v-ix; Daniel Anlezark, *Water and fire: The myth of the Flood in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester, 2006), 211 and n. 59.

¹⁸² Garner, 'The Mermedonian Cityscape', 58.

¹⁸³ Cf. *Andreas*, ed. Brooks, 97 n. to lines 1035ff.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 96 n. to line 1023. Cf. Hugh Magennis, 'Monig Oft Gesæt: Some Images of Sitting in Old English Poetry', *Neophilologus* 70 (1986), 442-52.

prominently on the darkness of the prison space (*dimman ding*, 1270a;¹⁸⁵ *heolstorloca*, 144b, 1005b; *heolstorscua*, 1253b; *hlinscua*, 1071a), but also represent the prison as a joyless and unpleasant place (*hleoleasan wic*, 131a; *wic unsyfre*, 1310b), a place of evil and lamentation (*gnornhof*, 1008b, 1043a; *hearmloca*, 95a, 1029b; *morðorcofa*, 1004b), and a place of confinement and compulsion (*clustorcleofa*, 1021a; *hlinræced*, 1463a; *neadcofa*, 1309a).

Much of the vocabulary and imagery used to describe the prison in *Andreas* is familiar from the similar descriptions in both *Juliana* and *Elene*. It is not surprising, therefore, that the prison in *Andreas*—like those in the two Cynewulfian poems—has been linked typologically to hell. Typological approaches to *Andreas* have, for the most part, focused either on the eucharistic and baptismal resonances in the poem, or on the *imitatio Christi* evident in the account of the torments suffered by Andrew.¹⁸⁶ Supplementing these interpretations, however, is Constance B. Hieatt's discussion of the typological links between the rescue of Matthew and his fellow prisoners and the Harrowing of Hell.¹⁸⁷ Focusing on the imagery of darkness and bondage employed in the description of the prison, Hieatt notes the similarities between the account of Matthew's prayer for release at the beginning of *Andreas* (54-121) and the pleas of the patriarchs in hell in *Advent Lyrics* II, and concludes that Matthew and his fellow prisoners 'represent the same group,

¹⁸⁵ The form *ding* is explained as a dative singular form of **dung*, a word otherwise attested (if at all) only in etymological reconstructions of Anglo-Saxon place-names, with a meaning similar to Old High German *tunc*, a 'subterranean chamber'. Cf. *Andreas*, ed. Brooks, 108 n. to line 1270; Simon Potter, '[review]', *MLR* 39 (1944), 65-7, at 65-6; *DOE*, **ding*.

¹⁸⁶ Thomas D. Hill, 'Figural Narrative in *Andreas*: The Conversion of the Mermedonians', *NM* 70 (1969), 261-73; John Casteen, '*Andreas*: Mermedonian Cannibalism and Figural Narrative', *NM* 75 (1974), 74-8; Marie Micelle Walsh, 'The Baptismal Flood in the Old English *Andreas*: Liturgical and Typological Depths', *Traditio* 33 (1977), 137-58; Robert E. Boenig, '*Andreas*, the Eucharist, and Vercelli', *JEGP* 79 (1980), 313-31; Frederick M. Biggs, 'The Passion of Andrew: *Andreas* 1398-1491', *SP* 85 (1988), 413-27; Hugh Magennis, *Anglo-Saxon Appetites: Food and Drink and their Consumption in Old English and Related Literature* (Dublin, 1999), 151-70; Anlezark, *Water and fire*, 212-30; Shannon N. Godlove, 'Bodies as Borders: Cannibalism and Conversion in the Old English *Andreas*', *SP* 106 (2009), 137-60, at 151-8. For a discussion of the typological function of landscape in the poem, see Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, 155-60.

¹⁸⁷ Constance B. Hieatt, 'The Harrowing of Mermedonia: Typological Patterns in the Old English *Andreas*', *NM* 77 (1976), 49-62. Cf. Earl, 'Typological Structure of *Andreas*', 71-3.

typologically, as [...] the patriarchs and prophets awaiting redemption'.¹⁸⁸ The rescue of the prisoners, Hieatt argues, re-enacts the Harrowing: freeing the prisoners from bondage (*of leoðobendum*, 1033b; *fram þam fæstenne*, 1034a) and delivering them into the protection of the Lord (*on frið dryhtnes*, 1034b; *on gehyld Godes*, 1045a), Andrew is 'duplicating the action of Christ in harrowing hell'.¹⁸⁹

Hieatt's reading of this episode is supported by a reference in the poem to the captivity of the devils in hell. Following the escape of their prisoners, the devil appears to the assembled Mermedonian people and instructs them to search for Andrew, the cause of their hardship (1168-83). In response, the saint chastises the devil and taunts him with the memory of his previous defeat and confinement by God:

[...] Ðe se ælmihtiga
 heanne gehnægde ond on heolstor besceaf,
 þær þe cyninga cining clamme belegde [...]'¹⁹⁰

This reference to the outcome of the angelic rebellion is not precisely paralleled in any of the prose analogues to *Andreas*.¹⁹¹ Like the earlier descriptions of the prison, therefore, the account of the punishments suffered by the devil probably constitutes an addition on the part of the poet. That the references to both darkness (*heolstor*) and bondage (*clamme belegde*) in these lines mirrors those earlier descriptions of the prison only serves to emphasize the association between the two *loci*.

¹⁸⁸ Hieatt, 'The Harrowing of Mermedonia', 55.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 56. Hieatt's wider suggestion that the three days Andrew spends in Mermedonia represent the three days Christ spent in the grave is less convincing. In particular, her suggestion that the sea-voyage undertaken by Andrew represents the saint's metaphorical death is rather strained (*ibid.*, 56-9). For the more orthodox view that 'the boat in which Andrew and his companions travel symbolizes the ship of the Church', see Anlezark, *Water and fire*, 213.

¹⁹⁰ *Andreas* 1190b-2, 'The Almighty humbled you, wretched, and shoved you into darkness, where the King of kings afflicted you with bonds.'

¹⁹¹ Andrew's reply to the devil is omitted from the Casanatensis text, but at this point in the Greek text Andrew warns the devil that Christ will, in the future, lower him into the abyss (presumably a reference to the apocalypse). Cf. *Acts of Andrew*, ed. Boenig, 16, 47-8. The Old English prose *Life*, while not elaborating on the punishment of the devil, does recast Andrew's words in the past tense: *min Drihten Hælende Crist þe gehnæde in helle* (187-9).

It is in this context too that the devil's subsequent boast concerning his power over the imprisoned Andrew should be viewed:

[...] Hwylc is þæs mihtig ofer middangeard,
 þæt he þe alyse of leoðubendum,
 manna cynnes, ofer mine est?¹⁹²

Like the devil's speech in *Elene* discussed above, this rhetorical question—which elaborates on a reference to Andrew's helplessness found only in the Casanatensis text—seems to parody the surprise and bewilderment of the demonic inhabitants of hell which the arrival of Christ commonly causes in contemporary accounts of the Harrowing.

Compare, for example, the following passage from Blickling VII:

‘Hwonon is þes þus strang, & þus beorht, & þus egesfull? Se middangeard þe us
 wæs lange ær underþeoded, & us deaþ mycel gafol geald; ne gelomp hit na ær þæt
 us swylc deaþ geendod wære, ne us næfre swylce ege ne wearþ ær to hell
 geendebyrded. Eala nu hwæt is þes þe þus unforht gæþ on ure gemæro? & nis no
 þæt an þæt he him ure witu ondræde, ac he wile eac oþre of urum bendum
 alesan.[...’]¹⁹³

In response to the devil's rash boast, Andrew not only asserts God's ability to release him from the earthly bonds in the prison, but also mocks the devil by again referring to his own confinement in hell following the failure of the angelic rebellion:

‘Hwæt, me eaðe ælmihtig God,
 niða nergend, se ðe in niedum iu
 gefæstnode fyrnum clommm,
 þær ðu syððan a susle gebunden
 in wræc wunne, wuldres blunne,
 syððan ðu forhokedes heofoncyniges word. [...’]¹⁹⁴

The emphasis on captivity (*in niedum*) and bondage (*gefæstnode fyrnum clommm; susle gebunden*) here again recalls the earlier accounts of the confinement of the captives within

¹⁹² *Andreas* 1372-4, ‘Which of the race of men, throughout the world, is so mighty that he could release you from these limb-bonds against my will?’

¹⁹³ Blickling VII 85, ‘From whence is this one so strong and so bright and so terrible? The world was long previously subjugated to us and death yielded us much tribute; it never previously happened that to us that death was thus ended, nor previously has such terror been thus appointed to us in hell. Alas now, what is it that enters our territory so unafraid? And not only that he does not dread our torments for himself, but he also intends to release others from our bonds.’

¹⁹⁴ *Andreas* 1376-81, ‘Lo, almighty God, the Saviour of men, may easily [accomplish that], He who of old fastened you in bondage with burning chains, where you have dwelt ever after in misery, bound with torment. You forfeited heaven when you disregarded the word of the King of heaven.’

the Mermedonian prison. Throughout these passages, therefore, the poet is both establishing a link between the release of the Mermedonian prisoners and redemption of the patriarchs at the Harrowing, and also establishing a contrast between the temporary imprisonment of both of these groups and the eternal imprisonment of the devils which results from their originary act of disobedience.

There is a clear similarity here between the treatment of the prison enclosure in *Andreas* and Cynewulf's practice in both *Juliana* and *Elene*. It is particularly striking, therefore, that the initial account of Matthew's incarceration in *Andreas* also establishes a contrast between the saint's outward, physical enclosure and his inward, spiritual enclosure that parallels that identified above in Cynewulf's account of Juliana's incarceration:

Hie þam halgan þær handa gebundon
 ond fæstnodon feondes cræfte,
 hæleð hellfuse, ond his heafdes sigel
 abreotan mid billes ecge hwæðre he in breostum þa git
 herede in heortan heofonrices weard,
 þeah ðe he atres drync atule onfeng.
 Eadig ond onmod, he mid elne forð
 wyrðode wordum wuldres aldor,
 heofonrices weard, halgan stefne
 of carcerne; him wæs Cristes lof
 on fyrhðlocan fæste bewunden.¹⁹⁵

The description of Matthew's resolve in these lines (*him wæs Cristes lofe / on fyrhðlocan fæste bewunden*) precisely matches the description of Juliana discussed above (*Hyre wæs Cristes lofe / in ferðlocan fæste bewunden*). Like Matthew, Juliana too praises God at the moment of captivity (*herede æt heortan, heofonrices God*, 239). The situation in each narrative is virtually identical, and as in *Juliana*, the emphasis on the interiority of

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 48-58, 'They bound the saint's hands there and fastened him with the skill of the devil, men ready for hell, and destroyed with the sword's edge the suns of his head [his eyes]; though he received poison's hateful drink, nevertheless in his breast he yet praised at heart the Guardian of the kingdom of heaven. Blessed and resolute, he continued valiantly to praise with words the Lord of glories, Guardian of the kingdom of heaven. Blessed and resolute, he still valiantly praised with words the Prince of glory, the Guardian of the kingdom of heaven, from the prison with a holy voice; the glory of Christ was securely enclosed in his mind.'

Matthew's mind or breast (*in breostum; in heortan*) establishes a contrast with the physical restriction of the prison (*handa gebundon; fæstnodon*).¹⁹⁶

The exactness of these parallels is suggestive.¹⁹⁷ Whilst these and other apparent similarities with his 'signed' poems need not suggest that Cynewulf was the author of *Andreas*—a position argued by some critics even before the discovery of the signed epilogue to *The Fates of the Apostles* in the Vercelli Book¹⁹⁸—it remains possible that the poet of *Andreas* was, here and elsewhere, imitating Cynewulf's verse. The question of literary borrowing in Old English poetry has recently been resurrected by (particularly) Andy Orchard, who has endeavoured to demonstrate a far greater degree of conscious intertextuality in Old English poetry than is usually recognized, challenging in particular the idea that 'if only more Old English verse had survived, many parallels of phrasing unique in the extant corpus today would be recognized as mere commonplace'.¹⁹⁹ In particular, Orchard argues from an analysis of parallel (and near-parallel) phrasing that the *Andreas*-poet was familiar not only with *Beowulf* (on which see further below), but also with the four poems signed by Cynewulf.²⁰⁰

The possibility that the reference to Andrew's mental enclosure at precisely this point in the poem reflects the poet's knowledge of the equivalent incarceration scene in *Juliana* should not, therefore, be dismissed out of hand, particularly in light of the wider similarities between the depiction of the prison in *Andreas* and Cynewulf's description of the prisons in *Juliana* and *Elene*. One question which the idea of literary borrowing in Old English poetry inevitable raises, however, is whether or not the potential borrower is doing

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, 200-1.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles*, ed. George Philip Krapp (Boston, Massachusetts, 1906), lvi-lvii.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. *Andreas*, ed. Brooks, xviii-xxi; Fulk, 'Canon, Dialect, and Date', 7-8.

¹⁹⁹ Andy Orchard, 'Computing Cynewulf: The *Judith*-Connection', in eds. Jill Mann and Maura Nolan, *The Text in the Community: Essays on Medieval Works, Manuscripts, Authors, and Readers* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2006), 75-106, at 98.

²⁰⁰ *Id.*, 'The Case for Cynewulf', 271-305. For Orchard's comments on this particular parallel, see *ibid.*, 288-90. See also *id.*, 'The Word Made Flesh: Christianity and Oral Culture in Anglo-Saxon Verse', *Oral Tradition* 24 (2009), 293-318.

so in a purely mechanical and utilitarian way, or whether he is recognizing and responding to a particular feature of the source passage. In the current instance, therefore, we might ask whether the reference to Matthew's mental enclosure at this point in *Andreas* can be read as a reflection of or response to the contrasting conceptualizations of enclosure evident in the putative source passage in *Juliana*.

Ostensibly, the answer to this question is that it cannot. Vocabulary related to "fastness" does feature prominently in the poem, and is used to describe both physical confinement and the concept of mental or spiritual "fastness".²⁰¹ However, the two concepts of enclosure are not set in juxtaposition, and it is noticeable that it is to God, not to his earthly followers, that the abstract concept of "fastness" is most frequently applied.²⁰² However, this is not to say that the conceptualization of enclosure is not a prominent concern in the poem. As we shall see, the poet of *Andreas* develops the inherent contrasts between enclosure and disclosure in a manner quite distinct from that identified in Cynewulf's poems.

As has been noted above, the Mermedonian prison is described in the poem as both *fæsten* and *burhloca*. Though here applied to the prison enclosure, both of these terms can apply more generally to the idea of protective enclosure, referring to a fortified or walled habitation.²⁰³ It is in this more common sense of 'walled stronghold', moreover, that each of these terms is applied in *Andreas* not to the prison itself, but to the city of Mermedonia

²⁰¹ The adjective *fæst* is used nine times in the poem (83a, 103b, 184b, 795a, 962b, 1038b, 1107a, 1357b, 1492b) and the adverb *fæste* occurs twice (58b, 1671a). In addition to (*ge-*)*fæstnian* (48a, 522a, 1378a), the poet uses the verb *ætfaestan* (1347b), and the substantives *fæsten* (1034a, 1068b, 1177b, 1544a) and *lagufæsten* (398b, 825b) both appear. The adjectival forms *fæst* and *fæstlic* also appear as the second element in six compounds: *soðfæst* (228a, 386b, 673a, 1514a); *soðfæstlic* (877b); *staðolfæst* (121a, 1336a); *þrymfæst* (323a, 479a); *wærfæst* (416a, 1273b, 1310a); *wisfæst* (1167a, 1648a).

²⁰² As God the Father, Christ, or the Steersman, the deity is variously described as *staðolfæst styrend* (121a, 1336a), *þeoden þrymfæst* (323a, 479a), *soðfæst metud* (386b) and *wærfæst cyning* (416b). By contrast, the adjective *wærfæst* is twice associated with Andrew (1273b, 1310a) and the bishop he appoints after the Mermedonian conversion is once described as *wærfæst wer* (1648a). This latter should probably be read in the context of the Mermedonians' highly ironic wish for 'wiser counsel' (*wærfæstra wordum*, 1167) when faced with deprivation of their accustomed food. In addition, the compounds *soðfæst* and *soðfæstlic* are further associated twice with the souls of the blessed in heaven (228a, 877b), once with the patriarchs Joshua and Tobias (1514a), and once with Christ (673a).

²⁰³ DOE, *burh-loca*, 1 and 2; *fæsten*, 2 and 3.

(*under burhlocan*, 1065b; *þam fæstenne*, 1544a). The idea of an enclosed space that this suggests is reinforced by the use throughout the poem of the terms *burh* and *ceaster* to describe the city, both of which refer primarily to a walled or fortified stronghold.²⁰⁴ In *Andreas*, both are used predominantly in adverbial phrases expressing either motion *to* or action *within* the city enclosure.²⁰⁵ The terms also form the first element of several compound words used in the poem both to describe the walls and gates of the city (*burggeat*, 840a; *burhweall*, 833b) and also to identify the Mermedonians as inhabitants of this enclosed space (*burgwaru*, 184a, 209a, 1094a, 1583a; *burhsittend*, 1201b; *ceasterware*, 1125a, 1646a).

The presentation of Mermedonia in terms of enclosure is also suggested, moreover, by the text's poetic geography. In contrast to the prose analogues, the description of Mermedonian territory in *Andreas* presents the land as both an island (*igland*, 15a; *ealand*, 28a) and as a borderland (*mearcland*, 19a; *leodmearc*, 286b; *mearcpæð*, 1061). Critical responses to this altered geography have noted the resultant emphasis on the land's isolation,²⁰⁶ otherworldliness,²⁰⁷ and marginality.²⁰⁸ What has not so far been noted, I think, is that the depiction of Mermedonia as both an *ealand*—a body of land encompassed by water—and as a *mearcland*—a land characterized as beyond the pale—combines precisely those characteristics of enclosure and exclusion implicit in the conceptualization of the prison space in Anglo-Saxon literary culture.

The enclosure of the prison itself is contained firstly within the wider enclosure of the city and its encircling walls, and subsequently within the removed geographical and

²⁰⁴ DOE, *burh*, A and B1; *ceaster*, 1 and 2.

²⁰⁵ Cf. *to þære mæran byrig* (41b, 287b); *in þas hæðenan burg* (111b); *in þysse mæran byrig* (973a); *in burh hraðe* (982b); *innan burgum* (1235b); *in þære hæðenan byrig* (1491b); *in þære beorhtan byrig* (1649a); *in þa ceastre* (41a, 929a); *in þære ceastre* (281a); *to þære ceastre* (828a); *inn on ceastre* (1058b); *innan ceastre* (1174b).

²⁰⁶ Grosz, 'Island of Exiles', 242; Magennis, *Images of Community*, 175.

²⁰⁷ Bolintineanu, 'The Land of Mermedonia', 153-7.

²⁰⁸ Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 170-1; Godlove, 'Bodies as Borders', 138-41.

topographical limits of the island. The captives in the prison are therefore located at the heart of a set of three concentric enclosures through which Andrew must pass in order to fulfil his mission of liberating the prisoners. Following the long narrative of Andrew's sea-crossing (352-817), the sleeping saint is transported by angels across the boundary of the sea (*ofer lagufæsten*, 825b) and deposited on the island (*on land becwom*, 827b) close to the city wall (*burgwealle neh*, 833b). Subsequently, the saint penetrates this secondary enclosure (*eode in burh hraðe / anræd oretta*, 982b-3) and approaches the prison (*carcerne neh*, 991b). At last, Andrew enters the prison (*þær in eode, elnes gemyndig*, 1001) and reaches the goal of his quest within the prison enclosure (*Geseh he Matheus in þam morðorcofan*, 1004).

The twined enclosures of island and city are, like the prison, explicitly hostile places, unhealthy for those entering from outside. The island is enveloped in evil (*morðre bewunden, / feondes facne*, 19b-20a), and those seeking it from without (*þære þe þæt ealand utan sohte*, 28) are fated to be used for food (25b-8). The city is explicitly heathen (*hæðenan burg*, 111b, 1491b), and strangers who enter it will suffer death (279-82). Following the imprisonment of Andrew, however, a different conceptualization of the city as enclosure begins to emerge:

Ða se halga wæs under heolstorscuwan,
 eorl ellenheard, ondlange niht
 searþancum beseted. Snaw eorðan band
 wintergeworpum; weder coledon
 heardum hægelscurum, swylce hrim ond forst,
 hare hildstapan, hæleða eðel
 lucon, leoda gesetu. Land wæron freorig;
 cealdum cylegicelum clang wæteres þrym,
 ofer eastreamas is brycgade,
 blæce brimrade. Bliðheort wunode
 eorl unforcuð, elnes gemyndig,
 þrist ond þrohtheard, in þreanedum
 wintercealdan niht.²⁰⁹

The description of Andrew's light-heartedness and resolve in these lines reflects the 'sweet inversion' that was, as we have seen, a prominent feature of the complex formation of the prison in Anglo-Saxon culture. In the present passage, however, this inversion is extended beyond the confines of the prison itself. The description of the Mermedonian landscape 'locked' in winter—which has no parallel in the prose analogues to *Andreas*—seems to show the confinement imposed on the saint being reflected back upon the land of those responsible for incarcerating him.²¹⁰

This metaphorical image of the confinement of the landscape is literalized, moreover, in the account of the flood that the saint calls forth to purify Mermedonia. As the population attempts to flee the onrushing deluge, the city is sealed up by an angel:

²⁰⁹ *Andreas* 1253-65a, 'Then the saint, the valiant warrior, was encompassed with wise thoughts the whole night long under the shadow of darkness. Snow bound the earth with wintry storms; the weather grew cold with fierce hail-showers, just as rime and frost, the grey stalking warriors, locked up the homeland of men, the peoples' dwellings. The land was freezing; the press of water was congealed with cold icicles, ice made a bridge over the streams, the pale expanse of water. The undaunted warrior remained light-hearted in captivity, mindful of valour, bold and strong in adversity, through the winter-cold night.'

²¹⁰ Cf. Bolintineanu, 'The Land of Mermedonia', 157: 'As the Mermedonians imprison the saint, winter imprisons the land'.

	Him þæt engel forstod,
se ða burh oferbrægd	blacan lige,
hatan heaðowælme;	hreoþ wæs þær inne
beatende brim.	Ne mihte beorna hloð
of þam fæstenne	fleame spowan;
wægas weoxon,	wadu hlynsodon,
flugon fyrgnastas,	flod yðum weoll.
Ðær wæs yðfynde	innan burgum
geomorgidd wrecen,	gehðo mænan
forhtferð manig,	fusleoð galon.
Egeslic æled	eagsyne wearð,
heardlic hereteam,	hleoðor gryrelic;
þurh lyftgelac	leges blæstas
weallas ymbwurpon,	wæter mycladon. ²¹¹

The eschatological overtones of this passage have been documented by Daniel Anlezark.²¹² What concerns us here, however, is the sense of the enclosure of the city in the depiction of the fiery barrier (*burh oferbrægd; weallas ymbwurpon*). The city as enclosure, previously a threatening and hostile location for foreigners, is here transformed dramatically into a place of torment for the confined Mermedonians. It is in this context, moreover, that the city is described as a *fæsten*, a term previously used only with reference to the prison (1034a, 1068b, 1177b).

The transformation of the city enclosure is explicitly linked to the cannibals' incarceration of Andrew. The punishment of water and fire is interpreted by the Mermedonians themselves as a sign that they have been wrong to incarcerate the saint.²¹³ Now themselves enclosed within the city, the Mermedonians' recognition of their error, articulated by one of their number, recalls both the confession of Judas in *Elene* and the penitential speeches of Adam and Eve in *Blickling VII*:

²¹¹ *Andreas* 1540b-53, 'The angel denied them that, he who encompassed the city with blazing fire, hot surging flame; the sea was beating fiercely therein. The throng of men might not prosper in flight from that stronghold; the waves grew, the surge crashed, sparks of fire flew, the flood swelled with waves. It was easy to find many terrified at heart lamenting their grief within the city, sorrowful songs recited, dirges sung. The terrible fire was perceived, severe desolation, terrible noise; blasts of fire surrounded the walls by aerial motion, the water increased.'

²¹² Anlezark, *Water and fire*, 223-30.

²¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, 229.

‘Nu ge magon sylfe soð gecnawan,
 þæt we mid unrihte ellþeodigne
 on carcerne clommum belegdon,
 witebendum. [...]’²¹⁴

Through this ironic inversion, the fate of the Mermedonians—spiritually as well as physically—becomes linked to that of Andrew. In an immediate sense, their only hope of survival is to release him at once from captivity (*þæt we hine alysan of leoðobendum*, 1564) and his disclosure from the prison has a cathartic effect on the land itself, marking the spiritual release of the land that was previously encompassed by evil (*morðre bewunden*, 19b). The flood recedes before the saint’s feet and the land is transformed (1569-85a), a change signalled by the poet through the subsequent shift in the terminology employed to denote the city, which is now described in unambiguously positive terms (*beorhtan byrig*, 1649a; *goldburg*, 1655a; *wederburg*, 1697a; *winburg*, 1637a, 1672a).²¹⁵

At the same time, however, the confinement of the Mermedonians in the city is a sign of their wider *unriht* in rejecting Christianity, and the transformation that results from the Mermedonian confession (1601-6) reaches a typological climax as the eschatological potential of the flood is resolved into the life-giving water of baptism (1630-2a, 1640-1a, 1643-5a).²¹⁶ In contrast to their physical confinement in the city and the spiritual confinement of sin, Andrew himself emphasizes the role of faith in opening up a path to salvation:

torht ontyned, [‘...] eow is wuldres leoht
 gif ge teala hycgað.’²¹⁷

In *Andreas*, therefore, the conceptualization of enclosure and the opposition established between enclosure and disclosure, which finds its strongest expression in the description of

²¹⁴ *Andreas* 1558-61a, ‘Now you yourselves may acknowledge the truth, that we unjustly afflicted the foreigner with chains and bonds of torment in prison.’

²¹⁵ Garner, ‘The Mermedonian Cityscape’, 61. On the transformation of the landscape, cf. Hill, ‘Figural Narrative in *Andreas*’, 268; Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest*, 174-6; Bolinteanu, ‘The Land of Mermedonia’, 157-160.

²¹⁶ Cf. Anlezark, *Water and fire*, 229-30.

²¹⁷ *Andreas* 1611b-12, ‘The bright light of glory is opened for you, if you think properly.’

the incarceration and release of both Matthew and Andrew, assumes a central importance for the way in which the poem's theological exploration of conversion and redemption is expressed.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter has been to demonstrate the sensibility of Anglo-Saxon poets to the significant use of setting and spatial representation by focusing on the presentation of a single, precise setting in Old English narrative verse. In examining the ways in which the prison is employed as a setting in vernacular hagiographical poetry, I have contextualized the poetic responses to this *locus* by outlining what can be recovered of the historical and cultural significance of the prison during the Anglo-Saxon period. My survey of surviving evidence indicates, in the first place, that the significance of incarceration and carceral imagery in Christian thought probably provides a more relevant context for the ways in which the prison is conceptualized in Old English verse than do Anglo-Saxon practices of imprisonment. In surviving devotional and theological writing from this period, the prison *locus* and imagery related to it is most commonly invoked in three contexts: in hagiographical accounts of the persecution of saints, in reference to the post-lapsarian state of humanity, particularly in accounts of the Harrowing of Hell, and in accounts of the torments of the damned in hell. My discussion of these contexts further identified certain features which recur frequently in association with the prison, such as the presentation of the prison as a *locus* for penitence, an analogous connection between the earthly prison and the infernal prison, the association of the prison space with miraculous happenings, and the related literary trope of the 'sweet inversion'. These features contribute to the cultural formation of the prison in Anglo-Saxon England.

Several of these features are also reflected in the presentation of the prison in the vernacular hagiographical poems discussed in this chapter. Both *Juliana* and *Andreas* depict the incarceration of a saint by heathen persecutors. Both also present the prison as a *locus* for the operation of divine grace and for the ‘sweet inversion’ of defeat into victory. In contrast, the use of the prison in *Elene* provides a sort of mirror image of this conventional paradigm in which it is the heathen enemy who is imprisoned. Even here, however, the association of the pit-prison with Judas’ conversion to Christianity may draw upon the association of the prison space and spiritual conversion apparent in the hagiographical narratives contained in the *Old English Martyrology*. In each of these poems the prison is also demonstrably described in terms that establish an analogy between the earthly prison and hell, and in each instance this description appears to invite typological interpretations of the incarceration and release of the protagonists in terms of the Harrowing. Moreover, an association of the prison with penitence is again revealed in all three poems through the confessional speeches voiced by Judas in *Elene*, by the devil in *Juliana* and—albeit with a less explicit connection to the prison space—by the Mermedonians in *Andreas*.

That there should be similarities in the treatment of the prison setting in each of these poems is, as noted above, not surprising, and it would be unwise to attempt to draw general conclusions about the significance of the prison as a *locus* in Old English narrative poetry from such limited data. Indeed, the fact that the prison occurs as a setting only in three poems each of which seems to draw directly on a Latin model might indicate that the prison was not a common setting in the vernacular poetic tradition. My analysis of the prison setting in these poems does, however, indicate three conclusions. Firstly, the evident elaboration of the prison setting in each of these poems in comparison to their various prose analogues again indicates the attentiveness of Anglo-Saxon poets to matters

of spatial representation. Secondly, the representation of the prison in these texts—both in terms of the similarities between the individual poems and in terms of their engagement with the wider conceptualization of the prison in Anglo-Saxon literary culture—indicates the importance of an intertextual approach to aspects of setting in Old English poetry. Thirdly, my analysis suggests that, despite their similarities, each of these poetic accounts develops the significance of the prison setting in ways that are appropriate to the immediate poetic context in which they occur.

The presentation of the prison in each of the three poems reveals a wider engagement with the meaning and valence of enclosure. Most obviously, in *Juliana* the ostensibly oppressive enclosure that the saint experiences in the prison is refigured not only through the ‘sweet inversion’ according to which Juliana herself subsequently confines the devil, but also through a contrastive emphasis on the security of the mental enclosure as a representation of spiritual constancy. In a similar but not identical way, Cynewulf’s depiction of the pit-prison in *Elene* both participates in a recurring dynamic associating release from confinement with spiritual growth and also establishes a contrast between the bondage associated with both the earthly and the infernal prison and the description of the Holy Spirit occupying the mental enclosure of the two main protagonists of the *inventio* narrative. By contrast, however, the elaboration of the depiction of the prison space in *Andreas* does not establish any sustained comparison with the idea of mental enclosure and stability. Rather the presentation of the prison is placed in creative juxtaposition with the wider development of the geography and topography of the land of Mermedonia. In the climactic and eschatologically resonant account of the flood and fire by which Mermedonia is threatened, the confinement of the city-dwellers reflects the typological association established earlier between the incarceration and release of the captives in the Mermedonian prison and the Harrowing of Hell. As in *Elene*, therefore, the depiction of

enclosure is here associated with an act of conversion, but the focus of *Andreas* is consistently upon actual rather than mental enclosure.

Coda: Andreas and Beowulf

As a final, admittedly speculative comment on the sensitivity of Anglo-Saxon poets to the conceptualization of enclosure, I shall finish this chapter by turning briefly to the question of the possible literary relationship between *Andreas* and *Beowulf*. It has long been recognized that both in terms of structure and diction the two poems bare an often strikingly close similarity to each other.²¹⁸ Although the question of direct influence between these two poems seems likely to remain a point of scholarly dispute, a group of recent studies has significantly advanced the case for the *Andreas*-poet's knowledge of *Beowulf* by highlighting not only the extent of the overlap between the two poems at the level of lines and half-lines, but also the thematic or connotative similarities which frequently seem to underlie these potential borrowings.²¹⁹ So, for example, Bolintineanu has argued that the verbal overlaps (or 'intertextual echoes') between Andrew's first vision of Mermedonia (839-43) and the description of various hostile landscapes in *Beowulf* serve to "import" an atmosphere of strangeness and danger into *Andreas*'s (and the readers') first impression of Mermedonia's landscape'.²²⁰ In the same vein, Anlezark, in his contribution to the ongoing critical debate regarding the meaning, function, and

²¹⁸ See, for example, *Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles*, ed. Krapp, li-lviii; Leonard J. Peters, 'The Relationship of the Old English *Andreas* to *Beowulf*', *PMLA* 66 (1951), 844-63; *Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles*, ed. Brooks, xxii-xxvii; E. G. Stanley, 'Beowulf', in ed. Stanley, *Continuations and Beginnings* (London, 1966), 104-41, at 110-14; Paul Cavill, 'Beowulf and *Andreas*: Two Maxims', *Neophilologus* 77 (1993), 479-87; Anita R. Riedinger, 'The Formulaic Relationship between *Beowulf* and *Andreas*', in eds. Helen Damico and John Leyler, *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period: Studies in Honor of Jess B. Bessiner*, *Studies in Medieval Culture* 32 (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1993), 283-312; Orchard, *Critical Companion*, 163-6; Anlezark, *Water and fire*, 347-58.

²¹⁹ See especially, Orchard, 'The Case for Cynewulf', 291-4; Bill Friesen, 'Visions and Revisions: The Sources and Analogues of the Old English *Andreas*', unpubl. PhD dissertation (University of Toronto, 2008), 107-241.

²²⁰ Bolintineanu, 'The Landscape of Mermedonia', 156.

relationship of the *hapax* words *ealuscerwen* (*Beowulf*, 769a) and *medoscerwen* (*Andreas*, 1526b), has argued that the *Andreas*-poet's use of this latter term to describe the flood which threatens to destroy Mermedonia not only draws on the *ealuscerwen* passage in *Beowulf*, but also elaborates on the themes and connotations contained therein.²²¹ In what follows, therefore, I intend to explore a further possible instance of conscious, intertextual echoing involving the prison setting in *Andreas*. I will also consider the way in which an awareness of the possible relationship between *Beowulf* and *Andreas* effects our understanding of the way in which enclosure within the prison is conceptualized in the latter poem.

When Andrew first approaches the prison to rescue Matthew, the poet describes the prison door (*hlinduru*, 993a) opening at the saint's touch:

	Duru sona onarn
þurh handhrine	haliges gastes,
ond þær in eode,	elnes gemyndig,
hæle hildedeor. ²²²	

This description is at variance with the treatment of the episode in the prose analogues, in which Andrew causes the door to open by making the sign of the cross before it. However, as has been frequently documented, these lines do recall the description of Grendel's entrance into Heorot before the fight with Grendel:

²²¹ Anlezark, *Water and fire*, 350: 'the *Andreas* poet seems conscious of a range of parallels between the two scenes, which he develops to their fullest eschatological potential.' On the debate over these compounds, see Fredrik J. Heinemann, 'Ealuscerwen-Meoduscserwen, the Cup of Death and *Baldrs Draumar*', *Studia Neophilologica* 55 (1983), 3-10; Jenny Rowland, 'OE *Ealuscerwen/Meoduscserwen* and the Concept of 'Paying for Mead', *LSE* 21 (1990), 1-12; Richard North, "'Wyrd' and 'Wearð ealuscerwen' in *Beowulf*", *LSE* 24 (1993), 69-82.

²²² *Andreas* 999b-1002a, 'The door immediately opened at the hand touch of the holy spirit, and the dauntless hero, mindful of valour, went within.'

	Duru sona onarn
fyrbendum fæst,	syþðan he hire folmum æthran;
onbræd þa bealohydig,	ða he gebolgen wæs,
recedes muþan.	Rape æfter þon
on fagne flor	feond treddode,
eode yrremod ²²³	

The similarities of the diction and context of these passages have most recently been examined by Bill Friesen.²²⁴ As Friesen points out, both passages are preceded by extended descriptions of the approach of the respective protagonists (*Andreas* 981-91; *Beowulf* 702-21a) and the violence intended by Grendel as he approaches Heorot (*Beowulf* 712-3) is mirrored by the miraculous but gory death of the prison guards that precedes Andrew's entrance into the prison (*Andreas* 992-6a). However, as Friesen also notes, at a connotative level Grendel's invasion of Heorot and Andrew's entry into the prison are diametrically opposed:

The repetition of motifs between the scenes [...] is [...] qualified not merely by variation, but, more pointedly, by antithetical variation, for Grendel means to kill those in the hall, while Andreas intends to save those within the dungeon.²²⁵

For the present study, the key point about this 'antithetical variation' is that each passage is concerned with the breaking down of enclosure. The doorway of any building is an implicitly liminal space, and the door itself functions as a mutable boundary between the interior and exterior. It also serves, however, to define the status of the interior of the building as an enclosed space, and the forcible entry described in both *Andreas* and *Beowulf* represents a disruption to a previously secure enclosure. Where the passages differ, however, is in the conceptualization of the respective enclosed spaces that are thus violated. In contrast to the oppressive enclosure of the prison, the enclosure of the Danish hall—emphasized in the somewhat ironic reference to the forged bonds with which the door is secured (*fyrbendum fæst*)—is positive and (theoretically at least) protective.

²²³ *Beowulf* 721b-6a, 'The door, secure with fire-forged bonds, immediately opened when he touched it with his hands; the hostile-minded one then swung open the hall's mouth, while he was enraged. After that the angry fiend moved quickly, trod on the gleaming floor'.

²²⁴ Friesen, 'Sources and Analogues of *Andreas*', 150-1.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 151.

In each passage, moreover, the disruption resulting from the violation of the respective enclosures represents a threat to communal identity. In *Beowulf* this threat is manifest in the description of the Danes listening to the hero's fight with Grendel taking place within Heorot:

	Denum eallum wearð,
ceasterbuendum,	cenra gehwylcum,
eorlum ealuscerwen.	[...]
Þa wæs wundor micel	þæt se winsele
wiðhæfde heapodeorum,	þæt he on hrusan ne feol,
fæger foldbold;	ac he þæs fæste wæs
innan ond utan	irenbendum
searþoncum	besmiþod. ²²⁶

Whatever the phrase *wearð [...] ealuscerwen* might mean, it is noticeable that the variation on the phrase 'all the Danes' insistently raises the issue of their communal identity at precisely the moment when the integrity of the enclosure within which community-defining activities such as feasting and gift-giving take place is most (and most dramatically) under threat.²²⁷ Grendel's disruption of the hall enclosure not only places the Danes in mortal jeopardy, but also threatens their very identity.

As Anlezark has shown, the use of the word *meoduscerwen* to describe the terror of the flood in *Andreas*—almost certainly a coinage based on the example of *ealuscerwen*—marks a similar threat to the hall-based identity of the Mermedonians.²²⁸ Even before this, however, the Mermedonians' communal identity has been disrupted by Andrew's violation of the prison enclosure. Following the release of the prisoners, the *Andreas*-poet describes the approach of a group of Mermedonians to the prison:

²²⁶ *Beowulf* 767b-75a, 'To all the Danes, the city-dwellers, each of the bold-ones, the nobles, *ealuscerwen* happened. [...] It was then a great wonder that the wine-hall, the beautiful building, withstood the battle0brave ones, that it did not fall to earth; but it was skilfully wrought securely with iron bonds within and without.'

²²⁷ On the role of the hall in the construction of communal identity, see further Magennis, *Images of Community*, 35-59.

²²⁸ Anlezark, *Water and fire*, 223-5, 350.

Wendan and woldon wiðerhycgende,
 þæt hie on elþeodigum æt geworhton,
 weotude wiste; him seo wen geleah,
 syððan mid cordre carcernes duru
 eorre æsçberend opene fundon,
 onhliden hamera geweorc, hyrdas deade.²²⁹

The expectation of a cannibalistic feast expressed in this passage is instantly reminiscent of Grendel's own almost tangible anticipation (*þa him alumpen wæs / wistfylle wen*, 733b-4a), while the phrase *him seo wen geleah* is redolent of the particular irony that marks the description of Grendel's ill-fated enthusiasm.²³⁰ However, whilst Grendel's expectations are dependent upon his intention to break open the iron-bound door of Heorot, the open door of the prison (*onhliden hamera geweorc*) signals the frustration of the Mermedonians' culinary intentions.

It is significant that the object of the cannibals' appetites are explicitly outsiders (*on elþeodigum*). The fact that the Mermedonians only eat foreigners is an essential component of their identity: by definition, Mermedonians are those that are not on the menu.²³¹ As a result of Andrew's release of the prisoners, however, the Mermedonian society is forced to become auto-cannibalistic, first consuming the dead jailors (1083-90a),²³² and subsequently casting lots to nominate one of their own number to consume (1093-1103a). When they are denied even this desperate consolation through the intercession of the saint, however, the Mermedonians' despair is expressed, appropriately enough, through the image of an empty feast-hall:

²²⁹ *Andreas* 1072-7, 'They expected and desired with hostile thought that they would make a meal of the foreigners, an appointed feast; that hope deceived them, when in a company the angry spear-bearers found the prison door open, the work of the hammer thrown open, the guards dead.'

²³⁰ Cf. Richard N. Ringler, '*Him Sēo Wēn Gelēah*: The Design for Irony in Grendel's Last Visit to Heorot', *Speculum* 41 (1966), 49-67.

²³¹ Cf. *Andreas* 25b-8. For a discussion of the use of the term *elþeodig* in the poem, see Godlove, 'Bodies and Borders', 140-1.

²³² It is an intriguing manuscript error that the jailors are at this point described as *þa behlidenan* ('the enclosed'), a slip for *þa belidenan* ('the dead', 1089a). Cf. *Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles*, ed. Brooks, 99 n. to line 1089. Given that it is the lack of (living) enclosed humans that forces the Mermedonians to turn their attentions to the dead jailors one wonders whether an aural pun is intended here.

Ƣa wæs wop hæfen	in wera burgum,
hlud heriges cyrm;	hreoƢon friccan,
mændon meteleaste,	meðe stodon
hungre gehæfte.	Hornsalu wunedon
weste, winræced;	welan ne benohton
beornas to brucanne	on þa bitran tid.
Gesæton searuþancle	sundor to rune,
ermðu eahtigan;	næs him to eðle wynn. ²³³

Comparison of these lines with *Beowulf* gives the impression that this passage presents a pastiche of the description of the Danes' initial sense of disenfranchisement following Grendel's appropriation of Heorot:

Ƣa wæs æfter wiste	wop up ahafen,
micel morgensweg ²³⁴	
	oð þæt idel stod
husa selest ²³⁵	
	Monig oft gesæt
rice to rune;	ræd eahtedon ²³⁶

In both cases, the misery and consternation expressed is motivated by the inability to perform the activities—specifically feasting—through which the societies' communal identities are constructed and reinforced.

It seems, therefore, that in both *Andreas* and *Beowulf* the forceful entry within an enclosure represented in Andrew's entry into the prison and Grendel's entry into Heorot marks a threat to the societies whose identities are dependent upon the integrity of, respectively, the prison and the hall. Conceptually, however, the enclosure and the society in *Beowulf* is positively valued, whereas in *Andreas* both are negatively valued. The disruption to the enclosure in the former poem is conceptually negative therefore, while Andrew's violation of the prison enclosure in *Andreas* is conceptually positive. If one accepts both the suggestion that the *Andreas*-poet was familiar with *Beowulf*, and also the

²³³ *Andreas* 1155-62, 'Then lamentation was raised in the dwellings of men, loud outcry of the host; the heralds shouted, mourned without food, stood weary, bound by hunger. The gabled hall, the wine-hall, remained empty; the men possessed no riches to enjoy at that bitter hour. Cunning men sat apart in council, pondered their misery; there was no joy in that homeland for them.'

²³⁴ *Beowulf* 128-9a, 'Then lamentation was raised up after the feast, a great morning-song'.

²³⁵ *Ibid.* 145b-6a, 'Until the best of houses stood empty'.

²³⁶ *Ibid.* 171b-2, 'Often many powerful men sat in council; pondered a course of action'.

possibility of conscious intertextuality on his part, then the comparison of these two potentially paralleled episodes suggests that Andrew's entry into the Mermedonian prison participates in the wider juxtaposition of conceptually good and bad forms of enclosure that, as we have seen above, appears to operate throughout the narrative of *Andreas* as a whole.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: SPATIAL SIGNIFIERS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPACE IN OLD ENGLISH POETRY

Towards the end of *Beowulf*, immediately before the hero's fight with the dragon, the progress of the narrative is arrested as Beowulf sits, sad at heart, and utters a lengthy speech in which reminiscences of his youth lead him to recount the accidental death of the Geatish prince Herebeald at the hand of his brother, the subsequent grief and death of his father Hreðel, and the bloody consequences of Hreðel's death for the Geatish nation (2417-2509).¹ Within his account of the killing of Herebeald, the hero likens the situation of the grief-stricken Hreðel to that of a father whose son has been killed on the gallows:

¹ For a discussion of the wider significance of this passage in the poem, see Linda Georgianna, 'King Hrethel's Sorrow and the Limits of Heroic Action in *Beowulf*', *Speculum* 62 (1987), 829-50.

[...] Swa bið geomorlic gomelum ceorle
to gebidanne, þæt his byre ride
giong on galgan. Þonne he gyd wrece,
sarigne sang, þonne his sunu hangað
hrefne to hroðre, ond he him helpe ne mæg
eald ond infrod ænige gefremman,
symble bið gemyndgad morna gehwylce
eaforan ellorsið; oðres ne gymeð
to gebidanne burgum in innan
yrfewardas, þonne se an hafað
þurh deaðes nyd dæda gefondad.
Gesyhð sorhcearig on his suna bure
winsele westne, windge reste,
reotge berofene; ridend swefað,
hæleð in hoðman; nis þær hearpan sweg,
gomen in geardum, swylce ðær iu wæron.
Gewiteð þonne on sealman, sorhleoð gæleð
an æfter anum; þuhte him eall to rum,
wongas ond wicstede. [...]'²

The significance of this passage—sometimes referred to as the ‘Father’s Lament’—has been the focus of much critical debate. The possibility that the old man referred to here is in fact Hreðel himself, and that the image of a young boy riding the gallows is in fact nothing more than a poetic circumlocution for the death of Herebeald, has been suggested by A. R. Taylor.³ More frequently, however, critics have interpreted the description of the father’s grief as a type of epic simile.⁴ That the situation alluded to here is that of a father whose son has been legally executed—and could therefore not be either avenged or compensated according to the provisions of Anglo-Saxon law codes—and that this is further intended to provide an emotive parallel to the situation of Hreðel, unable to take vengeance for the death of one son at the hands of another, was first proposed in 1939 by Dorothy Whitelock.⁵ However, scholars have also been quick to note the ostensible

² *Beowulf* 2444-62a, ‘So it is tragic for an old man to experience, that his young son should ride on the gallows. Whenever he should recite verse, sorrowful song, when his son hangs for the pleasure of ravens, and he, old and very wise, may not do anything to help him, his son’s journey elsewhere is always recalled each morning; he does not desire to await other heirs within the stronghold, when that one has experienced [evil] deeds through the compulsion of death. Sad in his son’s chamber, he sees the desolate hall, the wind-swept resting place, mournful, bereft; the riders sleep, the heroes in the grave; there is not the song of the harp, joy in the enclosures, as there was before. He goes then to his bed, sings a song of sorrows, one after another; it all seems too spacious to him, the plains and the homestead.’

³ A. R. Taylor, ‘Two Notes on *Beowulf*’, *LSE* 7-8 (1952), 5-17, at 5-13.

⁴ Cf. Clemons, *Interactions of Thought and Language*, 195-7.

⁵ Dorothy Whitelock, ‘*Beowulf* 2444-2471’, *MÆ* 8 (1939), 198-204. For an alternative analysis of this episode in terms of societal obligations towards retribution and vengeance, see Gwara, *Heroic Identity*, 259-67.

similarities between the death of Herebeald and the killing of Baldr by his brother Höðr in Old Norse mythology.⁶ Drawing on this possible Scandinavian connection, it has been suggested not only that the digression-within-a-digression that is the ‘Father’s Lament’ reflects traditional depictions of paternal grief in Old Norse literature,⁷ but also, more fancifully, that the account of the hanged son recalls distantly the sacrificial practices associated with a hypothetical Anglo-Saxon cult of the god Odin.⁸

Despite these differences of interpretation, however, almost all commentators on this passage have noted the way in which the elegiac tone of this passage—in conjunction with other passages such as the ‘Lament of the Last Survivor’—contributes to the general mood of desolation and transience which marks the final section of the poem.⁹ In 1965, in his influential survey of Old English literature, Stanley Greenfield highlighted particularly the description of the desolate hall and empty dwellings. Noting the slight disjuncture caused by the suggestion that the mourning father apparently views the desolate hall within his son’s *bur*—a term that usually denotes a private chamber¹⁰—Greenfield suggested that the poet was at this point drawing upon the ‘ruin’ *topos* familiar from elegiac vernacular verse, arguing that the *topos* possessed ‘a metaphoric quality’ even in situations in which the description was ‘literally uncalled for’.¹¹ More recently, Greenfield’s interpretation has been followed to its logical conclusion by Harris, who argues that the images of the hall do

⁶ Cf. Orchard, *Critical Companion*, 116-19; Heather O’Donoghue, ‘What has Baldr to do with Lamech? The Lethal Shot of a Blind Man in Old Norse Myth and Jewish Exegetical Traditions’, *MÆ* 72 (2003), 82-107; *id.*, *From Asgard to Valhalla: The Remarkable History of the Norse Myths* (London and New York, 2007), 93.

⁷ Joseph Harris, ‘A Nativist Approach to *Beowulf*: The Case of Germanic Elegy’, in eds. Henk Aertsen and Rolf H. Bremmer, Jr., *Companion to Old English Poetry* (Amsterdam, 1994), 45-62.

⁸ Gail R. Owen, *Rites and Religions of the Anglo-Saxons* (Newton Abbot, 1981), 19-20. Cf. Richard North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature*, CSASE 22 (Cambridge, 1997), 198-202.

⁹ Cf. Adrian Bonjour’s observation that ‘the poignant atmosphere of grief and sadness in which the ‘Father’s Lament’ is steeped’ reflects ‘the central theme and dominant mood of the end of the poem’ (*The Digressions in Beowulf*, Medium Ævum Monographs V (Oxford, 1965), 34).

¹⁰ Cf. *Beowulf* 138-42a where it is clearly implied that the such chambers are separate from and exterior to the hall.

¹¹ Stanley B. Greenfield, *A Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York, 1965), 230. Cf. Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder, with Michael Lapidge, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York and London, 1986), 297.

not relate to the supposed reality of the father's position, but rather to 'a vision (*gesyhð*) of traditional elegiac scenery' expressed in 'generalized elegiac wording'.¹²

This explanation of the presence of the ruin imagery in this passage is likely to be substantially correct. This does not explain, however, the curious expression of sorrow with which this brief account of a father's grief ends. While the desolation of the empty hall can be paralleled in poems such as *The Ruin* or *The Wanderer*, the statement that the habitation seemed too spacious (*to rum*) to the impotent sorrow of the parent is less conventional.

For Ruth Wehlau, who approaches both the 'Father's Lament' and *The Wanderer* as 'portrayals of despair and sorrow of a traditionally masculine nature', spatial imagery is central to the elegiac expression of despair:

In each instance we find a ruined and deserted world, accompanied by a sense of hopeless waiting and a failure of wisdom to console. All these notions are figured through spatial imagery—space is too little or too big, and frequently both at the same time—the internal world is thus both a prison or a wasteland.¹³

However, Wehlau's attempts to draw parallels for the striking image of spaciousness that we find at the end of the 'Father's Lament' in the elegiac imagery of *The Wanderer* are not wholly convincing. The situation depicted in *The Wanderer*—and, indeed, in other Old English elegiac verse—does clearly present a longing that is both temporal and spatial. Travelling sea-ways (*lagulade*, 3a) and paths of exile (*wræclastas*, 5a), cut off from his homeland and far from his kinsmen (*eðle bidæled*, / *freomægum feor*, 20b-21a), the Wanderer recalls past events from which he is separated in both space and time.¹⁴ Attempting to recapture a social context which no longer exists for him, the Wanderer

¹² Harris, 'Nativist Approach', 50. Cf. Richard Schrader's suggestion that the motif of a father viewing the vacated lodgings of his son is 'a *topos* whose history stretches from classical antiquity to the Renaissance' ('The Deserted Chamber: An Unnoticed Topos in the "Father's Lament" of *Beowulf*', *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association* 5 (1984), 1-5, at 2).

¹³ Ruth Wehlau, "Seeds of Sorrow": Landscapes of Despair in *The Wanderer*, *Beowulf's Story of Hrethel*, and *Sonatorrek*, *Parergon* 15:2 (1998), 1-17, at 4-5.

¹⁴ Cited from *The Wanderer*, ed. Roy F. Leslie, rev. ed. (Exeter, 1985).

sends out his spirit *ofer wabema gebind* ('over the binding of the waves', 57a) and laments the lost experiences of former days. However, in all of this imagery—which, as Wehlau points out, forms a striking contrast to the equally prominent use of binding imagery throughout the poem¹⁵—the dominant note is not in fact spaciousness, but distance.

By contrast, the 'Father's Lament' presents a figure separated from the object of his longing by time and by absence, but not explicitly by space. The opening account of the father's grief focuses remorselessly on the temporal sequence of cause and effect that has led to his present despair. The father's sorrow at the memory of his son's death is explicitly stated (2450-1a), while the conspicuous use of the conjunction *þonne* both locates the cause of his present grief in past events (2446b-9), and also explicitly rejects the possibility of future consolation (2451b-54).¹⁶ Unlike the Wanderer, however, the father utters his laments not at a distance from but in proximity to the location of his previous experiences of fatherhood, in the homestead in which his son's *bur* was located.¹⁷

The spatial expression of despair in the 'Father's Lament'—the suggestion that all is now *to rum*—is thus of a different order to that familiar from *The Wanderer* and other Old English elegies. Commenting upon this passage, Linda Georgianna has suggested that the phrase *to rum* here implies a sense of openness and vulnerability relating to a loosening of social bonds and the breakdown of the protective nature of the hall as a cultural symbol.¹⁸ However, such a meaning is not suggested by the use of the adjective in Old English poetry, where positive connotations of ampleness, liberality and opportunity predominate.¹⁹ In a metaphorical sense, the adjective is well-attested in contexts denoting mental qualities such as wisdom and generosity—as suggested by compounds such as

¹⁵ Wehlau, 'Landscapes of Despair', 5-6.

¹⁶ Cf. *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, 246 n. to lines 2446bff.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 246 n. to lines 2455-9.

¹⁸ Georgianna, 'King Hrethel's Sorrow', 838-40.

¹⁹ Cf. *BT, rum*. *BT* does record the sense '*not restrained within due limits, lax*' for the adjective (*rum*, V), but the only evidence provided for such a meaning is the reference in *Guðlac A* to *rume regulas* (489a), interpreted as 'lax monastic observances'.

rumheort ('generous') and *rummod* ('liberal minded').²⁰ However, by far the most frequent context in which the term is used in Old English verse is the depiction of idealized, and particularly paradisiacal, landscapes.

As has been noted in chapter one, spaciousness has been identified as part of a 'formulaic system' associated with the depiction of idealized landscapes in Old English poetry.²¹ The adjective *rum*—as well as synonyms such as *brad*, *wide*, and *side*—occurs frequently as part of this 'system'.²² In *Genesis A*, for example, both Creation as a whole and also more discrete desirable landscapes are repeatedly noted for their spaciousness. So, the extended account of Creation and the description of the earthly paradise that follows the account of the fall of the angels in this poem describes how God created both the spacious earth (*bis rume land*, 114b; *rumne grund*, 123a, 213a) and the wide oceans (*rumum flode*, 167b). Subsequently, after the account of the Flood, the descendants of Noah set out to seek the more spacious land (*rumre land*, 1651b) promised to them in the Noahic Covenant (1512-42)—a promise that is reiterated in the Abrahamic Covenant (1787-90a), in which the Lord again promises to grant a spacious kingdom (*rume rice*, 1790a) to the people of Abraham.²³

Elsewhere, the adjective is also used to describe the expanse of creation in both *Maxims I* (*Eardas rume*, 15b)²⁴ and *Judith* (*rume grundas*, 348a). In *Daniel*, the term is similarly used to describe the idealized landscape of Babylon for which Nebuchadnezzar proudly assumes responsibility (*rume rice*, 610a). Moreover, the influence of the 'formulaic system' associated with idealized landscapes on this passage of *Beowulf* is

²⁰ Cf. for example, *Elene* 1239b-42a; *Judith* 97b-8a; *Genesis B* 519b-20a, 559b-61.

²¹ See above 9.

²² Cf. Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, 144; *id.*, 'Grene in Old English Verse: An Investigation into Connotative Meaning and Poetic Technique', unpubl. MPhil dissertation (University of Oxford, 1994), esp. 35-8; Kathleen Barrar, 'A spacious, green and hospitable land: paradise in Old English poetry', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 86 (2004), 105-25, at 111-14.

²³ See also *Genesis A* 2109b-13.

²⁴ Cited from *The Exeter Book*, eds. Krapp and Dobbie.

suggested by the statement that it is not only the homestead (*wicstede*) but also the surrounding planes (*wongas*) which now appear too spacious to the grieving father. The poetic noun *wong*, as simplex and in compounded forms, features as a prominent element in the system outlined by Kabir, carrying strong connotations of open and verdant landscapes.²⁵

While the concept of spaciousness is conventionally associated with idealized landscapes in vernacular poetry, the concept of narrowness is conversely frequently associated with unpleasant and threatening locations. We have seen in the previous chapter how in both *Elene* and *Juliana* Cynewulf manipulates conventional depictions of hell as a narrow home in his presentation of the prison *locus*.²⁶ That the *Beowulf*-poet was himself familiar with similar conventional associations between narrowness and unpleasant landscapes is evident in the celebrated description of the narrow paths and claustrophobic landscape through which the hero passes on his journey to confront Grendel's Mother at the hellish mere (*stige nearo*, / *enge anpaðas*, 1409-10), as well as in his use of the term *nearo* as an abstract noun denoting 'distress' or 'trauma'.²⁷

It is against such traditional associations, therefore, that the phrase *puhte him eall to rum* in the 'Father's Lament' should be interpreted. The description indicates not only the importance of significant spatial representation as a poetic technique in the Old English tradition, but also the value of an intertextual reading practice which acknowledges the dialectical relationships which underpin that significance in individual examples and recognizes the position of a particular textual example within a wider complex collective formation. As with the preceding description of the abandoned hall, the *Beowulf*-poet is here working with and indebted to traditional and still recognizable conventions of spatial

²⁵ Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, 144-7.

²⁶ See above 198 and n. 119.

²⁷ Cf. *Beowulf* 2349b-50; 2594b-5. See also the unique compounds *nearocraft* ('art of rendering difficult', 2243b) and *nearofah* ('cruelly hostile', 2317a) and the more common poetic compound *nearoþearf* ('cruel distress', 422b).

representation. The artistry of this particular example, however, is apparent in the way in which the poet inverts the traditional associations of spatial terminology.²⁸ The poetic effectiveness of the use of the concept of spaciousness as a figure for the oppressive grief of the stricken father depends upon this inversion: the use of the phrase *eall to rum* in a context in which a reference instead to the concept of narrowness and constriction would be more conventionally appropriate is not only arresting for a reader familiar to any significant degree with the conventions for spatial representation in Old English verse, but also powerfully evokes the seismic shift that bereavement has brought about in the father's experience of the world.²⁹

According to the classic study by E. G. Stanley, Old English figurative diction is at its best when 'a state of mind or moral concept evokes in the poem the description of a natural phenomenon, associated by the Anglo-Saxons with that mood or moral concept'.³⁰ What the example of this passage from *Beowulf* suggests, however, is that the best Old English poets were in fact capable of playing with and dislocating the connections between a figure and its conventional associations. To put this another way, recalling Ganim's description of the 'explicit signage' of spatial representation in medieval literature, we might say that the poetic artistry evident in this passage derives from the poet's awareness of both the

²⁸ Cf. Kabir's discussion of passages in which vernacular poets draw upon a strongly-felt conventional association between the colour-term *grene* and paradisiacal landscapes in unexpected ways in order to 'circumvent traditional expectations through deliberate lexical or contextual deviance to create special effects, representative of both the overall poetic method of the poem under consideration, and the achievement of individuality while remaining within established parameters' ('*Grene* in Old English Verse', 56-7).

²⁹ A similar poetic effect is perhaps achieved in the curious passage at the end of *Christ and Satan* in which Christ, resisting the devil's temptations, condemns him to measure with his hands the dimensions of hell (690-726). While this unique punishment has usually been interpreted as a response to Satan's attempts to transcend his own limitations as a created being and to challenge the divine role of measuring Creation and appointing spatial and temporal relationships, it is noticeable that the emphasis on the breadth of hell in this passage again strikingly contrasts with the more conventional depiction of the narrowness of hell in an expression of the all-encompassing nature of Satan's torment. Cf. Thomas D. Hill, 'The Measure of Hell: *Christ and Satan* 695-722', *PQ* 60 (1981), 409-14; Harsh, 'Measured Power of Christ', 251-2; Ruth Wehlau, 'The Power of Knowledge and the Location of the Reader in *Christ and Satan*', *JEGP* 97 (1998), 1-12.

³⁰ Stanley, 'Poetic Diction', 434.

power and also the arbitrariness of the culturally mandated connections between the signifier and that which is signified within the vernacular poetic tradition.³¹

The example of the phrase *eall to rum* in this passage from *Beowulf* is representative at a micro level of the sensibility of Anglo-Saxon vernacular poets to the artistic potential of spatial representation more widely. In a poetic tradition which apparently valued signification and representation over mimetic re-production, the depiction of setting and of spatial relationships in Old English verse does not merely serve to provide a background against which events or situations might be staged, but typically has the potential to contribute in real and often under-appreciated ways to the production and interpretation of meaning. In the most striking examples, such as in the ‘Father’s Lament’ or in the description of the flight of the Israelites in *Exodus*, this is achieved not only by engaging with established conventions associated with spatial representation but by dramatically and forcefully inverting the expectations that such conventions arouse.

This poetic engagement with the representation of space has been the subject of this thesis. The three chapters at the heart of the thesis can stand alone as studies of the representation of specific events, situations, and settings in Old English poetry. Each of these chapters points towards specific conclusions drawn from the material under consideration. So, in chapter two, my analysis of the territorial presentation of the angelic rebellion in Old English verse demonstrates the different ways in which these accounts emphasize conflicting horizontal and vertical spatial relationships as a means of representing spatially contemporary tensions over the construction of power dynamics. This is particularly evident in the case of *Genesis B*, where the more precise historical context in which the adaptation of the Old Saxon original might be located encourages an

³¹ See above 14.

interpretation of the Old English poem in terms of a tenth-century interest in the negotiation of royal power.

In chapter three, I show how the significance of the localization of the battle-site has been too often overlooked in scholarly discussions of the way in which individual battles are depicted in Old English poetry. As I have argued, the recurrent importance of issues of territorial authority in these accounts, spatialized through emphasis on the role of borders and boundaries, suggests the influence of established poetic conventions for the description of battle. However, the creativity and artistry of Old English poets, and the productive rather than restrictive nature of the poetic tradition with which they work, is evident in the various ways in which these territorial concerns resonate beyond their immediate context, reflecting the wider thematic interests of the poems in which these accounts occur.

Chapter four also indicates the role of individual artistry in Old English poetry through a close analysis of the use of the prison setting in hagiographical verse. In this chapter, I offer the first detailed study of the role of the prison in Anglo-Saxon culture and literature. My analysis makes clear the extent to which some Old English poets responded to the role of the prison as a common setting in hagiographical narratives by engaging—in ways not paralleled in vernacular or Latin analogues—with the idea of spatial enclosure and the various ways in which this might be conceptualized.

However, whilst such conclusions are valuable individually, this thesis also stands as a whole from which more wide-reaching conclusions may be drawn. In the first place, I have demonstrated throughout how the sensibility of Anglo-Saxon poets to spatial representation has been hitherto underappreciated in critical evaluations of Old English poetic technique. In part, this under-appreciation has been the result of a scholarly tendency to focus on specific, isolated examples of spatial representation in the extant

poetic corpus, a tendency that has impeded critical understanding of the spatial poetics of Old English verse more generally. By focusing primarily on narrative poetry and avoiding so far as possible such celebrated and widely appreciated passages, I have drawn attention to the ubiquity of significant spatial representation in the Old English poetic tradition and have indicated the importance that it must assume in future accounts of this tradition.

Beyond this, however, the thesis has also drawn attention to the centrality of matters of spatial representation for the process by which meaning is created in Old English verse. This is suggested by the way in which the analysis of chapters two, three and four have shown that, in Old English verse, the poetics of spaces are frequently aligned with the poetics of power. The association of power with control of space that is made so explicit in Lucifer's rejection of God's 'spatial mastery' in the accounts of the angelic rebellion also underlies the concern with the negotiation of territorial boundaries in poetic accounts of battle. In each case, the dynamics according to which space is mapped and organized reflects the constitutive power relationships according to which identity is constructed. Similarly, the use of the 'sweet inversion' motif in association with the prison setting in Old English verse hagiography can be seen to reflect contested notions of authority and control. In particular, the concern with the conceptualization of physical and mental enclosure in the three poems examined in chapter four establishes a contrast between terrestrial authority and spiritual control in which the former is ultimately transcended by the latter.

In this way, the three principal chapters of these thesis, taken together, testify to the fundamental importance that spatial representation frequently assumes in Old English poetry. They also testify, however, to the need for scholarly awareness of the essentially intertextual nature of Old English poetics. I have demonstrated throughout this thesis that an examination of the dialectical frameworks in which individual texts are located can not

only cast light on the conventional nature of the Old English poetic tradition, but also, simultaneously, reveal how such a tradition can be a productive foundation for individual creativity. So, in successive chapters, I have drawn attention to both the apparent conventionality of spatial representation, and also—in the sense that this conventionality reflects the ‘more-than-textual resources of meaning’ and ‘inherent signification’ described by Foley³²—the individuality and artistry with which particular poets engage with these conventional resources. My conclusions regarding the spatial poetics of Old English verse thus finally support a model of vernacular poetic technique that privileges creativity and deliberate engagement with the signification of conventional language and imagery.

POSTSCRIPT

Throughout the course of this thesis, I have consistently emphasized that the sensibility to spatial representation in Old English verse goes beyond that evident in other areas of Anglo-Saxon literary culture. In chapters three and four in particular, comparison of vernacular poetic texts with their Latin and vernacular prose sources and analogues indicates that the process by which such textual models were adapted into Old English verse consistently included an elaboration of spatial descriptions and settings. However, it is nevertheless clear that the vernacular poetic tradition did not exist in a vacuum, and my conclusions regarding the prominence of significant spatial representation in Old English verse point to further areas of study beyond the scope of this project.

One such area is the extent to which the spatial poetics of Old English verse represent a specifically Anglo-Saxon development in Germanic poetry. As has been noted above, the origins of the strongly conventional tradition of Old English poetry stretch back to the time

³² See above 13-14.

before the migration of the Germanic tribes to Britain.³³ Potential similarities between the representation of space in Old English verse and that in surviving Old Norse poetry and prose have been noted in this chapter. More clearly, the example of *Genesis B* in chapter two has highlighted the perhaps particularly close relationship between both the languages and the poetic traditions of Old English and Old Saxon.³⁴ A comparative examination of the techniques associated with the representation of space in, particularly, the Old Saxon, Old High German and Old Norse traditions might, therefore, throw valuable new light upon the spatial poetics of Old English verse that have been the focus of this study.³⁵

Another area that might be expected to repay further investigation is the representation of space in the other literatures of Anglo-Saxon England. As chapter four in particular has shown, the dialectical and intertextual connections that inform the spatial poetics of this tradition may extend to relationships with both Latin literature and vernacular prose traditions. Indeed, it would be surprising if this were not in fact the case. The presentation of the prison *locus* in Old English verse demonstrates that vernacular spatial poetics may both draw upon and contribute to a complex collective formation that incorporates elements from both the Latin and the vernacular prose literary traditions. The interconnectedness of these literary traditions might, moreover, be closer than has generally been acknowledged. That Old English prose—particularly from the later Anglo-Saxon period—often contains ‘rhythmical’ passages that display an affinity with the traditional metre of vernacular verse has long been noticed.³⁶ More recently, a more

³³ See above 86 and n. 1.

³⁴ See above 53-4.

³⁵ For a comparative approach to some issues of spatial representation in the less closely-connected traditions of Old English and Early Welsh poetry, see Sarah Lynn Higley, *Between Language: The Uncooperative Text in Early Welsh and Old English Nature Poetry* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1993), esp. 149-84.

³⁶ The debate concerning the nature of such ‘rhythmical’ prose has focused primarily on the works of Ælfric, on which see esp. Frances Randall Lipp, ‘Ælfric’s Old English Prose Style’, *SP* 66 (1969), 689-718; S. M. Kuhn, ‘Was Ælfric a Poet?’, *PQ* 52 (1973), 643-63; Mechthild Gretsch, *Ælfric and the Cult of Saints in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, CSASE 34 (Cambridge, 2005), 110-13; Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Early English Metre* (Toronto, 2005), 81-90. Tiffany Beechy (*The Poetics of Old English* (Farnham, 2010)) has recently attempted to demonstrate that the binary categories of ‘verse’ and ‘prose’ are in fact anachronistic when

pervasive influence of the oral-formulaic traditions of Old English poetic composition has been detected especially in the vernacular prose of Archbishop Wulfstan.³⁷ It has also been argued not only that such oral-formulaic traditions may have influenced the Latin poetry of Anglo-Saxon writers such as Aldhelm, but also that Aldhelm's own poetry may subsequently have exerted an influence on the composition of some Old English poems.³⁸ Whether or not such authors might have drawn upon the traditional associations of conventional poetic diction and imagery is not clear, but a further investigation into the representation of space in Anglo-Saxon literature in general can only clarify the observations regarding Old English poetry made in this study.

Beyond such literary areas for future study, there is also a need for a systematic evaluation of the relationships that might have existed between spatial representation in Old English verse and contemporary Anglo-Saxon visual art—especially manuscript illustration, but also monumental art and architecture.³⁹ A striking example of the potential for such a study is afforded by a brief consideration of the depiction of the fall of the angels in Anglo-Saxon manuscript illustration.

applied to an Old English literary tradition in which—she claims—‘there was as yet no need for prosaic language to stand apart from poetic form as more prudent, pious, or methodologically sound’ (*ibid.*, 13). Whilst Beechy's wider argument is not tenable, her analysis of the patterning of Old English prose does perhaps indicate a closer association between vernacular prose and verse in this period than is sometimes acknowledged.

³⁷ Andy Orchard, ‘Crying Wolf: Oral Style and the *Sermones Lupi*’, *ASE* 21 (1992), 239-64. Cf. Don W. Chapman, ‘Poetic Compounding in the Vercelli, Blickling, and Wulfstan Homilies’, *NM* 103 (2002), 409-21. For earlier disagreements about the nature of Wulfstan's rhythmical prose, see Angus McIntosh, ‘Wulfstan's Prose’, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 35 (1949), 109-42; Ida Masters Hollowell, ‘On the Two-Stress Theory of Wulfstan's Rhythm’, *PQ* 61 (1982), 1-11.

³⁸ Cf. Lapidge, ‘Aldhelm's Latin Poetry’, *passim*; Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, CSASE 8 (Cambridge, 1994), 43-55, 119-25. On the possible influence of Aldhelm on Old English poetry, see Bruce Karl Braswell, ‘The Dream of the Rood’ and Aldhelm on Sacred Prosopopeia’, *Medieval Studies* 40 (1978), 461-7; Charles D. Wright, ‘The blood of Abel and the branches of sin: *Genesis A*, *Maxims I* and Aldhelm's *Carmen de uirginitate*’, *ASE* 25 (1996), 7-19; Christopher Abram, ‘In search of lost time: Aldhelm and *The Ruin*’, *Quaestio* 1 (2000), 25-49; Paul G. Remley, ‘Aldhelm as Old English Poet: *Exodus*, Asser, and the *Dicta Alfredi*’, in eds. O'Brien O'Keefe and Orchard, *Latin Learning*, I. 90-108.

³⁹ Note, for example, Clemoes' suggestion that the emphasis on verticality in a Christian cosmos is paralleled in the architectural developments which produced tall, narrow churches (*Interactions of Thought and Language*, 229 n. 1) and that a familiarity with the liturgical use of such spaces might have influenced Cynewulf's poetic representation of Christ's Ascension (*ibid.*, 326-7).

Of most immediate interest is the depiction of the fall in a full-page miniature on page 3 of MS Junius 11. The miniature is divided into four horizontal registers. The topmost register is dominated by an image of Lucifer—by far the largest and most splendid figure in the illustration—gesturing towards an elaborate throne and receiving the adoration of his followers. The second register represents Lucifer again, receiving palm branches in token of victory from six smaller winged angels, positioned to either side in two groups of three.⁴⁰ In the third register, a surprisingly diminutive figure of God is depicted flanked by three angels on the left and a further two on the right, thrusting downwards with three spears. In the lowest register, Lucifer falls from the heavens surrounded by his companions and by broken pieces of the magnificent throne depicted in the topmost register. Immediately below, Lucifer, now transmuted into Satan, is depicted heavily bound in the jaws of the mouth of hell.

The stratification of the miniature thus establishes four horizontal fields. However, the composition as a whole is dominated by a strong, central vertical axis on which the principal figure in each register is aligned.⁴¹ This visually predominant axis establishes what Karkov describes as a ‘vertical narrative’ within the illustration, framed by the glorious image of Lucifer in the topmost register and the demonic image of Satan at the foot of the page.⁴² Subordinate to this vertical axis, the four registers each portray ‘a secondary narrative that moves horizontally within the separate spaces depicted’.⁴³

⁴⁰ Both Herbert R. Broderick (‘Observations on the Method of Illustration in MS Junius 11 and the Relationship of the Drawings to the Text’, *Scriptorium* 37 (1983), 161-77, at 167) and Catherine E. Karkov (*Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England: Narrative Strategies in the Junius 11 Manuscript*, CSASE 31 (Cambridge, 2001), 50 n. 14) object that since Lucifer’s rebellion was unsuccessful, he could not properly be depicted receiving palms and argue that this scene in fact depicts the response to God’s triumph amongst the loyal angels. Both the objection and the alternative interpretation are unconvincing however, and it seems more plausible that the figure is indeed Lucifer, hubristically celebrating a premature victory. Cf. Raw, ‘Probable Derivation’, 144.

⁴¹ Cf. Broderick, ‘Method of Illustration’, 165: ‘the sequence of events [...] works from top to bottom with the main protagonists more or less centralized on a vertical axis’.

⁴² Karkov, *Text and Picture*, 4 n. 11.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 38-9.

The composition of the miniature, combining horizontal stratification with a dominant vertical axis, may thus be seen to reflect the juxtaposition of horizontal and vertical spatial relationships identified in chapter two as a repeating feature of vernacular poetic responses to the angelic rebellion—not least those contained within MS Junius 11 itself.⁴⁴ Moreover, a similar interest in contrasting vertical and horizontal axes is also evident in the depiction of this same event in the full-page colour miniature on fol. 2^r of London, British Library MS Cotton Claudius B.iv—the unique eleventh-century illustrated Old English *Hexateuch*.⁴⁵ In his discussion of this illustration, Benjamin Withers notes how the individual elements of the miniature are carefully located on a field of illustration defined by a heavy, decorated, rectangular border. Comparing the composition of the miniature to the use of competing vertical and horizontal axes in later Romanesque art, Withers points to the way in which the upright figure of God, enthroned in a mandorla positioned at the top of the central vertical axis of the miniature, is contrasted with the diagonal, upended figure of Lucifer, whose own mandorla abuts the bottom left-hand corner of the decorated border.⁴⁶

The emphasis on contrasting vertical and horizontal axes is thus a striking feature of both of these miniatures depicting the fall of the angels. That there are connections of some description between this visual emphasis and the prominent use of horizontal and vertical spatial relationships in the poetic accounts of this event is a possibility that

⁴⁴ In its current position in MS Junius 11, the miniature apparently illustrates the account of the fall contained in *Genesis A*. However, the details of the illustration correspond more closely to the subsequent account in *Genesis B*, and Raw has convincingly demonstrated that this picture belongs to the main body of illustrations derived ultimately from the hypothetical illustrated Old Saxon manuscript ('Probable Derivation', 146-7). Cf. above 56-7.

⁴⁵ Reproduced electronically on a CD-ROM accompanying Benjamin C. Withers, *The Illustrated Old English Hexateuch, Cotton Claudius B.iv: the Frontier of Seeing and Reading in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 2007). Ker (*Catalogue*, 178-9, no. 142) dates the manuscript to the first half of the eleventh century on palaeographical grounds; on art-historical grounds, both Elzbieta Temple (*Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts 900-1066*, Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles 2 (London, 1976), 102-4, no. 86) and Francis Wormald (*English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London, 1952), 67, no. 28) date the manuscript to the second quarter of the eleventh century, with a possible origin at St Augustine's, Canterbury.

⁴⁶ Benjamin C. Withers, 'A "Secret and Feverish Genesis": The Prefaces of the Old English Hexateuch', *The Art Bulletin* 81 (1999), 53-71, at 57.

requires further exploration. It is also a possibility that reinforces the need for a detailed study of the possible relationships between spatial representation in Anglo-Saxon visual and vernacular poetic arts.

Such questions are beyond the scope of the current project. However, what even this brief discussion of some areas for future study indicated by this thesis makes clear is that considerable work remains to be done on the various ways in which space, setting, and spatial representation might signify in Old English poetry and in Anglo-Saxon culture more widely. My hope, however, is that this thesis has—in collaboration with those previous studies whose influence on my work has been highlighted in the introduction—contributed to our critical appreciation of the techniques and achievements of the Anglo-Saxon vernacular poetic tradition, and has played a part in the ongoing process of mapping the landscape of Old English verse.

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