New Wine in Old Skins:

Vernacular Typology in Medieval English Literature, 590-1390

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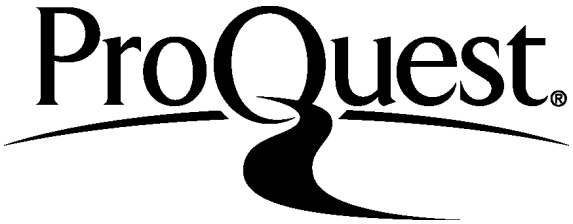

ABSTRACT

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My dissertation examines the significance of sacred poetry in English to the political and social identity of the English church, from England's conversion at the end of the sixth century to the flourishing of England's vernacular theology in the fourteenth. I show that the vernacular literary culture of Anglo-Saxon England was fostered in part by the distinction between the spirit and the letter of the Bible, which enabled speakers of Old English to regard their own literary cultures as potentially sacred and inspired. Turning to the later part of the medieval period, I examine the "spiritual sense," or level of figural meaning, of sacred texts in Middle English. I demonstrate that the spiritual sense of Middle English religious poems is often designed to communicate an idealized history of English Christianity, as Middle English poems often use inventive typologies to represent the miracle of Anglo-Saxon England's conversion as a source of sacred authority for the English language. This idealized religious history typically imagines the Church, not as a homogeneous community of Latin speakers, but as a diverse community characterized by heterogeneity and multilingualism.

My focus on the distinction between the spirit and the letter, and its significance to medieval multilingualism, enables me to showcase an aspect of the cultural identity of medieval Catholicism that has often gone overlooked. While scholars have long been interested in the cohesion of medieval Catholic literary cultures across Europe, they have often sought to elucidate this area of research by focusing narrowly on medieval authors' shared possession of Latin texts. I demonstrate that, throughout the Middle Ages, English Christians explained the unity of their shared tradition not in terms of the sacred authority of Latin, but in terms of the

sacred authority granted to the many vernaculars spoken within the Roman Catholic Church. In making this argument, I re-examine the historical development of sacred texts in English, seeking to transform this story from a straightforward progress narrative into a complex story of multilingual and transhistorical transmission and encounter.

This dissertation is organized chronologically. In my first chapter, "Gehyre se ðe Wille: The Old English 'Exodus' and the Reader as Exegete," I show that the insular nation of Anglo-Saxon England employed the spiritual sense of Scripture to identify itself implicitly with other originally "pagan" nations, such as Egypt and Ethiopia. Within Anglo-Saxon studies, these African nations have often been treated as the fantastic realm of the Other; my dissertation shows that they also offered Anglo-Saxon England a site of historical identification. This transnational identification was made possible by figural reading, which enabled medieval readers to imagine the Roman Catholic Church as a dynamic world religion, and thus to conceive of a place for England within the Church.

In my second chapter, "'For nu mine hyge hweorfeð': 'The Seafarer,' Grammatica, and the Making of Anglo-Saxon Textual Culture," I argue that "The Seafarer" reworks standard figural images drawn from the liturgical tradition in order to reimagine them as entirely English. By engaging its readers with the spiritual or figural sense of sea travel, and then reworking that sense in the language of the Old English liturgy, the text makes implicit claims for the sacredness of the vernacular literary tradition. Rather than relegating the vernacular to the expression of "barbaric" or "pagan" ideas, I show that "The Seafarer" invests English with a range of possibility equal to that of the Latinate tradition. Ultimately, I read the poem's relationship to its Latin intertexts as an early example of vernacular theology, one that makes implicit claims for the potentially sacred authority of English literary traditions.

In my third chapter, "'All forr ure allre nede': The Ormulum, the Long Twelfth Century, and the Invention of the Vernacular," I argue that the English language lost much of its imagined spiritual authority during the post-Conquest clerical reforms of the English church and became primarily a vehicle for literal meaning. Against this backdrop of reformist centralization and standardization, I examine the Ormulum, a metrical gospel paraphrase most famous among medievalists for its inexplicably standardized spelling. I argue that, in keeping with contemporary views about the limitations of the English language, Orm focused his efforts on perfecting the letter of English rather than its spirit.

In my fourth chapter, ''To Hippe Aboute in Engelonde': Langland's Alternative Typology and The Conversion of Anglo-Saxon England," I argue that the distinction between letter and spirit enabled readers of Middle English to read figural poems for idealized representations of English religious institutions. I examine the re-emergence of a fully developed spiritual or figural sense in the English texts of late medieval England. In particular, I turn to the historiography of William Langland, found in Passus XV of *Piers Plowman*, where the poet uses the enigmatic phrase "Peter, i.e. Christ" to introduce a long and disordered chronicle of English church history. The equation of Peter with Christ is a clear invocation of figural reading practices; Langland's innovation, I argue, is to synthesize figural reading practices with specifically English history-writing. Thus, in Passus XV, Langland uses the spiritual sense of his text as an opportunity to put forward his own vision of the ideal English church and its place within world history: as a convert nation, England derives its place within world Catholicism from the authority of its miraculous conversion from paganism to Christianity.

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Introduction

My dissertation argues that the birth of vernacular religious literature in England took place, not in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, as in commonly supposed, but in the seventh. It seeks to transform the story of the development of Europe's vernacular literary culture from a straightforward narrative of Western European progress into a more complex story of multilingual transmission and encounter. Without understanding the original transnational and multilingual identity of English Christianity, I argue, it is impossible to understand the vernacularization of England, or of Western Europe more broadly. The unusual historical range of the project is designed to counter the prevailing narrative of vernacular theology in England, a narrative that overlooks the debts that English Christian identity owes to the doctrine of the New Covenant. Throughout the medieval period, the theology of the New Covenant offered members of the English Church both a justification for the use of their own vernaculars and a means to imagine themselves as part of a world community. This New Covenantal sense of England's religious identity took root in clear and sometimes startling ways: seeing itself as existing "at the ends of the earth," for instance, the island nation of Anglo-Saxon England identified itself with Egypt and Ethiopia.

My exploration of this medieval literary culture draws on two aspects of biblical New Covenant theology: first, the famous distinction between the spirit and the letter of the law, found in the writings of Paul; and second, the expansion of God's faithfulness to include the peoples of all the earth, found in the Old Testament prophetic books. In its original form, the biblical New Covenant was an Old Testament prophecy, appearing in Jeremiah 31, that God would one day radically transform his relationship with his covenant people. Christian writers

from Paul onward used the language of this New Covenant prophesy to describe the new relationship that Christ was said to have created between God and the Church. In a letter addressed to the church at Corinth, Paul wrote that Christ had made the Church "competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:6, NRSV). According to this New Covenant, as Henri de Lubac writes, "God would no longer be with one ethnic group" but rather "in Jesus Christ and everywhere."

These essentially biblical conceptions of New Covenant were not static ideas throughout the Middle Ages, of course; they were subject to dynamic and ever-evolving reinterpretations. Paul's distinction between "spirit" and "letter" was of immense interest to early interpreters of the Bible, not only because (in the views of some) it licensed the use of the vernacular, but also because it allowed the Bible to be interpreted in non-literal, allegorical ways. These non-literal means of interpretation expanded the significance of the literal text in a number of different directions. Ultimately, this practice of reading texts for their manifold allegorical meanings—searching for their "fourfold sense," as I discuss below—became the foundation of most medieval exegesis. My dissertation demonstrates that this manifold sense of Scripture was an expression of the diversity made possible through the New Covenant, one that gave the reader the resources necessary to imagine the Roman Catholic Church as a dynamic world religion.

In evoking the exegetical practice of reading according to the spirit, vernacular poetry could grapple with one of the deepest problems of biblical literature: namely, the relationship of Old Testament to New. Considered as a single, composite text offering a progressive series of revelations, the Old and New Testament scriptures that made up the Bible were held to display radical historical continuity. As Henri de Lubac observes, the progression from Old to New

Testament revelations necessarily reflects "some sense of history, some sense of evolution, that is to say, some notion of the continuity of God's work in time, the uninterrupted continuity of a homogeneous historical development." But the transition from Old Testament to New Testament, occasioned by the birth of Christ, "also offers the spectacle of a discontinuity that has no equal" (De Lubac). My dissertation argues that the very form of the vernacular poems concerned with the New Covenant often dramatize the continuity problems inherent in the doctrine of progressive revelation. In these works, formal transitions are often absent; diegetic breaks abound; and elements of sacred history are juxtaposed without comment or explanation. These apparent disruptions, dislocating or disorienting as they may be for the reader, are often means of dramatizing the substance of New Covenant theology, as they elicit the practice of reading for the composite spiritual meaning of the text.

Through these mechanisms of representing New Covenant textuality, I argue, English poems engage with the political and social problems at the core of New Covenant doctrine. They take up the basic problems of how the Christian community is constituted, and how the community of "God's chosen people" may be bounded and unbounded. For that reason, these texts have a recurring interest in those at the margins of Christian belief, however those margins are drawn at particular moments in history. The Old English *Exodus*, for instance, engages deeply and repeatedly with the problems of pagan literature and learning, positioning itself as a text that draws on an originally pagan literary tradition to embody a Christian theology. At the other end of the historical spectrum, *Piers Plowman* takes up the relationship of Christianity to other monotheistic religions and to the "righteous heathen," inquiring after the fate of the Jews and puzzling over the proper orientation of the believing Christian toward the Muslim world.

The social orientation of these texts allows them to convey a somewhat paradoxical sense of place. On the one hand, each of these texts employs one of the vernaculars of England, itself a localizing move; and each of them bears different signs of particular real, local commitments to particular places. The Old English *Exodus* contains historically accurate representations of Anglo-Saxon nautical equipment; the *Seafarer* dedicates long poetic stretches to the precise identification of seabirds; the *Ormulum* was written in the service of a local religious community; and *Piers Plowman* is rife with references to English landmarks such as St. Paul's Cross. On the other hand, however, these texts are not content to chart their own local position independent of the cosmological or cosmopolitan world of medieval Roman Catholicism: instead, they are intent on understanding their own position relative to the rest of Christian history and the Christian world. The poems' repeated diegetic collapses underscore this concern with the universal: in these poems, ships appear in deserts, and the righteous heathen of pagan antiquity appear alongside recognizably English peasants. All of these narrative breaks become ways of performing theology, of juxtaposing historical modes and moments in a way that encourages the reader to investigate the claims of Christian sacred history.

Ultimately, my study contributes to our understanding of medieval literature as a category of literary production and a period of literary-historical study. Historically, scholars both within and without medieval studies have often assumed that medieval Christianity imagined itself as a united community insofar as it shared possession of texts in Latin. Within medieval studies, this view may be most closely associated with the seminal work of Ernst Robert Curtius, whose *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* continues to be influential over fifty years after it was first published. The paradigm of the Latin Middle Ages has historically been important to the study of medieval literature in part because it provides an

explicit and compelling rationale for periodization: in other words, it integrates the literature of the Western European Middle Ages and thereby helps to justify the existence of "medieval literature" as a category. Influential and important as this model has been, it overlooks the fact that medieval authors explained the unity of their shared tradition in terms of its inspired multilingualism, and not in terms of its latinity. Indeed, the contemporary conception of Latin as a great sacred silent language, akin to Sanskrit or Arabic, is largely foreign to medieval semiotics and linguistic theology. To the extent that the formal self-conception of the Church was founded on semiotics or linguistic difference, the relevant difference was often not that between sacred and vernacular languages, but on the more complex and elusive theological distinction between the New Covenant and the Old. My project thus reexamines our familiar rationales for periodization: by considering a range of reading experiences beyond those of the latinate reader, my project broadens our understanding of how a wdie range of medieval Catholics might have identified themselves as members of a dynamic, transnational, transhistorical church.

Allegorical Reading and Medieval Literary Study

As I note above, the medieval practice of reading allegorically was anchored in the medieval theory of the fourfold sense of Scripture, which taught that every verse of the Bible could be interpreted in one of four ways: literally, for its historical content; typologically, for the sense pertaining to Christ; tropologically or morally, for its moral content; and anagogically, for the sense related to the future, the afterlife, or the end of the world. Variants on this basic system abound. The practice of examining medieval literature for its engagement with the fourfold sense is certainly not new; on the contrary, it was a dominant strand of medieval literary scholarship for several decades of the last century, when it was championed by the influential critic D. W.

Robertson. One of the most infamous features of Robertsonianism, as this approach was known, is its tendency to resolve medieval literature into static, uniform, and predictable images of a static, uniform, and predictable society. My own work on the fourfold sense aims to revisit some of Robertson's presuppositions in a more historically inflected way: to view the fourfold sense, and its uses in literature, as phenomena that change radically over the course of the Middle Ages. I do not aim to offer a comprehensive account of these changes here: such an account is beyond the scope of a single dissertation, let alone a single introduction. Instead, I will focus here on a single one of the four senses, the typological (also sometimes called the allegorical or figural), by way of describing my method. Along the way, I will note some key historical changes in typological reading in English literature over the course of the Middle Ages.

As Robertsonianism has disappeared, Auerbach's account of the fourfold sense has gained in prominence; the essay "Figura" is widely read and taught as an introduction to medieval allegorical reading. The differences in these two scholarly views of the fourfold sense are, therefore, worth noting. For comparison purposes, I offer two capsule accounts of the fourfold sense, the first from Robertson's "Historical Criticism," and the second from Auerbach's "Figura":

> A sign, as opposed to a verbal figure, might have tropological, allegorical, or anagogical values—sometimes one of these, sometimes two, and sometimes all three. In other words, a principle stated in signs or implied by a sign might apply to the individual, to society or the church, and to the after life. This procedure is not quite so 'mystical' as it sounds. All that is meant by it ultimately is that a given precept or principle may apply equally well within man, within society, or within Heaven or Hell. (Robertson, "Historical Criticism" 18.)

> [Augustine] gives the doctrine of the fourfold meaning of Scripture a far more realistic, historical, and concrete character, for three of the four meanings become concrete, historical, and interrelated, while only one remains purely ethical and allegorical—as Augustine explains in De genesi ad litteram, l. In libris autem omnibus sanctis intueri oportet, quae ibi aeterna intimentur ("In all the holy books

> those things are to be looked for which are indicated as having to do with eternity")—end of the world and eternal life, analogical interpretation; quae futura praenuntientur ("which foretell future events")—figural meaning in the strict sense, in the Old Testament the prefigurations of the coming of Christ; quae agenda praecipiantur vel moneantur ("which command or advise what we are to do")—ethical meaning (Auerbach, "Figura" 42).

The discrepancies in these two accounts reveal the difficulty of generalizing about a thousand years of allegorical practice: these two brief summaries of the fourfold sense are not immediately recognizable as versions of the same system. Some of this difference is a mere difference of vocabulary: what Robertson calls the anagogical, Auerbach calls the analogical, but it is clear that the same sense of Scripture is intended. At other places, however, the differences are more significant. What Robertson calls the tropological sense—the sense applying to the individual—is for Auerbach the "ethical" sense. Most significantly yet, what Auerbach calls "figural meaning in the strict sense, in the Old Testament the prefigurations of the coming of Christ," Robertson calls the "allegorical," and defines as the sense that applies to "society or the church." Here these two accounts seem to have diverged entirely.

For all its deficits, Robertson's account of typology contains an essential insight with which Auerbach is not concerned: for Robertson, the typological is the social or societal. This understanding of the typological sense derives from the medieval understanding that the church was the mystical Body of Christ in the world: in this sense, the typological sense of the Bible is the one that relates to ecclesiastical politics, to church polity, or to the Christian community of faith. This recognition of two kinds of typological senses is apparent as early as Bede, who writes that "the mystical sense is that which pertains to Christ or the Church." For Bede, the allegorical sense of Scripture may be either that sense that relates to the historical Christ, or the sense that relates to Christian community.

Auerbach's and Robertson's versions of the fourfold sense are both substantially accurate, and in a sense complementary, although they both necessarily distort by virtue of their brevity. The differences are a matter of emphasis. Robertson's account, and the criticism that it engenders, is most concerned with the *scope* of these senses, their application to ever-widening social spheres—that is, with Christian community. Auerbach is immediately concerned with the apparent placement of these senses along a timeline of salvation history—that is, with time.

In fact, the typological sense of the Bible unfolds along both of these axes: properly speaking, the typological sense relates to the development of Christian community throughout history, to the idea of Christian history as revelation. In large part because of the complex relationship between typological reading and sacred history, the typological is often the most elusive and difficult of the four senses to describe and to trace. Each of the other three senses—literal, moral, and anagogical—clearly relates to a single frame of Christian history: respectively, past, present, and future. But because the typological sense is the sense that pertains to Christ, who is mystically present in the Church throughout time, the typological meaning of a text is at once eternal and transhistorical:

> Typology sweeps across the centuries, underscoring what existence means, basing its explanation in Christ's redemption as foreshadowed, actuated, continued, and finally completed. This act of redemption continues now, today, as exhibited in the individual soul, in the lives of saints, in the events of history, in the things of creation itself, in the divine office, in the sacraments, in the Holy Eucharist, in the sacrifice of the Mass—a continuous, constant, irreducible relevance (Manning 58).

Because the typological sense of a text often relates to historical change itself, and not to particular timeframes of Christian history, medieval theories of typology shift to accommodate

changes in theories of sacred history, as Robert M. Stein observes.[1] Throughout the Middle Ages, the possibilities of typology in English depend on how, and whether, English history can be understood as the revelation of God's purpose for the English people. The blueprint for this kind of narrative is established in the eighth century by Bede, whose most famous work reveals a strong and internally consistent conviction that English history reveals the purpose of God for the English people in a way that can be made transparent to the reader. This conception of history enters a crisis in the years of the Gregorian reforms and the Norman Conquest, when it becomes far less apparent how English history reveals God's purpose for the English nation. In the late Middle Ages, as historians craft new stories of how God's purpose is revealed in English history, the older sense of typology re-emerges more forcefully. In the Fifth Vision of *Piers Plowman*, as Emily Steiner has shown, Langland offers a version of English church history that is very much in dialogue with John Trevisa's universal history—the Middle English translation of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*. It is the retelling of English history in Passus XV, I argue, that makes possible the emergence of the fourfold sense in Passus XVI. In order to write typology in English, Langland must first establish that the pattern of English historical events reveals the

[1] Stein provides a useful account of this process as it took place in early and high medieval historiography: Early medieval history had been written to demonstrate a providential pattern in the world, however disordered the world seemed to be. Most frequently, methods of biblical typology provided the historian with a means of determining and organizing the historical event; thus Eusebius, to take one well-known example, sees Constantine as a new Moses and new David. Fulfilling in his imperial person the promise of redemption, Constantine is simultaneously *imperator* and *lux mundi* (412). The historical event is made by God *per signum*, and the historian's task is always to read the world as a book of signs asserting the continuance of the divine presence. In the twelfth century we find a great increase of historical writing, both in Latin and in the vernaculars. Yet the very thing that provokes historical writing at that time—the emergence of a complex secular world obedient to secular imperatives—also disables its own most characteristic means of understanding. One result is that the historian is driven back on his material. … William of Malmesbury, for example, tries to see the Normans as God's new Israel while seeing them simultaneously and unavoidably as imperial repressors of English liberty (Stein 97-98).

purpose of God for the English. Unsurprisingly, Langland's ambitious use of fourfold allegory occurs at the same time that Higden's universal history is being translated into English by John Trevisa. Both vernacular typology and vernacular universal history rely on a newly recovered understanding of English history as divine revelation.

The Evolving Status of Latin Throughout the Middle Ages

In its approach to England's multilingual religious culture, this dissertation both adopts and inverts the assumptions implicit in the term "vernacular theology": just as it treats the English vernacular as potentially stable, elite, or clerical, so it treats Anglo-Latin as potentially volatile, demotic, or secular. While it will sometimes view the vernacular as having access to modes of thought conventionally associated with high literary culture, it also views the Latin tradition as implicated in modes of thought conventionally associated with popular religious writing. Rather than imagining Latin texts and genres as sources of transhistorical literary stability, this dissertation will treat Anglo-Latin as a component of the ever-changing and multilingual milieu in which medieval English texts were transmitted. It will read the relation of Latin to literary history as contingent, dynamic, and historically inflected.

If scholars have often seen medieval typology as a more consistent and stable practice than it actually is, they have also taken Latin's status as a sacred language for granted, viewing it as a more or less unchanging reflection of the linguistic ideology of the Church. This is so both of medievalists and of scholars of other periods who write about the Middle Ages. In his widely influential *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson writes that "the astonishing power of the papacy in its noonday is only comprehensible in terms of a trans-European Latin-writing clerisy, and a conception of the world, shared by virtually everyone, that the bilingual intelligentsia, by

mediating between vernacular and Latin, mediated between earth and heaven" (*Imagined Communities* 15). Anderson's view of medieval latinity resonates with that of Sheldon Pollock, expressed in the recent *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, and in the works of many of the earlier thinkers whose views he summarizes.[2] While Gramsci, Auerbach, and Curtius disagree on much, all three of them imagine Latin texts and genres as sources of transhistorical literary stability. Much scholarship on vernacularity still takes place under the shadow of these immensely influential models.

Pollock's own engagement with these models challenges the view of vernacularization found in these texts, while taking a very similar view of medieval latinity. He suggests that the most significant factor in the process of European vernacularization has nothing to do with Latin: vernacularization is driven by contact between European vernaculars, the drive to emulate "neighbor literary cultures." So, following David Howlett and M. T. Clanchy, he suggests that the Normans' encounter with English as a result of the Conquest "enabl[ed] *la langue romane*, or Old French, not merely to exist but to become a language of culture."[3] In his focus on vernacular literary cultures, Pollock overlooks the extent to which the status of Latin as a standard language changed throughout the medieval period, as medieval Latin was itself shaped by encounters with other languages, including both vernaculars and sacred tongues. Bede's comparatively restrained attitude toward Latin, his unwillingness to exaggerate its authority, is typical both of his own

[2] "Antonio Gramsci, one of the few writers to have thought clearly and carefully about vernacularization as a cultural-political problematic, offers one strong formulation from the perspective of progressive pre-World War II internationalism. Vernacularization, he believes, came from 'national-popular below' the vernaculars were raised up 'against Latinizing 'mandarinism' and came to be written down 'when the people regain[ed] importance.' This position should by no means taken to represent a political man's lack of scholarship, for it is close to the view of the greatest comparative Romance scholar of the period, Erich Auerbach, for whom the manifestation of vernacular literature marks a 'liberation from clerical Latin culture' and a popular if not populist impulse. E. R. Curtius, by contrast, representative of a conservative intelligentsia searching for a usable European past amidst the rubble of World War II, is convinced that vernacularization derived from re-Latinized elites above: 'Without this Latin background, the vernacular literatures of the Middle Ages are incomprehensible'" (Pollock 438).'

[3] In making this claim, Pollock advances a more forceful version of an suggestion that was first put forward by M.T. Clanchy's *From Memory to Written Record*, as I discuss in chapter 2.

work and of Anglo-Saxon literary culture. When he receives a copy of the Greek text of Acts late in his lifetime, for instance, Bede revises his commentary on the book, better to reflect the meaning of the Greek. He is intent on conveying the meaning of the Greek original to his reader. At one point, he comments to the reader that Greek, like English, has a singular word for darkness, whereas Latin has only the plural:

> Sol convertetur in tenebras. Tenebrarum nomen in Graeco singulari numero legitur, id est, σκότος, quod Latinus interpres, quia singulari numero proferre nequibat, necessario pluraliter tenebras posuit. (1001A) Hoc autem ideo commemorandum putavi, ut sciret omnis quicunque haec de gente Anglorum legeret, non sibi esse necesse propter Latinae linguae auctoritatem, tenebras in suam loquelam pluraliter proferre; sed potius singulariter, cum et hoc aeque possit propter Graecam nimirum auctoritatem, unde in Latinam scripturam translata est.
>
> *The sun shall be turned into darknesses*. The word for *darknesses* in Greek is read in the singular number—that is, σκότος, which the Latin translator, because he was unable to offer a singular, by necessity put it in the plural, *tenebras*. I thought it, therefore, worth noting, so that any of all the English people who read this should know that it is not, of itself, necessary, according to the authority of the Latin language, to put *tenebras* in the plural in his speech [i.e., in English]; but it can be singular, as it can be equally, without doubt, according to the Greek authority, from which the Latin authority is translated.

Other Anglo-Saxon authors, among them Aelfric, share Bede's preferences for the languages of the Bible. In one of his homilies, Aelfric writes,

> Witodlice ðas dægðerlican ðenunga cyðað þæt frame ðisum dæge oð eastron is ure héofungtid. … Alleluia is ebreisc wórd. þæt is on leden Laudate dominum. and nán gereord nis swa héalic swa ebreisc; Nu forlæte we þæt healice gereord on ure Septuagesima. and cweðað on leden. Laus tibi domine rex aeterne gloriae; þæt is sy ðe drihten lof. éces wuldres cyning; We swuteliað mid þære eadmodan ledenspræce. þæt we sceolon us sylfe to eadmodran drohtnunge on ðyssere tíde gebígan; Alleluia is swa wé cwædon heofonlic sang. swa swa Iohannes se apostol cwæð. þæt he gehyrde micele stemne on heofunum. swylce bymena dream. and hí sungon alleluian; Gloria in excelsis deo sungon englas. þa þa crist on middanearde lichamlice accened wæs; Nu forlæte we ðas heofonlicas lófsangas on ure bereowsungtide, and we biddað mid soðre eadmodnysse ðone/ælmihtigan. þæt we moton geseon his heofenlica eastertide. æfter þam gemænelicum æriste. on ðam we him singað ecelice alleluian. butan geswince. amen. :— (Godden, *Aelfric's Catholic Homilies* 50-51)

> Certainly, that daily [office] says that from this day until Easter is our time of mourning. … Alleleia is a Hebrew word, which is, in Latin, *Laudate dominum*. And no language is so holy as Hebrew; now we abandon that holy language, in our period of Lent, and speak in Latin, *Laus tibi domine rex aeterne gloriae*; that is, praise be to you, eternal king of the world. We declare, with humble Latin, that we should humble ourselves in this time, for the sake of a humbler life; *Alleluia* is, as we said, heavenly song, as John the apostle said, that he heard many voices in heaven, as if a rejoicing of trumpets, and they sang *alleluia*; the angels sang, *Gloria in excelsis deo*, when Christ was conceived bodily, on earth. Now we abandon the heavenly love songs in our penitential season, and we await the almighty, with true humility, that we may see his heavenly Eastertime, after the common resurrection, we will sing to him Alleleuia, eternally, without tiring.

For Aelfric, at least in this sermon, to speak Latin is to be trapped in the dreary condition of the world: Latin is to Hebrew as Lent is to Easter. Far from describing Latin as a sacred language, Aelfric represents it as almost profane: it is the humble language suited to man's mortal condition.[4]

If many Anglo-Saxon authors take a relatively dim view of Latin, at least compared to Hebrew and to Greek, it may in part be because the boundary between Latin and romance vernaculars was very porous for much of the early medieval period. While Latin was a language of the Scriptures, it was also the everyday vernacular of the continent—the language of Rome. In the eyes of some Anglo-Saxon scholars and teachers, Latin was sometimes indistinguishable from the language of Franks, or so Byrhtferth suggests in his *Manual*:

> Se ðe sprycðd on Frencisc 7 þæt he can ariht gecweðan, se wyrcðd *barbarolexis*, swylce he cweðe, *inter duos setles cadet homo*, þonne he sceolde cweðan*, inter duos sedes.* (96)
>
> Whoever speaks in French [Frankish], and cannot speak it correctly, commits *barbara lexis*, as if, for example, he were to say *Inter duos setles cadet homo* [the man falls between the two *setles*] when he ought to have said *Inter duos sedes* [between the two seats] (97).

[4] Notably, Aelfric here departs from Jerome's teaching on this point: "Early Christian authors rejected the claim that Hebrew, the primitive language of man, would be restored as the only language for humanity as the eschaton" [Jerome, *Commentariorum in Sophoniam liber* 3.8-9, PL 25, 1378] (Resnick, 57).

Here the phrase that Byrhtferth identifies as "Frencisc," Frankish or French, is also perfectly good Latin.

Beginning in the mid-eleventh century, as the Latin church both divides and expands, it comes into contact and competition with the Greek church, on the one hand, and with the Arabic world, on the other.[5] The language of the Church itself comes under pressure, and its linguistic identity is reformed as a response to that pressure. As Robert Bartlett observes, "[i]n the late eleventh century, as the Spanish Mozarabic rite was replaced by the Roman, and the Slavonic liturgy was finally suppressed in Bohemia, the 'Latin' in 'Latin Christendom' gained in meaning (Bartlett)." During this period, Christian theories of sacred language develop to reflect the contact and competition of Latin Christianity with the cultures of Greek Orthodoxy and of medieval Islam. As Hannah Barker has found, the Great Schism of 1054—the split of Greek and Roman churches—intensified the extent to which Latin Christians identified themselves by their language:

> While Muslims generally considered Arabic to be a sign of religious unity, Christians connected linguistic diversity to diversity of belief within the Christian community. The Latin and Greek languages were used as shorthand for the two sides in the schism between the Roman pope and the patriarch of Constantinople. In his crusade proposal of 1332, Brocardus asserted the orthodoxy of the Latins against the "many Christian peoples of diverse languages who do not walk with us in faith or in doctrine," i.e. non-Chalcedonian as well as Greek Christians. ["Multi et diversarum linguarum populi christiani qui nobiscum in fide non ambulant nec doctrina." Brocardus, "Directorium ad passagium faciendum," in Recueil des historiens des croisades: Documents arméniens (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1906), 2:382.] ("Egyptian and Italian Merchants," 53)[6]

[5] See Colin Morris, "Greeks and Saracens," in *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250*.
[6] I.M. Resnick suggests that, in the period of the Crusades, "contact with the Arabs, who were at this time increasingly insistent upon the revealed character of Arabic, may have strengthened the Western tradition of the sacrality of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin" (Resnick 70). His speculation is bolstered by Barker's findings that "[l]anguage was often used by Latin pilgrims to express the religious variety of the people whom they encountered in the eastern Mediterranean": "In his description of Christmas celebrations at Bethlehem, the fourteenth-century pilgrim Niccolò of Poggibonsi explained that 'each generation celebrates in its own rite, in its own tongue, so that it is a marvel to see so many people thus disguised in tongue and attire.' He referenced both spoken and written language in his description of Cairo, where 'one generation is distinguished from another in language and letters and dress.'" (Barker 53)

Some aspects of this discussion may seem obvious: it is inevitable, for instance, that the Great Schism would have significance for the theorization of language in the Latin West, and it is inherently likely that such developments would have some impact on vernacular literature, as the very idea of vernacularity is defined in part by the relationship of vernacular languages with "standard" ones. Yet scholars of vernacularity and vernacularization in Europe have tended to treat the status of Latin as a timeless truth of medieval culture, rather than a fluid and changing facet of religious ideology, one with important ramifications for vernacular literature. Part of the contribution of this dissertation is to demonstrate that the status of Latin changes over time, as Latin is tranformed through its contact both with "barbarian languages" and with other "sacred tongues," and that these shifts have important consequences for the study of the vernacular in England. This argument emphasizes the point, originally made by Meg Worley, that our understanding of medieval vernacularity may be unduly influenced by post-Enlightenment ideas of vernacularity.[7] One aim of this dissertation is to illustrate the phenomenon Worley observes—cultural influence flowing unexpectedly from conquered to conquerer, or from periphery to center. Our widespread misunderstanding of the ideology of the early Middle Ages has had important consequences, not only for our understanding of the Anglo-Saxon period, but for our understanding of later periods as well. In reading the historical developments of the high Middle

[7] In her study of the Ormulum, Worley writes, "The *Ormulum*, particularly, suggests a picture in which one group dominates and the other educates: political imperialism leads not merely to conquest but to the acceptance, by the conquerors, of new cultural influences, flowing in the opposite direction. Such an account flies in the face of our postcolonial experiences with imperialism. Since the Enlightenment, the group that dominates has also been the group that educates, disregarding questions of relative merit. Our notions of vernacularity have grown out of this model, so that in any encounter between two languages (and I should repeat that vernacularity is a relationship, not essence), the more 'low-culture' one is called the vernacular, and the more 'high-culture' one is generously considered 'standard.' We apply this to medieval European languages as well: Old French, Middle High German, and Middle English are vernaculars, and Latin, Greek, and Hebrew are the default languages of literacy. But the example of the *Ormulum*, with its literary sophistication, is an indication of how erratically our shorthand notion of vernacularity fits onto the Middle Ages and, for that matter, the classical world" (Worley 26).

Ages into the early Middle Ages, scholars have overlooked important, even transformative, events in the eleventh- and twelfth-century church and their significance to the history of vernacular literature. My project aims to shed light on some of these developments.

The vital questions that drive my project center on religious experience in an age of transnationalism: is the experience of a shared language the only way for a world religion to be unified? What is the relationship of a world religion to its own multilingualism? In taking up the importance of vernacularity and multilingualism to medieval Christianity, my project participates in an ongoing comparative conversation about sacred language, vernacularity, and world religions. Within the last five years, scholars of Eastern and Near Eastern languages have compared the historical trajectory of medieval Latin to that of Sanskrit, Mandarin, and Arabic. These scholars have made the case for the similar historical trajectories of sacred languages, on the one hand, and for historically parallel processes of vernacularization, on the other. Until now, such scholars have taken for granted that early medieval Europe accepted the sacredness of Latin; my project calls this assumption into question. Without a better understanding of the original transnational and multilingual identity of English Christianity, it is impossible to understand the vernacularization of Western Europe. In re-examining the trajectory of European vernacularization, my dissertation thus joins in the broad and sustained recent conversation surrounding comparative literary study.

‘Gehyre se ðe wille’: The Old English 'Exodus' and the Reader as Exegete

This chapter argues that the Old English *Exodus* makes ambitious claims for the theological capacity of the vernacular to convey the spirit of Scripture. These claims for the vernacular are underwritten by the poem’s theology of the New Covenant, which locates God not “with one ethnic group” but “in Jesus Christ and everywhere,” to borrow the formulation of Henri de Lubac. In making this argument, it moves discussions of Anglo-Saxon vernacularity beyond the impasse sometimes produced by the field’s overemphasis on Alcuin’s famous demand, *Quid Hinieldus cum Christo* (“What has Ingeld to do with Christ?”). The paradigm of vernacularity derived from Alcuin’s letter has been emphasized by Anglo-Saxon studies at the expense of the two most important early medieval images for the reading of “gentile” poetry: namely, the gold out of Egypt and the beautiful captive woman. Both of these famous images appear at the climactic conclusion of the Old English *Exodus*, which features a beautiful pagan woman dancing exultantly on a gold-covered shore. This image not only represents the poem’s own use of the vernacular, but also the reader’s relation to the poetic text.

In the Old English *Exodus*, the sacred use of the vernacular is justified not only by the presence of these well-known images, but also by the poem’s covenant theology. Through its use of Anglo-Saxon envelope patterning, the poem implicitly links its climactic conclusion, described above, to its introduction, which frames the poem in terms of the spiritual senses of the Old Law, in particular the New Covenant. By formally coupling the spiritual sense of covenant with tropes for the conversion of pagan and vernacular literature to Christian ends, the Old English *Exodus* implicitly makes claims for the ability of English to convey the “spiritual senses” of the Bible. In doing so, the poem makes a case for Anglo-Saxon vernacular

theology, suggesting that the theological claims of the vernacular are inextricably connected to New Covenant doctrine.

These claims are investigated and developed by the poem's persistent invocation of figural reading, or *allegoria*. Derived from the doctrine of the New Covenant, the reading practice was designed to sustain and heighten the textual polyvalence that the Bible's "spiritual sense" required. The use of *allegoria* in the poem attests to the capacity of the vernacular to convey spiritual truth as well as narrative history. Ultimately, the poem's use of *allegoria* offers new insights into the poem's seemingly absent formal transitions. The discontinuities of the Old English *Exodus* **illustrate** the discontinuities of the transition from Old to New Covenant: like the transition from Old to New Covenant, the transitions of the Old English *Exodus* are concurrently "transitions to Christ" and "transitions that are effected in Christ."

Studies of the "creative tensions" between the Anglo-Saxon vernacular and Latin literary traditions have often begun by invoking Alcuin's famous rhetorical question to Higebert, *Quid Hinieldus cum Christo*, found in his epistle 124 (797 AD):

> Verba dei legantur in sacerdolalit convivio. Ibi decet lectorem audiri, non citharistum; sermon patrum, non carmina gentilium. Quid Hinieldus cum Christo? Angusta est domus: utrosque tenere non potuit. Non vult rex caelestis cum paganis et perditis nominetenus regibus communionem habere; quia rex ille aeternus regnat in caelis; ille paganus plangit in inferno. Voces legentium audite in domibus tuis, non ridendium turbam in plateis.
>
> Let the words of God be read at the episcopal banquet. There it is fitting for a reader to be heard, not a harpist; the discourse of the fathers, not the songs of the pagans. What does Ingeld have to do with Christ? Narrow is the house; both, it cannot hold. The heavenly king does not want to associate with pagans, damned so-called kings; for that King (who is) eternal rules in the heavens, the other, the damned pagan, laments in hell. Hear the voices of readers in your

dwellings, not the crowd of laughing people in the courtyards.(Garrison 241)[8]

Alcuin's ringing condemnation of pagan literature participates in a long tradition that begins with Paul, who writes in 2 Corinthians 6:15-16,

> Nolite iugum ducere cum infidelibus. Quae enim participatio iustititae cum iniquitate? Aut quae societas luci ad tenebras? Quae autem conventio Christi ad Belial? Aut quae pars fideli cum infideli? Qui autem consensus templo Dei cum idolis? ...
>
> Do not be yoked with unbelievers. What participation, indeed, has justice with injustice? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what part has the faithful with the unfaithful? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?

This passage is next taken up by Tertullian, who writes, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" But it is Jerome who transforms this rhetorical pattern into a commentary on pagan literature *per se*. Jerome takes up this passage in his famous account of a feverish visionary nightmare in which a divine voice tells him that he "is not a Christian, but a Ciceronian." He demands, "What has Horace to do with the Psalter? Or Virgil with the Gospel? Or Cicero with the Apostle?" In couching his objections to pagan literature in this time-honored rhetorical pattern, Alcuin places himself in a long line of critics of secular culture; he also implicitly characterizes the love of pagan literature as a form of idolatry.

Perhaps because Alcuin's letter names a legendary figure, Ingeld, who appears in *Beowulf*, the question *Quid Hinieldus cum Christo* has become the undisputed *locus classicus* for the problem of vernacular-Latin literary relations in the Anglo-Saxon period. It may even "be the most quoted statement by any Anglo-Latin writer," as Mary Garrison points out, having served as "the title for a book and at least two articles." As Garrison observes, the phrase has sometimes been used as evidence for speculations that short lays about Ingeld once circulated; it has also been treated as a "straightforward condemnation of the performance of

[8] Where translations of Latin and Old English are not attributed, they are my own.

Old English verse at ecclesiastical banquets" and sometimes "interpreted as an expression of the hostility of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical culture for vernacular literature more generally" (Garrison 237-238).

At times, the question has even come to stand in for a presumed clerical intolerance of pagan and vernacular culture and an official sense of their absolute incompatibility. It seems to epitomize the clerical attitude toward pagan or vernacular literature that many have taken for granted. So, for instance, Sheldon Pollock's sweeping account of vernacularization in medieval Europe uses the question as the climax of a paragraph describing centuries of early medieval anxiety about "taking pleasure in 'literature":

> [I]n the self-understanding of the clergy, the production and reproduction of texts were a form of monastic, even ascetic, practice, and writing as such was intimately bound up with religious education and custom, all of which tended to favor the copying of religious materials in Latin. Add to this a certain Christian unease in taking pleasure in 'literature'—basically, any non-Christian textuality—perceptible already in the works of the early Church fathers and still consequential at the end of the millennium. Thus, despite some evidence of interest at Charlemagne's court in the literization of Germanic heroic narratives, vernacular poetry was largely ignored if not repudiated. As the cleric Alcuin famously put it (albeit while addressing what should be read and heard in a monastery), 'What has Ingeld to do with Christ?' (Pollock 440)

Pollock's generalization, along with its telling parenthetical *albeit*, here typifies the kind of use to which Alcuin's letter has often been put: it is used to stand in for a much larger and more general context than the letter itself ever aimed to address.

This emphasis on Alcuin's letter has had two unfortunate consequences within Anglo-Saxon studies. First, the letter has largely overshadowed the much richer and more nuanced justifications of pagan literary culture that appear in other Latin sources from the early period. Second, the letter collapses two already problematic categories, the vernacular and the pagan, into one, in a way that fundamentally overlooks or obscures the possibility of vernacular theology in the early Middle Ages. It also frames the problem of vernacularity in terms of a

question that may not ultimately have had much significance for early medieval authors, as it engages relatively little with the central tropes of vernacularity that most interested other early medieval authors. If Alcuin's letter has become the *locus classicus* of modern scholars writing on the problem, it was not the *locus classicus* of early medieval scholars. Their favored passages both have their ultimate source in Origen, although the most famous versions of these passages were found in Augustine and Jerome. The first was Augustine's famous comparison of pagan learning to Egyptian gold, which—like pagan learning—could be appropriated so long as it was put to Christian use. Another favorite text on the subject was Jerome's comparison of pagan learning to the "beautiful captive woman" of Deuteronomy, whose hair had to be shorn and nails to be clipped before she could become a suitable bride. Accounts of vernacular and pagan learning tended to be framed in terms of the *usus* and *utilia* of pagan texts. Sometimes more explicitly than other times, this ethical framework of *usus* borrowed the Augustinian distinction between things to be used as means to an end and things to be enjoyed as ends in themselves.

Bede's commentary on Samuel 9 (1 Samuel 14) is considerably more representative of the discourse about vernacularity as a whole than is Alcuin's letter; it may serve as a capsule account of the whole conversation. Bede is an example of a cleric who knew and loved vernacular poetry: one eyewitness account of his last days describes him chanting not only in Latin but *in nostra quoque lingua, ut erat doctus in nostris carminibus*, "also in our language [i.e., English], for he was learned in our songs." His account of *Caedmon's Hymn* has been taken as an account of one of two "defining moments in the formative years" of English literature (Donoghue ix). At the same time, his attitude toward pagan learning and literature sometimes appears as censorious as Alcuin's. The subtlety and balance with which he weighs out the pros and cons of pagan literature is thus particularly valuable to a consideration of early medieval theories of the vernacular, as it rounds out the critical view of

the issue and provides a sense of the interrelationships of many different strands of discourse as Bede saw them.

In his commentary on 1 Samuel 14, Bede takes the opportunity afforded by a morally ambiguous Old Testament narrative to disentangle the complex problems posed by pagan learning. As an analogue for the problems of secular literature, the biblical passage under discussion in this commentary is telling in its own right: 1 Samuel 14 offers the reader a nearly insoluble ethical conundrum, a double cautionary tale about excessive consumption and excessive prohibition. Bede's commentary on this complex passage can best be read as a caution against two extreme positions. On the one hand, he cautions the reader against the unbridled delight in pagan literature, pointing out that the enticements of worldly literature are no different than other enticements of the world, in that they are best consumed in moderation. On the other hand, he points out the fallacy of forbidding all pagan learning, citing ample biblical precedents for authors who employed pagan learning judiciously.

The biblical narrative underlying Bede's commentary is significant to his discussion, as it dramatizes the tensions and conflicts that he treats as inherent in the clerical use of pagan literature. As the story opens, the Israelites are at war with the Philistines. On the morning of an important battle, King Saul takes a ritual oath calling down curses on any of his soldiers from eating before the victory has been won. Saul's son Jonathan does not hears of this curse until after he has eaten a mouthful of wild honey on his way to the battle ground. When his men tell him of his father's oath, Jonathan is greatly disturbed: he realizes that his men are faint from hunger and unfit to fight. Ultimately, Saul discovers that Jonathan has broken the oath and sentences his son to death, but the army—recognizing the impropriety of Saul's judgment—carries Jonathan off before Saul is able to carry out the sentence. Bede transforms this complex biblical episode into an equally complex allegorical discussion of poetry, in which Jonathan stands in for the gifted and authoritative teacher; pagan literature is

represented by the wild honey; and Saul's curse itself represents the foolishness of reactionary or needless prohibition. The complexity and nuance of the biblical episode enables Bede to construct an equally complex and nuanced picture of the dangers of secular poetry. On the one hand, the enjoyment of pagan learning can be fatal to spiritual progress; on the other, however, the total prohibition of pagan learning can be unnecessarily destructive for the reader.

The complexity of Bede's treatment of this issue is made possible in part by his use of a wide range of source material. Bede could not possibly cite Alcuin's letter, of course, since the letter was written many years after Bede's commentary, but he acknowledges the same *Quid Cicero* tradition in which Alcuin would later work, alluding to Jerome. He writes,

> Et nobiles saepe magistri Ecclesiae magnorumque uictores certaminum ardentiore quam decet oblectatione libros gentilium lectitantes culpam quam non praeuidere contrahebant adeo ut quidam eorum se pro hoc ipso scribat in uisione castigatum obiectumque sibi a domino inter uerbera ferientia quod non Christianus sed Ciceronianus potius esset habendus. (*In primam partem Samuhelis libri IIII* 120).
>
> And often the most renowned among the teachers of the church, the winners of the greatest contests, perusing the books of the gentiles with more ardent delight than is proper, have amassed guilt that they did not foresee. As one such teacher [i.e., Jerome] would write, he himself was castigated in a vision for this very thing, and, amidst violent blows, God objected that he was to be considered, not Christian, but rather Ciceronian.

Bede is not content to stop with an allusion to Jerome, however: he immediately complicates the question of Jonathan's guilt by introducing the problem of purpose. He focuses his discussion on the image Jonathan's wooden staff, which functions for him simultaneously as a symbol of pastoral or pedagogic authority, as an image of correction and guidance, and as a source of strength and support:

> Intinxit … Ionatham fauo syluestri uirgam qua uel ad equum uel ad uiandi praesidium utebatur et sic eam manu ad os conuertit suum. (120)

> Jonathan dipped a wooden staff into the honeycomb, a staff he had been using either to direct his horse or to assist himself in walking; and thus, with his hand, he spun the staff back toward his mouth.

In his explication of this image, Bede treats Jonathan's staff as a metonym for the *auctoritas potentiae*, the "authority of power." He suggests that the teacher may use his *auctoritas* just as Jonathan used his staff: to direct his underlings as Jonathan directed his horse; or to support his conduct as Jonathan supported his footsteps:

> Et magister quilibet nonnunquam…uel subditos regere uel seipsum sine offensione gerere curans argumentis siue sententiis gentilium credit adiuuandum… (120)

> And, at times, … being mindful either to direct his subordinates or to conduct himself without stumbling, a teacher may trust to help [himself] by the arguments or the teachings of the gentiles.

The authority of a gifted teacher is the instrument by which the honey of secular poetry may be conveyed to the mind. Just as the taste of honey caused Jonathan's eyes to light up, he suggests, so the taste of honeyed words may illuminate the faculties of a gifted teacher:

> mellitoque ut ita dixerim ex his ore illuminantur quidem quasi fauosa compositione uerborum oculi mentis ad enuntiandum quae recte nouerint acutius; sed retardantur plerumque mentis eiusdem incessus recordata sensuum uanitate a persequendis prauorum siue actuum siue dogmatum cultoribus. (120)

> some are illuminated, so to speak, by their honeyed mouth, as if the eyes of the mind were brightened by a honeyed composition of words, for the purpose of declaring more sharply those things which they rightly know; but the forward strides of that same mind are much delayed, when the vanity of the senses have been remembered by the cultivators of depraved acts or dogmas.

Jonathan's great disturbance at his father's counterproductive oath illustrates the disturbance that may be produced by the excessive prohibition of secular learning:

> Turbavit quia totum interdixit; quod si ex parte interdixisset et ex parte concessisset, commodius res videretur exacta. (120)

> [Saul] disturbed [Jonathan], because he forbade the whole; which, if he had

> forbidden it in some part, and conceded it in some part, would have seemed a thing more appropriately judged.

Just like Saul, Bede says, an excessively strict teacher can perturb his students:

> turbat acumen legentium et deficere cogit qui eos a legendis saecularibus litteris omnimodis aestimat prohibendos quibus ubilibet inventa utilia quasi sua sumere licet alioquin nec Moyses et Danihel sapientia vel litteris Aegyptiorum Chaldaeorumque paterentur erudiri quorum tamen superstitiones simul et delicias horrebant nec ipse magister gentium aliquot versus poetarum suis vel scriptis indidisset vel dictis. Sed multo cautius necesse est acutis rosa in spinis quam mollibus lilium colligatur in foliis multo securius in apolisticis quam in Platonicis quaeritur consilium salubre pagellis. Nam et apes ipsae quae huiusmodi mella faciunt ore quidem praetendunt dulcia dicta quae mulceant sed in posterioribus seruant uenenata gesta quae feriant. (121).

> He perturbs the faculty of the readers, and compels them to fail, who judges that they should be prohibited from reading every kind of secular letters, [when they] are in fact allowed to gather up whatever is useful as if it were their own. Otherwise neither Moses nor Daniel would have been shown to have been taught by the wisdom of the letters of the Egyptians and the Chaldeans; while these letters bristle with superstition, so they also tremble with delights. Nor would the instructor of the gentiles have included certain verses of the poets in his own words, either spoken or written. But it is more necessary to be careful when collecting the rose among the thorns than the lilies among the tender leaves: it is much safer to seek salvific counsel among apostolic than Platonist pages. For also the bees themselves, who produce honey of this kind, present with their mouths the sweetness that they commingle, but in their posterior parts they keep the poisonous deeds with which they may wound.

This passage of Bede's commentary on 1 Samuel is most important, not because of its influence on later Anglo-Saxon writers, but as a witness to the fullness of the conversation that was taking places in Latin sources available to him, a conversation that itself testified to the wide range of early medieval attitudes toward pagan literature. Jerome's famous account of his castigation is present in Bede's text, but it is held in tension with other rhetorical *topoi*, far more permissive in their implications. The image of pagan literature as offering roses among thorns was already a commonplace by the late eighth century, for instance. It was found—among other places—in the inscription of Isidore of Seville's library, where it alludes to the presence of pagan

literature among sacred.[9] Bede's mention of Moses, who was allowed to pick up the knowledge of the Egyptians as if it was his own, is a subtle allusion to the representation of pagan learning as "gold out of Egypt," an image of pagan learning that was deployed over and over again in the early Middle Ages. Even Bede's word choices are typical of the discourse in which he is participating: like Augustine, he insists that the value of pagan learning must be understood in terms of its utilia, utility; like Hrabanus Maurus, he describes the Christian use of pagan learning as an act of *conversio*, conversion. He is at pains to emphasize that the important question is not whether pagan and secular literature may be used, but what ends it should serve. In this, he echoes and is echoed by a large number of other Christian writers from the early medieval period.

It is against this backdrop of ethical complexity that the vernacular theology of the Old English Exodus must be read. Exodus concludes with a famously vivid description of triumph, one that invokes the well-established *topoi* for vernacularity that Bede takes up in his account. After the drowning of Pharaoh and his army, the treasures of the Egyptians wash up on the shores of the Red Sea for the Israelites to gather exultantly:

> Hreðdon hildespelle, siððan hie þam herge wiðforon,
> hofon hereþreatas hlude stefne—
> for þam dædweorce Drihten heredon—
> weras wuldres sang. Wif on oðrum,
> folcsweota mæst, fyrdleoð golan
> aclum stefnum, eallwundra fela.
> þa wæs eðfynde Afrisc meowle
> on geofones staðe golde geweorðod.
> Handa hofon halswurðunge,
> bliðe wæron, bote gesawon,
> heddon herereafes—hæft wæs onsæled. (574-584)

[9] Sunt hic plura sacra, sunt hic mundalia plura;
Ex his qua placent carmina, tolle, lege.
Prata vides plena spinis et copia florum:
Si non vis spinas sumere, sume rosas (De Lubac, c. 203).

> [They rejoiced with a song of battle after they escaped. With loud voice the troops raised up a song of glory: they praised the Lord for that great work. The multitude of people, men and women, sang a battle song about these many wonders in reverent voices. Then the African woman was easy to find on the seashore, adorned with gold. Hands raised necklaces; they were happy; they gazed on their reward; they took heed of the spoils; their bondage was loosed.]

In addition to serving as a vivid climax for the poem's triumphal story of freedom and deliverance, this tableau offers a metaphor for the practice of interpretation. The passage contains a great deal of wordplay to remind the audience of the role of interpretation in unlocking textual or biblical treasure. The plundering of the shore is narrated in terms most commonly used to describe biblical teaching and exegesis. The Israelites *heddon*, "heeded," the war-booty (584), and they share out treasure among *segnum*, "standards" or "signs" (585). Even the word *bote*, "recompense" (583), has linguistic associations, having been used earlier to describe the decrees of Moses. The avidity of the Israelites for plunder mirrors the avidity of the reader for the treasures offered by a holy text, or so the wordplay of this passage implies.

In comparing the "gold out of Egypt" to a kind of textual or interpretive plunder, the *Exodus* poet is not alone, of course: the poem participates in the pattern of justifications for the value and use of secular literature already described above. Like other authors from the period, the *Exodus* poet combines this image of Egyptian gold with another *topos* of pagan learning, namely the image of the beautiful pagan bride, here represented by the figures of the "African women," *Afrisc meowle*, on the shore of the Red Sea. These figures are only obliquely identified by the poem: the phrase may be singular or plural. The *Afrisc meowle* has been taken as a singular noun and identified with Zipporah, Moses' Ethiopian wife, who is not mentioned in the narrative by name but is part of the biblical account of the flight from Egypt. Taken in the plural, a reading that seems somewhat more grammatically consistent with the context of the phrase, it has been read as a reference to the Egyptian wives and camp followers

who joined the Israelites on their journey. The *Exodus* poet is not the only author to combine the two images of the converted pagan wife and of Egyptian gold into a single tableau: these conventional images were frequently associated with one another. (De Lubac 216).

The close connection that the *Exodus* poet makes between these well-known patristic figures and his own use of allegory poses an immediate problem, however: while the *topoi* of "gold out of Egypt" and the "beautiful captive woman" are both symbols of the secular, the pagan, and the unbiblical, the poet's sources seem to be uniformly sacred in nature (Lucas 51-60). Considering the other instances of *bote* in the text only causes the mystery to deepen: the only other time that the word occurs in the poem is at the poem's beginning (5), where it appears to refer—or at least to be strongly associated with—the Mosaic law. The appearance of this Augustinian "gold out of Egypt" *topos* at the poem's conclusion foregrounds the secular and the unbiblical in a fashion that seems quite inconsistent with the poet's own practice of drawing exclusively or primarily from sacred sources.

The metaphor makes more sense, however, as an analogy for the relationship of the reader of the Old English poem *Exodus* to the text of the poem itself, which is written in a language that requires conversion to be fit for Christian service. Incongruous as the comparison between African maiden and Germanic poetics may seem, it is attested elsewhere in early medieval literature, in the Carmen 30 of Sedulius Scottus. Sedulius Scottus is a learned Irish poet writing in Latin for the Carolingian court; his Carmen 30 which most likely dates from the 850s, is a tribute to Louis II, sometimes called Louis Germanicus. The poem glorifies the king in part by depicting his role in the conversion of the *Germani* and the *Nortmanni*:

> Vos timidi trepidant Germani bellipotentes
> Nortmannique truces vos timidi trepidant…
> Ecce stupent hilares ex coruis esse columbas
> Sese gentiles: ecce stupent hilares.
> Perfide, crede deo, si uis albescere, corue;

Ne moriare miser, perfide, crede deo.
Namque tui similes Christi decorantur amictu,
Non sunt, quod fuerant, namque tui similes;
Exue nunc veteres maculoso schemate formas,
Aethiopum tunicas exue nunc veteres,
Agnus et esto nitens renovatus munere Christi,
Inter catholicos agnus et esto nitens.
Barbara lingua sonans alleluiatica discat
Carmina, det laudes barbara lingua sonans
…
Cunctus ab axe venit borealis climatis ordo,
Linguosus populus cunctus ab axe venit;
Te Salemona pium uotis exoptat habere,
Eligit in regem te Salemona pium. (39-40, 54-62, 65-68)

The war-powerful Germanic peoples are fearful and frightened of you, [Louis]; and the ferocious Northmen and fearful and frightened of you…
Behold the ones rejoicing, astonished that doves should [come] from ravens,
their own race: behold the ones rejoicing, astonished.
Raven infidel, believe in God if you desire to become white; infidel, believe in God, lest you should die in misery.
For those like you are decorated, clothed after the manner of Christ; For those like you are not what they have been.
Now take off your old clothes, with their stained appearance; Now take off the old tunics of the Ethiopians,
and be a shining lamb, renewed in the service of Christ, and be a shining lamb among the catholics.
Let the barbarous tongues, resounding, learn alleluiatic
songs, let the barbarous tongues, resounding, give praises.
…
All together, the Northern regions arrive from the pole; all together, the voluble people arrive from the pole.
[The people] longs to have you, pious Solomon, according to the promise; It has chosen you, pious Solomon, as its king.

In fashioning his tribute to Louis Germanicus, Sedulius has drawn on a wide range of conventional *topoi* for the conversion of pagan learning and literature, many of which also appear— though to remarkably different effect—in the Old English *Exodus*. In mentioning barbarous tongues that sing *carmina alleluiatica*, "alleluiatic songs," Sedulius alludes to a famous description of the conversion of England found in the *Moralia* of Gregory I. Gregory writes,

> Omnipotens enim Dominus coruscantibus nubibus cardines maris operuit, quia emicantibus praedicatorummiraculis, ad fidem etiam terminos mundi perduxit. Ecce enim paene cunctarum iam gentium corda penetrauit; ecce in una fide orientis limitem occidentisque coniunxit; ecce lingua Britanniae, quae nihil aliud nouerat, quam barbarum frendere, iamdudum in diuinis laudibus Hebraeum coepit Alleluia resonare. Ecce quondam tumidus, iam substratus sanctorum pedibus seruit Oceanus; eiusque barbaros motus, quos terreni principes edomare ferro nequiuerant, hos pro diuina formidine sacerdotum ora simplicibus uerbis ligant; et qui cateruas pugnantium infidelis nequaquam metuerat, iam nunc fidelis humilium linguas timet. (10)
>
> For almighty God covered the depths of the sea with his flashing clouds, because by the shining miracles of preachers, he has brought even the ends of the earth to the faith. For behold, he has pierced the hearts of almost every people; behold, he has joined the eastern and western borders in one faith; behold, the [tongues] of Britain, which once knew only how to lament its barbarous state, has long since begun to sing the Hebrew Alleluia in praise of God. Behold, the ocean, once swollen, now laid beneath the feet of holy men, serves [him]; and its barbarous motions, which earthly princes could not subdue with the sword, these motions the mouths of priests, through the fear of God, restrain with simple words; and the unbeliever who had never feared hordes of fighters, now a believer, fears the tongues of the humble.[10]

As Brian Green notes, the Old English *Exodus* poet alludes to this passage as well. The poem's comparison of a cloud to a tent or tabernacle, which seems incongruous on its own, echoes the description of God found in Job 26:29-30: 'si voluerit extendere nubes quasi tentorium suum et fulgurare lumine suo desuper cardines quoque maris operiet' ('if he should wish to spread out the clouds like his tabernacle and flash forth with his lightning, he will cover even the depths of the sea').[11]

In the *Carmen* 30, as in the Old English Exodus, the traditional adornment of the African or Ethiopian is a figure for the conversion of a Germanic linguistic and literary tradition to

[10] Stanton translation.

[11] The allusion to Gregory here is brief and indirect, but the Gregorian passage itself was extremely well-known, and its relation to English history was well-established. Not only was Gregory's Moralia one of the most widely circulating books of the period, but this passage circulated independently of the *Moralia*, as Bede quoted it at some length in the Ecclesiastical History, in his account of the life of Gregory (Book II.1). It is also cited in two saints' lives from the Anglo-Saxon period: an anonymous Life of St. Brinus and Goscelin's Historia Maior de adventu S. Augustini. All three of these saints—Gregory, Brinus, and Augustine of Canterbury—were important participants in the Gregorian mission to England. Especially given its use in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, there is considerable reason to view this Gregorian passage as the Anglo-Saxon *locus classicus* of the Gregorian missions to England.

Christian service. Sedulius Scottus draws on the conventional representations of the beautiful pagan woman in order to represent the metamorphosis that the languages of the North must undergo in order to become *alleluiatica*, "alleluiatic," or capable of liturgy and praise. While the *Carmen* of Sedulius Scottus uses the conventional metaphors of literary conversion as a way to represent the power of the Carolingian empire, however, the Old English *Exodus* draws on these metaphors for pagan literature and learning in order to theorize its own use of Anglo-Saxon poetics, an originally pagan literary tradition. According to the terms set by its own framing metaphors, the meaning of the Anglo-Saxon poem itself becomes comparable to "gold out of Egypt," suitable for appropriation or reappropriation by the converted Anglo-Saxon nation. The African woman (or women) who dances on the shore of the Red Sea, exultantly dressing herself in her native jewelry, the spoils of her conversion, can be read as a figure for the poem's own use of Anglo- Saxon literary treasure.

Importantly, the converted Egyptian women (or woman) in the Old English *Exodus* are not themselves the objects of interpretive plunder; they are, instead, its agents and beneficiaries. The conventional image of the beautiful pagan woman emphasizes her captivity and her status as a prisoner, but the *Exodus* poet completely obscures this aspect of the convention, instead according the pagan woman apparently queenly status. In this respect, the *Exodus* poet's representation of the beautiful captive woman is quite different from that of Sedulius Scottus, who uses the conventional image of the Egyptian woman to expand on his depiction of the Germanic nations as a conquered people. The phrase *afrisc meowle golde geworðod* suggests that the African women are not only "themselves…treasure"; they are also "adorning themselves" *with* treasure, as Zacharias Thundy observes. In his image of exultation, the *Exodus* poet transforms a trope that is conventionally about seizure and rapine, about unilateral cultural appropration, into a *topos* that at least partly figures reappropriation and

native cultural inheritance. The poem explains that the women are rejoicing because *bote gesawon*: "they saw the rescue." The image of the African woman dancing in African gold suggests that this *bot* may apply to her treasures as well as her person.

This idea of *bote*, "rescue" or "recompense," occurs only twice in the poem, once at its beginning (5) and once at its end (583), in the context of the Israelites' celebration. By means of this verbal echo, the poem forms a kind of loose envelope pattern linking its conclusion to its introduction. It invites the reader to interpret the poem's exultant conclusion in light of its opening verse paragraph, which offers the three spiritual senses of the Mosaic law. In this way, the envelope pattern that opens and closes the poem invites the reader to compare two related ideas: the New Covenant, by which the Old Testament law became available to the *werðeode*, the nations; and the appropriate uses of the vernacular, which allow for putting the literary resources of pagan cultures to Christian use. Unlike the Old Testament, which was a law of the Letter, the New Covenant is a covenant of the Spirit. By formally coupling the spiritual sense of covenant with tropes for the conversion of pagan and vernacular literature to Christian ends, the Old English *Exodus* implicitly makes claims for the ability of English to convey the "Spirit" of covenant. In so doing, it invests the vernacular medium of its own composition with qualities worthy of exegesis and interrogation.

A similar sense of connection between the New Covenant and the vernacular is found in the first chapter of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, when Bede points out that the number of vernaculars spoken on the island of Britain correspond to the number of books in the Old Testament law:

> Haec in presenti, juxta numerum librorum quibus Lex Diuina scripta est, quinque gentium linguis, unam eandemque summae ueritatis et uerae sublimitatis scientiam scrutatur et confitetur, Anglorum videlicit, Brettonum, Scottorum, Pictorum et Latinorum, quae meditatione scripturarum ceteris omnibus est facta communis. (Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7-8)

> Here at present, according to the number of the books in which the divine law is written, there exist five languages of peoples in which one and the same knowledge of the highest truth and the truest sublimity is found and confessed: namely, that of the English, that of the Britons, that of the Scots, that of the Picts, and that of the Latins, which has been made common to all the others by the meditation of the Scriptures.

Here the numerical parallel—five books of the Pentateuch, five contemporary vernaculars—sets forth an implicit parallel between the Old Law, a covenant for the Israelites, and the New, a covenant for all nations. This coupling has its own precedent in Gregory I's theology of language. In a commentary on Pentecost, Gregory observes,

> Audistis etenim quia Spiritus sanctus super discipulos in igneis linguis apparuit, omniumque linguarum scientiam dedit. Quid scilicet hoc miraculo designans, nisi quod sancta Ecclesia, eodem Spiritu repleta, omnium gentium erat voce locutura? Qui vero contra Deum turrim aedificare conati sunt communionem unius linguae perdiderunt, in his autem qui Deum humiliter metuebant linguae omnes unitae sunt…
>
> For you have heard that the Holy Spirit appeared above the disciples in tongues of fire, and bestowed a knowledge of all languages. Now what is signified by this miracle, if not that the holy Church, filled with the same spirit, was destined to speak in the voice of all peoples? For those who tried to build a tower against God lost the community of one language, but in those who humbly feared God, all languages were united…[12]

Bede comments that, in each of the vernacular languages of Britain, knowledge of the sublime truth *scrutatur*, may be found. His verb *scrutor* refers to a thorough, active search. In other contexts, it might be translated "to search exhaustively," even "to ransack." Bede's choice of words here suggests that the vernacular must be interrogated if its riches are to be yielded up.

In a similar fashion, the role of readerly interrogation in drawing out the treasures of the *Exodus* narrative is emphasized by the repeated use of the word *gefrignan*, as in the poem's introduction:

[12] Stanton translation.

Hwæt, we feor and neah *gefrigen* habað
ofer middangeard Moyses domas… (1-2)

Lo, we have found out, far and near, throughout the earth, the decrees of Moses…

Like Latin *scrutor*, Old English *gefrignan* connotes a kind of avid searching. Frequently used to gloss *interrogare* ("to question") and *inquirere* ("to seek out, search out"),[13] the term has been etymologically linked to words denoting strong desire, like the noun *friclo* "appetite, eagerness" and the adjective *frec* "gluttonous, greedy; eager, keen."[14] The action of the Israelites on the shore at the conclusion, avidly seeking out the treasure of textual meaning, echoes the poem's opening act of *gefrignan*, understood as a kind of active "finding out" rather than a passive hearing.

By comparing its own hidden meanings with "gold out of Egypt," the Old English *Exodus* not only lays claim to its own hidden levels of spiritual meaning; it also situates the interpretation of spiritual truth with the inspired reader rather than the writer, implying that the spiritual sense of a text is what an inspired reader makes of a text rather than a property of the text itself. Genuine spiritual understanding is not, this metaphor suggests, a quality that merely inhabits texts, intact and inert; instead, its presence in a text offers opportunities for appropriation and reappropriation, opportunities that yield their treasures only to particular activities of inspired reading and listening. In this way, the poem clearly holds its reader partially responsible for producing the allegorical meaning of the poem. Its opening and closing lines place the reader in the position of interpreter, requiring him or her to read for the manifold senses of the text rather than relying passively on the poem to supply the allegorical meaning of the narrative.

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[13] As a search for *interrogare* in the Dictionary of Old English will reveal, this usage occurs frequently in glossed gospels: see the Lindisfarne Gospels, Mt. 22:45, Mk 9.32, 12.34, Lk 9.45, 20.40; the Rushworth Gospels, Mk. 9:32, Mt 22.46, Mk 9.32, 12.34 *et alii*.

[14] Holthausen, 115-116. Holthausen suggests that *fricca*, "herald", is etymologically related both to *frignan* and to *friclan* "to search for, desire" and *friclo*, "longing, anxiety for, craving," thus positing an etymological link between these two word families.

The poem's opening and closing lines foreground the importance and value of *allegoria* as a practice of reading, one that relies upon the fourfold sense, rather than of "allegory" as a method of composition. At the same time, this emphasis on the role of the reader is insufficient to explain the poem's theology of reading: it is not the reader alone, but Christ in the reader, to whom the poem attributes agency. It is Christ who is said to unlock the meaning of the poem's mysteries. The presence of Christ in *Exodus* is evident in the long homiletic passage that Moses delivers on the shore of the Red Sea once the Israelites have crossed successfully:

> Þanon Israhelum ecce rædas
> on merehwearfe Moyses sægde,
> heahþungen wer, halige spræce,
> deop ærende. Dægweord ne mað,
> swa gyt werðeorde on gewritum findað
> doma gehwilcne ðara ðe him Drihten bebead
> on þam siðfate soðum wordum.
> Gif onlucan wile lifes wealhstod,
> Beorht in breostum, banhuses weard,
> Ginfæsten god Gastes cægon,
> Run bið gerecenod, ræd forð gæð;
> Hafað wislicu word on fæðme,
> Wile meagollice modum tæcan,
> Þæt we gesne ne syn Godes þeodscipes,
> Metodes miltsa. (516-530a)
>
> Afterward, Moses, a man of distinction, spoke eternal counsel and solemn tidings to the Israelites on the sea-shore. The day's work has not been hidden from view: still the nations find each of the judgments that God gave to Moses on that journey, in the Scriptures in words of truth. If the interpreter of life, bright in the breast, the guardian of the body, will unlock this lasting good with the keys of the Spirit, then mystery will be explained, and counsel will go forth. It has wise words in its grasp; it strives [lit. strenuously desires] to instruct our minds, that we may not lack the fellowship of God or the mercy of the Lord.

Through a persuasive study of analogues, Dorothy Haines has argued that the epithets "interpreter of life, bright in the bosom, the keeper of the body" do not refer to human faculties but to Christ, and his role in mediating or "bridging" the Old Covenant and the New:

"He (Christ) is bright in our bosoms (i.e., illuminates us), unlocks scripture, wishes to teach our minds, and finally, to grant us more than mere earthly riches." In identifying the role of Christ in inspiring the reader, the poem also bridges the gap between Old and New Covenant, between *Moyses domas* and *wræclico wordriht wera cneorissum*:

> Far from being irrelevant or unconnected, the passage presents an important bridge from the Old Testament narrative of the exodus to its spiritual meaning now open to Christians. That bridge, the poet says, is Christ who, through his incarnation and teaching, has unlocked the meaning of the Old Testament, specifically the writings of Moses, including the subject of his poem. Furthermore, the passage continues with the pledge of the New Covenant: the expectation of a better home than the earthly, transitory realm promised to Moses and the Israelites. Just as Moses' speech which follows assures the Jewish people of God's faithfulness in delivering his promises, so also will he not fail to grant a heavenly reward to his own in the Last Judgment. (Haines 498)

The relationship between Old and New Covenant is thus made possible only by the heremeneutic agency of Christ.

Critics of the poem have long suspected that this extended invocation of Christ and of allegorical interpretation is not only local in import, but rather serves as a directive regarding the interpretation of other portions of the poem, encouraging the reader to think through the texts' coherence in terms of figural interpretation (Godden 217). In inviting the reader to approach the poem through the lens of *figura*, the poem does much more than present itself as a thinly veiled version of the gospel story. The poem's theology of reading draws instead on the doctrine of "*allegoria* in all its fullness," in the words of de Lubac. According to this doctrine, a the figural sense of a text may refer to Christ not only by prefiguring him historically, but by representing him mystically, as the body of the Church, or even by dramatizing his exegetical agency. At a basic level, of course, the medieval understanding of *allegoria* depends on the doctrine that there are four senses that inform a biblical text; in addition to the figural, the others are the historical, moral, and anagogical senses of biblical exegesis, which correspond generally to past, present, and future realities. The historical or

literal sense of a sacred text recounts the events of biblical times; the anagogical sense relates to Christian futurity, in the form of either the end times or the afterlife; and the moral sense relates to Christian conduct on earth in the present moment. These four senses were well-established in Anglo-Saxon England, having formed the basis for a number of widely circulating exegetical texts; they had also been formulated, explicitly and at length, in Bede's *De Schematibus et Tropis* (Kendall 192-207). All of these senses or meanings might be found in the biblical text at any given moment; they were overlapping, simultaneous presences.

Scholars of *figura* in the Old English *Exodus* have focused heavily on the identification of allusions to the gospel, a strategy which produces only limited success, as Nicholas Howe notes. Citing the paradigmatic "correspondence" of Joshua and Jesus, Howe notes,

> While it is predictable that the OE *Exodus* does not name Jesus, its failure to name Joshua is troubling. Even more troubling is the poem's conclusion on the far shore of the Red Sea rather than in Canaan. (Howe 104)

On this basis, Howe rejects the term *figura* as applicable to the Old English *Exodus*, explaining that he does so in part out of consideration for Auerbach's "classic statement" that "'the aim of this sort of interpretation was to show that the persons and events of the Old Testament were prefigurations of the New Testament and its history of salvation'" (Howe 104; Auerbach, "Figura" 29-30).

But this kind of typology has a narrower frame of reference than does medieval figura. According to early medieval rhetoricians, the figural sense of Scripture might be typological in a narrow sense, referring to the historical person of Christ or his prefigurations in the Old Testament; but it might also refer to the Church, the Body of Christ in the world. For instance, in his taxonomy of biblical senses, Bede speaks of Scripture's figural sense as a "mystical sense concerning Christ or the Church." In the examples that Bede provides of the fourfold sense of Scripture, he is careful to show both kinds of figural sense, those related to Christ and those

related to the Church. Bede typically gives equal weight to both of these possibilities. Nor does Bede grant any primacy to a figural sense that relates directly to the historical person of Christ: a figural sense that refers primarily, or exclusively, to the Church is entirely sufficient to serve as the figural sense of a biblical detail. When he gives his concluding example of the device of allegoria, for instance, he observes that a reference to "Jerusalem" can refer literally to the literal Jerusalem, figurally to the Church of Christ, morally to the elect soul, and anagogically to the heavenly homeland. (Tanenhaus 252)

The opening to the Old English *Exodus* suggests that the *Exodus* poet was thoroughly familiar with the formal doctrine of the fourfold sense. The opening of the poem explicitly frames the subject matter of its story—the *domas Moyses*, "decrees of Moses"—in terms of its fourfold sense.

> Hwæt, we feor and neah gefrigen habað
> ofer middangeard Moyses domas--
> wræclico wordriht wera cneorissum;
> in uprodor eadigra gehwam
> æfter bealusiðe bote lifes;
> lifigendra gehwam langsumne ræd--
> hæleðum secgan, gehyre se ðe wille. (1-7)[15]

> Lo, we have found out, far and near, throughout the earth, the decrees of Moses—a miraculous spoken promise for generations of men; the recompense of life after the dangerous journey for each of the blessed in heaven; lasting counsel to each of the living—to speak to men, hear he who will.

Although critics have previously taken the syntax of these lines only as a strangely protracted example of Old English parallelism (Lucas 76), this parallelism derives from the fact that the last three accusatives provide allegorical glosses for the first. The phrase *Moyses*

[15] I have repunctuated these lines to reflect the reading of them that I propose here. Where Lucas places an em dash after *cneorissum* (3), taking *domas* and *wordriht* as apposed accusatives and *bote* and *ræd* as parentheticals, I place the em dash after *domas* (2). This choice of punctuation is intended to show both the tight grouping of the three parallel accusative glosses (*wordriht*, *bote*, and *ræd*) and their implicit subordination to *domas*.

domas (2), "decrees of Moses," provides the historical sense of the biblical narrative. The next phrase, *wræclico wordriht wera cneorissum* (3), "a miraculous spoken promise for generations of men," invokes the New Covenant of Christian doctrine, offering a figural gloss upon the phrase *Moyses domas*, the Old Covenant of Jewish law. The invocation of the New Covenant paves the way for the introduction of the next gloss of *domas*, which provides the anagogical sense: *in uprodor eadigra gehwam æfter bealusiðe bote lifes* (4-5), "the recompense of life after the journey of destruction for each of the blessed in heaven." Finally, the word *ræd* (6) provides the moral sense of the *domas* of *Moyses*: the *lifigendra gehwam langsumne ræd*, lasting counsel to each of the living.

As the first seven lines of the poem imply, the allegorical sense of the poem relies on a complex representation of the relation between the Old and the New Covenant. At the most basic level, the poem's opening lines invoke a figural aspect of the *Exodus* narrative by alluding to a New Testament prophesy about the birth of Christ. This prophesy is found in the Canticle of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79), which foretells the births of Christ and of John the Baptist by framing them explicitly in terms of God's promises to Israel. Through the coming of Christ, Zechariah declares, God speaks to Israel

> salutem ex inimicis nostris et de manu omnium qui oderunt nos …et memorari testamenti sui sancti iusiurandum quod iuravit ad Abraham patrem nostrum daturum se nobis ut sine timore de manu inimicorum nostrorum liberati serviamus illi… (1:72-74)[16]
>
> salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us, … to remember the oath of his holy testament, which he swore to our father Abraham that he would give to us, so that we might serve him without fear, having been delivered from the hand of our enemies…

Read figurally, according to the terms of this prophesy, the Old English *Exodus* tells

[16] Here I cite the Latin text in the Vulgate, although it is possible that the author of *Exodus* used a version of the *Vetus Latina*. For an extended discussion and textual comparison of Latin translations of Luke surviving from the Anglo-Saxon period, see Liuzza, *The Old English Version of the Gospels*, vol. 2, 1-49. For a discussion of the Latin Old Testament sources of the Old English *Exodus*, see Lucas 52-53.

the story of Christ fulfilling God's oath—that is, his *wordriht* (3)[17] or *testamentum* (Lk. 1:72)—by freeing the whole people of God from their enemies so that they might serve the Lord. Under the terms of this reading, Pharaoh represents the *inimicus* of God's people, namely Satan: it is for this reason that *Exodus* repeatedly identifies Pharaoh with the epithets *feond* and *andsaca*.

If these lines may be treated as a simple allusion to the gospels, they also put forward a more complex representation of the relationship of Old Covenant to New, or of God to his chosen people. *Figura* here is better understood as the sense of the poem that relates figuratively to the New Testament body of believers, who represent Christ in a mystical sense, and who are included as members of the New Covenant. As noted earlier, this mystical sense was well recognized and long established by the Anglo-Saxon period, and is mentioned explicitly by Bede in his *De Schematibus et Tropis*: the figural sense of a text may be either the sense that relates to Christ, or to the Church. When the figural sense of Scripture is understood as relating to the transhistorical community of the faithful, the fourfold sense of the Old English *Exodus* becomes much more transparent.

The poem's sustained concern with the representation of Israel as covenant people is introduced by the phrase wræclico wordriht wera cneorissum (5). The meaning of this phrase has been obscured by the fact that the meaning of wordriht has not been well understood. This term occurs only twice in Old English, once in Exodus 3, and once in Beowulf 2631. The Bosworth

[17] Lucas glosses the term *wordriht* with "law," a choice that appears to have been influenced by his identification of *wordriht* with the Pentateuch. The meaning of the word is far from transparent, however: it occurs only twice in the Old English corpus, here and at *Beowulf* 2631, where it appears to mean "a duty which one has given his word to perform" or "what one has promised to do" (Bosworth and Toller). Previously, this first sense has seemed far enough removed from the usage of the word in *Exodus* l. 3 that scholars have proposed a second meaning of the word, namely "law" or "spoken law," to account for its other use in *Exodus*. However, once the context of the word in *Exodus* is better understood, there is no reason not to take *wordriht* here as a reference to something that God has promised or given his word to do. The word *domas* in line 2 refers not only to the Old Law in the sense of "graven tablets" but also to the Mosaic covenant. One aspect of this covenant was God's promise, *wordriht*, to Moses, and by extension to the Israelite people, as detailed in lines 16-29.

Toller dictionary proposes two different definitions for these two occurrences of the word, translating it, where it occurs in Beowulf, as "a duty which one has given his word to perform," and, where it occurs in Exodus, as a "law expressed in the form of a command." This definition invites the reader to take word-riht as a very close synonym for domas. Similarly, Lucas explains, "Presumably domas and wordriht refer to the Pentateuch, which does indeed contain langsumne ræd" (Lucas 75).

In fact, however, there is no need to provide separate definitions for each of the two occurrences of *word-riht* in Old English; the meaning of the word in *Exodus* may be taken as quite similar to the meaning of the word in *Beowulf*. In both cases, the term refers to an oath or a promise of great import. Where the word occurs in *Beowulf*, it introduces the speech made by Wigelaf to his companions, just before joining Beowulf in the fight against the dragon. The passage begins,

> Wiglaf maðelode, word-rihta fela
> sægde gesiðum-- him wæs sefa geomor:
> 'Ic ðæt mæl geman, þær we medu þegun,
> þonne we geheton ussum hlaforde
> in bior-sele, ðe us ðas beagas geaf,
> þæt we him ða guð-getawa gyldan woldon
> gif him þyslicu þearf gelumpe,
> helmas and heard sweord… (2638a).

> Wiglaf… spoke many *word-rihta* to his companions, his spirit somber: 'I remember a time, in the place where we drank mead, when we swore to the lord who gave us these rings in the beer-hall that we would repay him for the wargear, the helmets and hard swords, if such a need arose for him.

Here the term *word-riht* stands for both the promises made by Beowulf's retainers and their obligations to keep those promises; it invokes the logic of a covenant or compact.

In the Old English *Exodus*, the word *word-riht* may be taken to refer to the promises of God to his people, which in some respects are not unlike Wiglaf's promise to Beowulf: they

are spoken promises with covenental force, designed to be remembered in times of need. In this sense, the apposition of *Moyses domas* and *wræclico wordriht* reminds the reader that the Mosaic law is not simply a legal code; it is a bilateral covenant, or contract, promise between the Hebrew God and his chosen people. As a gloss on the phrase *Moyses domas*, then, the phrase *wræclico wordriht wera cneorissum* implicitly identifies the Old Law as both a promise in its own right and, implicitly, as a prefiguration of the New Covenant. As a reference to covenant, it does not refer primarily to the Pentateuch, as has previously been thought, but to the promise of God to Abraham and his descendents (Lucas 75), which is described in detail in *Exodus* 419-446 and was sometimes understood to foretell the coming of Christ.

This association between God's promise to Abraham and its New Testament equivalent, namely the New Covenant, is borne out by the poem's wordplay. The use of *cneorissum* in line 3 inaugurates a pattern of diction that persists throughout the poem, associating the idea of *cneorissum*, "generations", with the "sons of Abraham" and the promise of God to multiply Abraham's descendents. Strong associations link *cneowmaga, cneosibbe* and *frumcneow* with the logic of covenant.[18] Words like these, which contain the element *cneo-* or *cneow* (denoting kin or generation), are used almost exclusively in the context of these covenantal promises: either God's promise to make the sons of Abraham uncountable, numerous as the sand on the sea, or God's promise to provide them with a homeland. The promise of God to make Abraham's descendents more numerous than the sands of the sea,

[18] In lines 16-29, for example—the first explication of God's *wordriht wera cneorissum*, spoken promise for generations of men—God grants to Moses *his maga feorh*, *onwist eðles Abrahames sunum*, *…ofercom mid þy campe cneomaga fela*. In lines 314-318, the poem reminds its audience again of God's promise to Moses, using terms and syntax quite similar to those used in the scene of the burning bush: *Swa him mihtig god þæs dægweorces deop lean forgeald, ...þæt he ealdordom agan sceolde ofer cynericu, cneowmaga blæd.* Shortly thereafter, the sons of Abraham are referred to as *cneowsibbe cenra manna*. Twice more, the poem uses *cneow* compounds in explicit mentions of God's covenant to make Abraham's children as countless as the sand upon the shore (*frumcneow*, 371, 369-374; *cneowmaga*, 435, 432-442).

known as the "Abrahamic covenant," was to form the basis for the continuity between Jews and Christians because Paul interpreted this promise to Abraham as a reference to the manifold generations of Christian faithful to come (Galatians 3:6-9). The word *cneorissum*, generations, thus holds a double meaning: it refers not only to Abraham's kin or his Israelite descendents but his spiritual children under the New Covenant, namely the Christian faithful.

Once the close association of law and covenant, or *word-riht*, has been established, it becomes more apparent that the poem is largely organized around the covenental promises of God to his people. The appearance of covenant is one of the major threads linking the poem's many episodes, namely their connection to promises of God. This observation holds particularly true of the long series of apparent digressions found in lines 362-446, which leap from the account of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea to a description of Noah and then of Abraham. In fact, the organization of the passage is less arbitrary than it might seem. The passage begins with the first covenant mentioned in the Old Testament, the promise that God made to Noah after the Flood (Gen. 9), and it moves on to the second (Gen. 15). Because the pages that follow this passage have been lost, it is impossible to know whether the poem's subsequent lines originally described the Davidic covenant and the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31; but the word choices in the passage make clear that the accounts of Noah and of Abraham are related to the rest of the story in part by the shared theme of covenant.

The Noah episode, for instance, which has long been treated as a digression, centers on a description of Noah's faithfulness to the covenant of God:

> Hæfde him on hreðre halige treowa;
> forþon he gelædde ofer lagustreamas
> maðmmhorda mæst, mine gefræge. (366-368)
>
> He kept the holy covenant in his heart; therefore he guided across ocean-currents the greatest of treasure-hoards, as I have found out.

Likewise, the Abraham episode—which has long been treated as a problem for the poem's cohesion— centers upon the oath that God makes to Abraham, which was to become the

foundation of the New Covenant:

> He að swereð, engla þeoden,
> wyrda waldend and wereda god,
> soðfæst sigora, þurh his sylfes lif,
> þæt *þines cynnes and cneowmaga*,
> randwiggendra, rim ne cunnon,
> yldo ofer eorðan, ealle cræfte
> to gesecgenne soðum wordum,
> nymðe hwylc þæs snottor in sefan weorðe
> þæt he ana mæge ealle geriman
> stanas on eorðan, steorran on heofonum,
> sæbeorga sand, sealte yða. (432-442)
>
> The lord of the angels, ruler of fate, God of hosts, one righteous in victories, swears an oath on his own life, that men on earth with all their wisdom will not know the number of your family and kinsmen, [your] shield-warriors, unless someone should become so wise in spirit that he alone can count all the stones upon the earth, all the stars in the heavens, all the sand of the sea dunes or the salt waves.

The poem's transitions from one narrative episode to the other are not arbitrary: they are underwritten by the poem's theology of covenant.

Investigations into the poem's complex organization, with all of its seemingly digressive episodes, might lead to the temptation of subdividing the poem into discrete historical, anagogical, figural, and moral sections, as if he poem were a commentary or verse homily, but to do so would be to misread the poem's theology. The reading practice of allegoria, which the Old English Exodus invites, was designed to sustain and heighten polyvalence across a text. The fourfold senses of the Bible were overlapping, simultaneous presences rather than discrete modes; its meaning was not quadripartite, but fundamentally unified and four-dimensional. Godden's description of the "multi-valency" of the Old English Exodus, which "throws off sparks of significance in all directions as the poet explores" (Godden 217), might also describe the polyvalence of scriptural texts as read by early medieval exegetes, who intentionally opened up a number of different avenues for interpretation. The Old English Exodus similarly invites the

reader to read each of its details and episodes on riht, rightly (587), with an alertness to the several possible dimensions of its meaning. The possibility of multivalence that arose from such multiplicity of interpretation was acknowledged and sanctioned in Augustine's Confessions, whose relevance to the Old English Exodus has been established by Sarah Novacich:

> Ita cum alius dixerit: "Hoc sensit, quod ego," et alius: "Immo illud, quod ego," religiosius me arbitror dicere: Cur non utrumque potius, si utrumque uerum est? Et si quid tertium et si quid quartum et si quid omnino aliud uerum quispiam in his uerbis uidet, cur non illa omnia uidisse credatur, per quem deus unus sacras litteras uera et diuersa uisuris multorum sensibus temperauit? (12.31.1–7)
>
> So when one person has said "Moses perceived what I [do]," and another "No, what I [do]," I deem it more religious to say "Why not rather say both, if both are true?" And if anyone sees in these words a third truth, and a fourth truth, and another truth altogether, why not believe him to have seen all these things? Through him God tempered the sacred letters to the senses of many, about to perceive [in them] things true and yet different. (Chadwick 270–71, qtd. in Novacich 57)

By propounding the fourfold sense of Scripture as a lens through which the rest of the poem may be read, the poem influences the reception of other key details, reminding the reader that particularly charged or ambiguous expressions throughout the poem may have more than one sense, and that this multiplicity of meanings is governed by the specific idea of the fourfold sense. One particularly charged example of this occurs at lines 39-46:

> Bana wide scrað,
> lað leodhata, land drysmyde
> deadra hræwum— dugoð forð gewat.
> Wop wæs wide, worulddreama lyt,
> wæron hleahtorsmiðum handa belocene,
> alyfed laðsið leode gretan,
> folc ferende— feond wæs bereafod,
> hergas on helle; heofon þider becom,
> druron deofolgyld. (ll.39-47) [19]

[19] Here I have departed from Lucas' edition in two details, while following him in a third. The first is the punctuation of lines 46-47, which Lucas punctuates as follows: *Hergas on helle (heofon þider becom) druron deofolgyld,* "the enemy was robbed. The shrines in hell (heaven came there) fell, the idols [fell]." The eccentricity of style produced by this reading may be avoided by taking *hergas* as a reference to the hosts of hell, as Irving does, and as I have done above. Second, I have followed the usual emendation of *dryrmyde* (40) to *drysmyde*, rather than

> The killer ranged widely, the hateful tyrant; the land mourned the corpses of the dead; the multitude went forth; there was weeping on all sides, and little worldly celebration; the hands of the laughter-smiths were bound; a hateful journey was permitted to confront the nation, a wandering people; the fiend was bereaved, [and] the hosts in hell; heaven came there, the idols fell.

This passage begins as a fairly straightforward description of the flight from Egypt: the host of Israelites departs amidst the great lamentation of their Egyptian captors. Suddenly in line 45 the reader finds him- or herself in the middle of the harrowing of *helle*, hell, the figural equivalent of the flight from Egypt, and discovers that the passage has been about the harrowing of hell all along. The suddenness of this transition is made possible in part by local wordplay, namely the ambiguous reference of both *dugoð.* The half-line marking the departure of the Israelites, *dugoð forð gewat*, is strikingly cryptic and has been variably interpreted. Lucas, for instance, suggests that the line "refers euphemistically to the death of the Egyptian first-born in terms appropriate for the departure of the Israelites" (Lucas 80). Conversely, Irving characterizes the phrase as "no more than a standard phrase for death" (Irving 69). The cryptic quality of this phrase is not accidental; instead, it makes possible the slip between one dimension of the narrative and another. Thus the poem's seamless transitions from literal to "spiritual" senses are authorized by the double meanings of particular Anglo-Saxon words.

The effect of the poem relies upon these surprising transitions, which effectively remind the reader that all four senses of the narrative are continually available to the discerning reader. The frequent absence of transitions in the poem often has the pedagogical or doctrinal function of keeping the reader alive to the constant presence of many different meanings and dimensions

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to *ðrysmyde*, as Lucas proposes, solely on the basis that *dryrmyde* is closer to the original MS reading. Third, I have followed Lucas and others in emending *freond* to *feond* (45), although it should be noted that this emendation is not universally accepted. In *Exodus and the Treasure of Pharaoh* (164), for example, John Vickrey argues for the MS reading by suggesting that Pharoah is here identified as the *freond* of the first-born. Vickrey draws a connection between the description of the Egyptians as *werigend* (589) and the description of Pharoah as *freond*, pointing out that a lord or chief "may be called *freond* when his role as comforter or protector is important in the context," as in *Beowulf* 2393, *Christ* 912, *The Dream of the Rood* 144, *Genesis* 2315, *Psalms* 77.34 and 90.2.

at every moment in the poem's narrative. The Old English *Exodus* relies on rhetorical devices such as these to put the reader almost forcibly in the position of exegete, instructing him or her moment-by-moment in the fourfold nature of the text. In this way, the poem's allegory does not inhere in the text but is only produced in the act of reading. By situating the responsibility for the production of allegorical meaning with the reader, rather than the writer, the poem draws attention to the status of *allegoria* as a practice of reading rather than of composition.

In this respect, the poet's *tour de force* may occur at lines 71b-92, a passage so rich in conflicting imagery that it threatens breakdown. These lines describe the Israelites following the column of cloud in the desert, a familiar element of the Exodus narrative. But the passage is difficult to follow or comprehend because of the seeming disjunctures between the its setting and its imagery. While there is no doubt that the Israelites are firmly on land at this moment in the poem's narrative, the passage is nonetheless full of complex and realistic nautical imagery:

þær halig god
wið færbryne folc gescylde,
bælce oferbrædde byrnendne heofon,
halgan nette hatwendne lyft.
Hæfde wederwolcen widum fæðmum
eorðan and uprodor efne gedæled,
lædde leodwerod, ligfyr adranc,
hate heofontorht. Hæleð wafedon,
drihta gedrymost. Dægsceades hleo
wand ofer wolcnum; hæfde witig god
sunnan siðfæt segle ofertolden,
swa þa mæstrapas men ne cuðon,
ne ða seglrode geseon meahton,
eorðbuende ealle cræfte,
hu afæstnod wæs feldhusa mæst,
siððan he mid wuldre geweorðode
þeodenholde. þa wæs þridda wic
folce to frofre. Fyrd eall geseah
hu þær hlifedon halige seglas,
lyftwundor leoht; leode ongeton,
dugoð Israhela, þæt þær drihten cwom
weroda drihten, wicsteal metan.

There holy God shielded the people against the terrible heat, he covered the

> fiery heaven with a deck, the torrid heaven with a holy net. With its broad reach, the cloud evenly divided the sky and the earth; it led the people; bright and hot in heaven, the flaming fire was quenched. The warriors, most joyful of troops, looked on with amazement. The protection of the day-shield flew forward over the sky; the wise God had pitched a sail over the path of the sun, so that men did not know the riggings, nor were the earth- dwellers able to see by any skill either the sail-rod or how the greatest of tents was fastened, since He honored the faithful with glory. Then the third camp was a comfort to the folk. The entire army saw how the holy sails towered there, a bright airy wonder; the people, the troop of Israel, perceived that the Lord came, the Lord of the people, to measure out their camping place.

This passage contains several words that are otherwise unrecorded in Old English poetry, including *bælc*, *mæstrap*, and *seglrod*, terms for the parts of boats (Wilcox 131). The word *seglrod* is "a brilliant construction that must be attributed to the matrix of meaning in this poem," as Nicholas Howe points out, "by combining the meaning of 'sail' with that of 'rood' or 'cross,' it points to the nautical image for salvation. But the literal sense of 'sailyard' must not be ignored, for it supplements the earlier *mæstrap* and adds precision to the image." But the *seglrod* is not only sailyard and cross. It is also part of a cloud, specifically the poem's mysterious cloud-tabernacle, the *feldhusa mæst*, "greatest of tents."

As demonstrated earlier, this image of the cloud-tabernacle alludes to the famous passage of Gregory's *Moralia* that describes the conversion of England by missionaries who traveled from the continent by boat. The *seglrod*—simultaneously cross, missionary sail, cloud, and tabernacle—invites at least three figurative interpretations simultaneously. Morally speaking, it is the "cloud" that conceals and shelters Christ as if with a tent, as Gregory explains at length. Anagogically speaking, it is a cross that marks the way to salvation. Figurally speaking, it is one of the sailing ships that brings salvation to the English, and enfranchises them in the community of the universal church. Nor can the image be reduced to any one of these readings: indeed, the irreducibility of this image to any one determination is central to its purpose in the poem. By means of daunting formal ruptures such as these, the

poem dramatizes the importance of *allegoria* to the understanding of the passage.

Such formal ruptures are central to the hermeneutic paradigm that the poem invites—a paradigm founded on a sophisticated and complex understanding of *allegoria* as a practice of inspired reading. Through the interpretive challenges posed by its formal discontinuity, the poem dramatizes the reader's need to possess Christ as the *gæstes cægon*, the "key of the Spirit," in order to understand the poem *on riht*, righly. Like the transition from Old to New Covenant, the transitions of the Old English *Exodus* are concurrently "transitions to Christ" and "transitions that are effected in Christ," to borrow the words of de Lubac. The incongruous shifts of the poem's imagery are "transitions to Christ," in that it calls the reader's attention away from the literal sense of the Old Testament story, and toward the poem's spiritual senses. They are also "transitions *effected in* Christ," in that, in their very incongruity, they create space for the agentive power of the *banhuses weard, beorht in breostum* (the tenant of the body, bright in the breast).

The poem's deliberately problematic transitions are particularly important to an allegorical reading of the poem because they have been offered before as features of the poem that allegorical readings are particularly ill-equipped to explain. Howe, for instance, has found allegorical readings of the poem unsatisfying precisely because they do not adequately address the poem's instructive "incongruities." For Howe, these incongruities are important precisely because they demarcate the limits of the allegorical approach to its interpretation. Taking the *segl* of line 81 as his test case, he suggests that it is in giving an account of the poet's formal choices—his sense of timing and proportion—that allegorical readings break down. He writes that "allegorical interpretation cannot quite respond to the gamble of introducing the sail image at this precise moment," and expands on this point in a critically worded footnote:

> The more responsible allegorical critics have recognized this difficulty, though in evasive ways. Cross and Tucker (1960, 125) say of ll. 105-118, 'Clearly the

> geographical situation has been dismissed from the poet's mind'; and Lucas (1976, 195) states, 'The Israelites are seen as sailors engaged on a sea-voyage, albeit on dry land.' In trying to explain away the discrepancy between the poem's geography and imagery, these statements reveal the limits of any allegorical reading of *Exodus*.

Allegorical readings do not generally take into account the disruptions and seeming inconsistencies of a text, he suggests, nor have they generally helped to explain the realist or quasi-realist irruptions of nautical imagery into biblical narrative history.

As a response to allegorical readings as they have previously been practiced, Howe's analysis is both apt and trenchant, particularly given the tendency of some allegorical readers of the poem to seek its resolution in typology. If *allegoria* invites the reader to seek or create unity in a text, it often does so through the performance of apparent discord or discontinuity. The performance or production of this discontinuity requires its own kind of formal effects; but these effects have sometimes been overlooked by allegorical critics, who are at times more invested in using typology to recover some kind of narrative continuity where it seems to be absent, than in investigating the production of discontinuity. Indebted as they are to purely typological modes of interpretation, allegorical readings of the Old English *Exodus* have typically failed to account for the poem's formal properties, as Howe notes, because they "evade" the problems of the poem's discontinuities. That is, allegorical readers of the Old English *Exodus* have frequently paid little heed to local matters of timing, proportion, and structure, offering harmonizing typologies as if they obviated the deep and knotty problems of form that the poem poses. They have interpreted the poem without acknowledging the characteristic formal concerns that *allegoria* presents, concerns that Howe brings to the forefront of his reading.

If previous allegorical readings of the *Exodus* have failed to take into account these incongruities, however, this failure is not an inevitable feature of the allegorical method. On the

contrary, as I have demonstrated earlier, the poem's incongruities serve to underscore and dramatize aspects of the allegorical approach that it invites: in this sense, the poem's formal disjunctures and hermeneutic models are deeply aligned. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to set aside Howe's objections to the allegorical approach as irrelevant. On the contrary, his critique underscores the need for a distinction between "mere typology," in de Lubac's terms, and *allegoria*.

Within literary studies, it is not common to draw a sharp distinction between typology and *allegoria*, particularly when *allegoria* is taken in its narrowest sense, to mean the figural sense of Scripture. Within religious studies, however, the terms have been more clearly delineated, particularly by de Lubac, who writes,

> Nor should we confuse this scriptural allegory, understood in its fullness, with what is nowadays called 'typology,' a modern name that has enjoyed a good press for some time now. Scriptural allegory gives sanction to typology, it gives it its foundations, it contains it in itself. But if typology were the only aspect to be examined, there would not be any penetration through to the very foundations of traditional doctrine concerning Scripture. … In its very truth, it remains removed from the great Pauline influence that animates this whole doctrine.[20]

On the one hand, de Lubac observes, "to understand biblical revelation properly it is necessary to have some sense of history, … that is to say, some notion of the continuity of God's work in time, the uninterrupted continuity of a homogeneous historical development." Where typology goes wrong is in taking this assessment as if it were, itself, an adequate account of the relation between the Old and the New Testament, whereas in reality "no assessment could be more incomplete." The history of revelation is not merely an account of homogeneous historical continuity: it also

> offers the spectacle of a discontinuity that has no equal, which makes the tradition idea of allegory, understood in its most profound essence, irreplaceable. … In a sense, it is true, the continuity still remains and one can even say that it is

[20] De Lubac, I. 259.

> 'faultless.' … But in another sense, the break is a radical one. The new covenant is not like the old covenant. The people of God would no longer be an ethnic group. The Divine Presence would no longer be localized in one spot, in a material tabernacle. From now on God would be in Jesus Christ and everywhere.

In distinguishing between *allegoria* and typology, de Lubac makes the case for *allegoria* as a metatextual as well as a textual phenomenon, one that relies on the agency of Christ within the reader as well as within the text.

De Lubac's full discussion of the relation of the two terms, and the problematic tendency of criticism to collapse *allegoria* into typology, is too extensive to engage in full here. Instead, its relevance to the Old English *Exodus* may be illustrated by a single question: where should we expect Christ to appear in the text? *Allegoria* and typology give radically different answers to this question, and the former produces far more satisfactory readings of the Old English *Exodus* than the latter. To conduct a narrowly typological reading of the poem, the reader must search the text for Christ figures, a strategy of reading that has historically produced only limited results. Howe's rejection of *figura* is driven by his answer, or lack of an answer, to this seemingly straightforward question. Citing the paradigmatic "correspondence" of Joshua and Jesus, Howe notes,

> While it is predictable that the OE *Exodus* does not name Jesus, its failure to name Joshua is troubling. Even more troubling is the poem's conclusion on the far shore of the Red Sea rather than in Canaan.[21]

On this basis, Howe rejects the term *figura* as applicable to the Old English *Exodus*, explaining that he does so in part out of consideration for Auerbach's "classic statement" that "'the aim of this sort of interpretation was to show that the persons and events of the Old Testament were prefigurations of the New Testament and its history of salvation.'"[22]

[21] Howe, 104.
[22] Howe, 104; Auerbach, 1959, 29-30, cit. in orig.

On the other hand, the reading strategy of *allegoria* leads the reader to expect the presence of Christ to be far more pervasive, agentive, and paradoxical. Rather than locate Christ within the confines of narrative history, the poem's engagement of *allegoria* also seeks the presence of Christ in its more mystical sense: both as the Body of Church and as the Exegete. The poem locates Christ within the reader, outside the text, rather than inside the narrative. The Old English *Exodus* is interested, not only in locating the personality of Christ within the text in the form of a historical prefiguration, but in working out the identity of the Church in the world by tracing God's ongoing relation to his covenant people. Accordingly, Christ is not primarily represented within the narrative by means of an Old Testament figure: he is at work outside the narrative as well, as a metatextual force present within the reader, unlocking the *digelnys*—the mystery—of the Exodus story, to borrow a term from Aelfric's Exodus homily. As a work that invites *allegoria*, the Old English *Exodus* represents Christ as at work both inside and outside of the text, within and without the confines of narrative history. Under the terms of "allegory understood in all its fullness," Christ is present everywhere, within and without the text: it is this theological doctrine that the Old English *Exodus* conveys through its poetics.

This attitude toward divine agency is demonstrated not only in the content of the Old English *Exodus*, but in its form as well, which uses its unaccountable transitions to insist on the need for a divine agent. The way the poem represents Christ's presence as at work outside, as well as inside, the text illustrates, through poetic form, the distinction between *allegoria* and "mere typology." In this way, the poem's invocation of *allegoria* is inextricable from its disjunctions. The discontinuities of the Old English *Exodus* illustrate the discontinuities of the transition from Old to New Covenant. The poem does not only take up the relation between Old and New Covenants as its central theme; it also enacts this relation by its persistent troubling of

textual continuity. Its mode of narrating Old Testament history, treating it as constantly interrupted by the presence of God, illustrates a particular understanding of how the divine truth of history is revealed. The form of the Old English *Exodus* performs a "spectacle of discontinuity," using this spectacular discontinuity to underscore the nature of its New Covenant poetics. These poetics of New Covenant, of God "in Jesus Christ and everywhere," underwrites the poem's claims for the vernacular.

'The Seafarer,' *Grammatica*, and the Making of Anglo-Saxon Textual Culture

The Use and Function of the Exeter Book

The Anglo-Saxon manuscript known as the Exeter Book, containing approximately one-sixth of all surviving Old English poetry, is surrounded by mysteries. One of the most important and lasting is the problem of use: for what purpose was the collection compiled and copied? My discussion of *The Seafarer* will begin by proposing a possible answer to this question: I suggest that the arrangement of contents in the Exeter Book may derive from the conventions of an English language poetry curriculum. This argument stops short of claiming that the manuscript in its current form was a "classbook" in a conventional sense, or that the Exeter Book was used exclusively in the classroom. Scholars of the Exeter Book have pointed out that the manuscript may have been used in the liturgy, and that its travel reflects patterns of textual transmission and aristocratic book collecting that were typical of Europe's elites at the end of the eleventh century: these arguments are important, and they are consistent with my own discussion of the manuscript. I do not aim to show that the manuscript was intended solely for vernacular education within England; only that it, or its exemplar, may have been used for that purpose at some point.

Although it is frequently overlooked, there is concrete evidence that monastic education took place in both Latin and English toward the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, as Milton Gatch observes (41). Some monasteries appear to have conducted two schools, one in Latin and one in the vernacular, a bilingual system of education likely introduced to Ramsey from Fleury by Abbo. The most concrete evidence of this bilingual system may be found in Byrhtferth's *Manual*, a book for the instruction of the clergy, which is written in both Latin and Old English.

Byrhtferth says explicitly that the book is designed for the training and education of *þam þe þat Lyden ne understandað*, those who do not understand Latin (Hart 97). The *Manual* contains the rudiments of a monastic education. The majority of the material in the *Manual* is scientific in nature: among other things, it explains solar and lunar years, the Roman calendar, and the calculation of the date of Easter (Hart 97), using detailed diagrams throughout.

In claiming that his audience did not know Latin, Byrhtferth may have been adopting a rhetorical convention rather than stating a fact: as Malcolm Godden has shown, translations into the Old English often claim to be for humble audiences even when their primary readership was elite. Nonetheless, the curriculum in this text is less ambitious than that found in Byrhtferth's Latin source materials. The book is divided into four parts, and Byrhtferth's approach to translation varies throughout, seemingly to suit his subject matter. Part I is totally bilingual, offering copies of the same text in both Latin and Old English: it alternates between Latin passages and Old English translations. Byrtferth abandons this labor-intensive approach at the end of part I: Parts II and III are almost entirely in Old English, and the more scholarly Part IV is primarily in Latin, although a discussion of the Six Ages of the World is rendered in the vernacular (Hart 97).

Byrhtferth's *Manual* is an early eleventh century text, but it may have grown out of a practice of educating clerics in the vernacular that had begun earlier, by the end of the tenth century. The Benedictine Reforms of the late tenth century had led to a resurgence of monastic learning, and these reforms appear to have been fairly tolerant of English language education. Writing about the *Regularis Concordia* of c. 973, the most important document of the English Benedictine reform, Gatch observes,

> Nothing is said in the *Concordia* about preaching at Mass. Nor is anything said about the language in which the *lectiones* and the abbatial homilies were to be

> pronounced. One customarily assumes that the language of the monasteries was Latin; but, in fact, large numbers of monastic documents, liturgical and customary, were translated into English, and there is some evidence that in certain monasteries two schools—one in Latin, the other in English—were conducted. Thus the reformed English monasteries may possibly have made liturgical use of the native tongue or have prepared vernacular texts to facilitate in some fashion the participation of members of the English school in the liturgical life of the community. (Gatch, *Preaching and Theology* 41)

How pervasive was this system of bilingual education? It is impossible to know with certainty. However, Byrhtferth's program does not seem to have been an anomaly. The *Manual* itself was copied at other scribal centers, at both Glastonbury and at Canterbury, suggesting that other communities were educating parish priests in English (Hart, 98). Other evidence for Old English teaching comes from an unexpected source: the Anglo-Norman tradition, and the emulation of English texts by Norman ones. As M. T. Clanchy observes,

> Contact with England, with its long tradition of non-Latin literature, may have helped to develop French as a written language. Thus the earliest and best manuscript (dating from the 1140s perhaps) of the *Chanson de Roland* is English, although it is not probably indigenous as its langauge is predominantly Francien. More significant are those instances of French writing of which the earliest examples are English, notably the works of Philip de Thaon. He wrote a bestiary and lapidaries and also *Li Cumpoz*, which is a treatise in verse on how to calculate movable feast days. As he gives examples of such calculations and dedicates his work to Humfrey de Thano, who was chaplain to Eudo the Steward, sheriff of Essex, it is possible to date *Li Cumpoz* to either 1102, 1113 or 1119. Any of these years is precociously early for a writing in French and the subject matter of *Li Cumpoz* is even more remarkable. Only clerics needed to know how to calculate dates and Latin was the best language in which to explain such things with the necessary precision. (168-169).

Philip de Thaon's choice of subject matter for his French text is less surprising given that the calculation of moveable feast days was already being taught in English and had been for some time. Clanchy suggests that Philip's choice to write a *computus* in French "suggests that some clergy at least already preferred French to Latin." While this suggestion is perfectly valid, it is also entirely possible that Philip's choice of subject matter was influenced by an encounter with

the Anglo-Saxon practice of teaching *computus* in the vernacular. In late tenth and early eleventh century England, the vernacular was seen as an appropriate medium even for difficult technical subjects. If indeed, as Clanchy suggests, Philip de Thaon is moved to compose written texts in the vernacular in part because of his contact with the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition, it is not surprising that he should choose a text on this subject—he may have simply been imitating an Old English *computus*, such as the one found in Byrhtferth's *Manual*.

One notable feature of the *Manual* is its capsule accounts of classical rhetoric and meter: by including this material in his handbook of basic instruction, Byrhtferth suggests that the study of poetry was useful and important even for relatively uneducated priests. The existence of an Old English translation of classical rhetorical theory is in itself significant: Part II contains an *excursus* on classical meter; Part III of the text briefly lists and explains a number of figures of speech familiar from the classical tradition. It is even more significant that this material appears even in the minimalist curriculum of the *Manual*, a compilation focused on information that Byrhtferth felt was indispensable even for the relatively ignorant. Its presence here suggests that the study of literature may have been seen as an important part of Anglo-Saxon education, regardless of the language in which that education took place.

Is there a link between this teaching culture and the arrangement of contents in the Exeter Book? The possibility of such a link emerges from a comparison of the Exeter Book with the contents of Cambridge Gg 5.35, a mid-eleventh century English manuscript sometimes called the "Cambridge Songs Manuscript." The Cambridge Songs mansucript is an immensely important collection of Latin lyric that, like the Exeter Book, was copied for an unknown purpose. The glosses of the Cambridge Gg 5.35, however, show that it was clearly used as a school text. Moreover, it contains all of the greatest hits of the early medieval Latin curriculum, including the

Distichs of Cato, the *Epigrams* of Prosper, Juvencus' *Libri Evangelium Quattuor*, Caelius' Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale*, and Arator's *De Actibus Apostolorum* (Lapidge 102), suggesting that it might have been intended for this purpose from a fairly early point in its production.

A side-by-side comparison of the contents of the two manuscripts reflects uncanny similarities. Both manuscripts begin with a series of three biblical epics: paraphrases of the gospel or the Book of Acts. In the Latin manuscript, these texts are represented by Juvencus, Sedulius, and Arator; in the Old English manuscript, by the series of poems known as Christ I, Christ II, and Christ III. In both works, the gospel paraphrases are followed by works focused on spiritual warfare: in the Latin manuscript, the text is Prudentius' *Psychomachia*; in the Old English manuscript, these texts are Guthlac A and B and Azarias. Next comes an allegorical poem about the Phoenix: in the Latin manuscript, the text is Lactantius' *The Phoenix*; in the Old English, the text is a vernacular translation of the same poem. These parallels run through the whole collections. Both manuscripts appear to have three sections: a first section, including long biblical epics and important allegorical poems; a second, containing shorter lyrics focused on creation, the natural world, and secular wisdom; and a third, made up predominantly of riddles, and also including short hymns and poems:

Contents of the Exeter Book, *c.* 970-990	Contents of Cambridge Gg 5.35, *c*. 1050
Donation records etc., bound in later (1r-7v)	
Christ I (8v ff)	Juvencus
Christ II (14r ff.)	Sedulius
Christ III (20 v ff.)	Arator
Guthlac A (32v ff.)	Tiro
Guthlac B (44v ff.)	Prudentius, *Psychomachia*
Azarias (53r ff)	
The Phoenix (55 v ff)	Lactantius, *Phoenix*
Juliana (65v ff)	Boethius, *Consolation*
The Wanderer (76v ff)	Hrabanus Maurus, various
The Gifts of Men (78r ff)	Aldhelm, *De Virginitate*
Precepts (80r ff)	Milo, *De Laude Pucitie vel Sobrietas*

The Seafarer (81v ff)	Versus de XII Lapidibus Pretiosis
Vainglory (83r ff)	Alphabetical hymn on All Saints
Widsith (84fv ff)	Abbo of St Germain
The Fortunes of Men (87r ff)	Hymns
Maxims I (88v ff)	Hugbald
-- ? (90r ff)	Nightingale Poem
The Wonders of Creation (92v ff)	Verses on Creation
The Rhyming Poem (94r ff)	Eusebius, *Enigmata*
The Panther (95v ff)	Tatwine, *Enigmata*
The Whale (96v ff)	Alcuin, *Dogmata*...
The Partridge (97v ff)	Boniface, *Aenigmata* et al
Soul and Body II (98r ff)	Hymn
Deor (100r ff)	Epitaph on Alcuin
Wulf and Eadwacer (100v-101r)	Symphosius, *Enigmata*
Riddles 1-59 (101r-115r)	Aldhelm, *Enigmata*
The Wife's Lament (115r-115v)	Cato, *Epistula*, *Disticha*
The Judgment Day I (115v-117v)	Columban, *De Bonis Moribus Observandis*
Resignation (117v-119v)	Bede, *De Die Judicii*
The Descent into Hell (119v-121v)	Riddles
Alms-Giving (121v-122r)	Oswald
Pharaoh (122r)	Hymn
The Lord's Prayer I (122r)	'Rubisca'
Homiletic Fragment II (122r-122v)	Abecedarius
Riddle 30b (122v)	Greek alphabet
Riddle 60 (122v-123r)	Greek prayers
The Husband's Message (123r-123v)	Metrical versions of the Pater noster
The Ruin (123v-124v)	Liturgical prayers in Greek
Riddles 61-95 (124r-130v)	Verses on the Creed
	Medical riddle
	Medical expressions in verse
	Verses on the 'Te Deum'
	Bibliotheca magnifica (riddles on school subjects)
The *Cambridge Songs*	

In the case of the Cambridge Songs manuscript, it has been suggested that the three sections of the manuscript were intended for use in three different levels of language teaching, arranged in reverse order of difficulty, with the first section containing the most advanced poetry (Rigg and Wieland). This suggestion has not found universal acceptance, as the difficulty of the Latin poetry in the manuscript does not decrease so consistently as this hypothesis might imply (Lapidge, Dronke, et al.). Nonetheless, it is easy to imagine that the division of the manuscript

into three groups reflects the divisions within some kind of poetry curriculum, whether those curricular divisions are based on difficulty or on other considerations altogether.

These striking parallels generate a wealth of new interpretive questions about the texts in the Exeter Book: are we invited to read the *Guthlac* poems, or even *The Wanderer*, as a kind of vernacular psychomachia? Is Juliana being treated as a vernacular Boethius, and if so, is it being read as a kind of *consolatio* in late Anglo-Saxon England? Once we recognize the groupings in this manuscript as deliberate, how do they cut against our own conventional groupings of Old English lyric? For instance, what are we to make of the fact that *The Seafarer* is presented alongside wisdom literature, and the *Wife's Lament* among riddles and short lyric poems?

Evocative as these questions are, most of them are beyond the scope of my current study; instead, this chapter begins from the premise that the Exeter Book was copied in an environment where the use of rhetorical theory and the study of classical figures of speech was considered appropriate to the reading of vernacular literature, as Byrhtferth's manual shows. This is particularly so since the arrangement of contents in the Exeter Book may reflect the arrangement of material typical of an English curriculum. In the next section of my argument, I will go on to examine some of the linguistic and interpretive problems of a particularly challenging Old English lyric poem, *The Seafarer*, in light of Latin interpretive theory and figures of speech.

The Seafarer and the Forþon Problem

In spite of the popularity of *The Seafarer* within Old English scholarship, the poem's governing logic remains unclear, in large part because of the enduring mystery surrounding the poem's use of the compound expression *forþon*. This compound typically has a causative

meaning: it frequently glosses Latin *quia* and *quoniam*, and it is commonly translated as 'therefore', 'for that reason', or 'because'.[23] But the seven instances of the expression in *The Seafarer* (27, 33, 39, 58, 64, 72 and 108) have defied attempts to apply these translations consistently. In many cases, the ideas connected by instances of *forþon* seem to lack any cause-and-effect relationship.[24] Yet the conjunction is used so frequently in the poem that it produces the impression of some kind of poetic design. This impression is one of the reasons that the crux has been the subject of so much critical debate; another is that the instances of *forþon* have prevented critics from reaching any broad consensus regarding the poem's interpretation.

This study will argue that the repetition of *forþon* in *The Seafarer* is designed to evoke the repetition of *forþon* in the vernacular Psalms, where *forþon* clauses are often used to produce anaphora. Scholars have long noted *The Seafarer*'s debt to the Psalter: its themes, content, and imagery all reflect an awareness of the Psalm tradition.[25] As M. J. Toswell has recently observed, *The Seafarer* also echoes many of the formal patterns found in the Psalms of lament, especially the use of antithesis (Toswell, The Anglo-Saxon Psalter 342). In looking to the Psalm tradition for insight into *The Seafarer*'s structural and formal strategies, then, this study builds on a range of previous scholarship demonstrating *The Seafarer*'s stylistic and rhetorical debts to the Psalter and the surrounding commentary tradition.

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[23] This connective may be written either as one word or as two, and it has many variant forms and spellings. 'for-þǣm, for-þon, for-þȳ'. *The Dictionary of Old English online: A-G,* eds. A. Cameron, A. C. Amos, A. diPaolo Healey et al. (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2007), website: http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doe.

[24] 'The rather frequent use of the connective *for þon*, the usual meaning of which in Old English is 'therefore' or 'because,' challenges us to make sense of the sequence of ideas; but although the poem's original audience would presumably have been able to follow it, modern readers find it difficult to see exactly how and why one thing leads to another. It is as a result of this apparent disjointedness that no agreed conception of the poem has been formed.' P. Orton, 'The Form and Structure of *The Seafarer*', *SN* 63 (1991), 37 – 55, at 37-8.

[25] K. Sisam, '*Seafarer*, Lines 97-102', *RES* 21.84 (1945): 316 – 317; A. D. Horgan, "The Structure of *The Seafarer*," *RES* 30.117 (1979), 41 – 49; C. Cucina, *Il Seafarer: La Navigatio Critiana Di Un Poeta Anglosassone* (Rome, 2008); M. J. Toswell, 'Structures of Sorrow: The Lament Psalms in Medieval England', *Laments for the Lost in Medieval Literature*, ed. Jane Tolmie and M. J. Toswell (Turnhout, 2010), 21–44; M. J. Toswell, *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter* (Turnhout, 2014).

In one sense, this approach to the poem assumes that Old English literary culture is radically dependent on Latin literary traditions. In this respect, the use of *forþon* in *The Seafarer* reflects the kind of bilingual intertextuality that is often thought to have been pervasive in Anglo-Saxon England;[26] more narrowly, it reflects the cultivation of Latin *grammatica* within Anglo-Saxon literary culture. As a vernacular poem that relies on an awareness of anaphora, *The Seafarer* can be read as a 'textual hybrid', in the words of Martin Irvine: like many other poems in the Old English corpus, it may be said to 'presuppose a larger network of Latin texts and textuality for [its] articulation and intelligibility' (Irvine 420-21). Like the Latin loan words found in *Aldhelm* and the conclusion to *The Phoenix*, the repetition of *forþon* in *The Seafarer* can be described as 'disclosing, in the surface features of the language, deeper structures of discourse that are ordinarily invisible but everywhere present' (ibid. 424).

At the same time, however, the use of *forþon* in *The Seafarer* demonstrates that Anglo-Saxon poetry could rely on vernacular rhetorical traditions as much as on Latin ones. While *The Seafarer* is steeped in the Latin tradition, this tradition is frequently held at one or more removes: the poet signals his primary debts not to Latin sources—as the *Phoenix* poet does—but to Old English texts. The poem's use of the language of vernacular Christianity is evident in its conclusion, which adapts the language of the Old English prose homily in the form of its closing *uton we* exhortation (117-24). By alluding to Old English texts, the *Seafarer* poet distances his text from the original Latin source of the anaphora that helps to structure his poem—namely, the Latin Psalter—and instead signals a debt to vernacular homilies and vernacular Psalm

[26] 'Many Old English texts presuppose Latin textuality and discourse as a formally constitutive feature, linking English to Latin as gloss to text or commentary to prior, established work. At the intertextual level, most Old English poetry and nearly all of the prose is dialogic, in Bakhtin's sense of the term: the Old English texts set up an interpretive dialogue with prior texts, and their own textuality is formed from an internal dialogue between the discursive systems that make up English and Latin literary discourse. The resulting dialogical hybrid, formed of the literatures of both languages, is a distinctive feature of Old English textuality' (ibid. 422-23).

translations. In doing so, he situates the work within the discursive context of writing in Old English. In the case of *The Seafarer*, then, it is often words and phrases borrowed from a vernacular tradition that disclose the deep structures of discourse.

The poem's use of allegory, on its face profoundly latinate, is also bound up with a vernacular tradition of knowledge: the tradition of Anglo-Saxon vernacular psychology, which Leslie Lockett has described in detail. In patristic readings of the Psalter, especially those of Augustine and Cassiodorus, allegorical interpretation is linked to Latin theories of the self (Toswell 343-344): different levels of the Psalms' textual meaning often reflect different interpretations of the Psalms' first-person speaker (Lockett). Like the use of allegory in patristic commentaries on the Psalms, the use of allegory in *The Seafarer* owes much to a particular understanding of the self. But the model of the self at the center of the poem is not, primarily, the dichotomist model of Augustine; instead, it is a trichotomist model, more consistent with the vernacular tradition. *The Seafarer* demonstrates that the medium of English is more than sufficient even for ambitious allegorical representations of subjectivity.

My discussion of the *forþon* problem begins with the first instances of the expression in the poem, where it produces an apparent contradiction:

Forþon him gelyfeð lyt, se þe ah lifes wyn,
gebiden in burgum, bealosiþa hwon,
wlonc ond wingal, hu ic werig oft
in brimlade bidan sceolde.
Nap nihtscua, norþan sniwde,
hrim hrusan bond, hægl feol on eorþan,

corna caldast. Forþon cnyssað nu

heortan geþohtas þæt ic hean streamas,

sealtyþa gelac sylf cunnige;

monað modes lust mæla gehwylce,

ferð to feran þæt ic feor heonan

elþeodigra eard gesece…[27]

Here the use of the causative *forþon* threatens to derail the poem's logic. The first forþon clause describes, in detail and with conviction, the misery of sea travel; the second expresses a heartfelt desire to set sail. Yet these two seemingly opposite sentiments are connected by a conjunction commonly meaning 'therefore' or 'because.' How can the misery of sea travel offer the poem's speaker a reason to fare forth on his journey?[28]

Some scholars have sought to explain this contradiction by treating it as an expression of the speaker's complex religious motivations. These readings often rely on an influential study of the poem by Dorothy Whitelock, which argued that the speaker of the poem is a pilgrim, a *peregrinus pro amore Dei* (Whitelock 261-72). As Whitelock points out, many pilgrimages during the Anglo-Saxon period were conducted over the sea. The most famous example

[27] 'Indeed [*forþon*], he little believes—he who, proud and wine-flushed, has experienced the pleasure of life in cities, and little of painful journeys—how I often had to remain, weary, on the sea's path. The shadow of night would fall; it would snow from the north; frost would bind the ground; hail, the coldest of grains, would fall on the earth. Therefore [*forþon*] the thoughts of my heart are now pounding [or thoughts are now pounding my heart], that I should test out for myself the deep currents and the tossing of the salt waves; time and again, my mind's [*modes*] desire urges my mind [*ferð*] to fare forth, that I should seek the homeland of strangers far from here.' *The Seafarer* 27-38, in Klinck at 80. Translations of all Old English and Latin texts are mine except where otherwise noted.

[28] Critics have proposed a variety of solutions to the interpretive challenges posed by this problem. Articles dedicated partly or entirely to the problem include W. F. Bolton, 'Connectives in "The Seafarer" and "The Dream of the Rood"', *MP* 57 (1960), 260-2; M. Daunt, 'Some Difficulties of "The Seafarer" Reconsidered', *MLR* 13 (1918), 474–79; and N. Jacobs, 'Syntactical Connection and Logical Disconnection: The Case of "The Seafarer"', *MÆ* 58 (1989), 105-13. Other treatments of the problem are found in Mitchell 2:561 and Klinck 130. Daunt suggests that *forþon* may have an adversative sense, but her proposal has met with disagreement in other quarters: Mitchell and Klinck both note the lack of compelling evidence for such an adversative sense elsewhere. Many scholars treat the occurrence of *forþon* at line 27 as a 'loose connective', in Klinck's words, to be translated by a transitional word such as 'indeed.'

Whitelock offers is likely the three Irishmen mentioned in the 891 annal in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, who came to Alfred's court in a boat that had no steering equipment 'because they wished for the love of God to be on pilgrimage, they cared not where' (ibid. 271). P. L. Henry describes a similar episode, related in the Book of Leinster, in which three Irish monks set off on pilgrimage by casting their oars into the sea and throwing themselves on God's mercy (Henry 33). The ascetic practices of Ireland's monks were associated with a stringent mode of asceticism, characterized by a *mortificationis amor*, a 'love of mortification', in the words of Columbanus' biographer (Abbot 161). Where the Irish made contact with England or the continent, this mode of asceticism may well have stirred Christians outside Ireland to a similar love (Stancliffe 21–46 at 45-6). Such asceticism may well have influenced Anglo-Saxon ideas of pilgrimage: the Anglo-Saxons may have acquired the idea of 'ascetic exile' from the Irish (Orton 213–23 at 215-16).

If the Seafarer's pilgrimage is intended as such an ascetic exile, then the seeming contradiction of line 33b may in fact be a deliberate paradox: the speaker seeks to set sail precisely because sailing is so miserable. Sea travel, for the speaker, offers a heightened experience of physical suffering. If the memory of these sensations is driving the speaker to sea, then his seafaring may also stem from an ascetic desire to mortify the flesh. Richard Marsden suggests that lines 27-33 express the 'crucial paradox' of nautical pilgrimage: 'Seafaring is a wretched business—as the speaker has firmly persuaded us with his own "true story"—and *therefore* (OE *forþon*) he must embrace it all the more' (Marsden 221). In this 'willful desire to embrace the very hardship he has evoked', Marsden suggests, the speaker embraces a 'harshly ascetic' religious outlook (ibid.). According to this reading, the poem's contradictory or

paradoxical use of *forþon* represents the speaker's paradoxical relationship to himself, which is one of extreme asceticism or self-denial.

Valuable as this reading may be, it offers a beginning rather than an end to the poem's interpretive problems: it treats the speaker's suffering as voluntary but does not explain his motivation to suffer. Patristic authors leave no doubt that, for the true ascetic, suffering is not an end in itself but a means to an end. It is part of a process of radical self-transformation, from vanity and internal disorder to transcendence. Cassian makes this point clear in his *Conlationes*:

> finis quidem nostrae professionis ut diximus regnum dei seu regnum caelorum est, destinatio uero, id est scopus, puritas cordis, sine qua ad illum finem inpossibile est quempiam peruenire….Nam quid est aliud non aemulari, non inflari, non inritari, non agere perperam, non quaerere quae sua sunt, non super iniquitate gaudere, non cogitare malum et reliqua, nisi cor perfectum atque mundissimum deo semper offere et intactum a cunctis perturbationibus custodire?[29]

Other sources known in Anglo-Saxon England make similar claims, criticizing the ascetic who makes suffering an end in itself.[30] In his *Pastoral Rule*, for example, Gregory the Great cautions the monk against fetishizing abstinence on the grounds that doing so obstructs spiritual progress: as he writes, 'incassum ergo per abstinentiam corpus atteritur, si inordinatis demissa motibus mens uitiis dissipatur.'[31] This warning is repeated by the Old English translation of the Pastoral Care, which suggests that excessive fasting may produce a *mod* that is *forlæten ond onstyred ond*

[29] 'As we have said, the aim of our profession [i.e., the ascetic life] is the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven. But our destination, our goal, is purity of heart, without which it is impossible for anyone to reach our desired end… Not being envious, not being puffed up, not being provoked, not acting wrongly, not seeking one's own ends, not rejoicing in iniquity, not thinking on evil things, and all the rest: what is this, other than always offering God a perfect and most pure heart, and guarding it to keep it untouched by all emotional disturbances?' (1:iv, 1:vi).

[31] 'In vain is the body worn down by abstinence, if the mind is dissipated by vices and abandoned to disorderly emotions.' Gregory the Great, *Regula pastoralis*, ed. F. Rommel, O.S.B., trans. C. Morel, S.J., 2 vols., Sources Chretiennes 382 (Paris, 1992), II, III.xix.

todæled ungeðafenlice ond unendebyrdlice, 'unrestrained and excited and divided up improperly and in disorder'(Gregory 314). Such internal division and disorder is recognized as a symptom of vanity and excess, as both Gregory and his translator insist that suffering for its own sake is no virtue at all.

The poem's unclear or contradictory *forþon* clauses not only document the speaker's divided motivation, however: they also enable him to transcend it. By describing the speaker's contradictory motivations, the poem represents the conflict inherent in asceticism as a mode of religious experience.[32] The seemingly masochistic impulse that drives the speaker to sea, combined with the contradictory and elusive reasoning of line 33b, initially gives the appearance of a speaker whose mind is *todæled ungeðafenlice ond unendebyrdlice*, 'divided up improperly and in disorder'. Indeed, some readers of the poem have seen the seafarer as an extremist whose outlook has become indistinguishable from masochism: on the basis of the 'logical disconnection' wrought by the poem's *forþon* clauses, Nicholas Jacobs comments that if 'the poem had been composed in the nineteenth century, it would be instantly classifiable as a character study in the incoherence of fanaticism (111).' As the poem unfolds, however, it invites its audience to move beyond such an unsympathetic reading, and to see the speaker's sufferings as part of the process of self-transformation. The poem's *forþon* clauses evoke the syntax of the

[32] Writing about a contemporary community of Orthodox Greek monks, Kurt Bruder observes, 'Those who become members of the monastic community learn to collaborate in creating and sustaining a social order which is specifically organized around the problematization and transcendence of conventional selfing. The social activities in which they participate, even down to their self-talk, are so constructed as to focus attention on, call into question, and ostensibly afford a dramatically altered experience of, their selves. The monastics are literally at war with themselves; they live in a dialogically sustained contest between an old self and a new self (under the supervision of the Transcendent Self).' (K. Bruder, 'Monastic Blessings: Deconstructing And Reconstructing The Self', Symbolic Interaction 21 (1998), 87–116, at 87.) Bruder's observations on monasticism focus on a monastic context very different from that of Anglo-Saxon England, but the questions Bruder poses about the nature of the self under monasticism resonate with *The Seafarer* nonetheless. The Seafarer seems at times to be at war with himself, a war that takes the form of 'a dialogically sustained contest between an old self and a new self', and this contest is 'organized around the problematization and transcendence of conventional *selfing*.'

Psalter and the act of praying the Psalms, the central means of self-transformation available to the early medieval ascetic.

If the use of *forþon* in *The Seafarer* produces a 'lack of evident causal connection'(Jacobs 105), a similar lack of evident causal connection characterizes the use of *forþam* in the vernacular Psalms, where this lack turns out to result from the Psalms' elaborate use of anaphora.[33] The use of *for ðæm* or *forþam* or in the Psalms offers important context for the repetitive use of *forþon* in *The Seafarer*: *forþon*, *forþam*, and *for ðæm* are forms of the same conjunctive or adverbial expression, which has many variants and may be written as either one word or two.[34] The rhetorical device of anaphora was well-known in the Anglo-Saxon period, being included in Bede's well-known rhetorical handbook known as the *De schematibus et tropis*. Bede associated the device with the Psalter in particular, pointing out that '*anaphora in psalmis usitatissima est*.'[35] Byrhtferth thought that anaphora was important enough for clerics to understand that he included an explanation of it in his *Manual*, which was designed for English-language education of relatively unlearned priests (Hart):

> *Anaphora* ys þæt syxte hiw; þæt ys on Lyden gecweden *relatio* uel *repetitio*, 7 on Englisc gelomlicnys, þonne þæt vers onginð on forewerd eallswa þæt oðer, eallswa ys: *Dominus illuminatio mea, et salus mea, quem timebo? Dominus defensor*. 7 swa ys: Vox Domini in virtute; vox Domini in magnificentia. Sume uðwitan hatað þis hiw *epanaphoram*, þæt ys *super relationem*. (*Byrhtferth's Manual* 174)
>
> Anaphora is the sixth figure; it is called in Latin *repetitio*, and in English repetition, when the (first) verse begins in exactly the same way as the second,

[33] A similar borrowing of psalmodic anaphora occurs in the eighteenth-century *Jubilate Agno* of Christopher Smart: '…For I will consider my Cat Jeoffry./For he is the servant of the Living God duly and daily serving him./For at the first glance of the glory of God in the East he worships in his way./For is this done by wreathing his body seven times round with elegant quickness./For then he leaps up to catch the musk, which is the blessing of God upon his prayer./For he rolls upon prank to work it in' (*Christopher Smart: Selected Poems* 105).
[34] 'for-þǣm, for-þon, for-þȳ' (*The Dictionary of Old English Online*).
[35] 'anaphora is used exceedingly frequently in the Psalms' (Bede, 'De schematibus et tropis' II.i.4).

> just as: *Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea, quem timebo? Dominus defensor* (Psalm 24). Another example is: *Vox Domini in uirtute: vox Domini in magnificentia* (Psalm 28). Some scholars call this figure epanaphora, that is *super relationem.* (ibid. 175)

Predictably, the device was replicated in vernacular translations of the Psalms. Old English translations of the Psalms teem with *forþam* and *for ðæm* clauses, and these clauses frequently occur in long series, as I will show below. Sometimes the 'logical disconnection' of these clauses is quite pronounced, as the connection between the clauses seems ambiguous.

In Old English translations of the Psalms, *forþam* and *for ðæm* clauses are used very frequently, often in series. In many cases, the translators introduce these transitional expressions where they have no exact counterpart in the Latin and no obvious semantic function. The prose text of Psalm III.6-9, found on fol.19r of the Paris Psalter (reproduced at the conclusion of the article),[36] offers a compelling example of this seeming overuse of *for ðæm*. This well-known manuscript contains a parallel version of the Psalms, with the Latin in the left-hand column and the Old English in the right-hand column. The Old English text of the manuscript presents the scholar with a lesser version of the *forþon* problem: it contains a startling number of clauses beginning *for ðæm* that appear to show the same 'syntactic connection and logical disconnection' which scholars have long found in *The Seafarer*. In other words, the *for* connectives in the passage do not immediately appear to make sense. The Old English reads,

> Þa ongan ic slapan 7 slep 7 eft aras forðam þe drihten me awehte 7 me upparærde.
> Forðam ic me nu na ondræde þusendu folces þeah hi me utan ymbþringen ac ðu drihten aris 7 gedo me halne forþam þu eart mid god.
> Forðam þu ofsloge ealle þa ðe me wiðerwearde wæron butan gewyrhton 7 þara synfulra mægen þu gebryttest.
> Forðam on ðe ys eall ure hæl 7 ure tohopa and ofer þin folc sy þin bletsuncg.[37]

[36] For a full description of the manuscript, see Toswell, *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter* 99-130.
[37] 'Then I began to sleep, and slept, and again arose, for the Lord woke me and raised me up./For I am not now in any dread of a thousand armies, although they should throng around me without. But you, Lord, arise and make me whole, for you are with God./For you slew all those who were against me without merits [i.e., without cause]; and

At first glance, the translator of this passage seems to use the phrase *for ðam* nonsensically, and the passage is ambiguous as a result. The parallel Latin text is of no assistance because some of these instances of *for ðam* do not correspond to any expression in the parallel Latin text. The vernacular translation supplies *for ðæm* five times in four verses; in three of these five cases, there is no equivalent expression found in the Latin.

In the context of the vernacular Psalter, this use, or overuse, of *for ðam* is not at all unusual, and sometimes the ambiguity of the connective is greater than it is in the passage above. An extreme example is found in the Paris Psalter translation of Psalm 37:16-19:

> For þam ic hopode to þe, Drihten, and cwæð to þe: 'Gehyr ðis, Drihten, and andswara him.'
> For þæm ic symle bæd þæt næfre mine fynd ne gefægen æfter me, þy læs hi mægen sprecan [un]gemetlico word ongean me, gif hy geseon þæt mine fet slidrien.
> For þæm ic eom nu to swingellan gearu, and min sar ys symle beforan me,
> for þæm ic andette Gode min unriht and ic þence ymbe mine synna.[38]

At first the function of *for þam* in Psalm 37 appears to be even less transparent than that in Psalm 3, above. Here, however, the presence of a well-recognized, corresponding device in the Latin makes the function of *for ðæm* in the Old English more clear. In the parallel text of Psalm 37, Latin causatives (*quia* and *quoniam*) proliferate as much as Old English ones.[39] The reuse of words at the beginning of Latin clauses is a familiar rhetorical device, of course: it is simply anaphora.

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you crushed the might of the sinful ones./For in you is all our health and our hope, and over your nation be your blessing' (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 8824, fol. 19r).

[38] 'For I hoped in you, Lord, and said to you, 'Hear this one, Lord, and answer him.'/For I asked continually that my enemies should never rejoice on account of me, lest they might speak [un]fit words toward me if they saw my feet slip./For I am now prepared for blows, and my pain is always before me./For I confess to God my unrighteousness, and I think over my sins' (O'Neill 146-47).

[39] 'quoniam in te Domine speraui dixi tu exaudies Domine Deus meus / quia dixi ne aliquando insultent in me inimici mei et dum commouerentur pedes mei in me magna locuti sunt / quoniam ego ad flagella paratus sum et dolor meus ante me est semper / quoniam iniquitatem meam ego pronuntio et cogitabo pro peccato meo'. *Le Psautier Romain et Les Autres Anciens Psautiers Latins* 82.

The fact that anaphora was recognized by Anglo-Saxon students of the Latin bible, and even considered particularly appropriate to the Psalter, makes the syntax of Psalm III transparent: as in Psalm 37, the use of *for ðæm* in Psalm III is anaphoric. At times, in including such series of *for ðæm* clauses, the translators of the Psalms have merely offered a word-for-word translation of their source text. At other times, they have innovated, adding *for ðæm* connectives to the vernacular even where equivalents are absent from the Latin.[40] In both cases, the effect of these *for ðæm* connectives is much the same. By beginning a series of clauses with instances of *for ðæm*, even where such instances appear to make little local sense, the translator either respects or amplifies the parallelism of the Latin original.[41]

Because the meaning of these apparently causative expressions is actually determined largely by syntactic parallelism, the syntax of the vernacular Psalms is most paratactic and appositive just where it appears to be most hypotactic. The phrase *for ðæm* is generally taken as a subordinating conjunction.[42] Decoding it generally requires only a minimum of context: since the conjunction *for ðæm* simply joins two adjacent clauses, one usually needs only to read the two clauses in question to infer all that can be inferred from any particular instance of this connective. But in the Psalms, *for ðæm* does not operate in this prosaic, hypotactic fashion at all. Instead, it emphasizes the parallelism among clauses in a series. Its semantic function in the text relies on the cumulative impression it produces on the reader, in conjunction with the other instances of the same expression elsewhere in the text. The overuse of *for ðæm* in the Psalter may well be in part a rhetorical decoration: the translators might have felt that such anaphora was

[40] See, for instance, P. O'Neill's description of the addition of these conjunctions in *King Alfred's Old English Prose Translation* (46).
[41] A lengthy discussion of the Latin sources of the vernacular text may be found in O'Neill, *King Alfred's Old English Prose Translation* (31-44). Considerations of space have precluded any detailed treatment of these Latin sources in my discussion above. I do not mean to imply, by this omission, that the Latin text found in the Paris Psalter was the source for the parallel vernacular text: it was not.
[42] 'for-þǣm, for-þon, for-þȳ' (*The Dictionary of Old English Online*).

proper in a vernacular translation of the Psalms because it was a recognized feature of the original Latin text. Nonetheless, these terms also play a structural, semantic role, particularly in the Old English text.

The exact semantic property of this syntactic parallelism is laid out by Bede, almost in passing, in his *De schematibus et tropis*. Bede defines anaphora as follows: 'Anafora, id est, relatio, cum eadem dictio bis saepiusque per principia uersuum repetitur…'[43] In defining anaphora, Bede seems to have found the mere notion of repetition wanting and instead chosen a word that more fully captured the effect of the device. *Relatio*, the word Bede uses, has several meanings in Latin. It may refer to some physical action of return; in this case, it is often translated 'carrying back' or 'bearing back' (*Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources: Fascicule XIV Reg-Sal* 2734–2735). It is also used to identify relationships of grammatical reference. The use of it here suggests that anaphora may have a profoundly recursive quality or a deictic function: that is, much like a pronoun, it may actually 'point backwards' or 'refer backwards' to something quite specific from earlier in the passage. In this way, the repetition of *for ðæm* is employed by the translator to emphasize the relation among these clauses: each *for ðæm* clause implicitly 'bears the reader back' to some previous, parallel clause, and the coherence of the text relies on this pattern of recurring allusions. This use, or overuse, of *for ðæm* is not restricted to the few examples I have offered here; it occurs throughout the vernacular translations of the Psalms, in both prose and verse.

The Seafarer's recurring use of *forþon* to introduce a series of parallel clauses, especially where these clauses appear to be non sequiturs in their immediate context, is very likely a result of the linguistic influence of the Old English Psalms. Of course, as I noted earlier, the use of

[43] 'Anaphora, that is, carrying back (grammatical reference), when the same word is repeated twice or more at the beginning of verses…' (Bede, 'De schematibus et tropis' II.i.6).

forþon in *The Seafarer* is not strictly anaphoric, for the simple reason that the poem's *forþon* clauses are not always successive; especially later in the poem, the forþon clauses are separated by a number of intervening lines. Nonetheless, where the expression is introduced in lines 27-39, it occurs three times at the beginning of clauses, in fairly close succession, introducing a triad of related ideas. This pattern of occurrences resembles the Psalter's anaphoric use of *for ðæm*.

These examples from the Psalter do not only demonstrate that *for ðæm* is associated with anaphoric repetition; they also give us a wealth of additional examples of *for ðæm* used, not as a causal conjunction per se, but as a 'loose' or 'neutral' connective.[44] This connective might be translated into Modern English as 'for', as I have translated Psalm III above, for the purposes of underscoring the anaphoric rhythm of the text. But many of these conjunctions do not operate like hypotactic causal conjunctions: like the 'quia' and 'quoniam' of the Latin Psalter, many instances of *for ðæm* in the vernacular Psalter cannot simply be translated by Modern English 'because' or 'therefore' as they might in prose. Instead, they operate not unlike *forþon* at line 27 of *The Seafarer*: that is, they function as 'rather loose connectives'. They might, with a loss of rhetorical effect but no loss of meaning, be translated 'indeed':

> For þam ic hopode to þe, Drihten, and cwæð to þe: 'Gehyr ðis, Drihten, and andswara him.'
> For þæm ic symle bæd þæt næfre mine fynd ne gefægen æfter me, þy læs hi mægen sprecan [un]gemetlico word ongean me, gif hy geseon þæt mine fet slidrien.
> For þæm ic eom nu to swingellan gearu, and min sar ys symle beforan me,
> for þæm ic andette Gode min unriht and ic þence ymbe mine synna.[45]
>
> For I hoped in you, Lord, and said to you, 'Hear this one, Lord, and answer him.'
> Indeed, I asked continually that my enemies should never rejoice on account of me, lest they might speak [un]fit words toward me if they saw my feet slip.
> Indeed, I am now prepared for blows, and my pain is always before me.
> Indeed, I confess to God my unrighteousness, and I think over my sins.

[44] Mitchell, Old English Syntax, 2.561.
[45] O'Neill, King Alfred's Old English Prose Translation, pp. 146-147.

Reading *The Seafarer* through the lens of the Psalter produces a kind of poetic ambiguity in the connective *forþon*. As I noted earlier, translating *forþon* at line 33b as 'therefore' emphasizes the speaker's war with himself, showing the tension and oppositions inherent in the speaker's mortification of the flesh. But taking *forþon* as a loose connective reveals a level of meaning in the text that has heretofore been overlooked: this reading emphasizes the poem's scheme of pilgrimage as an experience having three levels. As Peter Orton has observed, 'the speaker in *The Seafarer* seems to be tracing a process of graduation from one kind of *peregrinatio* to another' (Henry 220). Lines 27-43 present this process of graduation as if in miniature. These shifts from one 'grade' of pilgrimage to another map onto a series of temporal shifts, from past to present to future.

The Seafarer's representation of pilgrimage as a tripartite experience has analogues elsewhere in the medieval pilgrimage tradition, as Henry and Orton have documented (ibid.). The Middle Irish Life of Columcille similarly identifies three kinds or 'grades' of pilgrimage. The first of these is traveling in body only, a pilgrimage that Orton designates the 'non-religious' pilgrimage; the second is abandoning one's homeland in mind, while remaining there in body, which Orton designates the 'mental' pilgrimage; the third is traveling in both mind and body, which Orton designates 'actual' pilgrimage, and which some Irish sources call 'perfect' (ibid. 219). This formulation draws on a commonplace idea of pilgrimage as a journey that takes place on two axes: one physical, one mental or spiritual. A similar—though not identical—conception of pilgrimage is on display in lines 27-43 of *The Seafarer*, which present three kinds of pilgrimage in sequence: lines 27-33a describe a secular or corporeal mode of pilgrimage; lines 33b-38 describe the experience of mental or imaginative pilgrimage; and lines 39-43 describe the

pilgrimage of the devout, a pilgrimage that, in *The Seafarer*, also foreshadows the soul's spiritual pilgrimage to heaven.

In Irish sources that describe *peregrinatio* as having three grades, the grades of pilgrimage are often listed and numbered explicitly;[46] in *The Seafarer*, however, the three grades of pilgrimage are established only by the poem's initial triad of *forþon* clauses. In the opening clause, the speaker describes an experience of secular, carnal experience of pilgrimage, located in the body and the past:

> *Forþon* him gelyfeð lyt, se þe ah lifes wyn,
> gebiden in burgum, bealosiþa hwon,
> wlonc ond wingal, hu ic werig oft
> in brimlade bidan sceolde.
> Nap nihtscua, norþan sniwde,
> hrim hrusan bond, hægl feol on eorþan,
> corna caldast…[47]

These lines evoke the physical hardships described in the poem's opening section, especially the dark and the cold. The most evocative details of these lines all take the form of brief sense memories narrated in the past tense, with a series of preterite verbs: night fell (nap), it snowed (*sniwde*), frost bound the ground (*bond*), hail fell (*feol*). So forceful is the cumulative effect of these details that the speaker's vivid memory of the past seems to intrude on his discussion of his present experience (lines 27-29a). The speaker underscores these bodily hardships through his description of other people's carnal delights, and by his emphatic contrast of himself with the boozy secularist whom John Vickrey has dubbed the "worldling" (Vickrey 145-56 at 153). If we follow Richard Marsden in reading the poem's theology through the lens of *The City of God*

[46] See, for example, P. L. Henry, *The Early English and Celtic Lyric* (50-51).
[47] 'Indeed [*forþon*] he little believes—he who, proud and wine-flushed, has experienced the pleasure of life in cities, and little of painful journeys—how I often had to remain, weary, on the sea's path. The shadow of night would fall; it would snow from the north; frost would bind the ground; hail, the coldest of grains, would fall on the earth.' (ll. 27-33a)

(Marsden 221), this worldly figure would seem to be an example of the carnally-minded citizen of the earthly city, a natural antitype for the pilgrim.[48]

If lines 27-33a introduce the theme of pilgrimage, the poem's next lines recast the same theme in a new context, describing a kind of pilgrimage that takes place in the present and that engages the mind, the *mod* or *ferð*:

> *Forþon* cnyssað nu
> heortan geþohtas, þæt ic hean streamas,
> sealtyþa gelac sylf cunnige;
> monað modes lust mæla gehwylce
> ferð to feran þæt ic feor heonan
> elþeodigra eard gesece…[49]

Here at line 33b, the speaker's attention returns from past to present. This shift is underscored by the addition of the adverbial *nu*, 'now', and the use of verbs in the present tense, such as *cnyssað* and *monað*. This shift from past to present and from body to *mod* is also a shift from a literal to a metaphorical mode. Lines 27-33a describe a literal *peregrinatio*, but the pilgrimage in lines 33b-38 is figurative. In lines 27-33a, the primary traveler is the body; but in lines 33b-38, the speaker's desire urges the *ferð to feran*, 'mind to set forth.' This second clause shifts the focus from one aspect of the self to another, as the speaker's attention moves away from the implications of pilgrimage for the body, and toward the implications of pilgrimage for the mind.

The third *forþon* clause reframes its central theme by relating it to the will of God, alluding to the ultimate fate of the soul:

> *forþon* nis þæs modwlonc mon ofer eorþan,
> ne his gifena þæs god, ne in geoguþe to þæs hwæt,
> ne in his dædum to þæs deor, ne him his dryhten to þæs hold,

[48] M. A. Claussen, '"Peregrinatio" and "Peregrini" in Augustine's City of God', Traditio 46 (1991), 33–75, at 46-7.
[49] 'Indeed [forþon] the thoughts of my heart are now pounding [or thoughts are now pounding my heart], that I should test out for myself the deep currents and the tossing of the salt waves; time and again, my mind's [modes] desire urges my mind [ferð] to fare forth, that I should seek the homeland of strangers far from here' The Seafarer 33b-38.

þæt he a his sæfore sorge næbbe,
to hwon hine dryhten gedon wille.[50]

The parallels between *The Seafarer* and the Middle Irish Life might lead us to expect a convergence of body and mind in these lines, a 'perfect' or 'actual' pilgrimage, but lines 39-43 do not conform to this expectation. In *The Seafarer*'s third mode of pilgrimage, as in the third mode of pilgrimage offered by the Middle Irish Life of Columcille, seafaring and devotion converge: the seafarer's travels are framed as the will of the *dryhten*, Lord. But *The Seafarer*'s third mode of pilgrimage has an eschatological or anagogical shading that is missing from the Middle Irish schema: the ominous quality of these lines evokes the speaker's anxiety about his ultimate fate. The word *sæfore* here is ambiguous, as the speaker's 'sea passage' is shaded by other more final kinds of 'passing.' These lines shift the focus of the poem to the speaker's ultimate destination in death and the world beyond it. In making the shift from present to future, the poem introduces a second kind of metaphorical or figurative pilgrimage, one superadded to the understanding of metaphorical pilgrimage found in lines 33b-38.

This distinctions between these two different tripartite models of pilgrimage result in part from their differing relations to Augustinian conceptions of the self. The Irish life of Columcille draws distinctions among the three kinds of pilgrimage on the basis of a mind/body distinction. In this, it shows the influence of Augustine, who likewise recognizes these three kinds of pilgrimage (though in a less schematic way): that of those who travel in the mind, those who travel in the body, and those who travel in both body and mind (Ward). Augustine rarely if ever distinguishes between the affective journey of the spirit in the present and the ultimate journey of the soul in the future. Indeed, a firm distinction between soul and spirit would run counter to

[50] 'Indeed [forþon] there is no one on earth so proud-minded, nor so good [i.e., generous] in his gifts, nor so bold in his youth, nor so brave in his deeds, nor his lord so loyal to him, that he never has sorrow of his seafaring, as to what the Lord desires to do with him' (*The Seafarer* 39-43 in Klinck).

Augustine's theory of self, which is essentially dichotomist, distinguishing inner person from outer, soul from body.[51] For Augustine, the kingdom of God is not primarily a future reality or an after-death experience; the pilgrimage of the soul does not take place primarily after death, or in the future, but in the present, as the mind of the devout person reaches toward God.[52]

In its representation of the third kind of pilgrimage, *The Seafarer* departs from this Augustinian model. In the Old English poem, the third pilgrimage is the pilgrimage of death, the final journey of the soul to the kingdom of heaven, which the poem places in some unspecified future time. By presenting the pilgrimage of death as an element in an anaphoric series following mind and body, the poem's rhetoric gives this third kind of pilgrimage equal weight to the pilgrimage of the body and the mind (ibid.). For the seafarer, the kingdom of God—the true end of ascetic practice—is a future rather than a present reality, and his conception of pilgrimage as an ascetic practice reflects his investment in this future kingdom of God. The idea that human experience has some ultimate destination returns repeatedly to the forefront of the speaker's concerns: in 72-80, the speaker envisions himself feasting eternally in the company of heaven, and the poem's conclusion suggests that speaker and audience alike have their true home in 'eternal blessedness', *ecan eadignesse* (120). At the poem's conclusion, this final journey is again compared to pilgrimage:

> Uton we hycgan hwær we ham agen
> ond þonne geþencan hu we þider cumen,
> ond we þonne eac tilien þæt we to moten,
> in þa ecan eadignesse
> þær is lif gelong in lufan dryhtnes,
> hyht in heofonum.[53]

[51] For Augustine's interpretation of the Pauline model of inner and outer body, see Dailey 27-61.
[52] An overview of Augustine's pilgrimage theology is found in Claussen, '"Peregrinatio" and "Peregrini."'
[53] 'Let us consider where we might have a home/and then think how we might reach it,/and then how we might endeavor to [arrive] there,/in that eternal blessedness,/where there is life dependent on the love of the Lord,/hope in the heavens' (*The Seafarer* 117-122a, in Klinck 83).

Just as Augustine's allegorical reading of pilgrimage reflected his dichotomist model of the subject, so *The Seafarer*'s allegorical representation of pilgrimage reflects a trichotomist model of the self. The figurative representation of pilgrimage crafted by the poem is consistent with the familiar vernacular distinctions among parts of the self. An unexpressed distinction between the functions of *mod* and *sawol* may lurk in the speaker's implicit distinction between the mental and the spiritual dimensions of pilgrimage. According to the conventions of Old English vocabulary, the *sawol* is thought to depart from the body at death, while the *mod* is not. Indeed, departing from the body at death is the 'primary purpose' of the *sawol*: 'the *sawol* enters the body at animation, departs at death, and does very little in between; its primary purpose is to represent the individual in the afterworld' (Lockett 35). The soul itself is conspicuously absent at 39-43. Nonetheless, in distinguishing among the corporeal, mental, and spiritual dimensions of pilgrimage, the poem constructs a figurative paradigm for pilgrimage that aligns with the Anglo-Saxon distinctions regarding the functions of body, mind (*mod* or *ferð*) and soul (*sawol*).

The triad of clauses in lines 27-39 present three kinds of pilgrimage in a graduated series, which foreshadows the development of the poem to come:

> *Forþon* him gelyfeð lyt, se þe ah lifes wyn,
> gebiden in burgum, bealosiþa hwon,
> wlonc ond wingal, hu ic werig oft
> in brimlade bidan sceolde.
> Nap nihtscua, norþan sniwde,
> hrim hrusan bond, hægl feol on eorþan,
> corna caldast. Forþon cnyssað nu
> heortan geþohtas, þæt ic hean streamas,
> sealtyþa gelac sylf cunnige;
> monað modes lust mæla gehwylce
> ferð to feran þæt ic feor heonan
> elþeodigra eard gesece;
> forþon nis þæs modwlonc mon ofer eorþan,
> ne his gifena þæs god, ne in geoguþe to þæs hwæt,
> ne in his dædum to þæs deor, ne him his dryhten to þæs hold,
> þæt he a his sæfore sorge næbbe,

to hwon hine dryhten gedon wille. (Klinck)

> Indeed [*forþon*], he little believes—he who, proud and wine-flushed, has experienced the pleasure of life in cities, and little of painful journeys—how I often had to remain, weary, on the sea's path. The shadow of night would fall; it would snow from the north; frost would bind the ground; hail, the coldest of grains, would fall on the earth. Indeed [*forþon*] the thoughts of my heart are now pounding [*or* thoughts are now pounding my heart], that I should test out for myself the deep currents and the tossing of the salt waves; time and again, my mind's [*modes*] desire urges my mind [*ferð*] to fare forth, that I should seek the homeland of strangers far from here. Indeed, there is no one on earth so proud-minded, nor so good [i.e., generous] in his gifts, nor so bold in his youth, nor so brave in his deeds, nor his lord so loyal to him, that he never has sorrow of his seafaring, as to what the Lord desires to do with him.

The protracted parallelism of these lines invite the reader to consider the second and third *forþon* clauses as allegorical glosses on the first. Rather like the understated appositive constructions found in other Old English poems (Robinson), the anaphoric parallelism of *forþon* clauses invites the reader to view pilgrimage as an experience with three levels or layers, whose relationships must be discovered by the reader. The three juxtaposed *forþon* clauses emphasize the innovation of representing pilgrimage as having two modes of figurative significance—as taking place along three axes rather than two. Like many of the poem's other meaningful ambiguities, the repetition of the weak connective *forþon* is thus symptomatic of its 'particular concern with the *sylf*' (Matto 160). Translating as 'for' or 'indeed', as I have done here, emphasizes the self's existence on three planes, past, present, and future. In doing so, it foreshadows the transformation that the rest of the poem performs, as it moves from remembering the miserable past, to reflecting on the inadequate present, to meditating on the glorious future, which will bring the seafarer to the kingdom of heaven.

The *forþon* paragraph of lines 27-43 is not only a central exposition of the poem's theory of pilgrimage; it is also an aid to interpreting *The Seafarer*'s use of figurative imagery. The three

kinds of pilgrimage in lines 27-43 are not only grades of experience: they are also levels of interpretive meaning. These levels of allegorical meanings are often copresent in the text. The threefold metaphorical scheme that underlies the poem's schematic interpretation of pilgrimage also undergirds the rest of the poem's use of figuration, as the text often associates each grade of pilgrimage—the pilgrimage of body, mind and soul—with one of three levels of textual signification. For the speaker of *The Seafarer*, as for the reader of the Psalms, varieties of allegorical meaning correspond to varieties of subjective experience.

A paricularly revealing example of this allegorical imagery is that of the *anfloga* in lines 58-66a, the poem's climactic passage:

> Forþon nu min hyge hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan,
> min modsefa mid mereflode,
> ofer hwæles eþel hweorfeð wide,
> eorþan sceatas; cymeð eft to me
> gifre ond grædig, gielleð anfloga,
> hweteð on wælweg hreþer unwearnum
> ofer holma gelagu; forþon me hatran sind
> dryhtnes dreamas þonne þis deade lif,
> læne on londe.[54]

This famously ambiguous passage evokes three readings simultaneously, each reflecting a different experience of pilgrimage: the travel of the body, the travel of the mind, and the travel of the soul after death. If the *anfloga* is instantly recognizable as an ordinary seabird, it is also at once mind crossing the waters and soul hurtling toward the afterlife.

The sustained ambiguity of this passage has often been treated as a problem to be solved, rather than an instance of allegorical wordplay. The larger interpretive disagreements about the

[54] 'Now, indeed [*forþon*], my thought wheels across the confines of my breast; my mind's thought wheels widely with the sea-flood over the whale's home, over the regions of earth, and comes back to me avid and covetous; the lone flier cries out, urges the spirit [or 'the spirit urges'] irresistibly along the *wælweg*, over the waters of oceans; indeed [*forþon*], for me the pleasures of the Lord are warmer than this dead life, this ephemeral life on land…' (58-66a).

literal and figural import of this passage have often arisen from local editorial questions—how to translate *anfloga*; whether to emend *wælweg*; how to construe *hweteð*. The disagreements surrounding this passage depend in part on the ambiguity of the word *anfloga*, usually translated as 'lone flier' or 'solitary flier'.[55] The word denotes someone or something on a solitary flight; more than that, however, it implicitly characterizes this flight as a form of solitude or loneliness, perhaps even exile. The second difficulty is the compound *wælweg*. *Wæl* in Old English most commonly means 'carnage, slaughter', but may also mean 'deep pool' (Bosworth 1152); accordingly, some critics retain the manuscript reading, translating the compound as 'way to the abode of the dead' (Smithers 22), 'way of slaughter,' 'ocean-way' (Stanley 58), or 'deadly sea' (Horgan 46). However, the word is more commonly emended to the well-known formula *hwælweg*, 'the whale's path' (Klinck 139). The poem's translators have varied widely in their approach: in his discussion of this crux, Charles Wallace offers a catalog of no fewer than thirty-seven translations of lines 62b-64a, many of them remarkably different from one another (Wallace 180-83).

Some critics have taken these lines to be resolutely literal, documenting the speaker's memory of his voyages; others have persuasively read these lines as a reference to the speaker's mind—his *mod* or *ferð*—so that the passage as a whole may be read as an 'especially vivid and concrete expression of the Seafarer's desire to go to Sea' (Klinck 138). Ida Gordon argues against a metaphorical reading of the *anfloga*: she suggests that its cry is the cry of the cuckoo, which recalls the speaker's attention to his surroundings (*The Seafarer* 41-42). In this, she is followed by Peter Orton and Dorothy Whitelock.[56] Conversely, Peter Clemoes has pointed out key similarities between these lines and a passage of Alcuin's *De anima ratione liber*, suggesting

[55] See 'an-floga' in *The Dictionary of Old English Online*.
[56] See Orton, '*The Seafarer* 58-64a' 450, though the whole article is largely devoted to this problem; see also Sweet and Whitelock 278.

that both works draw on the *topos* of the *mens absentia cogitans*. Based on this comparison, Clemoes translates lines 58-64 as follows:

> Now my mind roams beyond the breast that confines it, my spirit roams widely with the ocean flood across the domain of the whale, across the surface of the earth; the solitary flier [*anfloga*] returns to me filled with eagerness and desire, calls, urges my heart irresistibly on to the whale's path across the expanse of ocean…(Clemoes 64)

In his commentary on this passage, Clemoes makes clear that he takes the *anfloga* as a reference to the speaker's mind, mentioned in line 58.[57] This reading underscores the role of thought in Christian pilgrimage, representing pilgrimage as an interior journey as much as an exterior one.

A third group of scholars read this passage as an description of the journey of the *sawol* along the path of death, taking the compound *wælweg* to mean 'path of destruction'. G. V. Smithers and Vivian Salmon both treat these lines as a straightforward allusion to the journey of the soul to the afterworld. A. D. Horgan's treatment of the passage takes a somewhat similar approach, focusing on the sea's dangers and the imminent destruction of the world:

> Here's why my soul is ranging now beyond my breast,
> My spirit with the torrent of the sea

[57] The representation of the mind in travel, which Clemoes finds in both Alcuin's *De anima ratione liber* and *The Seafarer*, is also a commonplace of Augustine's writings on pilgrimage. Augustine often describes the contemplative dimension of pilgrimage in terms of the Pauline trope of 'peregrinating from one's body', an image that derives from 2 Corinthians 5, which he quotes almost one hundred times (Claussen, '"Peregrinatio" and "Peregrini"' 62): 'Audentes igitur semper, scientes quoniam dum sumus in corpore, peregrinamur a Domino: (per fidem enim ambulamus, et non per speciem) audemus autem, et bonam voluntatem habemus magis peregrinari a corpore, et praesentes esse ad Dominum.' The notion of *peregrinating from our bodies* finds its way into Augustine's *Enarrationes in psalmos*, where, explicating a different verse from the same chapter (2 Cor. 5:13), Augustine explains that true *peregrinatio* is comparable to Paul's contemplation. Appealing to the Pauline claim *Sive enim mente excessimus deo* (If we go out of our mind, it is for God), Augustine compares the physical act of pilgrimage, or *peregrinatio*, to the act of Christian contemplation. By going forth from his mind, Augustine writes, Paul went forth to God, and in the process exemplified the ideal of spiritual 'ascent': '*Sive enim mente excessimus deo*. [2 Cor. 5.13] Iam quod mente excesserat, deo excesserat. Excedens enim mente omnem humanam fragilitatem, omnem saeculi temporalitatem, omnia quaecumque nascendo et occidendo vanescunt transeuntia haec, habitabat corde in quadam ineffabili contemplatione' (Augustine 40-41).

> Is soaring far and wide across the whale's domain,
> Over the face of earth, and then returns to me
> Unsatisfied and hungering, why the lone flyer [*anfloga*]
> Urges my soul resistlessly upon destruction's
> Path, across the expanse of waters (Horgan 44)

In Horgan's translation, as in Gordon's, the *anfloga* of line 62b is a cuckoo, but in Horgan's reading the cuckoo's presence is considerably more foreboding: here the bird urges the soul upon the path of destruction, or death, and toward the life to come. The backdrop to this ominous interpretation is the world's impending doom. As Horgan suggests, the phrase *world onetteð* (line 49) possesses a 'calculated ambiguity': it may mean either 'the world bestirs itself' or 'the world hastens on (toward the end)' (ibid. 47). He proposes that the ambiguity of this phrase inflects the lines that follow, so that they may be taken either as literal, referring to the physical spring surrounding the speaker, or as 'eschatological', in his words.

The use of allegory of *The Seafarer* challenges the reader to identify multiple levels of meanings in the text—meanings that may be mutually inconsistent, even paradoxical, without being mutually exclusive. As Sarah Novacich observes in her study of the Old English *Exodus*, the mass of interpretations produced by allegorical reading are often 'divergent, multi-vocal, even sometimes contradictory' (Novacich 57). But the divergence and contradiction of allegorical interpretations is something for the exegete to embrace, not to resist, as Augustine points out in his *Confessiones*:

> Ita cum alius dixerit: "Hoc sensit, quod ego," et alius: "Immo illud, quod ego," religiosius me arbitror dicere: Cur non utrumque potius, si utrumque uerum est? Et si quid tertium et si quid quartum et si quid omnino aliud uerum quispiam in his uerbis uidet, cur non illa omnia uidisse credatur, per quem deus unus sacras litteras uera et diuersa uisuris multorum sensibus temperauit? (12.31.1–7) (ibid.)
>
> So when one person has said "Moses perceived what I [do]," and another "No, what I [do]," I deem it more religious to say "Why not rather say both, if both are true?" And if anyone sees in these words a third truth, and a fourth truth, and another truth altogether, why not believe him to have seen all these things?

The Seafarer's three levels of meaning suggest that the poem may owe a powerful debt to medieval rhetoric and interpretive theory, especially that of Origen. The threefold scheme of allegory in *The Seafarer* resembles the Christian doctrine of biblical allegory in one of its early formulations: the allegorical model of Origen, a Greek author who was known to the Anglo-Saxons largely through the Latin translations of Rufinus (Lapidge 322). Origen's threefold hermeneutic approach to Scripture, which identified a literal, moral and mystical sense of the biblical text, eventually gave rise to the familiar fourfold scheme of medieval exegesis (Bede, 'De schematibus et tropis' 127-128, 304-307). The presentation of a 'threefold sense' rather than a 'fourfold sense' was particularly common in the Psalm commentaries: Cassiodorus, for instance, says that in his commentary he aims to set out the three meanings of the Psalms: not only the literal but also the moral and the mystical (Cassiodorus Pref.I.35). This scheme resembles the arrangement put forward by the ninth century Old Irish Treatise of the Psalter, which explains: 'The mystical meaning [refers] to Christ, to the earthly and the heavenly Church; the moral meaning to every holy person' (O'Neill, *King Alfred's Prose Translation* 24). The homilies and commentaries of Origen were treasured on the continent throughout the early medieval period: Cassiodorus compiled an important collection of all of Origen's homilies on the Hexateuch, one that was copied and recopied all over the continent throughout the early Middle Ages, and Carolingian authors were fond of citing Origen by name (De Lubac 1:165-168). It is not impossible that some knowledge of these texts reached Anglo-Saxon England from Irish or from continental sources.

Origen's interpretive theories were bound up with his theory of the self: he taught that sacred scripture, like the human subject, is essentially tripartite in nature. His theory of self,

unlike Augustine's, was trichotomist: it recognized a distinction between spirit and soul. In his Homily 5 on Leviticus, Origen writes,

> sanctam scripturam credendum est ex visibilibus constare et invisibilibus, veluti ex corpore quodam, litterae scilicet, quae videtur, et anima sensus, qui intra ipsam deprehenditur, et spiritu secundum id, quod etiam quaedam in se coelestia teneat, ut Apostolus dixit quia: 'exemplari et umbrae deserviunt coelestium'. Quia ergo haec ita se habent, invocantes Deum, qui fecit Scripturae animam et corpus et spiritum, corpus quidem his, qui ante nos fuerunt, animam vero nobis, spiritum autem his, qui 'in futuro haereditatem vitae aeternae consequentur,' per quam perveniant ad regna coelestia, eam nunc, quam diximus legis animam, requiramus, quantum ad praesens interim spectat.[58]

By linking the 'threefold division of man' and the threefold sense of Scripture, Origen make connections between the allegorical senses of Scripture and the three primary aspects of human experience, namely the physical or corporeal, mental or psychical, and spiritual. Because he believes that 'Scripture, like man, has a body, soul, and spirit…, he makes the following descriptive correlations: corporeal sense for history, psychical sense for morality, and spiritual sense for allegory (or anagogy)' (De Lubac 1:142-143).

This pattern of associations is clear, though implicit, in the brief statement of his method included in the Homily 5 on Leviticus, which was known to Bede (Lapidge 322). The historical sense of Scripture is the body of the text, its corporeal sense; it is associated with the body of man and with corporeal experience. Origen points out that this sense, being history, is proper to the past: the 'body [is] for those who have preceded us'. For Origen, the moral sense is the 'soul' of the bible: this sense is associated with the rational mind, with psychical experience, and with the 'now' of Christian living. The anagogical or allegorical sense is the 'spirit' of Scripture: it is

[58] 'We must believe that Holy Scripture consists of things visible and invisible, as if of the body of the letter, which is seen; and the soul of the sense, which is perceived inside it; and then that according the spirit, because it holds even celestial things inside it, as the Apostle said that "they serve as examples and shadows of heavenly things." [Heb 8:5] Therefore, because these things are so, we should now seek that which we have called 'the soul of the law', as much as we observe it at present, while calling on God, who made the soul and body and spirit of Scripture—the body for those who were before us, the soul truly for us, but the spirit for those who will attain the inheritance of eternal life in the future, through which they will come to the heavenly kingdom.' Origen, *Origenes Werke* 6:333-334. See also De Lubac 1:142-143, 366.

for those who 'are destined to possess eternal life in a future age and to arrive at the heavenly truth of the law'. It stands for eschatology and for Christian futurity. The allegorical and anagogical aspects of the fourfold model are not absent from Origen's understanding of biblical interpretation: they are simply folded into a single 'sense', the mystical. This threefold model of the self is not static, but dynamic: it represents the transformative power of Scripture to remake the self. The threefold nature of Scripture is what makes it possible for Scripture to enact the spiritual transformation of the reader. By virtue of the threefold sense, Scripture itself becomes a vehicle for ascesis and personal transformation.[59]

Some knowledge of Origen, direct or indirect, may well lurk beneath the poem's allegorical model of pilgrimage. If so, the poet's knowledge of Origen's model would seem to reflect Origen's understanding of the link between parts of the self and levels of allegorical meaning. Like Origen, *The Seafarer* implicitly treats human experience as taking place along three axes, the corporeal, the psychical and the spiritual, and the parallelism of its *forþon* clauses in lines 27-43 suggests that these three elements of experience are to be understood as parallel. Like Origen, *The Seafarer* implicitly uses a central, tripartite model of self as the basis for a complex threefold system of interpretation. This tendency—to identify three levels of textual meaning, and then to associate each of these levels of meaning with one of the parts of the tripartite self—is the great identifying feature of Origen's hermeneutics. Moreover, like Origen, *The Seafarer* associates the literal sense of its narrative with the past and with the body (the *corpus*); the moral or psychical sense with the present and the mind (the *anima* or *mod*); and the mystical sense with time future, with eschatology and with the soul in its eschatological guise (the *spiritus* or *sawol*). Finally, *The Seafarer* treats these three levels of meaning as phases in a

[59] For Origen, as Karen Jo Torjesen observes, the three senses of Scripture 'correspond to the way Scripture shapes the process of salvation', for 'although there are three stages there is only one movement: from the lower stages to the higher ones' (21).

transformative progression rather than as static features of the text: the poem shifts its focus gradually from corporeal and worldly experience, to moral and psychic experience, to spiritual and eschatological experience. This reading of the poem might lead us to view *The Seafarer* as a text most intelligible to highly educated Anglo-Saxon readers, and profoundly reliant on the Latin tradition.

But the allegorical wordplay of *The Seafarer* is not a merely classicizing or latinizing gesture, nor is it purely derivative: the poem may borrow imagery from Latin sources, but it also transforms the imagery of its source texts in the process of appropriating it, at times obscuring its relationship to its Latin sources in the process. If the use of allegory in *The Seafarer* suggests that the poet may have known Origen's model of allegory, directly or indirectly, it does not suggest that the poem's Old English audience would have needed to know Origen in order to interpret the poem. The poem does not simply cite or borrow from the tradition of allegory to create a system of allegorical meanings that would be intelligible to those readers of Old English who also read Latin: on the contrary, while it may draw inspiration from a Latin tradition, it constructs meaningful ambiguity through the medium of the vernacular. Allegory in *The Seafarer* relies on the ambiguity of words, concepts and wordplay already available in Old English: the figure of the *anfloga*, for instance, relies on punning to construct a vernacular model of interiority.

One such transformation occurs in the poem's description of the *anfloga*'s cries, which alludes to a convention of pilgrimage theology while also inverting and adapting it. According to some readings of lines 58-64—those that, like Peter Clemoes', equate the *anfloga* of line 58 with the *hyge* of line 64— the pilgrim *anfloga gielleð*, 'cries out', while wheeling over the *eorþan sceatas*, 'regions of earth'. Many critics object to metaphorical interpretations of the term on the

grounds that such metaphorical interpretations cannot possibly explain the *anfloga*'s cries. Ida Gordon goes so far as to propose that 'the emphasis on the cries, which could have little or no metaphorical significance, would make such an image almost absurd' (Gordon, *The Seafarer* 41). John C. Pope, who does not identify the *anfloga* with the cuckoo, nonetheless writes that one 'does not normally associated immoderate appetite or the screams of irresistible desire with the rigorously disciplined ascetic' ('Second Thoughts 84-85). Both of these concerns, however, may be answered by a reference to Augustine. The image of crying out from the regions of earth is found in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, which return repeatedly to the idea that the true pilgrim is the one cries out from the regions of earth. Augustine writes of the voice of the pilgrim,

> Illius vox est, qui clamat a finibus terrae in alio loco psalmi dicens: *A finibus terrae ad te clamavi*. Qui nostrum clamat a finibus terrae? Nec ego, nec tu, nec ille, sed a finibus terrae ipsa tota ecclesia, tot hereditas Christi clamat, quia ecclesia hereditas eius, et de ecclesia dictum est: *Postula a me, et dabo tibi gentes hereditatem tuam, et possessionem tuam terminos terrae*.[60]

The image of the *anfloga*, at once broadly universal and resoundingly local, reveals the complexity of the bilingual interplay at work in *The Seafarer*. Paradoxically, if this originally Latin passage offers a possible source for the poem, the cries of the bird-spirit from the regions of the earth are no less Anglo-Saxon as a result. Over the course of its incorporation into *The Seafarer*, the tenor of the conventional image of the *vox clamantis* has been dramatically altered. The cries are associated with the *anfloga*'s return and with the formula *gifre and grædig*, often found in images of destruction[61] and recalling images of gruesomeness largely foreign to

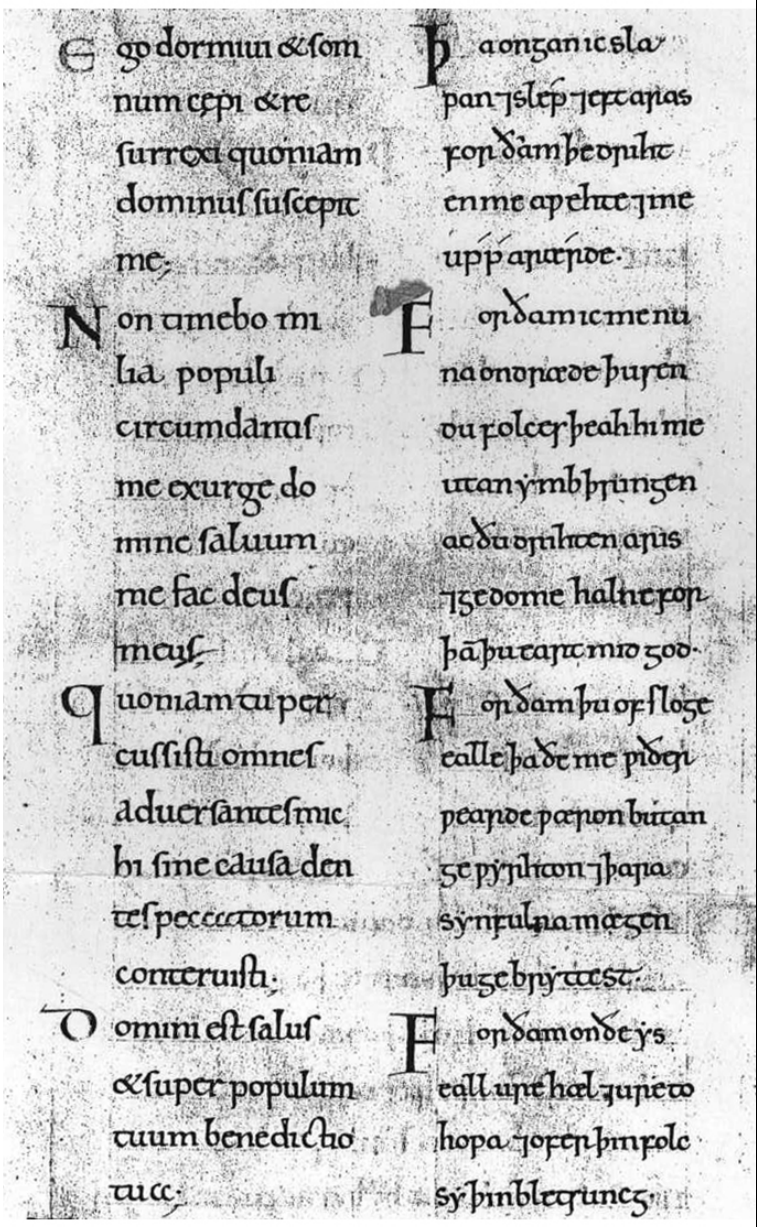
[60] 'This is the voice that cries out from the ends of the earth in another place in the Psalms, saying, From the ends of the earth I have cried to you. [(Ps 60:3(61:2)] Which of us cries from the ends of the earth? Not I, not you, not he, but the whole church itself cries from the ends of the earth, the whole inheritance of Christ cries out, because the church is his inheritance, and it is said of the church: Request of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession (Ps 2:8)' (Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* CXIX.vii).
[61] See 'gīfre,' 'gȳfre,' and 'an-floga' in *The Dictionary of Old English Online*.

Augustine but familiar to Anglo-Saxon eschatology, as the *Soul and Body* poems suggest (*The Old English Soul and Body* 56). Moreover, these cries have been radically localized: if, on one level, this voice crying out from the ends of the earth may symbolize the universal church, on another level, it is simply a feature of the Anglo-Saxon landscape.

The Seafarer's complex symbolism draws on an element of Latin *grammatica*, namely the practice of allegorical reading. But this symbolism is also firmly rooted in a vernacular tradition, as the allegory in these lines relies on Old English wordplay. Here the Old English serves as the medium of allegory itself, as the connotations of the coinage *anfloga* give rises to a multiplicity of meanings and connotations, some of them quite foreign to their Latin source texts. Latin has often been treated as the 'model or reference language for literate culture', while English serves as 'interpreter, glossator, or translator of Latin traditions and genres' (Irvine 420). But the layered complexity of this image cannot be explained as a gloss on an originally Latin allegory; instead, it stages a kind of allegory within the medium of the vernacular.

The poem invites the reader to view the Psalms, not as one of *The Seafarer*'s sources, but as one of its literary analogues. In doing so, the text invites the reader to think through the relationship of Latin and Old English literary culture, not in terms of simple derivation, but in terms of analogy. This invitation puts the language of Old English on par with the language of Latin as a vehicle for religious experience. Implicitly, the poem makes claims for the medium of the vernacular, as well as the model of subjectivity belonging to it, as a vehicle for reflection and contemplation. Through its self-conscious repetition of *forþon* clauses, the poem establishes a parallel between the reading strategy that it elicits from its reader and the strategy that the Psalms invite. By evoking the complex mode of subjectivity implicit in the practice of meditating on the

Psalms, *The Seafarer* uses the Old English Psalms as a backdrop against which to develop a specifically Anglo-Saxon model of Christian subjectivity and asceticism.

Ego dormivi & som num cępi & re surrexi *quoniam* dominus suscepit me.		Þa ongan ic slapan 7 slep 7 eft aras *forðam* þe driht en me awehte 7 me upparærde.
Non timebo mi lia populi circumdantis me exurge do mine saluum me fac deus meus.		*Forðam* ic me nu na ondræde þusen du folces þeah hi me utan ymbþrungen ac ðu drihten aris 7 gedo me halne for þa(m) þu eart mid god.
Quoniam tu per cussisti omnes adversantes mic hi sine causa den tes peccatorum conteruisti.		*Forðam* þu ofsloge ealle þa ðe wiðer wearde wæron butan gewyrhton 7 þara synfulra maegen þu gebryttest.
Domini est salus & super populum tuum benedictio tua.		*Forðam* on ðe ys eall ure hæl 7 ure to hopa 7 ofer þin folc sy þin bletsuncg.

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 8824, fol. 19r.

'All forr ure allre nede': The *Ormulum*, the Long Twelfth Century, and the Development of the Vernacular

I begin my discussion by defining terms and by explaining the claim that makes up its title. Taken at face value, to claim that the vernacular was invented in the twelfth century seems patently absurd. I do not, of course, suggest that people did not speak their own native languages until after the end of the Anglo-Saxon period. What I propose here is that, while scholars like Bede certainly recognized *vernaculars*, the idea of "the vernacular"—Latin's rough-hewn opposite, the "other" of the language of the church—developed a new meaning in the high Middle Ages. Here Meg Worley's discussion of terms is useful:

> Scholars tend to use 'vernacular' as if it referred to a class of languages, but its meaning shifts according to temporal and geographical situation. Clearly, if English can be vernacular in one setting—say, tenth-century Europe—and just the opposite in another setting—twenty-first-century Dominica—vernacularity is not a quality but a relationship. The key to understanding vernacularity is its opposite: the closest (though still imperfect) descriptor we have for the languages that sit in contrast to vernacular is 'standard,' which suggests that the organizing principle of the relationship is the power to standardize. (Worley 19)

Worley observes that few texts epitomize the complex relationships between standardization, education, and power than the strange text known as the Ormulum, to which the second half of my discussion is dedicated.

In referring to "the long twelfth century," I adopt Jan Ziolkowski's use of the term to refer to the span of time between the Great Schism of 1054, which divided the Greek and Latin Church, to the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. This period is the era of the great Gregorian reforms, beginning with Gregory VII (r. 1073-1085), the so-called founding father of the papal monarchy (Bartlett 244). Historians have described this era as a period in which latinity became increasingly central as a marker of the Western Church. As Robert Bartlett observes, "Starting

with the reform movement of the middle and later years of that century, papal power became greater, papal decisions more enforceable, ritual uniformity more real. One consequence was that Latin Christians identified themselves more often and more deeply as such" (Bartlett 241).

The twelfth century has long been recognized as an extraordinarily problematic period for the study of literature in English.[62] One of the challenges of studying this period has been the difficulty of constructing a shared literary context in which to examine works that seem to show no awareness of one another's existence, that do not constitute a corpus in any neat or tidy sense. Another is the difficulty of understanding whether, or for how long, English remained a standard language, and how to understand its use relative to that of French, Latin, and Norse. On the one hand, the choice to write texts in English—particularly poetry or literary texts—it so unusual that it often appears to be deliberately idiosyncratic. Its loss of prestige, relative to both Latin and French, is undeniable. On the other hand, the sheer quantity of twelfth-century manuscripts copied in English reminds scholars that English language texts were a major, if little-understood, part of twelfth-century England's textual culture.

[62] "One particular difficulty is why early Middle English works like the Ormulum and Katherine Group do not show a more substantial debt to Old English prose, and why these texts appear, or choose to appear, 'profound[ly] isolate[ed] from immediate vernacular models and examples, from any local precedent for the writing of English'. Another outstanding question concerns the status and character of the English language in the twelfth century, a question that relates both to its use relative to Latin, French, and even Norse, but also to the variation between different dialects and registers of English. Among the learned bi- and trilingualism must have been relatively common, but such linguistic facility was rare in other sections of society. It is now commonplace to read that to write in English in the twelfth century was deliberately to differentiate oneself, but this ready equation of language choice and identity is questionable. Such statements also seriously underestimate the pragmatic imperative of using English in some contexts, for example preaching. While scholars have posited a range of different audiences for English texts in the twelfth century—including monastic pueri or conversi, members of the lower clergy with little Latin and no French, viri idonei employed to preach vicariously on behalf of cathedral clergy, and secular vowesses, these suggestions necessarily remain speculative and the likely number of readers of English texts is unknown and perhaps // unknowable. The chronological, regional, and stylistic variations between different types of twelfth-century copying practices form a cline from extreme conservativism to partial modernisation; this means that much of the English in twelfth-century copies of earliest texts was archaic, in orthography, inflectional morphology and syntax. Acknowledging this raises a host of questions about how long, how readily, and how widely Old English remained intelligible, and how long late West Saxon retained its prestige as a standard language" (Faulkner 182-183).

In choosing to discuss the fate of English literature during the long twelfth century, I am making a deliberate choice not to frame this period as "post-Conquest," a term that has so dominated our paradigm for late Old English and early Middle English literature. I will consider many of the same problems that scholars of post-Conquest literature in English have long posed, but will do so from the vantage point of church rather than state history. The Gregorian reform movement had profound influences on the structure of the English church in particular, as Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury from 1070-1089, engineered a massive reform of the English church that affected nearly every aspect of the church's culture and operations. Important as this development is, it often remains invisible in discussions of vernacular English literature, which focus instead on on the relationship between English and Anglo-Norman, looking at historical developments from an insular rather than a transnational perspective. By situating the development late eleventh- and twelfth-century writing in English in the context of the Gregorian reforms, I hope to examine it in light of other cultural transformations taking place during the same period throughout Latin Christianity.

The long twelfth century is the era in which translations of the Bible into the vernacular begins to be prohibited—a pattern that, perhaps more than anything else, instantiates the divide between Latin, as standard, sacred language, and "the vernacular," as non-sacred and non-standard. Scholars of biblical translation and vernacular theology have sometimes imagined the papal policies of the long twelfth century as a natural continuation of the policies of the early Middle Ages. In fact, however, the shift toward Latinity in the church in the long twelfth century may be as marked as the shift toward vernacularity in the fourteenth century. Medieval prohibitions of biblical translation are generally local rather than universal. The first papal prohibition against the translation of Scripture is a letter from Gregory VII, dated 2 January,

1080, in which he refuses to allow the publication of the Scriptures in the language of the country. Another is (c. 1199), the *Cum ex iniuncto* of Innocent III, which has sometimes been described as the papal injunction against vernacular translation of the Bible, and which is a seminal document for vernacular preaching in the centuries to follow. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the targets of these prohibitions were both Germanic languages. The early suppression of vernacular translation reflects the suppression of supposedly barbarous and pagan cultural forms, and the opposition of both of these things to the Latinity of the Roman church.

The effect of this shift on England's textual culture can be seen in William of Malmesbury's adaptation of material from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. As I have demonstrated in earlier chapters, Bede's Latin writings were both representative of and influential in the development of Anglo-Saxon England's vernacular literary culture. The reception of his writings in the long twelfth century is thus a natural place to look for signs of new theories of vernacularization, or for friction between the old model of England's vernacular literary culture and the new. Bede is an important figure in the long twelfth century because he is at once unimpeachably English and unimpeachably authoritative. The opening of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta* shows the importance that Latin authors lent Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*:

> The history of the English, from their arrival in Britain to his own times, has been written by Bede, a man of singular learning and modesty, in a clear and captivating style. After him you will not, in my opinion, easily find any person who has attempted to compose in Latin the history of this people.

William's opening not only invokes Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*; it also evokes it, by opening in a more or less similar fashion. Like Bede, he begins by invoking his predecessors and naming his sources. Like Bede, the opening of his work includes a description of the geography of England, and an account of its kingdoms. Like Bede, his opening takes for granted a certain theory of language that undergirds his practice. But his theory of language is quite different from

Bede's. After listing the many inadequate sources from which his work will draw, some in English and some in a Latin that "disgusts" him, William expresses his intention as follows:

> Thus from the time of Bede there is a period of two hundred and twenty-three years left unnoticed in his history; so that the regular series of time, unsupported by a connected relation, halts in the middle. This circumstance has induced me, as well out of love to my country, as respect for the authority of those who have enjoined on me the undertaking, to fill up the chasm, and to season the crude materials with Roman art.

William's description of languages rests on an implicit binary: the dichotomy of civilized *romanitas* and crude barbarian culture.

William of Malmesbury's treatment of the Caedmon narrative reveals the changing status of the English language within the English church. While he mentions Caedmon, he completely dissociates Caedmon from the vernacular: Wearmouth is notable because the bodies of Bishop Trumwine, King Oswiu, and Æfflæd are found there, along with the body of a nameless monk whose gift of song was described by Bede (386, Winterbottom and Thomson, eds). This account does not mention the fact that Caedmon sung in English. Instead, Caedmon's miracles buttress the English church in a different way: the authority of his body, along with Hild's and many others, lends authority to the foundation of Whitby, at a moment when the authority of many English foundations was being threatened and diminished. Although William describes God's "gift of song" to Caedmon, the event he actually describes is the recent discovery of Caedmon's body alongside the bodies of other holy men.

In William of Malmesbury's account, then, Caedmon remains a sign of God's presence with the English, but the terms in which this presence can be read have changed. In Bede's account, Caedmon stands in for the permissibility of England's "barbarous tongue" and native literary tradition within the walls of the monastery; indeed, the gift of sacred poetry in the vernacular is the token of God's presence, not only with Caedmon, but, by extension, with the

whole English church. For William, however, it is not Caedmon's poetry, nor his language, but his body, that testifies to God's presence and bolsters the authority of the native English church. In twelfth century saints' lives, "[t]he body of a patron saint [often] becomes metonymically the 'corporate body' of the community… (Otter, 34)." This observation holds true all the more because the landscape of England itself is largely constituted for William by English saints' bodies and the monastic foundations that they uphold:

> The selection of saints in William's narrative traverses England and constitutes its geography. Northumbria, Kent, Mercia, East Anglia—the space fills with miracle-working bodies and fragments of bodies in which the divine is experience not as a sign or as promise or as longing but as presence (Stein, 'Making History English' 100).

The development of a short-lived cult of Caedmon is not surprising in the environment of the period, as the cultic life of England was being reinvented through the energy of Lanfranc's reforms. Both historiography and hagiography were driven largely by the crisis surrounding the authority of the English church and the pressure it faced to establish its authority in a new environment—both political and ecclesiastical. This crisis was compounded by the fact that familiar typological modes of thinking about English ecclesiastical unity were largely disabled or suspended by the trauma of the Conquest. As Robert Stein observes,

> Early medieval history had been written to demonstrate a providential pattern in the world, however disordered the world seemed to be. Most frequently, methods of biblical typology provided the historian with a means of determining and organizing the historical event; thus Eusebius, to take on e well-known example, sees Constantine as a new Moses and new David. Fulfilling in his imperial person the promise of redemption, Constantine is simultaneously *imperator* and *lux mundi* (412). The historical event is made by God *per signum*, and the historian's task is always to read the world as a book of signs asserting the continuance of the divine presence. In the twelfth century we find a great increase of historical writing, both in Latin and in the vernaculars. Yet the very thing that provokes historical writing at that time—the emergence of a complex secular world obedient to secular imperatives—also disables its own most characteristic means of understanding. One result is that the historian is driven back on his material. … William of Malmesbury, for example, tries to see the Normans as God's new

> Israel while seeing them simultaneously and unavoidably as imperial repressors of English liberty. (ibid. 97-98)

This cognitive dissonance—the clash of typological framework and political reality—haunts William's attempts to imagine England's body politic as a unified whole. Typically, he imagines the unification of England and Normandy as a monstrous body (ibid. 101). At one point, he recounts the story of a pair of conjoined twins, one of whom dies three years before the other, whom many thought to represent England and Normandy (ibid. 102). "The uncorrupted body of the saint…stands over against this form of monstrous integration" (ibid.). Because the dicovery of Caedmon's body lends support to the foundation of Whitby, in terms understandable to England's reforming clerics, it has weightier authority than does the story of Caedmon's barbarian poetry.

To find the English vernacular in William's text, one must look beyond Caedmon to the story of Aldhelm, whom Daniel Paul O'Donnell has put forward as an alternative Caedmon figure. On the basis of William of Malmesbury's text, Aldhelm possesses a "claim as a potential rival to Cædmon for the title of first recorded English vernacular poet." William relates the famous story of Aldhelm, standing on the bridge as if professing song, in order to lure his congregation to church by inserting scriptural teachings among more light-hearded words (O'Donnell 41). This episode does indeed offer many parallels with the Caedmon narrative: in both cases, an early English cleric shows himself proficient both in Latin teaching and in vernacular poetry. But here the parallels more or less end, and the differences become more instructive. The Aldhelm story may be said to reverse or undo the action of the Caedmon story, as much as it reinforces it. Caedmon famously begins his story as an outsider: the heart of the story is his welcoming and inclusion into the monastic community. The same cannot be said of Aldhelm.

William of Malmesbury's representation of English reflects the mutually enforcing dichotomies of Christian/non-Christian and civilized/barbarian discussed earlier. These mutually reinforcing binaries are exploded by the original Caedmon story, which dramatizes the inclusion of England's once pagan literary tradition in English monastic life. For Bede, as for Gregory and Sedulius Scotus, English was a *barbara lingua sonans alleluiatica*: a barbarous tongue resounding with alleluias. The miracle of the English conversion was its synthesis of barbarian tongues with Christian belief. But these linked binaries are clearly visible in William's story of Aldhelm, in which the semibarbarity of the English people accounts directly for their lack of sanctity. In the Caedmon narrative, English moves into the church; in the Aldhelm story, English moves outside the walls of the church and into the countryside. The use of the vernacular is strongly linked with the secular and located outside the church. Being "semibarbarous" is implicitly linked to being "too little interested in divine sermons": the Anglo-Saxons are a *populus eo tempore semibarbarus*, a people who were semibarbarous in Aldhelm's day. It is in this kind of language, and at this historical moment, that English becomes a vernacular in the sense that Meg Worley has defined the term: a non-standard language, the "opposite" of Latin. This sense of opposition underwrites William's treatment of English at many points throughout his text. The reconstruction of England's Anglo-Saxon past as a kind of barbaric Dark Ages has begun.

There does exist one moment in William of Malmesbury's histories when the English vernacular is brought into the church—indeed, into the very heart of the Church, to St Peter's in Rome. Moreover, this moment occurs as the result of a miracle. It takes place after the murder of St Kenelm, a Mercian king whose sister murdered him for the sake of his throne. The fraud, "which had been so secretly committed in England, became known in Rome through divine

intervention" ("fraus, tam celate in Anglia comissa, Romae divinitus innotuit"): the murder was revealed at Rome by a parchment scroll, dropped by a mysterious dove upon the altar of St. Peter's (Winterbottom and Thomson, ed., 262-263). The clerics gathered at St. Peter's were unable to read the divine message, however, because it was written in English. At last, an Englishman who happened to be in Rome came to the assistance of the gathering. Once the message was deciphered, the pope wrote a letter to the kings of England giving them an account of Kenelm's martyrdom. Here, the oral culture of the Caedmon story is supplanted by a documentary culture that is ascribed to divine intervention but that recalls the burgeoning documentary culture of William's own Norman England. One of the biggest obstacles faced for Norman reformers seeking to approve the English saints was the lack of documentary evidence for their miracles: hence, the somewhat desperate recourse to the testing of relics by fire. Much of the historiographical and hagiographical production of the long twelfth century was dedicated to filling gaps in the textual record of the English church, through the creation of missing monastic records, saints' lives, chronicles, and cartularies. This activity had a stabilizing effect on the English church during a period of rapid self re-invention. As Simon Yarrow writes,

> The spiritual patronage offered by Anglo-Saxon saints provided, in the words of a historian of early medieval France, 'a justification for authority, a rationale for power, and an issue around which social support could be mobilized'. It was an enterprise that lent continuity and stability to a phase of history accelerated by the events of 1066. It was an important, if sometimes torrid, exercise in cooperation and conciliation that allowed the English to invent and celebrate a past that featured their spiritual heroes intervening powerfully in society and provided the Normans with the opportunity to consolidate their positions within their new institutions and within wider society (Yarrow 6).

History writing in the period is similarly local, often focused on the interests of particular monastic houses:

> Contrary to what general statements about medieval historiography would lead one to expect, universal history is not a very prominent genre [in the twelfth

> century]—much less so than in the thirteenth century. Nor are the theoretical considerations of theology or general chronology of much concern. While all twelfth-century historians knew Bede's work intimately, and presumably regarded his division of historical eras in De temporum ratione as etched in stone, those considerations seem to be rather remote from their historiographical practice. There is not English equivalent to Otto of Freising, the writer modern scholars most often seem to have in mind when they generalize about medieval 'Geschichtstheologie.' In twelfth-century England, the vast majority of all historiographic activity emerges from the monasteries, and the writers have the interests of their houses at heart, be it material interests or a more spiritual concern with the sanctity and prestige of the monastery. (Otter 2)

In the story of St Kenelm, the gap in the record is filled miraculously, by divine intervention, allowing for the body of the saint to be recovered and the Body of the Church to be unified. Like the Caedmon episode, this story centers on an English text of divine origin, a text that is brought inside the church by means of a miracle. But in the St. Kenelm story, the miracle is brought about, not by the spirit, but by the letter—by writing, which must then be interpreted and translated. In this sense, Bede's reliance on the spirit of biblical narrative has been replaced by William's emphasis on the letter of textual authorities—first, the unreadable letters of the mysterious scroll; second, the letter of the pope to the English church.

The effect of this miraculous English writing is to "make the body of the English nation whole and forever present," in the words of Robert M. Stein:

> In the life of St Kenelm as William tells it, the miraculous English roll was translated into Latin and Latin letters were taken back to England in order for the English to find both a present sign and a means of their own salvation: the body of the saint is simultaneously a sign of life, a vehicle of life, and life itself. In the same way, William looks to Rome and writes a Latin history of the English in order to make English history, which is also to say, to make history English. ('Making History English' 104)

Here, the miracle of English is a means to an end, the authorizing discovery of the body of St. Kenelm. The letter of St. Kenelm is not subject to typological interpretation: its value lies in the letter rather than the spirit of its text. In this respect, it serves to epitomize the burgeoning culture

of twelfth century England, which aimed to establish unity not through typological reasoning but through new bureaucratic structures and procedural uniformity.

The Ormulum

William of Malmesbury's sense of the English as a crude or rough medium for expression is taken up by early Middle English poetry as well. While the very existence of English poetry written in the twelfth century may make claims for the lasting prestige of English, not all English poetry registers the prestige of language in the same way. Indeed, in the case of the Ormulum, it is doubtful that the poet regards English as a prestigious language at all. Like William of Malmesbury's St. Kenelm miracle, the Ormulum is more preoccupied with the letter than with the spirit of English texts. For William, the letter represents English documentary culture; for Orm, the letter stands in for English preaching and catechesis.

Orm's whole literary output is found in a single autograph manuscript of the late twelfth century: it consists of a single work, the *Ormulum*, a poem of some 20,000 lines. The poem is made up of a series of gospel homilies related to the life of Christ and the acts of the Apostles. It has been said that Orm's primary source is the twelfth-century *Glossa Ordinaria*, but he also possesses Bede's Commentary on Luke, as well as the ninth-century Irishman John Scotus Eriugena's commentary on John. Recent work on Orm's sources suggests that he prefers to use his older, insular commentaries when he can; he relies primarily on the *Glossa* only in his commentaries on Matthew and Mark. It has been suggested that he is also aware of at least some of the sermons of Aelfric and Wulfstan. Orm has strong leanings, therefore, toward England's older, pre-Conquest exegetical tradition. By the evidence of the Ormulum itself, at least, there is little sign that Orm had a sophisticated theological education: his influences are backward-

looking, and he does not concern himself with the kinds of theological trends and problems that characterize much twelfth century theology. The most striking aspect of the Ormulum is its language: the Ormulum is most famous as an extremely early attempt at English spelling reform. Orm attempts, with a nearly obsessive degree of care, to represent words the way he intended them to be pronounced. He doubles consonants with starting regularity. So successful was Orm at capturing and fixing a particular method of pronuniciation that the work is still of significant value to linguists, as it preserves an invaluable record of how Orm's early Middle English may have sounded.

Orm's distinction between the spirit and the letter of the text has a particularly Middle English nomenclature: the spirit of a biblical text is *gæstlike*, spiritual, whereas its letter is *stafflike*, literal. The word *stafflike* is derived from the Old English *stæflic*, which means both "literal" and "literate"; in keeping with Orm's tendency to use Scandinavian diction, both words are related to the Iceland *stafligr*, "pertaining to letters." Both words, of course, derive from the word for letter: *staff*, or *stæf*. But the word *staff* does not only mean letter: it may also refer to a wooden staff or a stick. That Orm is aware of this meaning appears in his wordplay: he writes that God *timbred,* "built" or "timbered" a name upon Adam out of four *staffs*, sticks or letters. Like buildings, words are composite structures. This pun does not exist in Latin. For Orm, then, the letter of English is wooden in a sense that the letter of Latin is not. The fact that Orm draws attention to the woodenness of his letters suggests a theory of the vernacular lurking in his practice.

Critical readers of the Ormulum might point out that the the text is wooden in more than one sense: most concretely, Malcolm Parkes has said that the manuscript looks as though it was written with a stick (Worley 19). Nonetheless, Orm's desire to make the lettter of his text

"wooden" in a positive sense—sturdy, regular, firm, unadorned—may explain the ways in which it is wooden in a negative sense. The metaphor of wooden buildings brings to mind William of Malmesbury's description of his project bringing Roman art to bear on the crude materials of English writing, as a metaphor for the act of translating from Latin to English. Only here, Orm's crude materials—the woodenness of English letters—are not subjected to Roman art, at least not in the form of translation. If Orm, like William, finds English materials crude or rough, he is entirely uninterested in transforming or transcending their roughness through art: he is instead preoccupied with making a useful and serviceable medium yet more useful and serviceable.

This preoccupation with usefulness emerges not only from his practice but from his theory as well. Orm's theory of the letter emerges most clearly in his account of the miracle at Cana: Christ's first miracle, performed at a wedding, when he transforms six stone vessels of water into wine at the request of his mother. Conventionally enough, Orm identifies the water with the letter of the text, and the wine with the spirit of the text: in Christ's coming, he transforms water into wine, as the letter of the Old Covenant is transformed into the spirit of the New. Furthermore, Orm explains that each of the six *fetless*, vessels, containing water, represent one of the ages of history. The water stands for historical epoch itself; the wine represents the episodes in Christ's life that were prefigured by each historical epoch. In walking his reader or hearer through the six epochs of Christian history, Orm not only tells familiar Bible stories; he also arranges them into a brief historical curriculum. While this section of the text does not explicitly spell words nor discuss *staffs* or letters, it is preoccupied with the act of reading according to the letter—with *stafflike* reading, as Orm puts it. His discussion shows his views of the limitations of both literacy and literalism. The water of the literal sense, Orm explains, has

its limitations. It does not have the flavor--the *smacc*, or "smack"—of wine. But it is valuable because people need it, and it quenches thirst:

> 7 her iss o þiss boc off þatt
> Stafflike witeȝhunnge
> Þatt all þatt forrme time wass
> Þurrh wi ᵹtess filledd offe,
> Swa summ þe firrste fétless wass
> Brerdfull off waterr filledd;
> 7 her I se summ del off þatt
> Stafflike witeȝunnge,
> 7 icc itt wile shæwenn ȝuw
> All forr ure allre nede. (14455)
> …
> Þa takesst tu, þatt witt tu wel (14476)
> Út off þe forrme time
> Stafflike drinnch, ȝa to þin lif,
> Ȝa to þin sawle baþe,
> Þatt mikell maȝȝ þe geȝȝnenn her
> To winnenn heffness blisse,
> Alls iff þu drunnke waterrdrinnch
> Út t off þe firrste fétless
> Þatt maȝȝ þe slekkenn wel þin þirrst,
> Ȝiff þatt iss þatt te þirrsteþþ.

Much like the letter of the Ormulum itself, the letter of the biblical law is shown to be unimpressive compared to the spirit. The same may be said of Orm's own text, which is so closely preoccupied with the English letters of which it is composed. Like water, it satisfies a need, but has no capacity to delight. Here the *Ormulum* might be said to theorize its own lack of aesthetic appeal: as a text preoccupied with letters, it is more like water than like wine. Its virtue is that it supplies a necessity. In offering his readers or hearers the letter of the law, and suggesting that they might be satisfied with the letter, Orm reminds them that the power of the letter is to slake thirst. The language he uses here is emphatic: the verb *slekkenn* can be used in reference to putting out a fire as well as to extinguish a thirst. For Orm, the letter is like water to the parched.

In a revealing study of the manuscript and the text, Chris Cannon has pointed out that Orm's practice equates the activity of "spelling" in two senses. The Middle English word *spellen* typically means "to tell" or "to preach." One of Orm's innovations is to coin a new verb that denotes the act of spelling in the sense of using letters to form words: "For the first time in English (and for the last time for some centuries) Orm uses a derivation of *espelir* (in the variant form *espeldre*) to coin the word *spelldrenn* when he wants to describe the shape of a particular word" (Cannon, *Grounds* 88). But the usage of these two words through the text demonstrates clearly that Orm views these two terms as related: "What [Orm's] practice knows best of all, in other words, is that the word *spellen* was derived from the word *spell*" (Cannon 89). As Cannon has also observed, Orm's text is richest when it is most concerned with spelling, especially when Orm spells out names from the Bible. Twice in the text, Orm spells out a name in Greek. One of these in the Greek name of Adam; one is the Greek name of Christ. Implicit in the spelling of these two names is the whole project of reform that Orm imagines, from its origin in the mortal condition represented by Adam, to its resolution in the saving work of Christ.

Orm's analysis of the Greek name of Adam is unusually complex and layered, relative to much of his exegesis; perhaps the figure interests him more deeply because it pertains to spelling. He begins by recounting the numerological significance of the spelling of the name in Greek: if you add up the value of all the letters, he explains, you get the number 46. Forty-six is the number of days that it took Christ's body to be formed into shape in Mary's womb; and forty-six is the number of years that it took to build the temple of Jerusalem. (Here his exegesis builds on Christ's famous words, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," which was later said to refer to his physical body.) And because God knew that he would sin, he named Adam after the linguistic and geographic divides that his sin would produce:

7 forr þatt Drihhtin wisste wel
Þatt Adam shollde gilltenn,
7 shollde wurrþenn worrpenn út
Off Paradysess riche
Inntill þiss middellærd, tatt iss
O fowwre daless dæledd,
Forrþi namm Godd, tatt witt tu wel,
Þe firrste stafess alle
Út off þa namess þatt he fand
Uppo þa fowwre daless,
[7 sette uppo þe firrste mann
Hiss name off alle fowwre;
Forr þatt hiss stren all shollde ben
Todrifenn 7 toske33redd,
Inn all þiss middellærd tatt iss
O fowwre daless dæledd.
œstdale off all þiss werelld iss
Anatole 3ehatenn,
7 off þatt name toc Drihhtin
An staff Allfa 3ehatenn,
To timmbrenn till þe firrste mann
Hiss name off stafess fowwre.
Wesstdale off all þiss werelld iss
Dysiss bi name nemmnedd,
7 off þatt name toc Drihhtin
An staff Dellta 3ehatenn,
To timmbrenn till þe firrste mann
Hiss name off stafess fowwre.
Norrþdale off all þiss werelld iss
Arrctoss bi name nemmnedd,
7 off þatt name toc Drihhtin
An staff Allfa 3ehatenn,
To timmbrenn till þe firrste mann
Hiss name off stafess fowwre.
Suþdale off all þiss werelld iss
Mysimmbrión 3ehatenn,
7 off þatt name toc Drihhtin,
Þatt witt tu wel to soþe,
An staff þatt iss 3ehatenn MY
Affterr Gricclandess spæche,
To timmbrenn till þe firrste mann
Hiss name off stafess fowwre.
Her hafe I nu biforenn 3uw
Þa fowwre stafess nemmnedd
Þatt Drihhtin þurrh himm sellfenn toc,
Swa summ icc habbe shæwedd,

Út off þa namess þatt he fand
Uppo þa fowwre daless,
Þatt lukenn all þiss middellærd
Wiþþinnenn þe33re wengess.
Þe firrste staff iss nemmnedd A
Onn ure Latin spæche;
Þatt oþerr staff iss nemmnedd DE;
Þe þridde iss A 3ehatenn;
Þe ferþe staff iss nemmnedd EMM
Onn ure Latin spæche.
7 3iff þatt tu cannst spelldrenn hemm,
Adám þu findesst spelldredd,
Þe name off þallre firrste mann
Þatt shapenn wass off erþe,
Þatt name þatt himm 3ifenn wass
Þurrh Drihhtin, forr to tacnenn,
Þatt all hiss offspring shollde ben
Todrifenn 7 toske33redd
Inn all þiss middellærd tatt iss
O fowwre daless dæledd.
7 forr þatt all Adamess stren
Todrifenn wass 7 ske33redd
Inntill þiss wide middellærd
7 inntill alle landess,
7 e33whær unnderr hæþenndom
7 e33whær unnderr sinness,
7 i þe laþe gastess hannd
7 all inn hise walde,
Forrþi comm Crist to wurrþenn mann
Off Adam 7 off Eve,
Forr þatt he wollde Adamess kinn
Útlesenn fra þe defell,
7 gaddrenn himm an hali3 follc
Off alle kinne lede,
7 turrnenn hemm till Crisstenndom
7 till þe rihhte læfe,
To winnenn þurrh hiss hellpe 7 hald
To brukenn heffness blisse.

Orm uses his spelling to inscribe his listeners into not one, but two, imagined communities. The first is the community of all believers, including Greek Christians as well as Latin Christians, the *hali3 follc/ Off alle kinne lede.* The second is the Latin church, a community

evoked by the phrase *Onn ure Latin spæche*, "in our Latin speech." Given the people whom the Ormulum is ultimately intended to benefit—English listeners who have no Latin—this phrase seems odd. On the one hand, this phrase might be taken as a gesture uniting Orm with his most immediate audience, the cleric who read the text and who was presumably more familiar with Latin than with English. It also suggests a subconscious *us* vs *them* binary that relies on a distinction between Greek Orthodoxy and Latin Christianity—the phrase "our Latin" is implicitly distinguished, not just from Greek, but from "*their* Greek," that is from the Greek of the Orthodox Church. But it also extends a moment of symbolic literacy to a listening audience: in the act of learning to spell one word in Latin, the listener gains access to literacy, however ephemeral. In the process, he or she is implicated in the shared latinity of the Western Church.

These dynamics are extended further in Orm's spelling of the Greek name of Christ, which again relies on numerology (although this time the numerology is drawn from Bede):

> 7 tiss name off þe Laferrd Crist,
> Þatt ȝe nemmnenn Hælennde,
> Iss writenn o Grickisshe boc
> Rihht wiþþ bocstafess sexe;
> 7 itt iss nemmnedd IESOYS
> Affterr Grickisshe spæche;
> 7 iwhillc an bocstaff þatt iss
> Uppo þiss name fundenn
> Tacneþþ an tăle rihht full wel,
> Swa summ icc shall nu shæwenn.
> Þe firrste staff iss nemmnedd I
> 7 tacneþþ tăle off tene;
> Þatt oþerr staff iss nemmnedd E
> 7 tacneþþ tăle off ehhte;
> Þe þridde staff iss nemmnedd S
> 7 tacneþþ twezȝenn hunndredd;
> Þe feorþe staff iss nemmnedd O
> 7 seofenntiȝ bitacneþþ;
> Þe fifte staff iss nemmnedd Y
> 7 tacneþþ fowwerr hunndredd;
> Þe sexte staff iss nemmnedd S
> 7 tacneþþ twezȝenn hunndredd.

7 ȝiff þu þise taless kannst
Inntill an tale sammnenn,
Þu findesst wiss wiþþutenn wen
Rihht ehhte siþe an hunndredd,
7 tærtill ehhte siþess an,
7 ehhte siþess tene. (4302-4335)

While Orm begins with Bede, he takes his exegesis in a different direction. The primarily numerological significance of the name of Christ is—strikingly—not found primarily in Orm's numerological manipulations of Christ's name. Instead, he uses the numbers represented by the name of Christ as a mnemonic for catechesis. Without fanfare, he substitutes 2 for Bede's 200, and 7 for Bede's 70, resulting in the simpler scheme 10-8-2-7-4-2. This scheme furnishes an outline for a remarkably well thought out presentation of a basic pastoral syllabus. The number 10 stands for the 10 Commandments (*þa tene bodewordess*, 4377) which he presents and explains in detail (4375-4535). The number 8 represents 8 forms of resistance to the "hæfedd sinness ehhte," or eight cardinal sins, which Orm identifies as follows:

& sinndenn wæpenn god & strang
Ȝæn hæfedd sinness ehhte,
Ȝæn gluterrnessess laþe lasst,
& ȝæn galnessess hæte,
& ȝæn ȝittsunng & gredi ȝle ȝȝc,
Ȝæn grimmele ȝȝc & braþþe,
Ȝæn unnlusst & forrswundennle ȝȝc,
Ȝæn erþli ȝ kare & serr ȝhe,
Ȝæn rosinng, & ȝæn idell æellp,
Ȝæn modi ȝnessess wæpenn. (4555ff)

The same sins, in the same list, are found in Cassian's *Eight Deadly Sins*; Orm is presenting a proto-version of the seven deadly sins that would become a more standardized element of pastoral literature in the coming decades. His extended commentary on the letter E consists of a mini-sermon on these sins and how to resist them, which runs for over 450 lines (4536-4991). The number 2 represents "the dual precept of charity," the commandment to "love God and thy

neighbor." The number 7 stands for the seven individual requests that make up the Pater Noster, which Orm lists and explains in detail, as well as for the seven beautitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. The number 4 represents the four Evangelists, whose lives and iconography Orm outlines at length. The final number 2 stands for the two kinds of *vitae*, active and contemplative. In short, Orm's commentary on the Greek name of Christ—which is well over two thousand lines long, over a tenth of the poem—consists of a very early version of a pastoral syllabus, of the kind that was to become increasingly standard in England over the course of the thirteenth century, all keyed to a simple mnemonic scheme. Through his association of each of these elements with a set number, Orm manages to fix the contents of this syllabus firmly.

This explicit connection between spelling and catechesis brings to the light the powerful connection in this text between preaching and the project of reform. Orm's text is quite explicit that the process of reform drives his teaching mission. This is especially so when he talks about catechumens, whom he calls by the unusual Scandinavian term "primmse33ness." Early in his work, in his second homily, Orm compares the labor of *spellen*, or preaching, to the labor of turning wheat into bread, with its many steps—threshing the grain, separating wheat from chaff, grinding the grain, and baking the bread. The details of this passage reveal Orm's vision to entail a totalizing social transformation:

> & 3iff þu shæwesst hemm off Godd
> & off hiss æddmodnesse,
> Hu wel he takeþþ a33 wiþþ þa
> Þatt sekenn Godess are,
> & 3iff þu shæwesst hemm whatt læn
> Iss 3arrkedd hemm inn heoffne,
> Ȝiff þatt te33 takenn Crisstenndom
> & Cristess la3hess haldenn,
> & spedesst wiþþ þin spell swa wel
> Þatt te33 itt unnderrfanngenn,
> & turrnenn till þe Crisstenndom
> & till þe rihhte læfe,

& shædenn fra þatt hæþenn follc
Þatt Godd iss all unncweme,
Forr þatt itt iss þatt illke chaff
Þatt helle fir shall bærnenn,
Þa winndwesst tu þin þrosshenn corn,
& fra þe chaff it shædesst,
& gaddresst swa þe clene corn
All fra þe chaff togeddre.
Forr þurrh þatt tatt tu læresst hemm
To ben sammtale & sahhte
To þeowwtenn an Allmahhtiȝ Godd
Wiþþ anfald rihhte læfe,
& aȝȝ to ben ummbenn þatt an
To winnenn eche blisse,
Þurrh þatt tu sammnesst hemm i Godd,
Þu gaddresst corn togeddre.
Annd þurrh þatt tu primmseȝȝnesst
hemm,
& spellesst hemm, & læresst
All to forrwerrpenn modiȝleȝȝc,
& harrd & grammcunnd herrte,
& aȝȝ to follȝhenn soþ meocleȝȝc
Wiþþ luffsumm æddmodnesse,
Þær þurrh þu brekesst wel þin corn,
& grindesst itt & nesshesst.
& þurrh þatt tatt tu fullhtnesst hemm
& unnderr waterr dippesst,
Þu sammnesst all þin mele inn an
& cnedesst itt togeddre,
Swa þatt teȝȝ shulenn alle ben
An bodiȝ & an sawle.
& Jesu Crist himm sellf shall ben
Uppo þatt bodiȝ hæfedd,
To fedenn & to fosstrenn hemm,
To steorenn & to berrȝhenn (1514ff)

This reformation process depends in part on the recognition of *Crisstenndom* and *hæþen follc* as binary categories: here, the wheat and the chaff correspond, respectively, to the believing Christian and the *hæþenn follc*, the pagan people. Through this process, the once *hæþenn* people are symbolically ground into flour, becoming indistinguishable parts of one Church with Christ as its head. Orm uses the word *Crisstenndom*, "Christendom," as an unproblematic equivalent for "Christianity": here the distinction between Christian faith and Christian territory is completely

effaced. The repetition of the word *one* throughout this passage—one voice, one right belief, one body, one soul—reflects the text's preoccupation with transforming its hearers into a uniform body of believers.

Orm's Liberation Philology

In its linkage of teaching and releasing, Orm's text resembles another English text preoccupied with spelling and alphabets, namely the miracle of John of Beverley, found in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. This story of this miracle is told in the Old English version of the *History* as well as in the Latin. When the Old English version was recopied in the twelfth century, largely for the sake of the saints' lives it contained, the John of Beverley miracle was often identified by headings and rubrications for reading even when the Caedmon miracle was not. As Irina Dumitrescu has argued, "Bede crafts John's healing of the mute adolescent and Caedmon's poetic miracle along the same lines to underscore the powerful role of Christian teaching in the empowerment of the English vernacular" (46). Like Aldhelm, and like the anonymous Englishman represented in the Kenelm story, John of Beverley offers a twelfth-century alternative to Caedmon as a representative of English literary culture. The story takes place at the start of Lent, when John of Beverley is brought a mute young man with a scabrous scalp. The Bishop orders the young man to stick out his tongue so that he can make the sign of the cross over it, then slowly teaches the young man to speak (Dumitrescu 42):

> "…7 ðus cwæð: Cweð hwelc hwugu word; cweð nu gee. Ða sona instæpe was se bend onlesed his tungan, 7 he cuæð ðæt he haten waes. Toætecte se biscop 7 hine heht steafa naman cweoðan. Cweð nu á. Cweð he á. Cwæð nu b. Cwæð he ðæt. Mid ðy he ðurh syndrige noman ðeara stafa æfter ðæm biscope cuæð, þa heht he se biscop him syllabas 7 word forecweðan, 7 in eallum he him gerisenlice ondsweorude (Bede, 388 V.ii)

> …and the bishop said, 'Speak some word; now say Yes. Then immediately, on the spot, the band of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke what he was commanded. The bishop increased [his commands] and ordered him to say the names of the letters. 'Now say A.' He said A. 'Now say B.' He said that. When he had spoken the various names of the letters, [repeating] after the bishop, the bishop commanded him to pronounce syllables and words, and in all he returned suitable answers to him.

Thereupon "the young man unleashes a torrent of language, speaking to other people as long as he can stay awake (Dumitrescu 42). Once his tongue has been healed, John of Beverley sends him to a doctor who heals his scalp, allowing him to grow a "full head of curly hair" (ibid.). Here the act of learning to speak is paralleled by the restoration of the body's integrity: the youth becomes "sound in body" as he becomes "fluent in speech." The act of learning his letters has allowed the youth to be incorporated into society, a transformed individual.

The act of learning the alphabet in this account lacks the glamour of Caedmon's divinely inspired verse: its miracle is understated by the standards of the *HE*. Nonetheless, as Irina Dumitrescu has observed, the John of Beverley miracle resembles the Cædmon story in reflecting Bede's "liberation philology." That is, it shows the power of language, to loosen bonds (the *bend*, or bond, of the youth's tongue), just as Christian liturgy loosened the chains of Imma in an earlier episode. In the John of Beverley narrative, language pedagogy is figured as poetic liberation:

> Bede presents the heathen Angles as enslaved and mute, but by the end of his *History* he shows how an English youth can use Latin grammar to acquire the emancipatory power of his own vernacular. In book 5, chapter 2, of the *History*, Bede stages a scene of healing in which language pedagogy is figured as poetic liberation. Most basically, he sees the tongue's // loosening as an escape from the impediments of physical disability and as a figurative deliverance from the bonds of pagan sin. However, it is also liberation from the desolation of being trapped in one's own consciousness, a freeing into communion with other people of a youth who had been, like Henry Park, a lifelong 'emotional alien' and 'stranger' … In his *History*, Bede figures grammatical teaching as a means of redemption both for

> the original trauma of linguistic fragmentation and for the personal suffering of a youth who is, in Isidore's words, *animalis brutis deterior* (ibid. 43).

Orm shares John of Beverley's instinct that the letters of the alphabet themselves, presented in an orderly fashion, can serve as a vehicle for the reform of seemingly intractable problems. Like John of Beverley, Orm sees himself as facing a problem of "muteness" that requires his intervention. While John encounters the problem in a single English individual, however, for Orm the problem is a collective and social one. Orm uses the figure of muteness to represent the kind of pastoral crisis brought about by pastors who do not know enough to teach:

> fele unwreste Prestes
> þat noht ne nimen gom
> to lernen haliȝ lare
> þat wæren hise sandermen
> þurh Gabriel bitacned
> þa ben þeg dumbe till þe folc
> for cunnen þeȝ noht spellen
> 7 swilke wæren alle mast
> þa [….] prestes
> swa swiþe unwise wæren
> þat nissten þeȝ noht what biheld
> þat lac þat ta was offred
> ne all what hem
> Was þurh Profetes cwiddedd
> Ne forþen hu þe lage was
> Gastlike tunderstanden
> Forþi þat þeȝ ne couþen noht
> Of þeȝre lage spellen (Ker 205-222)

This commentary comes in his discussion of the dumbness of the priest Zachariah, father of John the Baptist. In the biblical narrative, the priest Zachariah laughs with disbelief when an angel prophesies to him that his barren wife is going to become pregnant. The angel says to Zachariah,

> Et ecce eris tacens, et non poteris loqui usque in diem quo haec fiant, pro eo quod non credidisti verbis meis, quae implebuntur in tempore suo.
>
> And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day wherein these things shall come to pass, because thou hast not believed my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time. (Douay-Rheims)

This description of the priests as mute resonates with the historical situation in which the Ormulum was likely composed. It is generally taken for granted that the Orm's spelling system—the "Ormography," to use Worley's coinage—was designed to help readers read it aloud in church services. Meg Worley has put forward the persuasive suggestion that the Ormulum was written in such a way as "to guide the pronunciation of non-native speakers reading to a congregation of English-speaking laypeople." As she points out, Malcolm Parkes has placed Orm at the Augustian abbey of Bourne:

> Bourne was founded in 1138 by Augustinians brought to England in the first century after the conquest, and this so-called alien priory was almost certainly a French-speaking community, under the direct authority of an English house but of Saint Nicholas of Arrouaise, in northern France. By Orm's time, the monks of Bourne may have begun to consider themselves English; there are no records to document the nature of the relationship with the mother house in Normandy. But they must have been Anglo-Norman speakers, given both the nature of Anglo-Angevin society and the recent establishment of the priory. Furthermore, the 1164 Constitutions of Clarendon had for the most part closed the priesthood to villeins—a group that included nearly all English speakers. The name 'Orm,' of course, is Norse-English in the extreme, but Orm alludes to his advanced age (meaning that he probably entered the order before Clarendon) and marks himself as different from his fellow canons, particularly in his Englishness, so we are justified as seeing him as an exception to the French rule at Bourne. If that is the case, then who better the solitary Anglophone to teach Francophone priests how best to communicate to their English flock? (Worley 23)

Worley's argument might be extended a step further: the Ormulum may well have served, not only as a script for Anglo-Norman clerics to read from in the pulpit, but as a tool for their acquisition of English as a second language. Modern readers of the text will observe that Orm's repetitive and unchallenging diction makes it easy to learn new words in Middle English—indeed, it is nearly impossible to read the Ormulum without gaining a substantial new vocabulary of early Middle English words. The limited vocabulary and insistent repetitiveness of the Ormulum often aids its reader in language acquisition: it uses words over and over again, at

variable intervals, in ways that continually reinforce the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. As a result, the text itself serves as vocabulary tutor as well as accent coach. It is possible that the Ormulum led a double life: appearing on the surface as a text for the catechizing of the laity, but also allowing for the practical study of English by Norman clerics. The complicated linguistic milieu in which the text was composed thus puts a new spin on Gregory Shepherd's observation that "[t]he whole performance is so beleaguered, in fact, that, as Geoffrey Shepherd put it, Orm seems most like 'a diligent and / ingenious missionary in foreign parts struggling to put Scripture for the first time into a barbarous tongue'" (83-84). The struggle that the Ormulum seems to document may well be real: if so, it is not Orm's struggle, but that of his Anglo-Norman colleagues, who cannot communicate with those they are charged to teach. In this respect, the Ormulum is indeed a struggle to put Scripture into a barbarous tongue: the famously barbarous tongue of English.

In this way, the muteness of Orm's fellow priests can be compared to the muteness of the boy in the John of Beverley story. As Dumitrescu observes, "Bede rigorously constructs his narration of this miracle in a way that resists categorization according to linguistic genre or use, literacy or orality, English or Latin" (Dumitrescu 42). The boy's act of reciting the alphabet suggests a power of language that transcends the linguistic gulf separating English and Latin, through the use of letters common to both languages. In this moment, the letter itself becomes multilingual, Pentecostal: "In this reading, the pan-linguistic, grammatical aspects of John of Beverley's teaching therapy reflect the Pentecostal unity of all tongues and are linked to the evangelizing agenda of Acts. (Dumitrescu, 52)." The same is true of the Anglo-Norman monk who reads the Ormulum: his tongue is loosened by the familiar Latin letters of the Ormulum, enabling him to speak a foreign language. In this respect, the situation of the Ormulum reverses

the situation of the Beverley miracle: it is the English language that is reformed, but it is clerics who are mute, whose tongues are bound by their ignorance of English. The action of reform thus requires reciprocal action: it is the body of the English church that must be reformed, but the tongue of the foreign cleric that must be loosed.

For Orm as for Bede, teaching the dumb to speak is figured as an act of liberation and redemption. Dumitrescu observes that the mute adolescent in the John of Beverley story "embodies not the ultimate origin of language but redemption from a traumatized language" (347), with the trauma being the division of tongues at Babel. The redemption that underlies Orm's narrative is not Babel, however, but the scattering of men over the ends of the earth that took place when Adam was expelled from the garden. The trauma with which is is preoccupied is not the trauma of language but of the trauma of diasporic exile. Accordingly, he imagines the coming of Christ as the gathering up of a Christian diaspora, which was scattered at the moment of Adam's exile. Lurking behind his description of Christ, gathering men from the four corners of the earth at his second coming, lies an awareness of Isaiah 43:5-9:

> Noli timere, quia ego tecum sum; ab oriente adducam semen tuum, et ab occidente congregabo te. Dicam aquiloni: Da; et austro: Noli prohibere; affer filios meos de longinquo, et filias meas ab extremis terrae. Et omnem qui invocat nomen meum, in gloriam meam creavi eum, formavi eum, et feci eum. Educ foras populum caecum, et oculos habentem; surdum, et aures ei sunt. Omnes gentes congregatae sunt simul, et collectae sunt tribus. Quis in vobis annuntiet istud, et quae prima sunt audire nos faciet? Dent testes eorum, justificentur, et audiant et dicant: Vere.
>
> Fear not, for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north: Give up: and to the south: Keep not back: bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. And every one that calleth upon my name, I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, and made him. Bring forth the people that are blind, and have eyes: that are deaf, and have ears. All the nations are assembled together, and the tribes are gathered: who among you can declare this, and shall make us hear the former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, let them be justified, and hear, and say: It is truth.

This passage, like Orm's exegesis, imagines a redemption that undoes trauma through a collective release from captivity. This release is only made possible through the act of teaching:

> All swa birrþ Cristess prest to daȝȝ
> Þatt mann þatt he primmseȝȝneþþ
> Wel tæchenn all hiss Crisstenndom,
> & all hiss rihhte trowwþe,
> & wel himm shæwenn þatt he wass
> Her borenn unnderr sinne (18165)
> & shæwenn himm þatt he shall ben
> U¯tlesedd fra þe defell
> Þurrh fulluhht, ȝiff he¯t wile fon,
> & þurrh þe rihhte læfe…

In the heavily schematic arrangement of its catechetical materials, the Ormulum suggests that the development of the forms of preaching and lay education that we associate with the thirteenth century were already well underway, at least in some parts of England. As Meg Worley writes, "Orm only plays a small part in English literary culture under the Normans, but insular influence is particularly strong in the European homiletic tradition. As James Murphy has noted, the rise of the genre of preaching manuals in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was spurred primarily by Englishmen." As a formal syllabus, Ormulum's exegesis of the Greek name of Christ is remarkably early. It bears more than a passing resemblance to the contents of the Lambeth Constitutions of 1281, which "specified in article 9 (*Ignorantia sacerdotum*) what the content of pastoral teaching was to be in the province of Canterbury and, later, in York as well": namely, "the articles of the faith, the Decalogue, the dual precept of *caritas*, the deeds of mercy, the seven deadly sins and their potency, the chief virtues, the sacraments." (Newhauser 49)

The Ormulum's liberation philology—its aesthetics of reform—reflects England's reforming textual culture. The *Ormulum* epitomizes one of the most intractable problems of this historical period for scholars of English literature: the distinction, if it exists, between English

texts and English literature. As far as we know, textual production in England does not slow in the long twelfth century: on the contrary, "a notable body of texts…survives from this period," including almost nine hundred English prose works produced between *c.* 1100 and *c.* 1200, including "history, hagiography, homilies, debates, wisdom literature, and major religious and philosophical works" (Treharne, "Categorization" 248). In addition to religious and educational materials, there exist chronicles, a small amount of legal writing, and "individualistic productions" among which the poetry must be included (Pulsiano and Treharne). There are over one hundred examples of pre-1100 manuscripts that have been glossed and annotated between 1100 and 1300; moreover, over fifty manuscripts from *c*. 1050 until the early 1200s contain "Old English, or works derived from earlier, pre-Conquest exemplars" (ibid.). Most of this writing has received little, if any, attention to date because it falls outside the boundaries of the literary as we have conventionally understood it.

Of all the Caedmon figures considered in this chapter, the one most suited to the twelfth century may be the anonymous Englishman who happens to be at the court when Kenelm's roll of parchment is dropped at the altar of St. Peter: a little-known but irreplaceable figure, required by circumstance to mediate between papal authority, English documentary history, and contemporary local events. At the altar of Peter in the St. Kenelm story, as in Orm's alien priory of Bourne, it is not the English tongue that is mute but the tongue of the clergy. The muteness of individual Romans in the face of English letters becomes the muteness of a whole Church hierarchy: the Roman papal court is muted by its inability to speak the language of the people it governs, and this muteness becomes a kind of social and pastoral crisis. What steps into the gap in this narrative is an anonymous but invaluable speaker of the demoted vernacular—the anonymous Englishman who happened, fortuitously, to be on the spot, and who mediated

between the Pope and the events and currents of England. In William's account of St. Kenelm, the frustration of Roman attempts to read the scroll reflect a crisis of clerical authority. Just so, the Ormulum's recurring images of muteness and of thirst underscore the acuity of the pastoral and pedagogical crisis that England faced in the long twelfth century. In doing so, they also emphasize the amount of tireless experimentation and re-invention that were needed to surmount it, and which led directly into the thirteenth century flourishing of preaching and lay education, through the collaborative and largely anonymous labor of Norman and English teachers. In this one sense, if only in this sense, the *Ormulum* is a moving document.

'To Hippe Aboute in Engelonde': Langland's Alternative Typology and The Conversion of Anglo-Saxon England

This chapter explores the relationship between vernacular English Christianity and allegorical reading practices in one of the central texts of late medieval English literature, William Langland's Piers Plowman. While Piers Plowman belongs recognizably to the late medieval genre of the dream vision, its structure and atmosphere differ from those of many other late medieval examples of the genre: it presents the reader with a disorienting profusion of visionary modes. In Piers Plowman, theological abstractions mingle with social caricatures and historical figures so as to evoke a variety of dreamlike experiences, ranging from the phantasmagoric to the nightmarish to the revelatory. This profusion of discordant experiences lends the poem an atmosphere of crisis, one uniquely suited to Langland's central aim: to address the social and religious quandaries of late medieval England.

In this chapter, I argue that Langland addresses these quandaries by claiming spiritual authority for the vernacular, which he uses to express his own provocative vision of the ideal English church and its place within world history. Provocatively, the Fifth Vision implies that England's spiritual authority derives from its own miraculous sixth-century conversion to Christianity, not from its affiliations with Rome. The Fifth Vision invokes the spiritual authority derived from Anglo-Saxon England's conversion to rebuke its corrupt and hierarchically-minded fourteenth- century clerics; in doing so, it dramatizes the social and religious crises of late medieval England. At the same time, this Vision sees the emergence of a fully developed system of figural symbolism, the presence of which suggests that the poem has taken on a kind of sacred authority. In creating a specifically English account of sacred history and fusing it with the

appearance of newfound spiritual authority within the text, Langland synthesizes radical English historiography with traditional allegorical hermeneutics, creating a new mode of spiritual authority for the vernacular.

In the chapter that to follow, I demonstrate that the confluence of sacred authority with English church history is made possible by two profoundly interrelated religious practices well-known in late medieval Europe: first, the practice of visionary contemplation; second, its counterpart, the testing of spiritual authority. Langland suggests that the hypocritical clergy of late medieval England are comparable to the "preachers of Antichrist" in Gregory's Moralia: while English religious authorities may be "brilliant with signs and miracles," their authority cannot withstand scrutiny because they do not practice charity. While the Fifth Vision seems marked by the heterogeneity of its concerns— the history of English Christianity, the textual or discursive markers of spiritual authority, and the practical problems of poverty and social justice—it also demonstrates that these seemingly unrelated concerns are ultimately inseparable.

Since the publication of Steven Justice's seminal essay "The Genres of *Piers Plowman*," scholars interested in the formal unity of *Piers Plowman* have sought to understand the formal trajectory of the poem by tracing its evolution through several different modes of discourse. Following the work of James Simpson, many recent scholars have taken the First Vision as representing political discourse; the Second, penitential discourse; the Third, educational discourse; and the Fourth, monastic discourse or *lectio divina*. With the Fifth Vision, however, this discursive trajectory appears to break down. Much of the Fifth Vision is devoted to the encounter of its protagonist, Will, with an allegorical figure called Anima, a mysterious apparition who appears to Will in a dream and speaks without tongue or teeth. Anima's longest speech, and the Passus that surrounds it, has struck at least one critic as fundamentally flawed:

James Simpson writes of it that "it seems…unworked and sometimes turgid," and its organizing principles are not easy to perceive, in part because it intermixes so many different theological topics and critical modes (Simpson 161). The speech is a radically heterogeneous passage even in comparison to its surrounding context: its topical ambitions seem almost limitless. It propounds a theory of world missions; it invokes the spectre of heresy; it alludes to the practices of "making Bibles," of producing or reproducing Scripture. At the same time, this speech sees the return of blistering anticlerical satire, a genre that the poem seemed to have exhausted and abandoned at the end of Passus XIII (ibid. 160-61). This visionary satire is interwoven with Anima's lengthy discussion of apostleship and conversion, a discussion that brings a fragmented and ambitious account of world history to bear on a poem that has previously remained resolutely local. In its intermarriage of satire, history, and saint's life, the discourse of Anima presents the reader with a puzzle of tone and atmosphere.

In this chapter, I argue that the many diverse elements of Anima's speech all work together to represent a late medieval discourse of divine revelation, or *shewyng*. Throughout the Fifth Vision, Anima suggests that divine revelation requries may take two quite different but profoundly related forms. The first of these is the individual vision for the sake of private edification or the cultivation of the soul. This is the tradition of visionary discernment in which the Dreamer participates at the beginning of the Passus, and in which Walter Hilton and Richard Rolle discuss at length in their accounts of visionary experience. The other strand of visionary practice enlists the discourse of visionary discernment in the service of a politicized goal: an overtly historical investigation of clerical and pastoral authority. If the first four visions of *Piers Plowman* trace an evolution through increasingly authoritative modes of discourse, the Fifth Vision uses the paradigm of divine revelation to challenge the very nature of authority itself. In

putting the twin discourses of revelation and visionary discernment to use in the service of clerical reform, Anima is not alone. The logic of revelation was often used to political ends, and especially to police marginal elements of late medieval religious society. Recent work by Wendy Love Anderson has demonstrated how central it was, for instance, to the governance of women's visionary discourse. It was a recurring feature of anti-fraternal satire, and it was deployed rigorously by the church in the persecution of heresies and heretics. While Langland's Anima is determinedly political in his deployment of the tropes of discernment and revelation, he does not use these tropes only to police the margins of late medieval society, as many others do. Instead, he deploys this mode of critique to mount a critique of the most established elements of late medieval English Christianity.

When Anima first appears to Will, Will simultaneously finds himself in the world of thaumaturgy, of wonders and sorcery and miracles:

> Ac after my wakynge it was wonder longe
> Er I koude kyndely knowe what was Dowel.
> And so my wit weex and wanyed til I a fool weere;
> And some lakkede my lif—allowed it fewe—
> And leten me for a lorel and looþ to reuerencen
> Lordes or ladies or any lif ellis—
> As persons in pelure wiþ pendauntȝ of siluer;
> To sergeauntȝ ne to swiche seide noȝt ones,
> 'God loke yow, lordes!'—ne loutede faire,
> That folk helden me a fool; and in þat folie I ravede,
> Til Reson hadde ruþe on me and rokked me aslepe,
> Til I seiȝ, as it sorcerie were, a sotil þyng wiþalle—
> Oon wiþouten tonge and teeþ, tolde me whider I sholde
> And wherof I came and of what kynde. I coniuered hym at þe laste,
> If he were Cristes creature for Cristes loue me to tellen (1-15).

This brief encounter suggests that Will possesses a basic but functional knowledge of the conventions surrounding visionary practice: he knows that visions may be the product of magic

rather than of divine intervention, he knows that he should determine whether this vision is malign or is from God, and he has at his disposal a basic way to make this decision, namely to ask the spirit directly. Anima appears *as it sorcerie were*, as if it were an act of magic, and he makes predictions of the future, telling Will *whider [he] sholde*. Will responds immediately by testing the spirit, as he should: he asks Anima *if he were Cristes creature*. In doing so, he is putting into practice the words of the biblical text 1 John 4, which enjoins believers not to accept all visions as from God, but to test them to see if they confess Christ. As a dreamer, Will has become self-aware: he is clearly familiar with the conventions of visionary discourse.

This kind of testing of revelations was a nearly mandatory feature of late medieval visionary practice. As Kathryn Kerby-Fulton observes, the need for spiritual discernment was a common, even stereotypical, feature of visionary experience in late medieval England: "Langland, Julian, the M. N. translator of Porete's *Mirror*, and all the major Middle English mystics knew such treatises or their key doctrines in some form and exploited their audience's knowledge of them. Even Chaucer knows the 'rules' of *discretio* and applies them seriously in his saint's legends, and elsewhere in parody or semi-parody" (24), The late Middle Ages saw the rise of professional treatises and manuals on *discretio spirituum*, which instructed the reader in how to tell true visions from false. The treatises known in England included Alphonse of Pecha's work on Bridget of Sweden (1373), which was partially translated into Middle English in *The Chastising of God's Children*. Richard Rolle touches on the subject in the *Form of Perfect Living*, and the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* wrote a brief treatise on the subject called *Discrecioun* (Guillet 1260-61). When Anima appears "as it a sorverye were," and Will immediately challenges his *bona fides*, he makes a gesture that is seen also in many late medieval visionary texts.

While the Passus begins with an evocation of *shewyng* as visionary practice, the kinds of *shewyng* that Anima describes are not limited to the direct, unmediated experience of the divine: instead, Langland uses the term *shewyng* in such a way as to exploit its full semantic range. In Middle English, the term *shewyng* may refer to visionary revelation, but it may also refer to less supernatural forms of evidence: it might refer to an ordinary manifestation or exhibition, such as a military display, the production of evidence, the symptoms of disease, and even the commercial display of goods or the duty charged for such displays. These two strands of thought can be exemplified by the two quite different instances of the word *shewyng* in Piers Plowman, one of which refers to the supernatural and spectacular, the other to the natural and mundane. When Will thanks Anima at the opening of Passus XVI, he describes the long speech of Passus XV as a *shewyng*:

> 'Now faire falle yow,' quod I þo, 'for youre faire *shewyng*!
> For Haukyns loue þe Actif Man euere I shal yow louye. (XVI.1-2) (Langland 616)[63]

While the beginning of Passus XV frames the appearance of Anima as a visionary experience, the beginning of Passus XVI identifies Anima's speech as kind of revelation. The other instance of the word *shewynge* in Piers is very different: it occurs in Anima's critique of clerical and fraternal hypocrisy. Anima complains,

> 'Freres and fele oþere maistres þat to þe lewed men prechen,
> Ye moeuen materes vnmesurables to tellen of þe Trinite,
> That oftetymes þe lewed peple of hir bileue doute.
> Bettre bileuen were, by manye doctours, swich techyng,
> And tellen men þe ten comaundementȝ, and touchen þe seuene synnes,
> And of þe braunches þat burioneþ of hem and bryngen men to helle,
> And how þat folk in folies mysspenden hir fyue wittes—
> As wel freres as ooþer folk, foliliche spenen
> In housynge, in haterynge, in to heigh clergie shewynge
> Moore for pompe þan for pure charite—þe peple woot þe soþe! (70-79)[64]

[63] Langland, William. *Piers Plowman: A Parallel-Text Edition of the A, B, C, and Z Versions*. Edited by A.V.C. Schmidt. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Essex: Longman Group, 1995, 616.

Here the *shewyng* is not a mystical vision, but *shewyng* as symptom, the revelation of internal corruption. The term suggests, not divine revelation, but the more mundane revelations that may be effected by human behavior: in behaving ostentatiously, these friars are displaying the fraudulence of their claims to spiritual authority.[65]

For Anima, the discourse of *shewyng* is bound up with contemporary revelations of clerical abuse—abuse which, in Anima's descriptions at least, often takes the form of "overhopping." The apparent disorganization of Anima's speech derives from the speaker's own preoccupation with historical and geographical discontinuity, his anxiety about all forms of "hopping about." In *Piers Plowman* B.15.527-30, Anima complains of contemporary bishops who prefer to "hop about in England" rather than embrace a fixed place of residence:

> …to swiche þat of Surrye bereþ þe name,
> And nauȝ to huppe aboute in Engelond to halwe mennes auteres,
> And crepe in amonges curatours and confessen ageyn þe lawe:
> *Nolite mittere falsem in messem alienam.*[66]

> …such whose name says they're of Syria,
> That they should not hop about England as altar-consecrators,
> Creeping in among curates to hear confessions illegally:
> *Put not thy sickle into another's grain*.

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[64] Ibid, 572-573.

[65] The logic of *shewyng* in this case echoes the logic of the tree that Anima describes, an image that he borrows from John Chrystostom:

Iohannes Crisostomus of clerkes spekeþ and preestes:
Sicut de templo omne bonum progreditur, sic de templo omne malum procedit. Si sacerdocium integrum fuerit, tota floret ecclesia; si autem corruptum fuerit, omnium fides marcida est. Si sacerdocium fuerit in peccatis, totus populus conuertitur ad peccandum. Sicut cum videris arborem pallidam et marcidam, intelligis quod vicium habet in radice, ita cum videris populum indisciplinatum et irreligiosum, sine dubio sacerdocium eius non est sanum.[65] (117-118)

Just as from the temple all good emanates, so from the temple all evil emanates. If the priesthood has been unspotted, the whole church flourishes; if, however, it has been corrupted, everyone's faith is withered. If the priesthood has been involved insin, the whole population is turned toward sinning. Just as when you see a tree faded and withered, you know it has a defect in its root, so when you see a people disciplined and irreligious, without doubt the priesthood is not healthy.

[66] Langland, William. *Piers Plowman: A Parallel-Text Edition of the A, B, C, and Z Versions*. Edited by A.V.C. Schmidt. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Essex: Longman Group, 1995, 604.

In imagining bishops who preside over Syria while living in England, Anima describes a very particular practice, most common in the mid-fourteenth century, of appointing bishops to "imaginary dioceses" in lands under Arab rule (Langland, *C-text* 286). In 1370, for instance, Langland's own diocese of Hereford contained a friar by the name of Robert Worksop who had been appointed Bishop of Prischtina, a region in Albania (Gwynn 7). Offices such as Worksop's bishopric of Prischtina were very literally sinecures: they were bishroprics *sine cura*, "without cure of souls," or without pastoral and liturgical responsibilities. The holders of such offices were often "restless and ambitious friars who sought non-residential bishoprics as a means of escaping from the constraint of religious discipline," in the words of Aubrey Gwynn (ibid. 6).

In the Fifth Vision, the term "overhopping" encompasses a wide range of clerical abuses, neglect of pastoral as well as hermeneutic responsibilities. In Passus XIII. 69-72, for instance, Will uses the word *ouerhuppen* to complain that clerics skip over the biblical verses that would warn their congregations about clerical hypocrisy:

> Ac o word þei ouerhuppen at ech a tyme þat þei preche
> That Poul in his Pistle to al þe peple tolde:
> *Periculum est in falsis fratribus!* (Langland, *Parallel-Text* 516)
>
> But one text they also hop over, every time they preach,
> That Paul in his Epistle to all the people told:
> *There is danger in false friars*!

Similarly, in Passus XV, Anima uses the word "overhopping" to describe an act of lazy devotional reading:

> 'Wherefore I am afered of folk of Holy Kirke, (385)
> Lest þei ouerhuppen, as ooþere doon, in Offices and in Houres.
> (B.15.386-B.15.387) (ibid. 594)
> Therefore I am afraid for folk of Holy Church,
> Lest they should overhop, as others do, in Offices and in Hours.

As Emily Steiner observes, these instances of "ouerhuppen" are part of a larger pattern of clerical negligence that Passus XV is designed to skewer:

> Langland complains earlier in the passus that clergy are not fulfilling their pastoral duties: they are ignorant, abstruse, or corrupt. They 'ouerhuppen' (skip over passages), for example, in 'office and in houres' (line 386). … From Thomas's supposed example, bishops should learn that they should neither 'huppe aboute in Engelond' to sanctify men's altars, nor should they 'crepe [in] amonges curatours, confessen geyn þe lawe] (lines 529-30).

While Anima is perhaps the poem's most vocal critic of this desultory practice of reading, his speech in B.XV.197ff is implicated in the same patterns of overhopping that it criticizes: Anima's speech plays hopscotch with history. Like many speakers in the poem, Anima is in thrall to the very mode of discourse that he condemns. It is in part this tendency to leap around that gives Passus XV its apparently "unworked" quality. Read as pure chronology, the order of events in Anima's speech appears almost arbitrary. Anima's historical sequence begins with Saint Edward the Confessor (d. 1066), the last pre-Conquest King of England and the only King of England to be canonized; then it jumps to Saint Edmund (d. 869), an obscure king of East Anglia about whom little is known, and who is not mentioned in the *Polychronicon* at all. Next Anima's chronology leaps back five hundred years, to the third- and fourth-century desert fathers Anthony and Egidius, and even further back, to the first century of the Christian era. From there it moves forward to Dominic and Francis, grouping these two thirteenth-century saints in with Bernard (d. 1153) and even Benedict (d. 543). It leaps forward to the martyrdom of Saint Thomas of Canterbury (c. 1170), then forward again to the dissolution of the Order of the Knights Templar (c. 1310), then all the way back to Constantine's donation (an event that was thought to have taken place around 315) (ibid.).

The order of events in Anima's historical narrative is not as random as it appears: it reflects the genre in which the narrative is composed, that of the "*Legenda Sanctorum*, the lyf of

holy seyntes" (ibid. 586). Anima's history lacks chronological continuity because, as a legendary, it loosely parallels the liturgical calendar rather than moving inexorably through historical time. In its tendency to *overhuppen*, Anima's version of English history resembles that found in the South English Legendary and other English collections of saints' lives arranged according to the liturgical year. The problems of setting in Anima's long speech are typical of the legendary, which often cheerfully intermixes English legends with exotic ones, blurring geographic boundaries in the process. The *South English Legendary*, for instance, includes a colorful mix of specifically English saints, including Wulfstan, Edmund, Edward, Dunstan, and Cuthbert, with biblical saints and far-flung apostles of the early church, including Mary of Egypt and Saint Christopher the Saracen (Horstmann). As a mode of historiography, the legendary of Passus XV performs the same kinds of omissions that Anima deplores in other contexts: it skips around wildly.

In its tendency to overhop, Anima's speech challenges the legendary's claims to authority even while staging the possibilities of the form. As a genre, the English legendary not only served to instruct lay readers in the Christian practices of piety; it also commemorated heroes of the English nation, rewriting events from England's national history, arranging them along a liturgical rather than a chronological timescale, and thus inscribing them within a narrative of sacred time. Within its life of Wulfstan, or "St. Wolston," for example, at lines 72-84, the South English legendary furnishes an account of the Norman Conquest, one forcefully sympathetic to the English:

> þe weorre was þo in Enguelonde: deolful and strong i-novȝ,
> And eyþur of oþeres Men: al-to grounde y-slouȝ.
> No strencþe ne hadden þis straunge men: þat were i-come so newe,
> Aȝeinest heom of enguelonde: þe ȝwyle huy wolden beo trewe.
> Ake alas þe muchele tricherie: þat þo was, and ȝeot is,
> þat brouȝte þo Enguelond: al-to ground i-wis!

For þe englische barones bi-comen some: on-treowe and false also
To bi-traiȝe heom-seolf and heore kyng: þat so muche heom truste to.
þis Noremauns and þis Englische men: ane dai of bataile huy nome,
þare ase þe Abbeie of þe bataille is: ate daye to-gadere huy come,
To grounde huy smiten and slowen al-s.: ake alas þulke stounde,
þat Enguelond was þoruȝ tresoun: þare i-brouȝt to grounde! (ibid.)

In blending national and sacred history, the legendary resembles the universal history, another narrative genre that has been linked to the Fifth Vision of *Piers Plowman* (Steiner, *Reading Piers Plowman*). Like the universal history, the legendary narrates episodes from sacred history in order to navigate the relationship of the local and the universal, making a place for specifically English events within the larger theatre of world history. Because it overleaps chronological time, however, the liturgical form of the legendary is a troubled and potentially dangerous medium for the revelation that sacred history represents. In this respect, the legendary is quite different from the universal history, which synthesizes natural, biblical, and national history into a single, sweeping chronological account that terminated in England's own historical present. The overleaping of Anima's narrative suggests that, as historiography, the legendary is limited and compromised by its lack of chronological order—by its tendency to overhop.

As if to compensate for its own structural dangers and problems, the narrative of Anima's legendary describes the authorizing modes of divine *shewyng* that brought about England's original conversion. The generic and formal limitations of the legendary require the authorizing force of divine revelation, just as divine revelation is made possible when lazy priests "overhop" parts of the liturgy:

Ac þeiȝ þei ouerhuppe—as I hope noȝt—oure bileue suffiseþ;
Ac clerkes in Corpus Christi feeste syngen and reden
That *sola fides sufficit* to saue wiþ lewed peple—
And so may Sarȝens be saued, scribes and Grekis. (Langland, *Parallel-Text* 594)
But if they overhop—as I hope they don't—our belief suffices;
But clerks in the Feast of Corpus Christi sing and read
That faith alone suffices to save, where unlearned people are concerned—

And so may Saracens be saved, scribes and Greeks. 15 389

Here Anima seems to allude to the heresy of Uthred of Boldon: Uthred taught that all souls, Christian and non-Christian alike, had a vision of divine truth at the moment of their death, and that their salvation depended on their response to this vision, not on their religious practices in life.[67] As Pearsall notes, "Divine revelation in the moment of death is an extreme example of *fides sufficit*" (287). The solution to the problem of overhopping, Anima suggests, is found in mechanism of revelation that faith makes possible. For Anima, revelation is the only possible compensation for overleaping: it is through divine revelation, or *shewyng*, that the gaps produced by overleaping can be closed.

In Anima's account of sacred history, the poem's two modes of revelation—the *shewyng* of everyday behavior and the *shewyng* of contemplative practice—converge. In this account, Anima offers a narrative of England's conversion that is overwhelmingly preoccupied with the work of divine revelation and the proofs of faith: the telltale signs and experiences of the saints, including miracles and martyrdom. Together with the good conduct, humility, and poverty of the saints, their miracles and martyrdoms are offered as a kind of *euidence*, "evidence," a word that occurs for the first time in Passus B.XV.429-441:

> The heuedes of Holy Chirche—and þei holy were—
> Crist calleþ hem salt for Cristenes soules,
> *Et si sal euanuerit, in quo salietur*?
> Ac fressh flessh ouþer fissh, what it salt failleþ,
> It is vnsauory, for soþe, ysoden or ybake;
> So is mannes soule, sooþly, þat seeþ no good ensample
> Of hem of Holy Chirche þat þe heighe wey sholde teche
> And be gide, and go bifore as a good banyer,

[67] In a later revision of these lines in the C-Text, Langland expands on this point, adding,

> For Sarrasynes may be saued so yf they so byleued
> In the lettynge of here lyf to leue on holy churche. (XVII.122-124)
>
> For Saracens may be saved so, if they so believed
> In the letting of their lives to believe in holy church.

And hardie hem þat bihynde ben, and ȝyue hem good euidence.
Elleuene holy men al þe world tornede
Into lele bileue; þe lightloker, me þinkeþ,
Sholde alle maner men, we han so many maistres—
Preestes and prechours, and a pope aboue,
That Goddes salt sholde be, to save mannessoule. (Langland, *Parallel-Text* 598)

The heads of Holy Church, if they were holy,
Christ calls them salt for Christian souls.
And if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?
But fresh flesh or fish, when they lack salt,
Are unsavory, to be sure, whether stewed or baked;
So is man's soul, indeed, that sees no good example
Of those of Holy Church who should teach the high way
And be guides and go before like a good standard-bearer,
And hearten those behind and offer clear examples for them.
Eleven holy men converted all the world
Into the right religion; the more readily, I think,
Should all manner of men be converted, we have so many masters,
Priests and preachers, and a pope on top,
That shouold be God's salt to save man's soul (Norton 263).

Augustine is said to convert the English by *euidence*, "evidence," "more through miracles than by much preaching" (448 ibid. 600). The same might be said of the rest of the saints in Anima's *legenda sanctorum*. The *good euidence* that the apostles offered, and that the saints offer after them, include the ability to elicit miraculous provision even from the wilderness that surrounds them: Egidius has a hind that feeds him, Antony a bird that brings him bread (272-273 ibid. 586). Paul, Peter, and Mary Magdalene (286-295) receive miraculous honor from the animals that surround them in the wilderness (ibid. 586-587). This provision offers a powerful counterexample to the contemporary English clergy in two ways: first, it demonstrates that they were content to rely on divine provision rather than falling prey to the sin of *couetise*; second, it demonstrates that original apostles had enough faith to perform genuine miracles.

In offering a radicalized counternarrative of sacred history and progressive revelation, Anima also offers a radicalized typology: he offers a new account of how the Church represents

Christ figurally. In following *Petrus*, *id est Christus* with a long geneology of apostles and saints, Langland supplants the papacy with a long line of exemplary English martyrs and miracle workers. Through this legendary, which posits a geneology of English miracle-workers as the inheritance of Peter, Langland creates an ecclesiology that substitutes a chain of miracle-workers for the papacy. It suggests that the true Body of Christ is not sustained or ruled by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church, or the pope and his servants, but rather by those who have received apostolic authority. As ecclesiology, this claim evinces the same kind of quietly radical impulse that leads the *Erkenwald* poet to replace the pope with an English cleric who represents, in some sense, by a process of synecdoche, the whole church: Anima reaches back through a radicalized historiography to invest the English church with the authority of miracles. This alternate typology offers a way of locating Christ in English history, and reading English history as a manifestation of Christ.

Langland represents the English church as having roots in the original mission to the English, which was authorized, not merely by papal prerogative, but by the direct and incontrovertible sign of God's favor: the revelation represented by miraculous *euidence*. The miracles of Langland's account of apostolic church history license what would otherwise be an extraordinary omission, namely the total lack of emphasis he places on the office of the Pope. In this respect, Langland follows Higden and Trevisa's characteristic emphasis on events in the English church (Steiner, "Radical Historiography" 172). Unike Higden and Trevisa, however, Langland structures his English history on the liturgical calendar, not on a chronological timeline. In doing so, he renews the claim for English history as liturgical history: that is, as sacred history. The quiet radicalism implicit in his strategy can best be seen in the English saints' lives by which Anima glosses the phrase *Petrus, id est Christus*: "Peter, that is, Christ." This

allusion evokes the moment in the gospels when Christ tells Peter, "You are Peter [*lit.* "rock], and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." As the first Pope, St. Peter stands metonymically for the Church, the body of Christ in the world. Conventionally, Peter's line of descent was traced through the popes and papal history from St. Peter to the present. But Langland's typological expansion of this phrase does not treat the popes as Peter's descendants. Instead, it offers a counternarrative of Christian history, in which Peter's true line of descendants are seen to be, not the popes that followed him, but in the saints who lived up to his apostolic ideals, offering genuine *euidence* of their spiritual authority.

Langland's radical typology reflects a basic binary question about spiritual authority: does spiritual authority derive from centralizing institutional structures, or from the divine revelation of authority? By Langland's day, this binary question was a time-honored component of the discourse of revelation. In assessing Will's own fitness as a teacher and scholar, for instance, Anima invokes Romans 12:3, one of the most important texts in revelatory discourse:

> And riȝt as hony is yuel to defie and engelymeþ þe mawe,
> Right so þat þoruȝ reson wolde þe roote knowe
> Of God and of hise grete myȝtes—hise graces it letteþ.
> For in þe likynge liþ a pride and a licames couetise
> Ayein Cristes counseil and alle clerkes techynge—
> That is *Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere*.
> 'Freres and fele oþere maistres þat to þe lewed men prechen,
> Ye moeuen materes vnmesurables to tellen of þe þrinite,
> That oftetymes þe lewed peple of hir bileue doute. (64-73). (Langland, *Parallel-Text* 572)

The verse *Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere* (Romans 12:3) was used by the late medieval Church to condemn heretical visionaries: it was cited, for instance, in the trial and eventual condemnation of Meister Eckhart for heresy. Its association with prophets and visionaries tradition derives in part from a papal decretal issued by Innocent III, the famous "Cum ex iniuncto," which contains a particularly influential interpretation of Romans 12:3:

> Tanta est enim divinae scripturae profunditas, ut non solum simplices et illiterati, sed etiam prudentes et docti non plene sufficient ad ipsius intelligentiam indagandam. Propter quod dicit scriptura: 'Quia multi defecerunt scruntantes scrutinio. 'Unde recte fuit olim in lege divina statutum, ut bestia, quae montem tetigerit, lapidetur, ne videlicet simplex aliquis et indoctus praesuamt ad sublimitatem scripturae sacrae pertingere, vel etiam aliis praedicare. Scriptum est enim: 'Altiora te ne quasieris.' Propter quod dicit Apostolus: 'Non plus supere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem.
>
> "Such is the depth of the holy Scriptures that not only simple and uncultivated people, but even those who are wise and learned are not able to search out their meaning. This is why the Scripture says: "For many of those who sought failed in their search" (Psa 64:7). Also was it correct that it was established in the divine Law that if an animal touches the Mountain (of Sinai) he should be stoned (cf. Heb 12:20; Ex 19:12ff), in order that in fact no simple or uncultivated man should have the presumption to touch upon the sublimities of the holy Scripture or to preach it to others. It is written in fact: "Do not seek that which is too high for you" (Sir 3:22). This is why the apostle said: "Do not seek more than what is necessary to seek, but seek with sobriety" (Rom 12:3). (Friedberg and Richter 785)

Originally, Innocent III intended this document to draw a bright line between the ordained clergy, who were authorized to speak, and all others, who were allowed to speak only in cases of obvious divine revelation.

In this respect, the letter had the opposite of its intended effect: by Langland's day, Innocent's teachings on divine revelation turned out to be something of a Pandora's box. Due to its intense focus on the performance of divine revelation and "obvious miracles" as the only adequate substitute for traditional ordination, Innocent's letter inadvertently opened the door for discussion of contemporary miracles, signs, and wonders as symbols of divine authority. These symbols might, at times, rival the traditional symbols of authority of the Roman Catholic church. As Wendy Love Anderson writes, "*Cum ex iniuncto* opened rather than closed the medieval debate on authenticating prophecies or visions, perhaps because both miracles and scriptural proofs were themselves so difficult to authenticate" (Anderson 51). As a result, the decretal proved to be endlessly politically adaptable. Its power to rebuke cut both ways, as it was used as

an instrument of antifraternal and anticlerical satire. So, for instance, William de St. Amour used the decretal as the basis for a lengthy critique of the friars and an attack on their authority. Dyan Elliot observes that "The apostolic injunction to 'prove the spirits (1 John 4.1) implicitly associates God's probatory function with the assessments wrought by human ministers" (Elliot 42). For many late medieval authors, the injunction to 'prove the spirits' implicitly associates God's probatory function with assessments *of* human ministers as well. On the other hand, defenders of authors like Catherine of Siena used the terms of the bull to bolster the case for women's visionary authority. In marrying the rhetoric of miracles and wonders with accusations of clerical hypocrisy, Anima locates himself within this more radical tradition of revelatory discourse, which has a sharply political edge.

Anima's complementary pair of concerns appear even in his tale of Mohammed, which serves as a parody of English clerical abuse. In the context of the *legenda sanctorum*, Anima's story of Mohammed is recognizable as an "anti-legend," a life of the damned. Such anti-legends were not an uncommon element of the legendary tradition: some copies of the *South English Legendary* contain lives of Judas and of Pilate, for instance (Liszka). Another well-known anti-legend was Adso of Montier-en-Der's popular *Letter on the Origin and Times of the Antichrist*, which narrated the biography of Antichrist according to the conventions of the genre of the saint's life (McGinn 81). Like many such tales, the story of Mohammed is clearly intended as a foil for the other narratives that surround it, as a story that sheds light on the same themes from a different direction. Anima's story of Mohammed follows the particulars given in Higden's *Polychronicon*, which were common in medieval Christian accounts of the life of Mohammed. Unlike Higden's, however, Anima's portrait of Mohammed is a thinly veiled description of English hypocrisy.

Like Higden, Langland suggests that Mohamed embarked on an elaborate project of clerical fraud by counterfeiting the signs of divine revelation:

> 'This Makometh was Cristene man, and for he moste noȝt ben a pope,
> Into Surrie he souȝte, and þoruȝ hise sotile wittes
> Daunted a dowue, and day and nyȝt hire fedde.
> …

When Mohammed trains the dove to perch on his shoulder and peck grains from his ear, as if placing his beak in his ear, he is teaching the dove to behave as doves sometimes behave in saints' legends. The story of Gregory the Great told in John Mirk's sermon on Pentecost, for instance, tells how, when the great man was alone and working, a dove would visit him and place its beak in his mouth as Gregory was writing (Mirk 162-163). This dove was clearly intended as a token of divine inspiration, so much so that—Mirk says—its presence was later used as evidence of Gregory's holiness, to protect his works from being burned as heretical. Although Langland does not make the identification explicitly, the dove was so strongly associated with the Holy Spirit in late medieval iconography that it is almost certainly intended as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and would have been recognized as such by Langland's original readers. In training the dove to peck grains from his ear, Mohammed is offering false *euidence* of his own holiness. At lines 412-415, Anima darkly compares Mohammed to the contemporary clergy of his own time:

> Ac for drede of þe deeþ I dar noȝt telle truþe,
> How Englisshe clerkes a coluere fede þat Coueitise hiȝte,
> And ben manered after Makometh, þat no man vseþ trouþe. (Langland, *Parallel-Text* 598)

Here covetousness is portrayed as a source of false inspiration, a false sign. Like the *shewyng* of the friars' *high clergye*, and like the dove of Mohammed, the covetousness of English clerks is a kind of fraudulent *euidence*.

For Anima, the detection of clerical fraudulence and hypocrisy is one of the primary functions of Conscience. At ll. 346-354, Anima compares the hypocritical preacher to a counterfeit coin, a *lussheburwe*, or Luxembourg. Luxembourg shillings and pence were "light counterfeit coins," as Schmidt's commentary observes, "the importation of which was forbidden as treason" (ibid. 652). The significance of this allusion to counterfeit coins has generally been overlooked:[68] the imagery of the counterfeit coin is a traditional element of the discourse of revelation, and it explicitly links spiritual discernment with the clerical hyprocisy. In the writings of many patristic authors, as Dyan Elliot observes, "the art of discernment had been likened to the task of the *numeralius* or moneychanger, whose profession required him to authenticate or 'prove' (*probare*) coins by testing them in a fire" (41). Elliot cites Jerome, Ambrose, and Cassian as sources of this image; another is the *Moralia* of Gregory I, which circulated widely in medieval England. In his exposition of Job [33], Gregory explains that the preachers of Antichrist are none other than the "preachers of…hypocrisy, who while they hold the holy orders of God, grasp with all their desires the fleeting world, who profess that all their doings are virtues, but every thing they do is sin." The Elect, Gregory writes, are responsible for recognizing hypocritical preachers just as a moneychanger must recognize counterfeit coins:

> [W]hat wonder is it that we do that spiritually, which we see money-changers daily performing in the body? Who, when they receive a coin, examine first its quality, afterwards its shape, but last of all, its weight, lest either brass should be concealed under the appearance of gold, or lest the shape of counterfeit coin should disgrace that which is truly gold, or lest deficient weight should prove that to be light, which is both gold, and of the proper shape.

Gregory closes this analogy with a rousing exhortation to his readers to be discerning in examining the deeds and character of the clergy, no matter how illustrious they may seem:

[68] The little work that has been done on this image suggests only that the "comparison of man's soul to a coin was traditional"(Langland, *Parallel-Text* 652). See also Raw, who treats this image as "one of three metaphors that express the concept of man as the image of God" (156). This is so, but only in the most general terms; the tradition of discretio offers much closer Latin analogues than those Raw offers.

> For if a good deed which is brilliant with signs and miracles, possesses not the full amount of perfection, it ought to be anxiously considered with careful circumspection, lest an imperfect thing, when taken for a perfect one, should turn to the loss of the receiver. … How do [the preachers of Antichrist], who have not only attained the perfection of humility, but have not even reached its threshold, display in themselves the weight of full amount? Hence, then, hence let the Elect know how to despise the wonders of these persons, whose conduct plainly impugns every thing which is said to have been done by the holy fathers. (Gregory, *Morals* 3:610)

Like Gregory's counterfeit coin, Anima's *lussheburwe* signifies the hypocritical cleric, who talks like a holy man, but whose soul is corrupt and insubstantial:

> Ac þer is a defaute in þe folk þat þe feiþ kepeþ,
> Wherfore folk is þe febler, and noȝt ferm of bileue.
> As in lussheburwes is a luþer alay, and yet lokeþ he lik a sterlyng:
> The merk of þat monee is good, ac þe metal is feble.
> And so it fareþ by some folk now: þei han a fair speche,
> Crowne and Cristendom, þe kynges mark of heuene,
> Ac þe metal, þat is mannes soule [myd] synne is foule alayed:
> Boþe lettred and lewed beþ alayed now wiþ synne,
> That no lif loueþ ooþer, ne Oure Lord, as it semeþ. (346-354) (Langland, *Parallel-Text* 592)

These hypocritical *folk* resemble the clerics of the *Moralia*, who "while they hold the holy orders of God, grasp with all their desires the fleeting world, who profess that all their doings are virtues, but every thing they do is sin," in Gregory's words (*Morals* 3:610-311).

Framed in this way, as an analogy to the act of moneychanging and of the testing of coins, the testing of revelations speaks back to the anxiety of the Meed passus surrounding the problems of coins and the circulation of cash. As in those passus, the fact of moneychanging hands poses real social dangers; but in Passus XV, the dangers are met by the faculty of Conscience, who is Anima in one of his guises. As Anima explains in his lengthy self-description near the beginning of the Passus (31-32):

> And whan I chalange or chalange noȝt, chepe or refuse,
> Thanne am I Conscience ycalled, Goddes clerk and his notarie…

The word *chepe*, it has been observed, is a mercantile one: it means "to bid to buy" (ibid. 2:773). The activity of Conscience is one, if not of moneychanging per se, than certainly of money handling and of assessing monetary value. As Sarah Wood has observed, [the function of Conscience shifts and changes over the course of the poem], reflecting the many different possible meanings of Middle English *conscience* and Latin *conscientia* (Wood). In Passus XV, the function of conscience is similar to that of Gregory's moneychanger, or *numeralius*: to challenge or challenge not.

From the revelatory politics and politicized revelations of Passus XV, the poem moves on to its concluding sections, which take the form of biblical paraphrase set to the rhythm of vernacular romance. In turning to biblical narrative, however, the poem does not leave behind the revelatory mode of the Fifth Vision: instead, the discourse of divine revelation is subsumed within the discourse of biblical translation and adaptation. The shifting discourses of *Piers Plowman* conduct the poem's search for an "integrally authoritative voice" (Justice 292): these shifts tell the story of how exegetical authority may legitimately be acquired. Not unlike sacred history itself, *Piers Plowman* moves forward through a series of narrative phases, as each new mode of discourse simultaneously undoes and perfects the discourse that came before it, synthesizing and reconciling elements of the old to create something new. The formal trajectory of the poem contains in itself an implicit critique of the worldliness of corrupt discourse, a worldliness that (the poem suggests) is written into the very structure of certain contemporary genres and patterns of thought. Through its shifts from one reading mode to the next, *Piers* progresses away from the habits of arbitrary or illusory division and toward an understanding of truth as fundamentally unified. By a process of adopting and then discarding a succession of increasingly sacred genres of writing, the poem dramatizes the spiritual education of its

protagonist, and it conducts a quest for a discursive mode capacious and authoritative enough to represent the truth of English history as progressive revelation.

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