THE HEXAEMERAL TRADITION IN OLD ENGLISH POETRY

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IN OLD ENGLISH POETRY

by

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ABSTRACT

In our search for an understanding of Old English cosmological conceptions we discover that the creation myth is central to the mysteries of the Christian faith, and that the Greek and Latin authors' interpretations of creation, known as "Hexaemera", provide much that is vital and influential to Old English poetic cosmology. My purpose in this dissertation is two-fold. The first is to provide for the Old English biblically-based poems an informing context of Greek and Latin hexaemeral writings drawn mainly from the Fathers of the Church. The second is to examine three Old English texts on creation and paradise as set against the background of the Mediterranean hexaemeral tradition. That a definite and complex accumulation of hexaemeral writings existed from the early patristic era through the Old English period (ca. A.D. 100-750) is confirmed by the wide variety of treatises, tractates, sermons, poems and hymns, assertive and didactic literary genres all revealing one major purpose -- the demonstration of intelligible order in the universe which is to be perceived through a vision of God's wisdom in creation.

From this immense body of traditions about creation and paradise emerges a pattern which suggests to us the hypothesis that the Old English Christian poets, whose

access to a broad range of such writings has been established, pondered and incorporated the hexaemeral features and conventions while adding their own variations to the creation theme. An important corollary to this hypothesis is that the Old English accounts of creation and paradise were influenced by an elaborate, lettered, and learned tradition which deserves special critical emphasis. Recent scholars have stressed the need for a comprehensive study of the potentialities of allusion in Old English poems to traditional Christian allegorical and tropological interpretations, as well as a study of the scholarly habits of perception which distinguished the monastic and ecclesiastical writings of the Middle Ages. This thesis is intended to fill a small aspect of this need in its exploration of the lettered traditions of creation which preceded and existed alongside Anglo-Saxon civilization.

In order to develop this thesis I have categorized its two parts, respectively, as the patristic and poetic traditions. Part One offers an inquiry into the exegetical treatment of creation and paradise revealed in the Fathers, the Christian Latin poets, and related sources. The exploration is not intended to be comprehensive but representative in a critical mode directed towards illuminating our understanding of certain seminal concepts

from which radiated further interpretations of creation in the Old English poetic canon. The figural levels of meaning perceived by patristic authors in such archetypal symbols as the primordial ocean, the green plain and golden groves of Eden, the luminaries of day and night, the fire and hail, snow and vapour of creation, contribute to our understanding of the Old English moulding of creation myths.

In Part Two, the critical scope of the study focusses in three separate chapters on the creation features of the Junius Genesis A and Christ and Satan, and the paradisal elements in the Exeter Phoenix. Equipped with a knowledge of the main features of the Mediterranean hexaemeral tradition, we are enabled to perceive the divergent treatment of creation themes in the relevant Old English texts. The intricacies of Christian exegesis can amplify our appreciation of the more concise Old English poetic hexaemera, in which the major emphasis is on tradition drawn from late classical antiquity, pagan Germanic concepts, and biblical and patristic imagery. This assertion is not to imply that the Old English poetic texts merely present successive interpretations of creation and paradise without adding any new dimension. The hexaemeral tradition in the imaginations of the Old English poets loses the rigid character of dogma and develops into

a vision of the world as cosmopoesy.

The boundaries of investigation in this thesis are necessarily limited. I have selected a scope of study within the main documentable collection of traditions which aided in shaping Old English cosmogonic mythology. Throughout the study I argue for the significance of, and the indispensable need for, knowledge of Christian traditions in the area of Old English hexaemeral writings which constitute mythopoeic or imaginative literature in contrast to the homiletic character of influential patristic doctrine.

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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

PART ONE: THE PATRISTIC TRADITIONS

CHAPTER ONE

I: INTRODUCTION

In this expository chapter I wish to explore the patristic conceptions of creation[1] which formed the literary mosaic of the hexaemeral tradition. During the infancy of Christianity the Church Fathers themselves were living epistles attesting to the power and benevolence, the creativity and caring of their God. After examining their records of the creation story and outlining these as concisely as the complexity of the accounts allows, I then propose in future chapters to compare my outline of findings with selected Old English creation passages in order to recognize and classify some common poetic images, currents of ideas, and literary techniques which these texts exemplify. The challenge appears to lie not in merely establishing the links, between patristic and Old English texts, of a theological tradition of hexaemeral and paradisical writings, but in interpreting such material in

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[1]By general consensus the patristic era lasted from A.D. 100 (Clement of Rome) to the middle of the eighth century (John of Damascus). See Robert Barr, Main Currents in Early Christian Thought (Glen Rock, N.J., 1966), p. 5.

the light of possible influences of the patristic inheritance on individual Old English poems.

By the task of investigating and describing what constitute the features of the hexaemeral traditions displayed by various kinds of patristic texts, I hope to broaden the foundation for understanding Old English creation passages. The undoubted availability to Old English scriptural poets of many works of the Fathers adds to the persuasiveness of the argument for the latter's relevance to the Anglo-Saxon hexaemera. As well as the Venerable Bede's Hexaemeron, for example, the Exameron Anglice[2] ascribed to Aelfric is found to contain in its metrical prose a re-working of the revelations of St. Basil and St. Ambrose, the chief purveyors of the fourth century Greek and Latin hexaemeral tradition.

The relevance of patristics to the study of Old English literature is convincingly argued by a number of modern critics in their exegetical approach to individual poems. Morton W. Bloomfield, for example, suggests the

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[2]See Exameron Anglice or The Old English Hexaemeron, ed. and trans. S. J. Crawford (Darmstadt, 1968), an edition which provides a collation of all the manuscripts and parallel passages from the established works of Aelfric.

existence of broad dimensions in the scriptural exegesis of the Fathers. "The rich theological and philosophical fare which the Fathers offer moderns", he writes, "comprises a great deal more than a method of hermeneutics with an accompanying biblical symbolism."[3] Implications of patristic material for Old English poetic practice seem to require an explanatory conceptual framework. To precede the main divisions of this chapter on the matters of creation and paradise, therefore, I shall sketch the mythopoeic relation of scriptural exegesis to Old English biblical poetry.

In interpreting biblical concepts the Fathers consciously or unconsciously dealt with the shape and substance of myths and the methods in which the biblical writers and editors developed, revised, and extended these myths in the building up of a complicated fabric of meaning. To evaluate the extent of the indebtedness of Old English poetry to the myths of early Christian hexaemeral tradition may be supposed merely an exercise unless such study sheds

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[3]Morton W. Bloomfield, "Patristics and OE Literature: Notes on Some Poems", Comparative Literature, 14 (1962), 36. For the critical perspectives on the relevance of patristic exegesis to OE and ME writings see "Patristic Exegesis in the Criticism of Medieval Literature, the Opposition, the Defense, and the Summation", by E. T. Donaldson, R. E. Kaske, and Charles Donahue respectively, in Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature, ed. Dorothy Bethurum (New York, 1960), pp. 1-82.

valuable insight on the habits of perception which distinguished the early mediaeval period in England. A study of the treatment of creation themes in the early Church writings may prove useful insofar as the Old English poets of biblical history appear to have shared with the Fathers the inherited traditions about what Père Daniélou has termed "the cosmic covenant, begun on the first day of creation".[4] Scriptural poetry in Anglo-Saxon England was laid out with reference always to the myths of man's creation and his destination beyond historical time. Such verse is a testament to early English Christianity and a proof of the cultural transformation of the pagan heritage. While recognizing the extensive circulation in pre-Christian Europe of ancient creation myths absorbed and modified by later poets and polemicists, one must make a critical distinction. In his study of "Bede and Medieval Civilization", Gerald Bonner points out an important difference in cultural terms between Bede and the Mediterranean Fathers. "For the Fathers", he writes,

> the classics were, in a very obvious fashion, a temptation to apostasy. For Bede and his age they could never be that. . . . The paganism of Bede's world was German heathenism, not the

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[4]Jean Daniélou, In the Beginning: Genesis I-III (Montreal, 1962), p. 24.

literary paganism of classical antiquity.

Again, Bonner asserts, "the world of Bede is a monastic world, his culture a monastic culture, designed to bring men to heaven".[5] Against the background of an atrophying paganism, Grimm compares the spread of Christian doctrine throughout the heroic world to the figural fertility of corn:

> I liken heathenism to a strange plant whose brilliant fragrant blossom we regard with wonder; Christianity to the crop of nourishing grain that covers wide expanses. To the heathen too was germinating the true God who to the Christians had matured into fruit.[6]

In this context it seems appropriate to suggest that Anglo-Saxon civilization shared with the early centuries of Mediterranean Christendom the historical situation of contending loyalties between pagan and Christian. Such a division of loyalties, while reflected and emphasized in the works of patrology, vitally shapes Old English poetry in its transformation of robust Germanic concepts into essentially devotional verse. In Old English civilization

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[5]Gerald Bonner, "Bede and Medieval Civilization", Anglo-Saxon England, 2 (1973), 83.

[6]Jacob Grimm, Teutonic Mythology, trans. from 4th edition by J. S. Stallybrass. Vol. I (New York, 1966), p. 7.

the poetic influence of the newly-founded Christian faith figuratively took up the armaments left on the battlefield by the declining heathen stronghold in England: heroism and loyalty continued to be vaunted as "Christian" virtues. While the Continental traditions and accounts of the world's creation appear largely to have been lost, the references to the creation in Old English are overtly Christian. In substance, then, although the stylistic influence of Germanic vocabulary and concepts remained strong, the Old English verses on the creation pay homage to the myths of the Judeo-Christian tradition transmitted through the patrimony of the Fathers.

A problem immediately arises. In the environment of the ancient legacy of paganism, why was early Anglo-Saxon civilization nevertheless responsive in the substance of its poetry to the subtler claims of monastery and scriptorium? That it was responsive to these matters can be seen in the hortatory and doxological character of much Old English verse which finds its cultural counterpart in such works as the Catecheses of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in Prudentius' Cathemerinon, in Dracontius' Carmen de Deo, in St. Basil's Hexaemeron, in St. Ambrose's hymns and Liber de Paradiso, and in St. Methodius' expository Liber de Libero Arbitrio which occasionally breaks into a hymn of praise. In all such writings the central theme is the

celebration of the Godhead in all its powers and attributes. It seems evident that the Greek and Latin Fathers and the Christian poets and hymnodists, in providing the elements of hexaemeral argument and speculation, also helped to shape Old English cosmological assumptions. The possibility seems strong that the conceptual origins of the Old English cosmic poems lay in a borrowed body of traditions, gathered and pondered by scop and monk during the early centuries of Christianity. The ritualistic myths embedded in Old English creation references do not reveal a restrictive framework but suggest the influence of an inherited tradition of hexaemeral writings on cosmos, creation, and paradise -- inseparable themes when viewed collectively, or, as Geoffrey Shepherd[7] has termed them "cosmopoesy", in relation to Old English cosmological ideas. In giving exegetical importance to hexaemeral matters the Fathers provide dimensionless material, although it varies greatly in both literary form and value. Dogmatic defence of the orthodox faith characterizes the varied theological disputation with reference to the creation of both the word and man. In common with the Church Fathers, the Latin poets of biblical history[8] shared

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[7]Geoffrey Shepherd, "Scriptural Poetry" in Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in OE Literature, ed. E. G. Stanley (London, 1966), p. 6.

[8]The "Latin poets of biblical history" are discussed by E. S. Duckett in her chapter of that name in Latin

a fund of speculation about the revealed scriptures and their power to win souls for the heavenly kingdom through the functions of the Church.

From the multifaceted interpretations of creation and paradise it seems possible to draw conclusions, however tentative, about the Old English poets in their selective drawing upon the main documentable body of traditions which shaped their cosmogonic mythology. As well as sharing the inspiration of the Greek and Latin Fathers who provided consciously elaborated and embellished creation theories, the Old English religious poets also seem to have shared the impulses of primitive peoples who articulate and foster myths in seeking to explain the present by the past, in order to gain reassurance for the future. Perhaps this last possibility accounts for the receptivity of Anglo-Saxon scholars and poets toward the doctrines of the Church at Rome.[9]

The Old English poets' variation of the stock conventions and traditions of creation narratives reveals what Shepherd has appropriately called the "cosmic character" of Anglo-Saxon Christinaity which "explained

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Writers of the Fifth Century (Camden, Conn., 1969), Chapter Five, pp. 51-92. Several of these, namely Hilary, Avitus, and Dracontius, are quoted in this thesis.

[9]Bonner, op. cit., pp. 78-79, argues, "not too much stress should be laid on the alien character of Bede's Latinity". He points out that Wearmouth and Jarrow

creation and the destiny of the universe. It gave [the Anglo-Saxons] their only outline of knowledge; it stood for science and history, as well as morality and religion".[10] The thrust of this sweeping assertion is supported by the recognition that in the early mediaeval period the history of the Church was the history of the conquest of salvation for humankind. God's enterprise of creation was viewed by the orthodox Fathers as a typological event[11] anticipative of the future redemption of the created order, the earth and its creatures pronounced good by God upon the seventh day on which he rested from his work. As St. Jerome avows, Omnis creatura Dei bona est[12] ("all the creation of God is good") in the world that emerged for man, designed by God for his own praise and pleasure.

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represented a sophisticated and cosmopolitan community constantly in touch with Rome and Italy, and that "Latin was not a foreign tongue at all; it was the tongue of the Church".

[10]Shepherd, op. cit., p. 3. He suggests persuasively that "OE civilization treated the Bible not as a repository of dogma but as a cosmopoesy", 6.

[11]Typology may be defined as that branch of Scriptural exegesis which, recognizing the symbolic potential of the types (or figures) of the Old Testament, sees their fulfilment in the New. The method of typological interpretation thus spanned both the Jewish and Christian eras.

[12]St. Jerome, Epistola 79, PL, 22, 729.

The origins of myth are mysterious and obscure. The writings of the Fathers, however, explicated those mythical assumptions about the genesis of mankind that circulated among Jewish, Greek, and Roman Christians. They explained these myths with such force and persuasiveness that in grappling, for example, with the problems posed by the alleged chronology of the "days" of creation, the expositions they achieved provided elaborately-detailed and circumambient confessions of the Christian faith which closed in upon the heresies and detractions that plagued early Christian thought from within and without.[13] Greek, Hebrew, and Latin hexaemeral accounts are expostulatory and panegyric in tone; the myriad attributes of God as Creator are praised whether he is apprehended as the Unus Artifex of Greek thought, a transformation into sacred terms of Plato's Demiurge, the creating Elohim of Philo Judaeus, the Opifex Maximus of Latin tradition, or the "Thunderer" of the Sibylline oracular accounts. Among the various strands of enquiry concerning the creative nature of God,

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[13]Detractions from outside the infant Church shook its solidarity less than the internal heresies which split the eastern and western Churches from time to time. The heresies which often concerned doctrines of creation are described by Barr, op. cit., p. 15, as products of "an ebullient religiosity untempered by the instinctive sobriety that orientates a calm and collected Christian toward solidarity with the hierarchy".

one assumption is unanimous: God's goodness is universally given as the reason for the creation of the world. Innumerable writings attest to the benevolence of God, for example, in planting Paradise for Adam's delight. God's loyalty toward the creature in whose creation the Almighty found rest is a theme highly endowed among the Fathers with exegetical and homiletical values. St. Ambrose, for example, elaborates the myth of God's repose at the conclusion of the series of Lenten homilies on the Hexaemeron, reminding his audience that God found rest only after he had fashioned man to his own image.[14] How much more, reasons St. Ambrose, should man be humble and gentle, so that God himself might find rest in his creature's affection.

At the risk of over-simplification it may be said that patristic cosmology shared with the Germanic and Old English world-view an understanding or apprehension of the universe as a tightly-woven system displaying a responsive interaction among creator, creature, and creation. The Germanic conception of the three-tiered cosmos consisting of the upper abode of the gods, the lower plane middle-

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[14]St. Ambrose, Hexaemeron, Sermo 9, cap. 8:49, Lib. 6, PL, 14, 277. The Latin expression is definitive: Requievit autem posteaquam hominem ad imaginem suam fecit.

earth, and the infernal hell, finds its counterpart in the early Christian adaptation of the pagan ideas of the elysium and underworld of Classical Mediterranean myth. In Anglo-Saxon concepts, the poetic absorption of the Germanic triple-tiered universe focussed upon the intermediate level of this cosmic scale. The term middangeard bears obvious semantic affinities to other cosmic concepts in the Teutonic languages. Gothic offers the parallel midjungards, Old High German mittangart and mittilgart, both meaning "middle-earth" practically always in the physical, spatial sense. Corresponding to the Old English woruld, Old High German also has weralt and Old Norse verǫld. These signify the visible world with its terrestrial objects in the Latin sense of mundus or saeculum. The Old English woruld appears to have descended from the Teutonic type wer-aldi, literally meaning hominum aetas, the "age of man".[15] Such semantic correspondences are found also in other Germanic dialects, giving strength to the mythical relationship of the ages of man and his worldly abode.

The temporal implications of the term wer-aldi are intimately connected by Bede to the natural order of the

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[15]See Albert Keiser, The Influence of Christianity on the Vocabulary of OE Poetry (Urbana, 1919), p. 89.

ages of the world. In confessing his patristic debt, Ita Patrum vestigia secuti sumus[16] ("Thus I have followed the paths of the Fathers"), he viewed the approaching millenium. Sex aetatibus mundi tempora distinguntur ("The epochs of the world are divided into six ages"). Enumerating the epochs of Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, the Babylonian Exile, Christ and his own, Bede likens each age to the corresponding stage of man's development from birth to old age. He writes assuredly of the sixth age,

> Sexta, quae nunc agitur, nulla generationem vel temporum serie certa sed, ut aetas decripita, ipsa totius saeculi morte finienda.[17]
>
> The sixth age, now appearing, is of uncertain duration in time or generations, but like decrepitude itself, is to end with the death of the whole world.

The theme of creation was the agent which soldered the links of this teleological chain into a coherent and intelligible progression. The focus of mystical eschatology, in Bede's vision, was the new creation "coming down from God out of heaven", the celestial meadhall Jerusalem of which the radiant earthly creation was the type or former model.

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[16]Bede, In Cantica Canticorum Liber Septimus, PL, 91, 1223.

[17]Bede, De Temporibus Liber, "De Mundi Aetatibus", PL, 90, 288.

Among the numerous distinctions which must be laid out with reference to patristic and Old English cosmology in hexaemeral matters, I make only two in this first chapter. As a chronological term, "creation" means the actual successive labours of the six "days" of the establishment of the world with heaven as a roof. In evoking the Greek hex "six", found in "hexaemera", this is the dynamic sense of the term "creation". A second meaning of "creation" refers at once to the whole of the completed, ordered system of the cosmos which represents the highly-embellished product of the creative energies of God. This is "creation" in terms of its timebound cycles of cosmic, natural, and seasonal activity. St. Ambrose explains the distinction clearly: Primo fecit Deus, postea venustavit[18] ("First God created [the world], then adorned it"). Old English poetry also celebrates those aspects of creation in its seasonal cycles which appear to reveal God's patérnal care for his creatures. St. Basil had taken up this theme, asserting that the diverse parts of the whole world are bound together by an unbroken bond of attraction into one fellowship, so that a natural affinity coheres among created objects.[19] A vital link of

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[18]St. Ambrose, Hexaemeron, Lib. 1, cap. 7:27, PL, 14, 148.

[19]St. Basil, Hexaemeron, Hom. 2:2, PG, 29, 34.

relationship is thus evident in the cosmic theory of both patristic and Old English poetic texts.[20]

Among the Fathers of the East and West, the symbolic import of their exegesis lies in their figural readings of events in the Pentateuch with typological implications also for the revelations of the New Testament. The Fathers thus provided a broadly-defined mythopoeic perspective for future writers. Their schema of biblical exegesis on the levels of literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical meanings, supply part of the substance from which the doctrinal implications of Old English creation texts and homilies take their source. The flexibility of the allegorical method is suggested in Bede's "De Schematibus et Tropis" in the De Arte Metrica:

> . . . item allegoria verbi, sive operis, aliquando historicam rem, aliquando typicam, aliquando tropologicam, id est, moralem rationem, aliquando anagogen, hoc est, sensum ad superiora ducentem, figurate denuntiat. Per historiam namque historia figuratur, cum factura primorum sex sive septem

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[20] In contrast to the foregoing, Milton Mc C. Gatch in Loyalties and Traditions: Man and his World in OE Literature (New York, 1971), pp. 102-115, argues that "although they accepted the cosmological tradition on authority, the OE writers were not interested in the same implications of cosmology as the authors of the tradition and rarely stopped to treat it exhaustively or systematically" (p. 110). Again, "while the cosmological picture was accepted, it lost its metaphysical implications and gained moral urgency" (p. 115). The argument of which these are the summary statements, however, centres around King Alfred's version of Boethius' The Consolation of Philosophy and Byrhtferth's eleventh-century Manual, works dated considerably later than the OE poems examined for their

> dierum totidem saeculi hujus comparatur aetatibus.21
>
> Allegory of the word or of the deed figuratively declares sometimes the historical matter, sometimes the typical, sometimes the tropological, that is, the moral concern, sometimes the anagogical, that is, the sense that leads to higher things. For history is represented through history, when the creation of the first six or seven days is likened to just so many ages of the present world.

St. John Cassian's classic illustration of the four scriptural senses takes up the symbol of Jerusalem. According to history, it "is a city of the Jews; according to allegory it is the Church of Christ; according to anagogue it is that heavenly city of God which is the mother of us all (Gal. iv.26); according to tropology it is the soul of man".[22] How the exegetical method appears to operate, even in an oblique way, in Old English Christian poetry, will be spelled out in future chapters with reference to such common biblical symbols as the groves and rivers of Eden and popular images of virtue, such as the phoenix.

Chief among the patristic sources are concepts of some of the perennial structures of the human imagination -- the journey towards salvation, the ritual of baptism

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hexaemeral content in this thesis.

[21]Bede, De Schematibus et Tropis Sacrae Scripturae, PL, 90, 185.

[22]See Beryl Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1952), p. 28.

which prepares man for entry into paradise, the return to the garden or green plain of Eden from which man must evermore in historical time be exiled. The journey, the ritual, the return, -- each of these themes throughout the patristic and early mediaeval period flourished and developed into complexes of images. Later mediaeval literature, it may be noted, takes up the same concepts although these are not consistently theological in application, and offers more oblique and sophisticated re-workings of the myths of chaos and creation, recovery and rebirth through the archetypal myths of the earthly paradise or garden of God. The Middle English Pearl is an example of the potential sensus spiritualis of the garden image. Mediaeval iconography and manuscript illuminations reflect the Adam/Christ, Eve/Mary dichotomy with its background in Eden. Adam, a type of Christ, loses the world for mankind while feasting in a garden. Christ as the second Adam, fasting in a wilderness, regains it. Behind Eve and her sinful progeny the door of paradise is barred. The Virgin re-opens it by the gift of her Son to a redeemed mankind. The elaborate typological correspondences between garden and wilderness are worked out by St. Irenaeus, the Father "most deeply imbued with the typological view of sacred scripture".[23]

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[23]J. M. Evans, Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition (Oxford, 1968), p. 101.

Journey, ritual, and return -- these myths are closely interwoven among the Fathers with the general hexaemeral theme. In affording and defining an imaginative direction in terms of cyclic re-enactment, these myths vitally help to shape the theme of creation in Old English poetic texts. In the Anglo-Saxon metaphor of the human journey, God's labours at creation are commemorated by the hall-building carried on in both obvious and oblique Christian terms, by man as a spiritual wanderer or anhaga. The place of enactment is the fallen world, the ruined work of creation. The ritual of hall-building points to the restoration of loyal bonds between God and middle-earth, and to the return of man to the green plain of Eden which represents spiritual home-coming. Indeed, some of the Fathers, chiefly St. Ambrose, interpreted Eden not at all in the literal sense of paradisal enclave, but as the highest portion of man's aspiring nature.

In the broad range of Old English criticism I have found no extended treatment of the creation and paradise themes in themselves. The usefulness of such an investigation will depend first, on the ability to view the Old English poems as products of highly-wrought workmanship exhibiting an interior logic among the complex fabric of images they present. Second, the Greek and Latin Fathers, together with early Christian poets and hymnodists, may, in their wide range of commentary and interpretation, help

our appreciation of certain poems in Old English that have too often been evaluated as merely poeticized renderings of the Vulgate, or as lifeless homilies disguised in poetic garb. The poems to be explored, Genesis A and Christ and Satan from the Junius MS and The Phoenix from the Exeter Book, have been selected for their pervading cosmological emphases and their apparent continuation of hexaemeral themes found in late classical and early Christian Latin literature. My underlying thesis, which the following chapters develop, is that the poems mentioned are products of a lettered and elaborate hexaemeral tradition. While they borrow abundantly from a thriving Latin tradition, they also imaginatively incorporate ancestral formulae and heroic themes to achieve the effect of a highly-developed art, rich with encrustations of ancient and early mediaeval myth and symbol. An enhanced mythical value emerges from this assimilation of Germanic and Mediterranean cultures. The emphasis in each poem is not on balance, but on imaginative synthesis. The focus of Old English poetic composition has shifted from the circle of the tribe to the scriptorium and monastery, the guardians of Latin learning and culture. It seems inevitable, then, that the "tradition of bookish learning [and] the weight of dogma and ecclesiastical custom" perceived by Geoffrey Shepherd behind Anglo-Saxon scriptural

verse, impose "a degree of stability upon shifting texts".[24] Literate composition implies a more-or-less fixed text disclosing a premeditated theme and a deeply-pondered "design" in terms of both the shape of the poem and the writer's didactic intention with regard to the reader. In the last two decades, critical contributions to Old English biblically-based poetry are unanimous in positing the influence of a lettered tradition upon Anglo-Saxon verse. With Christianity holding the monopoly of Anglo-Saxon literacy, it follows that the lettered tradition derived from the Church and from the influence of Roman missionaries and native saints and scholars. In establishing the literary character of Old English formulaic poetry, recent critics[25] have stressed the lettered tradition which appears to structure the scriptural verse. While citing the

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[24]Shepherd, "Scriptural Poetry", 10.

[25]Alvin A. Lee, in The Guest-Hall of Eden: Four Essays on the Design of OE Poetry (New Haven and London, 1972), p. 230, has stressed the mythopoeic provenance of literature which functions "as an imaginative order of words using ideas and theological matters but always distinct from the discursive prose of the doctrinal or philosophical treatise". Other critics, in assembling evidence for the influence of a lettered tradition upon OE poetry, emphasize as much the poetic heritage as any ideological or theological debt. J. E. Cross, in "The Literate Anglo-Saxon -- On Sources and Disseminations", Proc. Brit. Academy, 58 (1972), 74, reminds us of the importance of Latin traditions as likely agents of the dissemination of ideas originating in Greek or Hebrew. Jackson J. Campbell, in "Knowledge of Rhetorical Figures in Anglo-Saxon England", JEGP, 66 (1967), 1-20, and Philip

macaronic verse at the end of The Phoenix as evidence of pre-meditated, learned composition to the accompaniment not of the harp but of the pen, Larry Benson asserts, "[The Phoenix] employs the allegorical technique in a way that links it as closely to Latin learning as to Germanic song".[26] Anglo-Saxon Christianity, permeated by Germanic idiom and spirit drawn from the tribal societies described by Tacitus, both fulfils and transcends the heroic concepts, offering to the faithful not worldly fame but deathless joy in a life beyond life, in the new creation of God.

As a prelude to the Old English poems, I wish to explore in the rest of this chapter the patristic resources which may have been available to the Old English poets' imaginations. Later chapters are devoted to examining the poetic re-shaping in the symbolic mode of such possible resources. It will become evident that Old English poetry, in contrast to patrology, lost much of the restrictive character of dogma and became, in broader

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Rollinson, in "Some Kinds of Meaning in OE Poetry", Annuale Mediaevale, 11 (1970), 5-21, offer conclusions about the imprint of an elaborate poetic and literary tradition on OE Poetry. Morton W. Bloomfield, in "Understanding OE Poetry", Annuale Mediaevale, 9 (1968), 5-25, asserts the influence of traditional "wisdom literature" on certain OE poems.

[26]Larry D. Benson, "The Literary Character of Anglo-Saxon Formulaic Poetry", PMLA, 81 (1966), 335.

terms, "cosmopoesy". Mindful of Earl G. Schreiber's contention that "what scholarship and criticism of Old and Middle English need now is not another spate of heavy-handed application of patristic material but a study of the habits of mind and perception which produced both the literary and theological writing of the Middle Ages",[27] I wish to remain sensitive toward the interior logic of the poems under study, to examine them in their individual context as well as in a line of hexaemeral tradition. A "study of the habits of mind and perception which produced . . . the writing of the Middle Ages", however, must inevitably explore patrology which, through the influence of monasteries and ecclesiastical communities, helped to shape Old English culture. Gerald Bonner comments persuasively upon Bede's "thorough" assimilation of the patristic idiom and concludes that for him, "the faith of the Fathers was as his own and their enemies were to be regarded as his".[28]

In turning to the appropriate works of the Fathers

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[27]E. G. Schreiber in his review of Bernard F. Huppé, The Web of Words (Albany, 1970), in JEGP, 71 (1972), 107.

[28]Bonner, "Bede and Medieval Civilization", 74. This critic asserts that Bede found himself "wholly within the monastic culture described by Dom Le clercq" in The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture, trans. Catherine Misrahi (New York, 1962). See Bonner, op. cit., p. 78.

I wish to present not an inflated résumé of patristic material on cosmos, creation, and paradise, the matter of which is almost dimensionless, but relevant examples only of the tradition that preceded and coexisted with the Old English period. An exposition follows under the headings "Creation" and "Paradise".

II: CREATION

Throughout seven centuries of hermeneutics, a formal pattern of writings evolved which had as their collective purpose the summoning of the Church to its destiny as the spiritual haven for wayfaring men. Because the ear of faith was more susceptible than the mind of reason to the dogmas of Catholicism, certain commentators such as Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, endeavoured to explain the Scriptures to both the culturally elite and to "artisans" and "workers of handicrafts who with difficulty provide a living for themselves."[29] Although this fact might suggest that the ecclesiastical communities favoured the lector over the harpist, so to speak, such was not the case, as examples from the Latin poets and hymnodists will reveal. It is an ironic fact, however, that although the homilies, apologies, and defences of the Christian faith were intended largely to be direct in tone, the writings were characterized by increasing subtlety and complication as they invoked the exegetical tools to open the Scriptures. Certain of the Fathers, such as St. John of Damascus, compiled huge summae of theology, garnering and synthesizing

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[29]St. Basil, Hexaemeron, Hom. 3:1, PL, 29, 54.

the elements of Greek or Latin patristic thought. The theme of creation was a fertile field of sermon material for the Fathers whose figural interpretations widened the horizon and deepened the impact of early Christianity in its defence of faith against the background of a declining paganism.[30]

In his Confessiones, St. Augustine gives his devotion form and meaning by placing his contemplation of God against eternity. Et laudere te vult homo, aliqua portio creaturae tuae, "Man", he asserts, "being a part of your creation, desires to praise you". Quia fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te,[31] "for you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you". Here Augustine expresses concisely the compulsion of the creature toward its Creator and implies the soul's native knowledge of its

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[30]For an expert outline of the implication and function of the "allegorical method", see H. A. Wolfson, The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, vol. I (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), especially Chapter II, pp. 24-72. Elaborate distinctions among the applications of the allegorical method characterize this discussion.

[31]St. Augustine, Confessiones, Lib. I, cap. 1, PL, 32, 660-1.

highest good. As well, Tertullian the Apologist acknowledges, Animae enim a primordio conscientia Dei dos est,[32] ("from the beginning the knowledge of God is the inheritance of the soul"). Tatian in defending Christianity against the learned men of Greece argues,

> Deus noster non esse coepit in tempore, cum solus sine principio, ipse omnium sit principium. Spiritus Deus, non tamen materiam permeans spiritus, sed materialium spirituum et figurarum, quae in materia sunt, opifex; et visu et tactu indeprehensus, quippe cum ipse sensibilium et invisibilium exstiterit parens. Hunc ex his quae creavit cognoscimus et potentiam invisibilem ex operibus apprehendimus.[33]
>
> Our God did not begin to be in time as he alone is without beginning. He himself is the beginning of all things. God is a spirit, not pervading matter, but the maker of material spirits, and of the forms that are in matter; He is invisible, intangible, being in himself the Parent of both sensible and invisible things. We know him from his creation, and apprehend his invisible power by his works.

Tatian's belief in the creation of both form and matter by God alone articulates an emphatic difference between Hellenic and Hebrew shaping of creation myths. The account of creation in the Timaeus, for example, puts forward a master-craftsman, the Demiurge, whose external

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[32]Tertullian, Adversus Marcionem, Lib. I, cap. 10, PL, 2, 282.

[33]Tatian, Oratio Contra Graecos, 4, PG, 6, 814.

imposition of order on the flux and chaos of becoming, shapes the world out of already-formed independently-existing matter co-eval with himself.[34] Christian polemics are directed against those moral philosophers of Greece and against the cosmogony of Hesiod who interpreted the first things as taking form from chaos, from an abyss of space bearing the stuff of creation in a shapeless and inchoate mass. Innumerable texts cluster around the creatio ex nihilo theme: a formal and earnest pattern of argument emerges from the hexaemeral accounts. Simultaneously, however, so complex a schema of creation developed that Greek philosophic concepts found their way into Christian commentary. Robbins, in his evaluation of "The Influence of Greek Philosophy on the Early Commentaries on Genesis", makes this statement, "that there is an ideal pattern is echoed throughout the Hexaemera in various forms and developments, all of them to be traced ultimately to the Timaeus as their source".[35] The existence of an ideal pattern in the universe is reflected and transmitted in the

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[34]Plato, Timaeus, 41.

[35]F. E. Robbins, The Hexaemeral Literature (Chicago, 1912), p. 5.

dialogues, apologies, and orations of the Fathers.

A spokesman for the Antiochene community, St. Theophilus articulates the ex nihilo theme while acknowledging the existence of a pattern from which God worked. The Mosaic cosmogony is venerated: Ac primo quidem [prophetae] summo consensu docuere Deum ex nihilo omnia creasse ("And first the prophets taught us unanimously that God made everything from nothing"). "Nothing", argues Theophilus emphatically, "was coeval with God". Nihil enim Deo coevum. Of man, he asserts, Nam qui creatus est multis rebus eget, increatus autem nulla omnino[36] ("For he that is created is also needy, but the Uncreated stands in need of nothing"). The arguments against the coeval existence of matter with God, or the Master Craftsman, strike death-blows against the old Hellenic assumptions.

At the same time, however, the "ideal pattern" motif surfaces throughout the demonstrations of the intelligible order and exquisite detail of the universe. The Octavius of Minucius Felix reveals a dialectic in vigorous defence of the creation of the world by God, against the atomic theory articulated by Caecilius. Against the skeptical pseudo-scientific materialist arguments (with

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[36]St. Theophilus of Antioch, Ad Autolycum, Lib. 2, PG, 6, 1063. St. John of Damascus also distinguishes the types of creation ex nihilo: in De Fide Orthodoxa, Lib. 2, cap. 5, he writes that God created some things, i.e., heaven, earth, air, fire, water from no pre-existing matter, and

their origin in the atomic theory first stated by Leucippus of Miletus, fifth century B.C., and developed by Democritus), Minucius Felix offers an eloquent plea for God's design in creation. In achieving poetic power, the argument gives evidence of the influence of Christian myths and cultural assumptions in dialectical operation. The pivotal issue runs thus:

> Quod si ingressus aliquam domum, omnia exculta, disposita, ornata vidisses, utique praesse ei crederis dominum, et illis bonis rebus multo esse meliorem: ita in hac mundi domo, cum coelum terramque perspicias, providentiam, ordinem, legem, crede esse universitatis dominum parentemque ipsis sideribus et totius mundi partibus pulchriorem.[37]
>
> If, upon entering some house, you found there everything kept in neatness, perfect order and conditioned by good taste, you would probably assume that some master was in charge of it, one far superior to those fine possessions of his; so, too, in this house of the world, when you see providence, order, and law prevailing in heaven and on earth, you may be sure that there is a Master and Parent of the universe, one more beautiful than the stars themselves, and the single parts of the world.[38]

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others, i.e., animals, plants, and seeds from those things which had their existence directly from him. PG, 94, 879.

[37]Minucius Felix, Octavius, cap. 18, PL, 3, 299-300.

[38]J. E. Cross in evaluating the Octavius, deduces that "orthodox Christians of a later age shut their minds to enquiry about the Creation in face of their dogma". See "Aspects of Microcosm and Macrocosm in OE Literature", Comparative Literature, 14 (1962), 6. This assumption is challenged in Chapter Two of this thesis.

God's superiority to man is evident in the former's calling into being the substance of his creation, when previously it had no existence.[39] Hilary of Poitiers, in declaring that God alone can distinguish between creation and birth, states that only he can bring both to pass.[40] Origen writes that things created and born are in harmony with the intentions of the cosmos, which, wholly in harmony with itself, cannot have been the work of many makers.[41] St. Methodius summarizes the evidence for the argument of a pattern or order in the universe:

> Caeterum vero coepi laudere Opificem, qui terram fixam, animalium que differentias ac varios plantarum flores aspicerem. . . . Similiter etiam vere dicendum videbatur, nihil Deo praeter ipsum coexistere; esseque res, ipso creante: siquidem id suas erat compositus elementorum ordo, naturaeque in eis concinnitas.[42]

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[39]St. Irenaeus supports this in Contra Haereses, Lib. 2, cap. 10, PG, 7, 734-6, as well as St. Gregory Nanzianzen, Orationes, 40:45, PG, 36, 423.

[40]Hilary of Poitiers, Liber de Synodis, PL, 10, 493.

[41]Origen, Contra Celsum, Lib. 1, PG, 11, 702.

[42]St. Methodius, Liber de Libero Arbitrio, cap. 2, PG, 18, 243.

> I began to praise the Creator, as I saw the earth fast fixed, and living creatures in such variety, and the blossoms and plants with their many hues . . . and it seemed to me that it might be said with equal truth, that nothing is eternally co-existent with God distinct from himself, but that whatever exists has its origin from him, and I was persuaded of this also by the undeniable disposition of the elements, and by the orderly arrangement of nature about them.

In complementing this argument, St. Basil writes in his homilies on the hexaemeron that he sees no need to refute the "vanity" of the heathen; the wise men of the Greeks, he reminds his audience, wrote many works about natural history, but the multiplicity of conflicting accounts availed mutually for their own undoing. Basil firmly establishes the Mosaic cosmogony as true and venerable, and although he is restricted somewhat by the homily-form, he ironically plunders the works of the antique philosophers in his descriptions of the various forms in nature. While pretending to lay aside what he terms impious speculation about the substance of things, he then proceeds with exact detail to enquire into the nature of the world. His reasoning is sophisticated, both gracious and urbane in tone, yet dogmatic to the most extreme degree. He rejects the theory of spontaneous creation, avowing assuredly,

> Etenim coeli terraeque tradenda creatio est, qua casu, ut quidam opinati sunt, producta non est, sed a Deo originem traxit. Ecquis auditus magnitudine eorum quae dicuntur dignus est?[43]

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[43]St. Basil, Hexaemeron, PG, 29, 3.

> For indeed, the creation of heavens and earth must be handed down, not as having occurred spontaneously, as some have imagined, but as having its origin from God. What ear is worthy of the sublimity of this tale?

The sustained theme of the Hexaemeron involves the condition of the heavens and earth and the exegetical implications of the works of the days. A psalm-like quality characterizes this series of nine homilies, which is concluded with a pious tribute:

> Gaudeat pius dogmatibus veritatis: glorificetur Dominus.[44]
>
> Let the just rejoice in the dogmas of truth; let the Lord be glorified.

In the West the counterpart of St. Basil was his admirer and imitator, the hymnodist and exegete St. Ambrose. His Hexaemeron is more than a mere metaphrasis of Basil's sermons on creation;[45] it is rather an inspired adaptation of the creation material overlaid with classical allusions garnered from Ambrose's broad familiarity with antique philosophy and poetry. It opens with a stern polemic

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[44] Ibid., 207.

[45] An excellent edition of the ancient Latin version of St. Basil used by Ambrose to bring the hexaemeral tradition to Western Christendom is the translation from Greek to Latin by Eustathius Afer, in Ancienne Version Latine des Neuf Homélies sur L'Hexaéméron de Basil de Césaréé, ed. Emmanuell Armand et Stig. Y. Rudberg (Berlin, 1958).

against those materialists with their mechanical atomistic theory who assume that the world spontaneously formed itself, or that it was fashioned out of pre-existent matter. Ambrose denounces all "warring speculation" and develops the creatio ex nihilo theme. His account is influenced, however, by the philosophers of natural history of the Greek world as he reveals,

> In his enim quatuor illa elementa creata sunt, ex quibus generantur omnia ista quae mundi sunt. Elementa autem quatuor, aer, ignis, aqua, et terra, quae in omnibus sibi mista sunt.[46]
>
> Truly, with heaven and earth were created those four elements from which are generated everything in the world: these elements are four in number: air, fire, water, and earth -- elements which are found mingled in all things.

Ambrose views Genesis as a prophetic book; the typological and Christological emphases predominate in his account. In quoting Proverbs 8:27, Cum pararet coelum, cum illo eram ("when he made the heavens, I was with him"), he later relates this to Apocalypse 1:8, Ego sum alpha et omega, principium et finis[47] ("I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end"). The strands of mystical eschatology evident here are tightly woven further on in

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[46]St. Ambrose, Hexaemeron, Lib. 1, cap. 6:20, PL, 14, 143.

[47]Ambrose, Hexaemeron, Lib. 1, cap. 4, PL, 14, 139.

Ambrose's account of the Paradise of the Gospels.

St. Ambrose is perhaps more universally known for his hymns celebrating God's paternal care. The opening verses of two hymns reveal their panegyric tenor:

> Deus creator omnium
> polique rector, vestiens
> diem decoro lumine
> noctem soporis gratia.
>
> God that all things did create
> And the heavens dost moderate,
> Who doth clothe the day with light,
> With benefit of sleep the night.
>
> Aeterne rerum conditor,
> noctem diemque qui regis
> et temporum das tempora
> ut al leves fastidium.[48]
>
> Eternal Lord the world that made,
> Who hides the day in night's black shade,
> And fixes hour on hour that we
> May never faint or weary be.

The route by which such mythopoeic assumptions influenced English thought is full of interest. The Venerable Bede at the opening of his own Hexaemeron pays tribute to the line of tradition upon which he so extensively draws. He salutes Basil, introduced to Roman theology by

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[48]Ambrose, PL, 16, 1473. The translation is by F. A. Wright in Fathers of the Church (London, 1928), pp. 184 and 186.

Eustathius Afer, and Ambrose, who influenced St. Augustine's defence of orthodoxy against the Manichaeans. Bede mentions this last work by name and depends occasionally upon it. As the English Father of the Church, Bede constructs in his Hexaemeron[49] an elaborate commentary on the beginning of Genesis, an exegetical work continued in the In Pentateuchum Commentarii.[50] His De Natura Rerum, beginning with the problem "quid sit mundus", is a highly derivative work on the design of creation. These definitive works are reflected in the Exameron Anglice attributed to Aelfric, who adapts, quotes, and reshapes Bede, as Bede himself refashioned his predecessors. The continuity of exegetical tradition evident here helps perhaps to buttress the argument for the relevance of patristic exegesis to Old English writings.

The designing intelligence attributed to God by Bede and all the Fathers is everywhere revealed in the artifice of the creation. In St. John Chrysostom's words, Non enim [creatio] mala est, sed et bona, et sapientiae Dei, virtutis ac benignitatis est argumentum[51] (For [creation] is not evil but is both beautiful and a token of the

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[49]Bede, Hexaemeron, PL, 91, 9, 9-190.

[50]Of doubtful authorship, attributed to Pseudo-Bede.

[51]St. John Chrysostom, De Diabolo Tentatore, Hom. 2:3, PG, 49, 260.

wisdom and virtue and kindness of God"). The devil's detractions regarding the sanctity of creation are countered by Chrysostom's insistence that the visible creation leads the perceptive man to the knowledge of God. John of Damascus, in emphasizing the goodness of creation's design, introduces a motif common to Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon creation accounts, creation by the Word of the Almighty:

> Quoniam igitur bonus, omnique bonitate praestantior Deus, non satis habuit sua ipsius contemplatione frui; sed pro nimia bonitate sua quaedam esse voluit, quae ipsius afficerentur beneficiis, ejusque bonitatis participes forent: eam ob causam ex nihilo producit conditque uuiversa, tam invisibilia, quam visibilia; atque etiam hominem ex aspectabili et non aspectabili natura conflatum. Porro cogitando creat; cogitatioque illa, Verbo complente et Spiritu consummante, consistit.[52]
>
> Since therefore God is good and in all things superior in goodness, it was not enough to derive enjoyment from self-contemplation, but in his great goodness wished certain things to come into existence which would enjoy his benefits and share in his goodness, he brought all things out of nothing into being and created them, both the invisible and the visible. Yes, even man, who is a compound of the visible and the invisible. And it is by thought that he creates, and thought is the basis of the work, the Word filling it and the Spirit perfecting it.

St. Clement of Rome, the first Apostolic Father, and St. Athanasius declare this doctrine respectively:

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[52]John of Damascus, "De Rerum Creatione" in De Fide Orthodoxa, Lib. 2:2, PG, 94, 863-866.

In verbo magnificentiae suae constituit omnia, et in verbo potest illa evertere[53] ("By the word of his majesty he has established all things, and by a word he can overthrow them") and Deum omnia, neutiquam prius exsistentia, ex nihilo per Verbum fecisse ut essent[54] ("Out of nothing and without its having any previous existence, God made the universe to exist through his Word").[55]

On the extensive theme of the inborn knowledge of God necessary for the soul's salvation, St. Cyril of Alexandria decrees, Hominis quidem naturae maxime inditam esse Dei cognitionem, et cujusvis utilis ac necessarii nativam scientiam ipsi Opificem insevisse[56] ("In truth we declare that the knowledge of God is innate in human nature and that the Creator has implanted in it native knowledge of all things vital and useful for salvation"). While defending Scripture against the pagans Athanasius declares that creation acclaims in speech its own lord and from this recognition it is possible to achieve

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[53]St. Clement of Rome, Epistola I ad Corinthios, cap. 27:4, PG, 1, 267.

[54]St. Anthanasius, Oratio de Incarnatione Verbi, PG, 25, 102.

[55]Further implications about the theology of the "Word" in creation may be side-stepped here as this topic is discussed in Chapter Three, infra.

[56]St. Cyril of Alexandria, Contra Julianum, Lib. 3, PG, 76, 654.

the knowledge of God from the visible creation.[57] By means of inborn knowledge, then, and of the visible, tangible creation, God has established in the soul of man the index whereby the creature may have fellowship with the Creator. St. Cyril of Jerusalem exhorts his audience, Et diversa igitur opificii ratione, efficaciam opificis intellige[58] ("from the variety of his workmanship, therefore, learn the perception of the Creator"). Further, St. Cyril not only admonishes his flock, but also extends his arguments to rebuke the aberrations of impious heretics:

> Quid enim habent, quod in hoc maximo Dei opificio criminentur? quos oportebat conspectis coelorum convexitatibus stupore percelli: eum adorare qui coelum statuit quasi fornicem: qui de fluxa aquarum natura ruere nesciam coeli substantiam efformavit . . . sapientissimam quoque Dei in condendo dispositionem consideret.[59]
>
> For what have they to blame in this vast creation of God? They ought to have been struck with wonder on contemplating the vaulted expanses of the heavens, and to have worshipped him who established the sky as a dome, who from naturally fluid waters formed the steadfast substance of the heavens. . . . Let him consider also the surpassingly-wise disposition of God in creation.

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[57]St. Athanasius, Oratio Contra Gentes Pars I, cap. 34, PG, 25, 67.

[58]St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechesis 9:14, PG, 33, 654.

[59]St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechesis 9:5, PG, 33, 642-3.

Lactantius, Theophilus, and Augustine participate vigorously in the panegyric hexaemeral tradition. In his Divine Institutes, Lactantius exhorts man to contemplate celestial bodies and to understand from the arrangement, constancy, usefulness and beauty of created objects a proof of providence and divine intelligence.[60] St. Theophilus' admonition to Autolycus embraces the whole of creation:

> Considera, o homo, ejus opera, tempestatum statis temporibus vicissitudines, aeris mutationes, astrorum attemperatum cursum, dierum et noctium, mensium et annorum rite descriptas vices, seminum, plantarum et fructuum amoenam varietatum . . . tum providentiam, qua Deus cibum omni carni praeparat, tum servile obsequium, quod homini ab omnibus praestari jussit . . . Solus ille Deus est qui lucem ex tenebris fecit, qui lumen e thesauris suis educit et receptacula Austri ac thesauros abyssi et terminos maris fecit.[61]
>
> Consider, O man, his works -- the timely rotation of the seasons, and the changes of temperature, the regular march of the stars, the well-ordered course of days and nights, months and years, seeds, plants, and fruit of all beautiful variety, and the providence with which God provides sustenance for all flesh, and the subjection in which he has ordered that all things subserve mankind. He alone is God who made light out of darkness and produced light from his treasuries, and formed the treasure-houses of the deep, and the bounds of the seas.

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[60]Lactantius, Divinarum Institutionum, Lib. 1, cap. 2, PL, 6, 121.

[61]St. Theophilus, Ad Autolycum, Lib. 1, PG, 6, 1034.

A sacramental sense of unity throughout the apparent diversity of creation informs the Fathers' concepts. St. Augustine in a sermon on creation offers a cumulative rhetorical pattern which attains a pitch of poetic intensity. He invites his hearers,

> Interroga mundum, ornatum coeli, fulgorem dispositionemque siderum, solem diei sufficientem, lunam noctis solatium: interroga terram fructificantem herbis et lignis . . . interroga mare . . . interroga omnia, et vide si non sensu suo tanquam tibi respondent, Deus nos fecit. Haec et philosophi nobiles quaesierunt, et ex arte artificem cognoverunt.[62]
>
> Ask the world, the beauty of the heaven, the brilliancy and order of the stars, the sun sufficient for day, the solace of the moon at night, ask the earth fruitful with its plants and trees . . . ask the sea, ask of all things and see if they do not answer you as if by a tongue of their own, 'God made us'. These things brilliant philosophers have explored and by the art have come to know the Artificer.

The primal harmony of the cosmos is reflected in the orderly progression of night and day; the testimony of all created orders under moon and sun confirms the matchless wisdom of God in creation.

Not only from the arguments of order did the Fathers draw conclusions about God as benefactor, but also from the evidence of his forethought. Both St. Ambrose and St. Augustine present the idea of futurity inherent in the

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[62]St. Augustine, Sermo CXLI, cap. 2, PL, 38, 776.

creation of living objects enabled to propagate their kind. All things are assumed to exist in a state of potentiality, with the creation of original forms or ideas in the beginning foreshadowing and ensuring the future life of the world. St. Ambrose explains this:

> Dedit ergo formam futuris annorum curriculis mundi primus exortus, ut ea lege annorum vices surgerent, atque initio cujusque anni produceret terra nova seminum germina, quo primum Dominus Deus dixerat: Germinet terra herbam feni, seminans. . . .63
>
> The shape of the cycles of years to come has been given form by the first dawn of the world. Based on that precedent, the succession of years would tend to arise, and at the commencement of each year new seedlings would be brought forth, as the Lord God has decreed, "Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed. . . ."

The creation of the world is viewed in this chapter as having taken place in the spring, when everything is burgeoning and flowering. The world's creation in the spring of time is a theme repeated by many of the Fathers, echoed by Aelfric,[64] and ultimately, perhaps, derived from Philo Judaeus.

In this context of the problem of futurity at

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[63]St. Ambrose, Hexaemeron, Lib. 1, cap. 4:13, PL, 14, 139-40.

[64]See Aelfric, Exameron Anglice, ll. 114-116, p. 42:

> fordanðe he on lenctentid, swa swa lareowas secgað,
> gesceop ðone forman dæg ðyssere worulde,
> ðæt is on gerimcræfte XV kalendas aprilis.

creation, it will be valuable to present an example of Philo's allegorical reasoning in his dialectical method. His disquisition on the "incorporeal ideas" displays certain correspondences to St. Augustine's theory of the symbolic futurity inherent in the rationes seminales, a term difficult to translate as it implies the future potentiality of the myriad "forms" of creation. One of Philo's pivotal questions and answers on Genesis runs thus:

> Q. "What is the meaning of the words, "And God made every green thing of the field before it came into being on the earth, and every grass before it grew?
>
> A. In these words he [Moses] alludes to the incorporeal ideas. For the expression 'before it came into being' points to the perfection of every green thing and grass, of plants and trees. And as Scripture says that before He made plants and grass and the other things, it is evident that He made incorporeal and intelligible ideas in accordance with the intelligible nature which these sense-perceptible things on earth were meant to imitate.65

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for in spring, as doctors tell us,
he created the first day of this world,
that is by reckoning the fifteenth day before the Calends of April (18th March).

[65]Philo, Supplement I, Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin, trans. Ralph Marcus (London, 1953), pp. 2-3. Lampe and Woolcombe point out the common use of typological vocabulary by St. Paul and by Philo, and assert that Philo, unlike St. Paul, employed the non-literal, allegorical method: "The presuppositions which conditioned the latter were those of Rabbinic Judaism, whereas the former was conditioned by the presuppositions of Middle Platonism". See G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woolcombe, Essays on Typology (Napierville, Ill., 1957), p. 65.

In brief, God had already measured the chlorophyll in immaterial terms before the foundation of the world. In these same terms, perhaps, God fashioned the "heaven of heavens" as the prototype of the heavens above the earth, in which St. Cyril of Jerusalem perceived a token of the compassion of God: Deus ex bonitate sua maxima coelum divinitati suae pro velo praetendit, ne periremus[66] ("God in his great mercy has spread the heavens as a veil before his own Godhead, that we might not perish").

In the hands of St. Augustine the allegorical method in the moulding of creation myths distinguishes sharply between the spiritual and the corporeal creations. His De Genesi Contra Manichaeos, the Confessiones and De Civitate Dei and the De Genesi ad Litteram, Imperfectus Liber, all contribute greatly to the hexaemeral theme. The enterprize of this last-mentioned book so baffled St. Augustine that he was forced to abandon it half-finished, admitting that its problematical nature raised more questions than those for which he could supply answers. Rather than devolve into theological platitudes, Augustine awaited further spiritual illumination in turning his attention to the "cosmological dimensions, not alien to the history of

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[66]St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechesis, 9:1, PG, 33, 638.

salvation, but rather broader than and inclusive of it".[67] Eugene Te Selle, a modern scholar of Augustine, defines the first created light in the latter's theory as "God's calling upon the spiritual creation to turn toward himself and, by adhering to God and contemplating him without cessation, to be illumined by the eternal Wisdom and become fully 'formed'".[68] The problem of the allegedly temporal succession of the creation "days" is interpreted as a state of knowledge, not the condition of flux:

> All the days are simply a reiteration of the one day, the perfect lucidity and unity of the angelic community which is God's first creation, and this reiteration is to be understood not as a temporal succession but as a properly articulated knowledge, an ordinata cognitio of the whole of creation according to the distinctions between its various realms, coming full circle in the seventh day without evening, with the enjoyment of God as the ultimate end.69

As Origen, the early Christian founder of Neo-platonism, defends in his De Principiis the Mosaic cosmogony in its figural meanings and asserts the spiritual signification of the creation days, St. Augustine influentially for the

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[67]Eugene Te Selle, Augustine the Theologian (New York, 1970), p. 208.

[68]Ibid., p. 200.

[69]Ibid., p. 208.

future of theology attests to their exegetical potential. By analogy from the beauty of created things, the corporeal world mirrors the sanctity and order of the heavenly realm, and guides man toward a proper concept of the Creator.

This vision is brilliantly revealed in the Carmen de Laudibus Dei of the poet Dracontius, an earnest witness to the glorification of God's creation. Such verses as these, involving all the artifacts of creation, contribute to the effect of a cosmic hymn; the measured stateliness of the lines recalls for the reader the doxological connotations of much of Old English verse:

> Agmina te astrorum, te signa, et sidera laudant
> Auctorem confessa suum, te fulmen adorat. . . .
> Te tellus fecunda vocat, te suspicit aer,
> Unda super coelos tibi supplicat et polus omnis,
> Flumina te metuunt, et fontes, stagna, paludes
> Voce sua laudant, te nubila crassa coruscant,
> Te lux alba dies, te nox obscura tenebris
> Te bona temperies, te tempora cuncta precantur,
> Ver, aestas, autumnus, hiems redeuntibus annis.[70]
>
> In troops the stars, the signs, the constellations praise Thee
> Acknowledging thy power; the lightning adores Thee. . . .
> The fertile earth invokes thee, the air contemplates Thee.
> The waters above the heavens supplicate Thee, and the poles.
> The flowing streams fear Thee; fountains and still waters
> Praise Thee with voices; for Thee the dense clouds gleam.
> The bright light of day, the obscure nocturnal shadows,

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[70]Dracontius, Carmen et Deo, Lib. 2, PL, 60, 787-8.

Fine weather and the hours all pray to Thee
together,
Spring, summer, autumn, winter, to Thee yearly
return.

In concluding this section on creation, a glance at the formation of man, the "little world made cunningly", is in order. St. Cyril emphasizes the uniqueness of man's exaltation in the creation hierarchy:

> Sex in diebus Deus mundum fecit: verum mundus propter hominem est. Sol splendidissimus fulgoribus micat: sed ut homini luceat, effectus est; et omnia animalia, ut nobis serviant constituta sunt; herbae et arbores ad usum nostrum creatae. Bona, opificia omnia; sed nullum eorum imago Dei, praeter hominem solum. Sol mandato solum; homo divinus manibus efformatus fuit.[71]
>
> God made the world in six days, yet the world was made for man. The sun, however bright its shining rays, was still created to give light to man. All living creatures were made to serve us. Plants and trees were created for our use. Everything created was good, but of them all none was the image of God save man alone. The sun was summoned into being by a mere command, but man by God's hands.

The distinctive destiny of man, homo ab humo,[72] is here set forth with relation to the subservience of all created orders. The fruits and vines of Paradise throve under

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[71]St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechesis, 12:5, "De Christo Incarnato", PG, 33, 731.

[72]The elaborate typological connections between Adam and Christ, which the early Fathers established and the later ones embellished, form a major development of the exegetical tradition. In early Christian poems, especially those built upon the felix culpa theme, the etymology of Adam appears in various interpretations of the Genesis story. In the following chapters I refer where applicable to such poetic variables.

Adam's husbandry; the asp and the lion were obedient to his call. St. John of Damascus summarizes the Greek patristic view of prelapsarian man in his portrayal of microcosmic properties. Postulating the simultaneous creation of body and soul against the "ravings" of Origen, St. John launches into an oxymoronic pattern of description. God, he argues, made man innocent, virtuous, free from grief and care, and adorned with all good qualities. He made of man "a sort of miniature world within the larger one", earthly and heavenly, halfway between greatness and lowliness, at once spirit and flesh. Ultimately he could be removed to the heavenly sphere by the gift of immortality attained by participation in the divine illumination.[73] Man was created sinless and endowed with only one fatal gift, the privilege of preference, which led to the spoliation of Eden. An awareness of man's Fall flavours the Fathers' accounts of creation and touches with elegy their descriptions of Paradise. Now, if it should

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[73]St. John of Damascus, De Fide Orthodoxa, Lib. 2, cap. 12, "De Homine", PG, 94, 919. Relevant to this is J. E. Cross' citation of Isidore, Etymologiarum, Lib. 11, PL, 82, 397, and St. Ambrose, De Officiis Ministrorum, Lib. 3, PL, 16, 158, in supporting his outline of the poetic aspects of microcosm and macrocosm. See J. E. Cross, "Aspects of Microcosm and Macrocosm in OE Literature", Comparative Literature, 14 (1962), 1.

seem that we have lingered in patristic pastures, let us ascend the holy mountain and enter the Garden of God.[74]

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[74]No pretence has been made in the scope of this chapter to indicate thoroughly or systematically the views of the Fathers on the creation theme. Any reader, spending even a score of hours with the J. P. Migne compilation of the Patrologia Latina and Patrologia Graecae, begins to realize that such a study would demand a lifetime's work. In summary, it might be said that the imago mundi presented by the Fathers in all their various interpretations, provides a mythopoeic contribution to the legacy of traditions upon which the learned Old English poets may well have drawn. Besides a number of lesser authorities, I have depended for the the knowledge of provenance and availability of most sources upon J. D. A. Ogilvy, Books Known to the Anglo-Latin Writers from Aldhelm to Alcuin (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), and Ogilvy, Books Known to the English, 597-1066 (Cambridge, Mass., 1967). (Supplement.)

III: PARADISE

Because the innumerable traditions about the nature of the Earthly Paradise, a myth common to most ancient cultures, do not fall neatly into an orderly progression, I wish to waive chronological sequence in drawing a brief outline with examples concerning this vital myth. Only the salient and most obvious attributes of paradise pictured by the Greek and Latin Fathers and related early Christian writings will be indicated here. As the arguments in future chapters corroborate the definiteness and continuity of the Mediterranean paradise-myth, particularly in the Old English allegory The Phoenix, a broad and loosely-defined framework of paradise traditions preceding Anglo-Saxon civilization would seem to be appropriate.

The origin of the Earthly Paradise myth is wholly pre-Christian. The myth bears relevance to classical concepts of the aurea aetas 'golden age', and also shares several attributes of Christian millennial visions. In retrospect, Hesiod and the other Greek poets viewed the eponymous hero Cronus as the initiator of a universally peaceful era. In the youth of the world, after the banishment of Chaos beyond Oceanus, the "age of Cronus" came to signify the period of "paradise on earth". Its relation

to the millenial expectation of Isaias is obvious. The Old Testament prophet envisions universal peace in the day of the "root of Jesse" when Israel shall rest and "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb".[75] (Isaias 11:6) Hesiod in the Works and Days recalls the world's idyllic "beginning of things, which were the same for gods as for mortals", when men were "prosperous in flocks, on friendly terms with the blessed immortals".[76] Lactantius, like Isaias, anticipates the golden age to come. In quoting the Sibyl of Cumae, Lactantius builds upon this theme, calling the glorious future age the reign of Saturn. Then the earth shall open with fruition, the rivers shall flow with wine, the streams with milk, and the sun, glowing over all the earth, shall enhance the spontaneous generation of flowers and fruit:

> Mundus denique ipse gaudebit; et omnis rerum natura laetabitur. . . . Leones et vituli ad praesepe simul stabunt: lupus ovem non rapiet, canis non venabitur, accipitres et aquilae non nocebunt: infans cum serpentibus ludet.[77]

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[75]Unless otherwise stated all biblical quotations in English are from the King James Authorized Version, and are indicated in context.

[76]Hesiod, Works and Days, trans. Richard Lattimore (Ann Arbor, 1959), pp. 31-2, (ll. 120-1).

[77]Lactantius, Divinarum Institutionum, Lib. 7, cap. 24, "De Renovato Mundo", PL, 6, 808-811. The mythopoeic debt of the Christian apologist to the Fourth Eclogue of Vergil is immediately apparent to scholars of the golden age of Latin literature.

> The earth itself shall at length rejoice; and all of nature's creation shall be glad. . . . lions and calves shall be stalled together protected; the wolf shall not molest the lamb, the dog shall not seek prey, the hawks and eagles shall not destroy, the child shall play with the serpent.

In the establishment of early Christian doctrine, Isidore, while treating original sin, states the ideal age of the world to have been that of prelapsarian Adam.[78] The Greek, Hebrew, and Latin mythical correspondence is evident: paradise on earth existed in a condition of innocence and a knowledge only of the good. In the eighth century John of Damascus elaborates this fact, relating it to the Tree of Life in the midst of Eden. The Tree of Life is that whole and undivided Tree that brings the only participation in the good, an activity which ensures immortality for man.[79]

To avoid the effect of a mere recounting of the history of ideas on the Earthly Paradise myth, it seems appropriate to consider in terms of a mosaic its thought-currents and image-complexes. An apparently unstructured

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[78]Isidore of Seville, De Ordine Creaturarum, cx, PL, 83, 938 ff.

[79]St. John of Damascus, De Fide Orthodoxa, Lib. 2, cap. 11, PG, 94, 912 ff.

outline appears to be consistent with the composite nature of the material to be explored. In turning, then, to Isidore's Etymologiae,[80] we find crucial distinctions laid out between the heavenly and earthly paradises, while his Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum[81] interprets the allegorical perspectives in the terrestrial Paradise. On this theme the Fathers offer a multiplicity of exegetical writings, some of them pedestrian, others revealing an astonishing poetic power. Among the early mythographers of the Earthly Paradise legend, the garden of God planted "eastward in Eden" is generally indicated. In later recensions of the myth it is often understood as a sanctum or hallowed dwelling in the midst of, yet mythically set apart from, the profane world. Throughout his Homiliae in Genesin St. John Chrysostom asserts that the Earthly Paradise is absolutely located in the temporally-bound creation, just as God's successive acts in creating the cosmos were begun simultaneously with the creation of time itself.[82]

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[80]Isidore of Seville, Etymologiae: Differentiarum, "De Duplici Paradiso", PL, 83, 75.

[81]Isidore, Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum, PL, 83, 216 ff.

[82]St. John Chrysostom, Hom. 7, PG, 53, 21-384.

Common to all the authors involved in this theme is the recognition of the cosmic quality of Paradise: it symbolizes the Heavenly Paradise in little. The motif of microcosm and macrocosm, already discussed with reference to the creation of the world and man, can be profitably applied to the Earthly and Heavenly Paradises. In expanding this idea, however obliquely stated, Wallace-Hadrill writes,

> God planted a garden eastward in Eden as the culmination of his ordering of chaos. It was beautiful because it was ordered, and thus Gregory of Nyassa could write of it before man appeared in it, "animals skipping about, running to and fro in the thickets, while every sheltered and shady spot was ringing with bird song" . . . This was not the primeval jungle but Paradise, for the mind trained in Plato and Aristotle would see no beauty in disorder, any more than the mind trained in the Old Testament scriptures would see beauty in the wilderness.83

Eden itself, the Earthly Paradise and the land of the mythical Phoenix, are considered to be located in the East, the Orient, or as some poets suggest, in the regions of the Indus River. This view contrasts with the pagan Greek concept of the Garden of the Hesperides, or the Isles of the Blessed as located in the West. The topography of Paradise is invariably elevated, "far hence", and toward the rising sun. St. Jerome claims for it a mountain-top situation: Vel certe mons sanctus Dei, paradisus (ut

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83D. S. Wallace-Hadrill, The Greek Patristic View of Nature (Manchester, 1968), p. 90.

diximus) intelligendus est[84] ("Or without doubt the holy mountain of God is to be known as 'Paradise', as we say"). Severianus, in the De Mundi Creatione Oratio, writes that God planted Eden in the East, representing by that direction the beginning of life for man. The direction of heaven's luminaries is from East to West, signifying the life cycle of the sons and daughters of Adam. John of Damascus takes up the theme in encomiastic language typical of the Greek Fathers:

> In Oriente omni terra sublimior positus fuit, probeque temperatus, ac subtilissimo purissimoque aere undique collustratus, plantis numquam non floridis uernans, suavissimo odore et lumine plenus, elegantiae omnis, quae quidem in sensum cadat, et pulchritudinis cogitatum superans, divina plane regio. . . .85
>
> It was situated in the East and was higher than all the rest of the earth. It was temperate in climate and bright with the softest and purest of air. It was luxuriant with everblooming plants, filled with fragrance, flooded with light, and surpassing all conception of sensible fairness and beauty. In truth, it was a divine place. . . .

Further in this chapter St. John discusses in a sophisticated exegetical mode the meanings of God's injunction, "Of every tree of Paradise thou shalt eat", which means, "By the aid of all created things, be thou drawn up to Me, their

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[84]St. Jerome, Commentariorum in Ezechielem Prophetam, PL, 25, 285.

[85]St. John of Damascus, De Fide Orthodoxa, Lib. 2, cap. 11, PG, 94, 914.

Creator, and from them reap the one fruit which is Myself, who am the true life".[86]

All of the Fathers agree with Tertullian that Eden, a treasury of every joy and pleasure, is a place of divine beauty and unfading completion. This early and inventive Latin Father, in pointing out the assimilation of Christian belief by pagan poets and philosophers, describes Paradise in contrast to gehenna 'hell':

> Et si paradisum nominemus, locum divinae amoenitatis recipiendis sanctorum spiritibus destinatum, maceria quadam igneae illius zonae a notitia orbis communis segregatum, Elysii campi fidem occupaverunt.[87]
>
> If we mention Paradise, a place of supernatural beauty, destined to receive the spirits of the saints, severed from the knowledge of this world by the barrier, so to speak, of that fiery zone, the Elysian fields have already won belief.

Sidonius Apollinarius and Rabanus Maurus repeat such material about the sanctity of the Earthly Paradise, its removal both spatial and temporal from the flux and mutation of fallen creation, and from the waters of the flood. In highly embellished images Eden is presented as

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[86]John of Damascus, op. cit., Lib. 2, cap. 11, PL, 94, 915.

[87]Tertullian, Apologeticus Adversus Gentes, cap. 47, PL, 1, 587.

ringed with a wall of fire, guarded by Cherubim (according to the Vulgate), separated by height or by a watery distance, and possessing unending spring. Rabanus Maurus dwells upon the separation of the Garden from the Deluge, its protection by a long reach of Ocean.[88] Because of its mythical removal, the laws of nature established at creation are in abeyance. No ravage of the fallen order of creation can touch Paradise, neither invading flood nor fire, no frost or hail, no ungentle wind or storm. Only the unchanging temperateness of eternal spring, with its flowery spoil and luxuriance of growth, characterizes the Earthly Paradise. This empery of peace is often described among the Fathers by negative terms, in a stylistic trait common throughout the tradition both Latin and Old English.

A conceptual conflation of the horticultural, agricultural, and mineral aspects of Eden is immediately evident in the Christian poems celebrating the Garden of God. Sidonius Apollinarius in his Carmen series presents the distinguishing features of Eden thus:

> Ver ubi continuum est, interpellata nec ullis
> Frigoribus pallescit humus; sed flore perenni . . .
> Halant rura rosis, indescriptos que per agros

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[88]Rabanus Maurus, Commentariorum in Genesim, Lib. 1, cap. 12, PL, 107, 476 ff.

> Fragrat odor: violam, cytisum, serpylla, ligus rum, Lilia, narcissos. . . .89
>
> Spring there is perennial, disturbed not at all by winter's cold whitening the ground; yet perpetual flowers . . .wild roses breathe, through the undivided fields fragrant in essence: violets, clover, thyme, the spreading cypress, lilies and narcissus. . . .

As in mediaeval manuscript illumination, the rose and lily represent the full flowering of perfection. The cone-bearing cypress, not yet established as a symbol of mourning, is an emblem of the Garden's vitality. The typical opening of this passage, Est locus oceani, longinquis proximus Indis ("There is an ocean-spot, placed afar off near India") appears in variant forms in the literary presentation of the sacred garden. Pseudo-Tertullian in his De Iudicio Domini presents the largesse of Eden in comparable language: Est locus Eois Domino dilectus in oris, / Lux ubi clara, nitens, spiratque salubrior aura ("There is a spot in the East, pleasing in the sight of God; / Light there is clear and glowing, and breathes a healthier air"). Here is immutabile tempus ("unchanging weather") in the secreta Deo regio ("secret place of God"). Here also,

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89 Sidonius Apollinarius, Carmen II, PL, 58, 654.

Omnia fert foecunda, solo praedivite tellus,
Flores in pratis flagrant, et purpura campis. . . .
Roscidaque hic multo variantur semine rura,
Et roscis nivea crispatur floribus arva.[90]

All fruitfully bears; the earth alone surpassingly rich,
Flowers glow in meadows and purple plains . . . .
And here many [flowers] wet with dew
are varigated from wild seed,
And the snowy field is covered with dewy flowers.

Undoubted masters of classical concepts, the Christian poets were equally learned in the allegorical implications of Scripture. All the full-blown beauty of Eden, replete with pines and cedars, magnificent fruits and ambrosial dew, precious gems and welling streams, the scents of spice and apples, unites in highly stylized images of perfection. Collectively, these recall to the reader the complex of images associated by the author of Canticles with the Church. More pointedly, perhaps, they emphasize the anagogical outlook of the poet. For his own glorification as well as for Adam's pleasure, God has planted Eden eastwards where the redeemed are prefigured in the lines,

Illi exsultantes divinis laudibus omnes
Hortantesque simul referunt ad sidera voces,
Psallentes Domino celebrant per gaudia grates,
Innocuamque viam nuntius comitantibus ibunt.[91]

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[90]Pseudo-Tertullian, De Iudicio Domini, 8, PL, 2, 1151.

[91]Pseudo-Tertullian, op. cit., 1152.

> These all exalting and exhorting with praises divine address their voices to the stars. They celebrate the Lord in psalms, thanksgiving out of joy, and they show [imbunt] the way of innocence to the band.

Such psalm-like qualities distinguish the poems of Dracontius, Prudentius, and Avitus on the Edenic theme. It is valuable to recognize that both patristic and poetic accounts of Paradise share a common allegorical application (however oblique in the Christian poems), a communal verbal heritage and conceptual resources.

To mention briefly the anonymous poem De Ligno Vitae[92] is to recognize a familiar symbol, the Tree of Life. This poem is structured around the notion that Eden, a microcosm of the orbis terrae itself, was situated at the geometric centre of the earth. Est locus ex omni medius, quem cernimus, orbe ("There is a spot at the centre of all, which we discern by a circle"). Typology enters the poem as the fruit and branches of the Tree of Life provide the way to the saints' repose in the shade of the celestial Tree in the Kingdom of God: Hinc iter ad ramos, et dulcia poma salutis: / Inde iter ad coelum per ramos arboris altae[93] ("From hence the way to the branches and the honeyed and health-giving fruit: / Thence the way to the heavens through the boughs of the lofty Tree"). The comparable

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[92] Date of poem falls in the fifth century.

[93] De Ligno Vitae, PL, 2, 1171-4.

Carmen of Dracontius offers a like pattern of delicate flowers, jewelled turf, and eternal spring in conventional formulaic phrasing beginning Est locus in terra diffundens quatuor amnes ("There is a spot in the earth pouring forth four streams"), and continuing with such effusions as Ver ubi perpetuum communes temperat auras, / Ne laedat flores, et ut omnia poma coquantur[94] ("There perpetual spring with temperate air communing fails to injure the florets, that all the fruits may mature").

Cathemerinon V of Prudentius, titled Hymnus ad Incensum Lucernae, relates information about the same gardens, groves of spice, streams, grassy meadows, perpetual spring and fecundity of the Heavenly Paradise. The fragrance of the heavenly realm is compared to the sweet hymns and prayers of devotion offered by saints:

> Illic purpureis tecta rosariis
> Omnis fragrat humus, calthaque pinguia
> Et molles violas, et tenues crocos
> Fundit fonticulis uda fugacibus.
> Illic et gracili balsama surculo
> Desudata fluunt, raraque cinnama
> Spirant, et folium, fonte quod abdito
> Praelambens fluvius portat in exitum.[95]

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[94]Dracontius, Carmen de Deo, Lib. 1, PL, 60, 704, 706.

[95]Prudentius, Cathemerinon V, PL, 59, 826-7. The translation is from The Poems of Prudentius, trans. Sister M. Eagan (Washington, 1962), Fathers of the Church Series, editorial director R. J. Deferrari, p. 36.

There bright roses exhale fragrance from gardens
rare,
And where murmuring springs water the earth around,
Modest violets bloom, crocus and marigold,
Lifting radiant flowers, rich in their saffron hues.
There sweet balsams distill perfume from slender
trees,
The rare cinnamon breathes spices that fill the air,
And the leaf of the nard floats from the hidden
spring
To the mouth of the stream laving the pleasant
strand.

Finally, the Poematum -- De Initio Mundi of Avitus presents Paradise as Lucus inacessa cunctis mortalibus arce permanet ("an inaccessible grove kept inviolate from mortality"), and a spot where semper lux pura venit ("always pure light exists"). In the conventional form,

Est locus eoo mundi servatus in axe
Secretis, natura, tuis, ubi solis ab ortu
Vicinos nascens aurora repercutit Indos.96

There is a place thither in the world
protected by the heavens; sequestered
by nature, where the sun from its rising
spares the Indos region in the crescent
dawn.

More explicitly than the poets, the Greek and Latin Fathers present allegorical readings of the Earthly Paradise. In recognizing the intimate connection between the hexaemeral and paradise themes, such authors as Philo and St. Augustine as well as the Anglo-Saxon Bede continue

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[96]Avitus, De Initio Mundi, PL, 59, 328.

to interpret the elements of creation with their multifarious levels of meaning. The expositions on the four rivers of Eden closely weave together creation-and-paradise myths, and in so doing they invite our recalling of ancient river civilizations. Homer embodied the early Greek assumption that everything evolved from the circumambient Oceanus, the primordial All-Father wedded to Tethys, mother of the rivers. In Hesiod's cosmogonic scheme Oceanus held back the encroachment of chaotic forces. For the river civilizations of Egyptian and Hindu peoples, primeval waters marked the beginning of things.[97] Such an emergence myth gave rise to the veneration of rivers as the source of seasonal fertility and renewal. Associations of this kind, however oblique, may be latent in St. Augustine's discussion of the four rivers which irrigated Eden.

> Flumen autem quod procedebat ex Eden, id est ex deliciis et voluptate et epulis, quod flumen a propheta significatur in Psalmis, cum dicit "Torrente voluptatis tuae potabis eos", (Psal. xxxv, 9); hoc est enim Eden, quod latine voluptas dicitur; dividitur in quatuor partes, et quatuor virtutes significat, prudentiam, fortitudinem, temperantiam, justitiam.98

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[97]See a valuable discussion of this theme in Meyer Reinhold, Past and Present: The Continuity of Classical Myths (Toronto, 1972), p. 59.

[98]St. Augustine, De Genesi Contra Manicheos, cap. 10:13, PL, 34, 203.

> The flood, therefore, which proceeds out of Eden, is of delight, voluptuousness, and feasting, which by the Prophet was signified in the Psalms, as he says, "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures". Here, therefore, is Eden, which in Latin is called "delight". It is divided into four parts, which signify four virtues: prudence, courage, moderation, and justice.

His analysis of the Edenic elements in the detailed expository De Genesi Contra Manicheos reveals the conviction, Ad orientem, lucem sapientiae in Eden, id est in deliciis immortalibus et intelligibilibus[99] ("Toward the East, toward the grove of wisdom in Eden, there is immortality and knowledge in pleasure"). Even as St. Augustine perceives in the four rivers of Eden the four cardinal virtues, Bede detects the unity they reveal in fulfilling their appointed courses by flowing through subterranean channels.

> . . . ea flumina quorum fontes noti esse dicuntur, alicubi esse sub terris et post tractus prolixarum locis regionum aliis erupisse, ubi tanquam in suis fontibus noti esse perhibentur.100

> . . . that river which, it is said, is signified by four fountains, is somewhere under the earth and behind the tracts extending to the locality of other waterspouts, where, it is maintained, these fountains are perceived.

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[99]St. Augustine, op. cit., PL, 34, 202.

[100]Bede, Hexaemeron I, PL, 91, 45-6.

Augustine, Ambrose, and Bede, in a long tradition of writings about paradise dwell exhaustively upon the allegorical interpretation of Eden and its related concepts of horticultural abundance and mineral treasure. St. Jerome, too, leaves no stone unturned as he invests with symbolic value even the precious gems to be found in the Earthly Paradise.[101] Perhaps his three-year sojourn in the desert of Chalcis sharpened his focus of personal apocalyptic expectation and gilded his pen with paradisal visions. St. Ambrose, as well, in his Liber de Paradiso interprets the mineral resources of the Garden, as he writes,

> Posuit autem eum in paradiso sicut solem in coelo, exspectantem regnum coelorum, quemadmodum creatura exspectat revelationem filiorum Dei.102
>
> He placed man in Paradise, just as he placed the sun in heaven, awaiting lordship over the heavens, just as the creature expects the revelation of the sons of God.

In Paradise was planted the sacred "green tree" of the Psalmist's commendation, which symbolized the well-cultivated soul planted and rooted by rivers of living water. Here, indeed, in the Garden of God the book of creation and

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[101]St. Jerome, Liber Hebraicarum Quaestionum in Genesim, PL, 23, 989.

[102]St. Ambrose, Liber de Paradiso, cap. 1:5, PL, 14, 293.

Paradise was opened. St. Ambrose extends the agrarian or vernal metaphor to further dimensions of Scripture; for him, the book of Genesis was a paradise where the virtues of the Patriarchs blossomed forth. Deuteronomy was a paradise where the commandments of the Law flourished. The Gospels constituted a paradise where the Tree of Life brought forth good fruits and bestowed upon all men the teachings of everlasting hope.[103] Bede, too, as we have seen, embroidered the same traditions with symbolic potentialities as he viewed in Paradise a type of the future fatherland:

> . . . [paradisus], in quo positus est homo primus, etsi vel Ecclesiae praesentis, vel futurae patriae typum tenet . . . locum scilicet amoenissimum, fructuosis nemoribus opacatum, eumdumque magnum, et magno fonte fecundum.104
>
> . . . [Paradise], in which has been placed the first man, may yet represent the Church or figure forth a type of the future fatherland . . . the place, it is manifest, is most beautiful, the fruit of the sylvan grove; the great and mighty fountains make it fertile.

Of the primordial joy of the "first man", St. Augustine asserts, Quid ergo? Adam non habuit Dei gratiam? ("What then? Did Adam not have the grace of God?"). The

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[103]St. Ambrose, Epistolarum Classis I, Epistola 49, PL, 16, 1204.

[104]Bede, Hexaemeron, Lib. I:1, PL, 91, 43.

argument proceeds with the emphasis on prevenient grace:

> Imo vero habuit magnam, sed disparem. Ille in bonis erat, quae de bonitate sui Conditoris acceperat: neque enim ea bona et ille suis meritis comparaverat, in quibus prorsus nullum patiebatur malum.105
>
> Yes, truly, he had it greatly, but of a different kind. He was hedged about by goodness which he had received by the benefit of his Creator, for he had not acquired these gifts by his own merit, in which good things he endured no suffering at all.

In this disquisition is buried an awareness of the ironic condition of Adam's happiness in an Eden which, characterized by faultless climate and perennial spring, seems to exist precariously before the postlapsarian world, with its fatal knowledge and loss of innocence, threatens to engulf it. The cloistered architectural image of the walled Paradise embodies seeds of potential desacralization: the domus mundi, the hospitable "house of this world", has as its opposite model, in the thought of the Fathers, the windy hall of hell. An acute awareness of the infernal realm appears in the sermons of the Fathers on Paradise and the Fall. Having become victims of the caprice of climate, Adam and Eve share the curse pronounced upon the earth in its fallen state. In the wider creation to which they are exiled, thorns and thistles raise their barbs

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105St. Augustine, De Correptione et Gratia, cap. 11: 29, PL, 44, 933.

in place of the former luxuriance of Paradise.[106] At the mercy of frost, hail, sun and wind, Adam must wrest sustenance from fallen nature as the cycle of the Fall is completed: sin infects the physical world and breaks the charmed circle of the primal creation. John of Damascus[107] states the irony clearly, writing that after the Fall the creation formerly subject to Adam rose up against this ruler appointed by God. He was then ordered to till in the sweat of his brow the clods from which he had been fashioned. In amplifying this theme, Aelfric contrasts vividly the prelapsarian reign of peace with the affliction of Adam by the lower orders of creation:

> Hi mihton ða syððan seocnysse ðrowian, and hine byton lys and lyftene gnættas and eac swylce flean and ðre gehwylce wyrmas, and him wæron deregendlice dracan and næddran and ða reðan deor mihton ðerian his cinne, ðe hine ealle aér arwurdodon swyðe.108

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[106]Significant in this context are the typological innovatio ns of St. Cyril of Jerusalem. J. M. Evans writes, "To the existing [typological] design he added analogies between the thorns promised in God's sentence on the earth and the thorns in Christ's crown, the garden of Eden and the garden of Gethsemane and the fig-tree which clothed Adam and Eve and the fig-tree cursed by Christ". See J. M. Evans, Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition, p. 102.

[107]John of Damascus, De Fide Orthodoxa, Lib. 2, cap. 10, PL, 94, 907.

[108]Aelfric, Exameron Anglice, ll. 459-464, p. 68.

> Thenceforward they could suffer sickness, and lice and gnats of the air bit them, and likewise fleas and all other kinds of reptiles. And serpents and adders were injurious to them, and the fierce beasts, all of which reverenced him greatly before, could injure his descendants.

The Fathers write at length upon the ruin of the work of creation; angels, they say, witnessed and lamented its spoliation. Only the sacred enclave of Eden or the Earthly Paradise remained inviolate, guarded by Cherubim with flaming swords, or by a sheet of fire. A mental review of the beginnings of each of the hexaemeral and paradisal accounts, with their atmosphere of hope and promise, reminds the reader forcefully of the life-cycle of man. The mediaeval maxim, "In Adam's fall we sinnèd all" invites us to contemplate the route by which man, forsaking the paths of exile in the worldly kingdom, may in the ritual of salvation and baptism, find again the green path[109] to

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[109]Hugh J. Keenan significantly suggests that the tradition of the green streets of heaven sprang from the 'green meadows' of Eden and lingers in the modern translation of 'green pastures' of Psalm 23. "By 1400", he writes, "the green way had taken on an opposite meaning; by then it signified the way to hell." See "Exodus 312: the Green Street of Paradise", NM, 71 (1970), 460. See also Kari Sajavaara, "The Withered Footprints on the Green Street of Paradise", NM, 76 (1975), 34-38, in which "the interrelationship between the green colour and the path leading to Paradise, and to Heaven, is [demonstrated to be] even more obvious in another passage in the Cursor Mundi".

Paradise and re-enter the Garden of God. The graceful Cathemerinon X of Prudentius, with its typology of the Fall, offers reassurance for the faithful whose journey, ritual, and return are accomplished:

> Patet ecce fidelibus ampli
> Via lucida jam paradisi,
> Licet et nemus illud adire,
> Homini quod ademerat anguis.[110]
>
> Behold, to the faithful is opened the bright path to Paradise leading; man's entry is sanctioned once more to the garden he lost to the serpent.

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[110]Prudentius, Cathemerinon X, Hymnus Circa Exsequias Defuncti, PL, 59, 887-8.

PART TWO: THE POETIC TRADITIONS

CHAPTER TWO

CREATION AS COSMOPOESY: THE HEXAEMERAL THEME IN GENESIS A

Among the topics debated by the writers in the hexaemeral tradition, no subject was entirely agreed upon except the conjunction of God's goodness and strength in the acts of creation. The designation of God the All-Creator in the exordium of Genesis A emphasizes these two faculties in the terms soðfæst and swiðfeorm (righteous and strong), thus echoing the assumptions of a long line of texts and sermons on creation. These commentaries, collectively known as "Hexaemera", formed a vast and diversified body of literature which struck roots deeply into scriptural tradition, philosophic enquiry, and the ever-changing conceptions of natural science and the study of phenomena. The hexaemeral commentaries reveal deeply-reasoned attempts to discover and demonstrate the existence of an intelligible world as the spiritual counterpart of the material world. In the exegetical and allegorical writings of the Fathers of the Church appear interpretations of the providence of God, the knowledge of which is to be found in the contemplation of the created order. Throughout Genesis A the broad variety of epithets for God expands in important ways the primary conception of the divine

intelligence as sōdfæst and swīdfeorm.

The survey in Chapter I of the range of hexaemeral interests considered by the Fathers worthy of elaborate argument enables us to draw together three major perspectives in viewing the Genesis A creation story. These are first, the philosophical perspective involving theory; second, the theological perspective entailing dogma; and third, the mythopoeic perspective evoking our perception of the poem in terms of "cosmopoesy".

The philosophical perspective revolves around theories of the cosmos, ranging from sophisticated argument to impious speculation by skeptical philosophers about what God did before he created the world. The theological perspective concomitantly recognizes that dogma is a major characteristic of much Old English poetry with its homiletical character. The central document of mediaeval scholarship, the Vulgate Bible, gave to the Christian poets their conviction of lessons to be drawn from the paradigmatic acts of God in creation. A vision of the world as cosmopoesy, however, enriches the implications of the philosophical and theological approaches even as they in turn contribute to the mythopoeic perspective. This involves the attempt to define the myths that shaped Anglo-Saxon assumptions about creation, the relation of time and eternity, the dialogue of God with man, and life on the fleeting level of middle-earth. The mythopoeic approach

to the poem forms the third perspective by which a more comprehensive view than that offered by philosophical or theological approaches may be achieved.

The present task is to allow the poem to speak for itself from within its own, albeit fragmented structure. As well as investigating the poem's individual features, I have the additional task of selecting from the hexaemeral tradition those themes that may profitably be brought to bear upon Genesis A, for the poet has unravelled the web of previous creation stories and has rewoven them into a distinctive associative fabric. The purpose, as stated earlier, is to extend our insights about the habits of mind and perception which characterized the Anglo-Saxon poetic intelligence at work.

The chapter is organized as a progressive examination of Genesis A, 1-25a and 92-234 with reference to the three critical perspectives as they seem appropriate. The hexaemeral theme is integral to the poem's imaginative structure and its mythological conception. Indispensable to the art and meaning of Genesis A, the exordium and account of creation are intimately related and are thematically functional in a variety of ways. The associational potential of the fusion of Mediterranean and Germanic cultures enriches the interpretation of creation under the third suggested perspective -- the mythopoeic. This last,

in terms of the investigation of the conceptual origins of the poem, may yield insights in extending our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon cosmological assumptions. The a-historical dimensions of the poem involve a theological framework in the account of the transformation from peace to war in heaven and the corresponding inversion of this as chaos is superseded by form and a peaceful earthly hall is established. Opportunity is thus given for the devotional style and theme to build upon the cosmic events preceding the creation of middle-earth. The hexaemeral tradition in Genesis A conforms to no one type of poetic paraphrase. In its range and variety of themes the creation narrative captures something of the dynamic character of its own subject matter. How this is achieved is the subject of the present chapter.

The demonstration of the interlaced themes of the introduction of Genesis A and the following hexaemeral narrative may be facilitated by a translation of the poem's first 25 lines. As I have observed, this passage is integral to the method of the Old English poet who is contributing not to sacred history as such, but to its mythic interpretation.

Us is riht micel ðæt we rodera weard,
Wereda wuldorcining, wordum herigen,
modum lufien! He is mægna sped,
heafod ealra heahgesceafta,
frea ælmihtig. Næs him fruma æfre
or geworden, ne nu ende cymþ
ecean drihtnes, ac he bið a rice
ofer heofenstolas. Heagum þrymmum
soðfæst and swiðfeorm sweglbosmas heold,
þa wæron gesette wide and side
þurh geweald godes wuldres bearnum,
gasta weardum. Hæfdon gleam and dream,
and heora ordfruman, engla þreatas,
beorhte blisse. Wæs heora blæd micel!

þegnas þrymfæste þeoden heredon,
sægdon lustum lof, heora liffrean
demdon, drihtenes dugeþum wæron
swiðe gesælige. Synna ne cuþon,
firena fremman, ac hie on friðe lifdon,
ece mid heora aldor. Elles ne ongunnon
ræran on roderum nymþe riht and soþ,
ærðon engla weard for oferhygde
dwæl on gedwilde. Noldan dreogan leng
heora selfra ræd, ac hie of siblufan
godes ahwurfon.[1]

It is most fitting that we the Lord of heaven,
the Glory-King of hosts, magnify with speech,
adore in our hearts. He abounds in power,
the Head of all exalted creatures,
Lord Almighty. Never for him was beginning
or source brought about, nor does an end now come
for the everlasting Lord, but he rules eternally
over the heavenly seats. In high majesty,
righteous and surpassingly strong, the realms
of the sky he holds,
which were established far and wide
through the might of God for the children of glory,
wardens of souls. They had brilliance and bliss

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[1] Genesis A, ll. 1-25a, p. 3, of The Junius Manuscript. Quotations from the Old English poems under study are from the standard edition, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, vols. 1-6, ed. G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie (New York, 1931-53), hereafter cited as PR with the relevant volume, page, and line numbers. Successive quotations are indicated by line numbers in context.

and their Creator, troops of angels,
bright in bliss. How great was their glory!
Thanes stalwart in glory judged the Prince good;
gladly sang laud to their Life-Lord,
in the thaneship of their Lord they were
exceedingly blessed. Sin they knew not,
the framing of crimes, but they in beatitude abode
forever with their Prince. Naught did they perform
in heaven save right and truth,
until the angels' leader in his overweening pride
lured them into error. No longer would they fulfil
their own counsel, but they from the peaceful
love of God turned away.

Here in the shape of a miniature psalm is laid out the Old English poet's conception of the primordial society of heaven. This ideal of the beatific vision develops through the poet's acknowledgment of God's power and sovereignty, his timeless existence, his righteousness and strength, and his reception of praise from adoring troops of angels. Their sinless estate and their participation in the dream or deathless joy of God together evoke a vision of a loyal society bound in love and faithfulness to the adoration of the Life-Lord whose protection encircles the celestial thrones. The Scriptural cosmogony of Genesis holds no precedent for this account of the aurea aetas anterior to creation, nor does it relate the Fall of the faithless angels. In contrast to the Hebrew creation story, the Old English poet has framed his introduction with imaginative power to include the relating of this holy society's degeneration into warring dryhts.

Thematically and structurally Genesis A 1-25a

sets forth several motifs. The lines establish a type of proem which proceeds from an a-historical, timeless perspective. The bright vision of loyal thanes amplifying in chorus the brilliance of the Glory-King, and receiving his favour and protection, foreshadows the dryht-imagery of the whole of Genesis A. The presentation of cosmic harmony among the seats of heaven contrasts vividly with the closely-following myth of the Fall of the bad angels, weavers of evil counsel. This last myth, moreover, provides a transition to the creation narrative, thus forming an indispensable link between the exordium and the hexaemeral account. Through a later consideration of the moral imperatives under which Adam lived in paradise we may see how the angels' Fall directly influenced the life of the terrestrial dryht on middle-earth.

Genesis A 1-25a thus presents the reader with a widely-ranging field of investigation. Against it may be set those commentaries on creation which lack the framing device so effectively employed by the Junius poet, for a host of such texts presents the creation theme without reference to the angels who were commonly assumed among the Fathers to be the first creation of God. That no claim for uniqueness, however, may be offered on behalf of the poem's exordium becomes evident as several diverging traditions open out before us. Through a consideration of representative examples from these traditions encountered in

context, the literary position of Genesis A may be assessed.

A conventional and decorous exhortation,

> Us is riht micel ðæt we rodera weard,
> wereda wuldorcining, wordum herigen,
> modum lufien! (1-3a),

this is nevertheless emphatic and devotional in its balanced structure, evident in the double epithet for God and the hortatory subjunctive herigen and lufien. Immediately proposing the comeliness of man's praise of God both in audible words and in the silent recesses of the heart, the poet suggests the relationship that structures the earthly dryht, the social unit characterized by responsive interaction between generous lord and loyal thane. For God, in the Old English scheme of creation, did not exist "beyond attributes" as certain Fathers tended to argue; rather, he revealed his attributes in each of his creative deeds. In the ritual re-enactment of God's model of creation carried out by the princes later in the Genesis account may be seen a mythopoeic complement or recapitulation of divine creation. The princes and patriarchs thus responded in loyalty to the divine giver of gifts, the Dryhten who presided over his society of earthly thanes. Indeed, the poet's imagining of God as wuldorcining (Glory-King) shapes the concept of God as Dryhten, the transcendent model of divine caritas.

A fruitful area of comparison between the exordium of Genesis A and other poetic texts lies in Caedmon's Hymn.[2] The verbal and epithetic correspondence evident here offers poetic imagery complementary to the vision of the Dryhten in Genesis A 1-12. For both Germanic and Old English poetry, the source of heroic terminology was the ancestral wordhord, the patrimony of language and imagery handed down to the English from the pagan Continental societies described by Tacitus. Recurring themes of heroic life and modes of thought characterize the wordhoard in the hands of the Old English poets. The devotional potential of traditions clustering around the tribal unit or dryht is exploited by the Junius poet, and, more obliquely perhaps, by the author of Caedmon's Hymn.

Without interpolating a treatment of Caedmon's Hymn, it will be valuable to point out the verbal correspondence between it and the exordium of Genesis A, as the epithets of the Hymn occur with frequency throughout Genesis A. While the Hymn almost immediately recalls the creation of the world, the opening passage of Genesis A

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[2]PR 6, 106, 1-9. (West Saxon Version) An investigation of textual problems is found in The Manuscripts of Caedmon's Hymn and Bede's Death Song, ed. E. V. K. Dobbie (New York, 1937). In a critical context see also J. B. Bessinger, Jr., "Homage to Caedmon and Others: a Beowulfian Praise Song" in Robert B. Burlin and Edward B. Irving, Jr., Old English Studies in Honour of John C. Pope (Toronto and Buffalo, 1974), 93, in which Bessinger reminds us that "God is not given the name 'God' in Caedmon's Hymn but rather is

extends the theme of promise into a pattern including the angelic creation and the heofenstolas (seats of heaven) without, in fact, explicitly mentioning the earth's formation. That the cosmogonic myth in Genesis A has been shaped by heroic terminology is a commonplace of criticism. The Hymn, too, begins with comparable heroic resources. As the Genesis A account offers praise to the rodera weard (1, Warden of the sky), the Hymn refers to heofenrices Weard (1, Warden of the heavenly kingdom). The Hymn's exhortation, Nu we sculan herian heofenrices weard (1, Now must we praise the Warden of the heavenly kingdom) is a variant of Us is riht micel ðæt we rodera weard / Wereda wuldorcining, wordum herigen (For us is most fitting that we should praise with speech the Warden of the sky, the Glory-King of hosts). Both exhortations share the verb herigean (to praise). The timelessness of God is stressed in ecean drihtnes (for the everlasting Lord) of Genesis A, while ece dryhten appears twice (4 and 8) in the Hymn. God's creative power is He is mægna sped (3, He is full of power) in Genesis, and metodes miht (2, God's might) in the Hymn. Whereas the epithet wereda wuldorcining of Genesis refers in its context to the angel-troops, the comparable term in the Hymn directs

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referred to by a famous series of heroic periphrases in a pleonastic tour de force".

its meaning towards humanity: moncynnes Weard (7, Warden of mankind).

Genesis A emphasizes God's majesty in wuldorcining; the Hymn stresses his providential care for humankind in wuldorfæder (3, Glory-Father). With reference again to the heavenly hosts, the Lord of creation in Genesis A is heafod ealra heahgesceafta (4, Head of all the high creation, or Head of all exalted creatures). The Hymn's epithet, in contrast, is halig scyppend (6, Holy Shaper), the context of which refers to the creation of humanity. The divergence in emphasis is more than slight; the Junius poet's effort to frame the hexaemeral theme by an account of the war in heaven calls for a heightened image of God's majesty rather than emphasis upon his paternal care for his creatures. This latter theme appears later in the Genesis A account of the creation of Eve. From the foregoing comparison of heroic epithets, however, the implication is strong that while Caedmon's Hymn sings of the relationship of God to his creaturely race, the opening of Genesis A directs our attention to the bond between God and his society of angels, to the celestial community of spirits which existed before the corporeal world was spoken into being. It is the theme of this interaction between God as liege-lord and his angels as faithful troops, upon which the exordium of Genesis A turns.

The framing in these terms of the Old English hexaemeral account may have come under the influence of certain Hebrew psalms which link their creation references to extended patterns of praise. The Vulgate Psalm 148:2[3] includes the Psalmist's invocation to the angel-hosts: Laudate eum, omnes angeli eius; / Laudate eum omnes virtutes eius ("Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all ye hosts"). Psalm 102 reveals the Jewish attitude toward the angels as ministers of God's word and will. These concepts are closely related to the Old English treatment of the angels in Genesis A 1-25a. These angels are the ministers and messengers of God whose exalted estate reveals itself in Bede's phrase calling these blessed troops "sons of God".[4] The poetic terms wereda wuldorcining (Glory-King of hosts) and heaford ealra heahgesceafte (Head of all the high creation), recalls the injunction in the Vulgate Psalm 102: 19,20, which couples an address to the angels with a brilliant visual conception of the sovreignty of God:

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[3]Vulgate references here and throughout the thesis are from Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam, ed. Alberto Colunga and Laurentio Turrado. Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos (Matriti, 1965).

[4]Bede, Hexaemeron, PL, 91, 14.

Dominus in caelo paravit sedem suam, /
Et regnum ipsius omnibus dominabitur. /
Benedicite Domino, omnes angeli eius, /
Potentes virtute, facientes verbum illius, /
Ad audiendam vocem sermonum eius.

The Lord hath prepared his throne in the
heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.
Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in
strength, that do his commandments,
hearkening unto the voice of his Word.

The literary intelligibility of the opening doxology, Us is riht micel is enhanced by the poet's conviction that man, made a little lower than the angels (Vulg. Psa. 7:5), is intended by his Creator to imitate the pattern of praise established by the angels of all ranks. This assumption is implied and developed throughout the Old English passage here considered. The influence of the Psalter appears to be pervasive in numerous Old English texts. In terms of poetic workmanship we may recall that "the first fifty Old English psalms . . . are reasonable renderings of the Latin psalms, with a considerable amount of added material, much of which has its source in patristic commentary on the psalter".[5] Although the Paris Psalter, for example, is usually dated later than the Caedmonian poems, the Latin psalms of the Vulgate

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[5]John D. Tinkler, Vocabulary and Syntax of the Old English Version in the Paris Psalter (The Hague, 1971), p. 9.

provide the pattern set forth in the Old English poem in the relationship between God and psalmist, God and angels, God and the devout Old English poet.[6]

The Vulgate Psalm 112:4 situates God's glory above the heavens: Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus, / Et super caelos gloria eius ("The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens"). The implication seems to exist, here in the Psalms and in the Old English references to the sky, that the heavens themselves canopied middle-earth in a series of tiers. The atmospheric heavens hovered over middle-earth in clouds and rain, snow and hail. The planetary heavens with their portents and signs, comprised the middle sky, so that the greater glory of the beatific vision should not dim the lesser majesty of sun and moon. As the Junius MS illustrations show, God differed as architect from man in first creating a roof for the hall of middle-earth and subsequently creating its foundation.[7]

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[6]The theme of praise coupled with recognition of God as Creator of heaven and earth structures a number of Hebrew Psalms, notably 32, 91, 94, 104, 106, and 135. Certain passages from the Apocrypha constitute a reminiscence of creation. Among these are Sirach 39, 12-35, and Sirach 43 in toto which is a unified cosmic hymn of jubilation. Variations on the theme of creation appear in Tobit 13, Judith 16, and the penitential Prayer of Manasseh. Quotations from the Apocrypha are from The Apocrypha of the Old Testament, Revised Standard Version, ed. Bruce Metzger (New York, 1965).

[7]For a discussion of Caedmon's architectonics in presenting the theme of creation, see J. B. Bessinger, Jr.,

In the Junian drawings of the uprearing of the firmament and the separation of day from night, the three-tiered shape of the cosmos is clearly shown. The topmost level of this celestial pyramid housed the heofenstolas (heavenly seats), or in Hebrew conceptions, the tabernacle of the "Most High".

With reference to heavenly places, the pseudonymous Odes of Solomon bear special relevance to Genesis A in the former's devotional attitude. In treating hexaemeral subjects, the sixteenth Ode asserts the comeliness of the individual soul's praise of its highest good:

> As the work of the husbandman is the ploughshare;
> And the work of the steersman is the guidance of the ship:
> So also my work is the Psalm of the Lord in his praises;
> My craft and my occupation are in His praises;
> Because His love hath nourished my heart,
> And even to my lips His fruits He poured out.[8]

The encomiastic tenor of these verses is heightened by the doxology at the Ode's conclusion, a benediction similar to that concluding the sixth book of the Hexaemeron of

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"Homage to Caedmon and Others: a Beowulfian Praise Song", 94.

[8]The Odes and Psalms of Solomon, ed. Rendel Harris and Alphonse Mingana, Vol. II (Manchester, 1920), 283. Compare also with the opening of Genesis A the patterns of praise in two Christian poets of the fifth century: Hilary of Arles in his Metrum in Genesim, PL, 50, 1287, and Dracontius, Prolegomena in Carmina Dracontii Synopsis Libri I, PL, 60, 676-7.

St. Ambrose.[9]

Both Greek and Latin patrology attest to the widespread currency of the "oracles" of the pseudepigraphal collection of Sibylline writings. Certain myths and mysteries which they contained were transmitted to the scholarly community of Hellenistic Jews at Alexandria near the beginning of the Christian era -- an age of eclecticism which synthesized widely-diverging conceptions of God. In the highly admonitory fragments of the Proem is a polemic warning foolish man to fear God, his "all-nourishing Creator", and solemn assurance of his timelessness and strength. The author of Book I pictures God gazing down from heaven, the epouranois or abode of perfection:

> One God, who reigns alone, supreme, unborn,
> But God is one alone, high over all;
> He made the heaven, and sun, and stars, and moon,
> And the fruit-bearing land and swelling sea.
> He is sole God, Creator uncontrolled,
> Who himself fixed the figure of the forms,
> And mixed the light of mortals, and the nature
> And generation of all things that live.10

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[9]St. Ambrose, Hexaemeron, Lib. 6, cap. 10:76, PL, 14, 288.

[10]Milton S. Terry, trans., in The Sibylline Oracles Translated from the Greek into English Blank Verse (New York, 1890), "Anonymous Preface", p. 23. See also Introduction, p. 14, which dates the origin of the Oracles in the period B.C. 150-A.D. 300. Among the Fathers who quote them are Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Theophilus, Augustine, Jerome, and Lactantius.

The formal, highly schematized arrangement typifies the rather perfunctory paraphrase of Genesis as it is rendered in Greek hexameters. Genesis A 1-25a, no less formal in tone, nevertheless reveals a less schematized and more spontaneous attitude on the poet's part. While many portions of the Sibylline Oracles evince poeticized dogma, drawn from the newly-crystallized doctrines of Christianity, the Old English narrative evokes the mythic terms of cosmopoesy. The majestic conception of God as wereda wuldorcining draws upon the ancient heroic terminology of Germanic legend, much as the Sibylline Oracles in a different cultural amalgamation drew upon pagan myth in terming God "Jove, the Thunderer".

No suggestion of trinitarian doctrine surfaces in the Old English poet's outline of God's immortal existence:

> Næs him fruma æfre,
> or geworden, ne nu ende cymþ
> ecean drihtnes, ac he bið a rice
> ofer heofenstolas. (5b-8a)

Neither fruma (beginning) nor or (source) has been wrought for God, himself the ordfruman (13a, Creator, Source of the Beginning) and indeed the Alpha and Omega of sacred history. This text recalls the Psalmist's assertion, Parata sedes tua ex tunc; / A saeculo tu es (Vulg. Psa. 92:2, "Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting"). The next unit focusses on the angels who extend God's majesty:

Heagum þrymmum
soðfæst and swiðfeorm sweglbosmas heold,
þa wæron gesette wide and side
þurh geweald godes wuldres bearnum,
gasta weardum. Hæfdon gleam and dream,
and heora ordfruman, engla þreatas,
beorhte blisse. Wæs heora blæd micel! (8b-14)

This passage establishes, in both a retrospective and anticipative sense, two suggestions about the angelic creation and mankind's first parents. Just as God is conceived as rodera weard, so the angels are designated by the poet as gasta weardum, a term which implies their function in imitating the divine model of activity, in guarding the realms of the sky, and in guarding the souls of men. Moreover, in anticipation of the (lost) account of the creation of Adam, the passage provides a vision of the angels in beatitude, a condition enjoyed before the Fall by the first human pair. As the poet relates, they were, in their prelapsarian state, englum gelice (185b, like the angels). In this brief yet eloquent comment breathes the elegiac tone which characterizes the commentaries of the Fathers on the first innocence of the new creation. The Junius poet too, in recalling the gleam and dream of the angelic hosts in bliss, reveals a veiled attitude of lament for the peaceful dryht of heaven, so soon to be disordered by demonic upheaval.

The following passage is characterized by homiletic understatement; in the activity of praise, the poet seems

to imply, man was intended to imitate the angels.

> Ðegnas þrymfæste þeoden heredon,
> sægdon lustum lof, heora liffrean
> demdon, drihtenes dugeþum wæron
> swiðe gesælige. Synna ne cuþon,
> firena fremman, ac hie on friðe lifdon,
> ece mid heora aldor. (15-20a)

St. Clement of Rome clarifies the poet's recognition of the angelic mission in his injunction,

> Gloriatio nostra et fiducia in ipso sit, voluntati ejus subjiciamur. Attendamus ad universam angelorum ejus multitudinem; quo modo astantes voluntati ejus famulentur.11
>
> Let our glorying and our confidence be in him; let us be subject to his will. Let us consider the whole multitude of angels, how they stand and minister to his will.

These angels it was, whose origins the Fathers confessed to be obscure,[12] that were often regarded as agents or subordinates in the work of creation.[13] Although no explicit reference to the assistance of angels appears in the Genesis A creation story, their existence is strongly implied by the poet, who twice calls God "Lord of Angels"

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[11]St. Clement of Rome, Epistola I ad Corinthios, cap. 34, PG, 1, 275.

[12]See Origen, On First Principles, Lib. 1, Preface 10, PG, 11, 120-1. Here Origen states, "When these angels were created, or of what nature they are, or how they exist, is not clearly stated".

[13]Robbins, in The Hexaemeral Literature, p. 28, writes that the doctrine of the creative "Powers" of God was in part derived from the activities of the Jewish angels in Philo's writings, thus influencing Christian hexaemera.

in metod engla (121b) and frea engla (157b). The poet thus links God's care for angelic and human creations, the former providing in its gratitude to God the pattern for mankind to imitate. The angels were recognized by the Fathers to be among the first creations of God, as implied in the first verse of Genesis, yet neither they nor any other created thing was coeternal with the Father of all.[14] St. John of Damascus, in recalling the angels' creation, states that God brought them ex nihilo into being and created them, as he created man, after his own image, yet as an incorporeal race.[15]

As we have seen, pagan terms of loyal thaneship are here translated into Christian devotion. Stalwart retainers laud their Prince, their Life-lord, and receive his favour in return for the privilege of dugeþum (service). The verses evoke the sound of a chorus of praise: þegnas þrymfæste þeoden heredon, / sægdon lustum lof. In his

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[14]St. Augustine confirms this in De Civitate Dei, Lib. 12, cap. 16, PL, 41. 365.

[15]St. John of Damascus, De Fide Orthodoxa, Lib. 2, cap. 3, PG, 94, 866: Qui facit angelos suos spiritus, / Et ministros suos ignem urentem ("He makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire").

fascination with angelology, St. Gregory Nazianzen provides a pictorial vision of the celestial beings gathered in bliss around the "First Cause". The more concise poetic account is amplified in meaning by Gregory's:

> . . . quam quod angelos quosdam et archangelos scimus, thronos, potestates, principatus, dominationes, splendores, ascensus, intelligentes virtutes, vel mentes potius, puras naturas, minimeque adulterinas, ad malum immobiles, vel certe non facile mobiles, perpetuos choros circa principem illam causam agitantes; . . . divinae majestatis laudes canunt, ac sempiternam illam gloriam sempiterne intuentur, non ut inde gloriae Dei aliquid accrescat (nihil enim est, quod ei, qui plenus est, aliisque bonorum auctor, accrescere queat;) sed ne etiam primae illae post Deum naturae beneficio affici desinant.16
>
> We know that there are angels and archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Powers, Splendours, Ascents, Intelligent Powers or Intelligences, pure natures and unadulterated, immovable, or scarcely movable, to evil, ever circling in chorus around the First Cause . . . singing the praises of the Divine Majesty, for ever contemplating the eternal glory, not that God may thereby gain an increase of glory, for nothing can be added to that which is full -- to him, who supplies good to all outside himself -- but that there may never be a cessation of blessings to those first natures after God.

The Old English pronouncement Synna ne cuþon . . . ac hie on friðe lifdon (18b-19) anticipates the condition of the sinless Adam and his new bride, Eve: Man ne cuþon / don ne dreogan, ac him drihtnes wæs / þam on breostum brynende lufu (189b-191, "Man knew neither pain nor grief, but

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[16]St. Gregory Nazianzen, Oratio 28:31, PG, 6, 71.

in the breast of both the love of God flourished"). The innocence of both angels and newly-formed man is revealed in the emphatic ne . . . ac construction which stresses their removal from "the framing of crimes". These are those angels or pure spirits of whom Gregory of Nazianzen writes, "they were immovable, or scarcely movable", the qualification here having extended consequences, among them the creation and Fall of man.

The following narrative unit leads directly into the momentous spurning of heaven's dryht by the faithless angels:

> Elles ne ongunnon
> ræran on roderum nymþe riht and soþ,
> ærdon engla weard for oferhydge
> dwæl on gedwilde. Noldan dreogan leng
> heora selfra ræd, ac hie of siblufan
> godes ahwurfon. (20b-25a)

Overweening pride usurps righteousness and truth, while the poet's definitive statement summarizes the theological implications of this event. Almost unanimously among the Fathers, a defiance of eternal law (defined by Augustine as the divine order of God),[17] represented a turning away from the Creator and a turning towards creatures. The emphatic verb ahwurfon (to turn away) stresses the total defection of the forsworn angels and suggests the hexaemeral

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[17]St. Augustine, Contra Faustum Manichaeum, Lib. 22, cap. 27, PL, 42, 418.

account in Slavonic Enoch in which the angels took counsel of their own will. St. Augustine lays out the patristic distinction between the peaceful love of God or, in Old English terms, siblufan godes, and the chaotic condition aroused by the deliberate perversion of the will. With reference to the blessedness of the good angels and the misery of the bad, he argues that when the will abandons what is above itself, and turns to what is lower, it becomes evil, not because that is evil to which it turns, but because the turning itself is wicked.[18]

This turning away by the angels is the defection remedied by the creation of the world. God's creation of a second race in his own image was designed to reverse the infernal will of the fallen angels. Adam and Eve were intended to adore God in speech and heart, as the poem's audience is instructed to do. The creation of the world, therefore, emerges from the resolution of warfare in heaven. The dismissal of the false retainers to the exile-paths of hell leads naturally into God's resolve to re-establish the glorious creation. The legendary Fall of the angels provides a structural link indispensable to the continuity between the exordium and the creation narrative. A further

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[18]St. Augustine, De Civitate Dei, Lib. 12, cap. 6, PL, 41, 353.

dimension emerges, for upon Adam and his dryht falls the burden of proving, by the faithful husbandry of Eden, their worthiness to attain to the vacant celestial thrones. In this task they, like the fallen angels in theirs, defected. Rhetorically and morally, then, the poet's narrative art frames the major themes of creation and paradise by an account of the Fall of the angels and the Fall of man. These last two themes are inextricably linked, for just as the faithful thanes ministered to God's word and will, thereby proving "useful" to him, so Adam and Eve are intended to become useful in taking on the nurture of creation and cultivating the varied fruits of virtue.[19] Yet another reciprocal dryht-relationship is about to be established. God's preparations for it form the subject of the rest of this chapter.

After a brilliant glimpse backward to the splendour

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[19]The "Fall of Man" constitutes one of the major episodes of the Eden story as treated in Genesis B, which, when the Genesis poem is read as a continuous narrative, frames, perhaps by a compiler's design, the story of man's creation. The motif of the plots of the fallen angels in the exordium of Genesis A anticipates the fuller account elaborated in the inserted Old Saxon Genesis B. Our narrative, however, concentrates its description on the perfection of Eden's design, and fails to elaborate, in the account preserved, on the Fall story.

of the vacant Thrones of the heavenly kingdom and the restored joy in heaven (78-91), the poet reveals God himself taking inner counsel. The picture suggests a heathen chieftain deliberating the most favourable counsel, and forms an imaginative contrast to the unvarnished opening of the Vulgate Genesis, In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram (Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"). The poet's elaborate strategy forbids him to begin in medias res as he imagines God thus:

> Ða þeahtode þeoden ure
> modgeþonc, hu he þa mæran gesceaft,
> eðelstaðolas eft gesette,
> swegltorhtan seld, selran werode,
> þa hie gielpsceaþan ofgifen hæfdon,
> heah on heofenum. Forþam halig god
> under roderas feng, ricum mihtum,
> wolde þæt him eorðe and uproder
> and sid wæter geseted wurde
> woruldgesceafte on wraðra gield,
> þara þe forhealdene of hleo sende. (92-102)
>
> Then our Lord took counsel in the thoughts of his heart how he should again establish the glorious creation, the native regions, the heaven-bright seats, with a better host after they, his boasting foes, had given them up in heaven on high. Wherefore holy God under heaven's embrace, with his great might, desired that for them earth and sky and broad water should be established, the world-creation in the stead of those evil ones whom he had outlawed from his protection.

God's intent is clear; in the words of Philo,

> God, being minded to unite in intimate and loving fellowship the beginning and end of created things, made heaven the beginning and man the end, the one the most perfect of imperishable objects of sense, the other the noblest of things earthborn and

> perishable, being, in very truth, a miniature heaven. He bears about within himself, like holy images, endowments of nature that correspond to the constellations.20

In the Old English passage it is evident that the woruldgesceafte (101a, world-creation) is not an emanation from the mind of God, but the free appointment of his will. The creation about to follow is indeed a niwre gesceafte (171b, new creation), and the separate evidence of the result of God's modgeþonc (counsel or thought of the heart). Philo again recognized the distinctive quality of the new creation in writing that Moses, having attained the summit of philosophy, acknowledged that "the universal must consist of two parts, one part active Cause and the other passive Object; and that the active Cause is the perfectly pure and unsullied Mind (= nous) of the universe. . . . The passive part [which] is in itself incapable of life and motion . . . when set in motion and shaped and quickened by Mind, changes into the most perfect masterpiece, namely this world".[21]

With reference to the foregoing, we are confronted by the problem of the Old English poet's belief in creatio ex nihilo. He specifically states that God wished to

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[20]Philo, De Opificio Mundi 82:27, ed. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whittaker (London, 1929), p. 67.

[21]Philo, De Opificio Mundi, 8:2, p. 11.

re-establish the eðelstaðolas (94a, native settlements) which were the first creation, the heaven of heavens,[22] the abode of the blessed troops of Genesis A 1-14. God's desire is then laid out, that eorðe and uproder / and sid wæter (99-100a, earth and heaven and broad water) should be established.[23] The fact that this new universe is to recompense God for the traitors thrust out from heaven suggests that it is indeed a creation out of nothing. The Jewish tradition, honouring the Mosaic cosmogony, posited creatio ex nihilo in its monistic belief that God is eternal. The Greeks, believing generally in creation out of formless matter which was eternal, revealed a philosophical dualism in the alleged eternal nature of God and matter.

Which of these assumptions appears to be reflected in Genesis A? Perhaps the distinction may be clarified if the single deviation from the Hebrew norm is considered. The Wisdom of Solomon 11:17 refers to "thy all-powerful hand

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[22]The concept of the "heaven of heavens" is invoked in Deuteronomy 10:14, "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God", and in Vulg. Psa. 68:33, "To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old".

[23]Huppé suggests that by reversing the Genesis order of "heavens and earth", the poet specifies the world surrounded by the stratosphere, "the world of earth, sky, and water", Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's Influence on OE Poetry (New York, 1959), p. 141.

which created the world out of formless matter". This aberration from accepted belief reveals strong Greek philosophic influence, yet the orthodox eastern Fathers generally acknowledged the fact of creatio ex nihilo.[24] Their assumption of this finds support in Job's avowal, Qui extendit aquilionem super vacuum, / Et appendit terram super nihilum (Job 26:7, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty space, and he hangeth the earth upon nothing"). It seems probable that the Anglo-Saxon poet, following the orthodox Fathers, believed in creatio ex nihilo -- if, indeed, he considered the problem of any moment in his cosmic scheme.

A second textual problem immediately arises in the passage beginning Forþam halig god . . . . In the narrative progression of the Hebrew Genesis, scholars have discovered two distinct creation stories.[25] These are known as the Elohistic or priestly account comprising

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[24]See Justin Martyr, Cohortatio ad Graecos, cap. 22, PG, 6, 282, in which the distinction is clarified between a creator who works from nothing, and one who works from shapeless matter. Theophilus in Ad Autolycum, Lib. 2, cap. 4, PG, 6, 1051, sees God's power manifested in his creation from nothing. St. Irenaeus in Contra Haereses, Lib. 2, cap. 10, PG, 7, 736, and St. Methodius in De Libero Arbitrio, PG, 18, 255, both acclaim God as creating from nothing.

[25]For an outline of this double creation story, see Robert Davidson, Genesis I-II (Cambridge, 1973), Chapter One.

Genesis 1 and 2:1-3. The second is the Javistic narrative, beginning at Genesis 2:4 with the summary statement, Istae sunt generationes caeli et terrae, quando creata sunt, in die quo fecit Dominus Deus caelum et terram ("These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens"). While the first account focusses on the divine fiat, "And Elohim said . . .", the Javistic narrative displays anthropomorphic concerns. Man, not God, appears at the centre of the second creation narrative. The point of interest lies in the relevance of these distinctive passages to the Genesis A narration. Not until line 97 is God seen taking deliberate action in the shaping of the world. Eorðe and uproder and sid wæter (earth and sky and broad water) are established through God's will. This passage, 97b-102 is perhaps comparable to the fact of creation divulged in Genesis 1:1. Closely following, however, is a second comparable statement revealing the course of creation. The two passages display a pattern comparable to the Hebrew account. The second Old English reference (112-116a) further documents the acts of creation, naming God helm eallwihta (113a, Helm of all created things). In the first passage relating the act of creation, the term woruldgesceafte functions in a synecdochical way for the individual created objects, the earth and planetary heaven

and face of the deep mentioned in Genesis.

I am not suggesting that the Scriptural Elohist and Javistic accounts provide the pattern for the Old English narrative progression. It may, however, be pointed out that while the Javistic narrative resumes abruptly after the account of the blessing of the seventh day, and appears to fill a hiatus following the priestly narration, the Old English references display no such stylistic discontinuity. Rather, each of these passages, 97b-102 and 112-116a, fulfils the intention of God as it is stated in the first and implied in the second. An important qualification immediately follows each passage: Ne wæs her þa giet nymþe heolstersceado / wiht geworden (103-104b, "Nor was there yet anything created here, save darkness"), and Folde wæs þa gyta / græs ungrene (116b-117a, "The earth there was yet ungreen grass"). The variation in these two climactic statements about the beginning of creation allows the poet to expand his poetic imagery in describing chaos.

> Ne wæs her þa giet nymþe heolstersceado
> wiht geworden, ac þes wida grund
> stod deop and dim, drihtne fremde,
> idel and unnyt. On þone eagum wlat
> stiðfrip cining, and þa stowe beheold,
> dreama lease, geseah deorc gesweorc
> semian sinnihte sweart under roderum,
> wonn and weste, oðþæt þeos woruldgesceaft
> þurh word gewearð wuldorcyninges. (103-111)

> Nor was there yet anything created, save darkness, but this broad ground stood deep and dim, alien to God, idle and useless. There with his eyes gazed down the steadfast King, and beheld that place empty of joy. He saw dark shadows hanging in eternal night, swart under the sky, wan and waste, until this world-creation, through the word of the Glory-King, came into being.

The passage is climactic. It appears to offer the still point upon which the story of creation turns. Under the swart shadows hanging in eternal night, we sense the contending forces of creation and chaos. Two strikingly similar passages from Old High German and Old Norse poetry compel our attention, in their respective accounts of the pre-creation vacuum. The Bavarian Wesso brunner Gebet, a ninth-century fragment of a vernacular creation hymn, opens with a formulaic flourish and develops in an elaborate repetitive pattern of negation:

> Dat gafregin ih mit firahim firiuuizzo meista,
> dat ero ni uuas noh ufhimil,
> noh paum [nohheinig] noh pereg ni uuas,
> ni [sterro] nohheinig noh sunna ni scein,
> noh mano in linhta, noh der mareo seo.
> Do dar niuuit ni uuas enteo ni uuenteo,
> enti do uuas der eino almahtico cot,
> manno miltisto, enti dar uuarun auh manake mit inan
> cootlihhe geista. enti cot heilac. . . .26

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[26]Peter Dronke, The Medieval Lyric (London, 1968), p. 37. See also the strikingly parallel negative series in the "Eridu Story of Creation" in Alexander Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis: the Story of the Creation (Chicago, 1942), pp. 49-52.

> I learnt among mankind this greatest of wonders:
> there was no earth, nor sky above,
> not a [single] tree, nor yet a mountain,
> not a single [star] shone, nor the sun,
> nor did the moon gleam, nor the glorious sea.
> Then there was nothing there, at any turn or corner,
> and yet there was the one almighty God,
> most gracious of men, and with him too there were many
> blessed spirits. And holy God. . . .

A stanza in the Norse "sibyl's prophecy" of the Völuspá reaffirms the blankness of pre-creation:

> Vara sandr né sær né svalar unnir,
> iörd fannz æva né upphiminn,
> gap var ginnunga, en gras hvergi.[27]
>
> There was neither sand nor sea, nor cool waves,
> there was no earth, nor sky above,
> there was a gaping void, but nowhere grass.

The Bavarian and Old Norse versions offer complementary visions of chaos. The first manuscript fragment breaks off at the point where the Old English poem actively begins the creation narrative. The passage is distinguished first by its initiation of temporal succession in the term oðþæt (until), and second by its revelation of a verbal creation, þurh word . . . wuldorcyninges (111, through the word . . . of the Glory-King). The appearance of temporal terms strengthens the motif of successive creative acts: oðþæt (until), ærest (first), gyta (yet), þa (then), miclum spedum (with great speed), raþe (quickly), dæg æresta (the first day). The idea of creation by the word

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[27]Dronke, The Medieval Lyric, p. 36.

of God, a concept vigorously argued by Rabbinic and patristic writers, is also reinforced by successive references as, for example, Leoht wæs ærest / þurh drihtnes word dæg genemned (129b-130, Light was first through God's word named day). The poet also relates the uprearing of the firmament to his agen word (149b, his own word), and the summoning of the waters to his word (158a, his word).

The passage also introduces a descriptive epithet heavy with theological overtones, idel and unnyt (106a, idle and useless). The formula as A. A. Lee has pointed out recalls the characterization by Beowulf of the desolate Heorot as idel ond unnyt.[28] The context is the ravage by the demonic onslaughts of Grendel of the noblest of all mead-halls. We recall the early context of Genesis A, that of the peaceful dryht of heaven and its momentary spoliation by the covenant-breaking thanes. As a guerdon for their evil counsel, God shaped a wræclicne ham (37a, wretched abode). Thereafter, God's own counsel gave birth to the plain of paradise, the neorxnawong, god and gastlic, gifena gefylled / fremum fordweardum (209-210a, paradisal plain, good and ready for guests, filled with

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[28]See Alvin A. Lee, The Guest-Hall of Eden, p. 197, and Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg, ed. Fr. Klaeber (Boston, 1950), p. 16, l. 413a.

gifts and continual benefits). The preliminary stage of this artefact, however, finds that þes wida grund / stod deop and dim, drihtne fremde, / idel and unnyt (104b-106a, "this broad ground stood deep and dim, alien to God, empty and useless"). The comparable Vulgate expression is Terra autem erat inanis et vacua, et tenebrae erant super faciem abyssi (Genesis 1:2, "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep"). In Hebrew the primeval chaos is described in the alliterative phrase tōhū wā bōhū[29] (without form and void). In commenting upon the chaos here presented, Robert Davidson writes, "The general picture here is similar to the opening stanza of the Babylonian creation myth in which, before even the heavens or the earth were created, there existed primordial Apsu and Tiamat, dark, swirling waters".[30]

From the foregoing, it seems that some relationship must cohere among the terms applied to the broad waste of Genesis A, as deop and dim, drihtne fremde, and idel and unnyt. Because these designations are negative, must they

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[29]See Robert Davidson, Genesis I-II, p. 15.

[30]Ibid.

be pejorative? We recall the poet's qualification, "Nor was there yet anything save darkness created". This darkness created by God, the heolstersceado (shadow that hides) could hardly be seen to bear his condemnation as it provided the created substance out of which God evolved the glorious creation. Profound and dark it may have been, idle, empty, and useless, alien to God, until his word acted upon it. Its differentiation from the darkness associated with Satan (who was later to become "the Prince of this world")[31] is explained by St. Ambrose. The darkness pendant over the abyss he characterizes as darkness because the brilliance of light was absent. He refuses to interpret darkness as evocative of the powers of evil, cum utique non substantialis, sed accidens sit malitia, quae a naturae bonitate deflexit[32] ("for evil is not a substance, but an accident, and a deviation from the goodness of nature"). Darkness and the abyss, he considers, should be literally understood, for the darkness in this context springs from the shadow cast by the heavens. The firmament of the heavens includes the earth because heaven stretches itself out like a vault.[33] The mist of darkness, existing from the epoch of the creation of the heaven of heavens,

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[31]See John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11.

[32]St. Ambrose, Hexaemeron, Lib. 1, cap. 8, PL, 14, 149-50.

[33]St. Ambrose, op. cit., Lib. 1, cap. 8, PL, 14, 152.

accompanied like a shadow the body of the world. St. Ambrose's explanation about the primordial darkness with which God was obliged to deal before he called the world into being, seems to invalidate the suggestion put forward by Huppé that by this "positive darkness" may (with word-play on synn) be likened "to the black night of sin".[34] This last seems unlikely, as the poet specifically states that the new woruldgesceafte is designed to recompense God for those traitors of the fallen dryht, and presumably for all their works as well. Sinnihte (109a, eternal night) is here probably a figurative expression for the previously unending darkness now about to be dispelled by the Almighty's word.

A problem, however, arises. As a resolution to the heavenly warfare anterior to creation, God is said to have shaped a house of pain for the exiles, whose leader aspired to a rival kingdom in the northern part of heaven. Nowhere in Genesis A is the location of their torture-house specifically described, although God is said to know that it lies synnihte beseald (42a, enshrouded in eternal night). The term sinnihte is also used of the pre-creation darkness but, as I have suggested, in a more figurative manner. The

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[34]Huppé, op. cit., p. 145.

creation narrative in Genesis A, however, does not preclude the concept of the suspension of middle-earth over hell. The passage of the Sibylline Oracles comparable to this portion of the Old English poem reveals the earth's situation thus:

> For God the earth established, casting it
> Round about Tartarus; and he gave forth
> The soft sweet light, and raised the heaven on high,
> And spread abroad the ocean's blue expanse,
> And crowned the pole with hosts of brilliant stars,
> And decked the earth with plants, and mixed the sea
> With rivers, and the air with vapours fused,
> And watery clouds.35

"Tartarus" is glossed as "the prison of the Titans, here conceived as encompassed by the earth and forming its interior".[36] This early Christian vision of the cosmos, like that of the devout Anglo-Saxon, allows the "heaven of heavens" to overshadow both the planetary and atmospheric sky of middle-earth, and suggests the infernal regions below. The Genesis A poet may thus have ruminated over the essence of the term sinnihte and used it in a pictorial and figurative sense.

The following narrative unit recalls verbal echoes of both Caedmon's Hymn and of the Beowulf scop's "Song of Creation":

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[35]The Sibylline Oracles, Book I, 11-18.

[36]Terry, op. cit., p. 33, n.

> Her ærest gesceop ece drihten,
> helm eallwihta, heofon and eorðan,
> rodor arærde, and þis rume land
> gestaþelode strangum mihtum,
> frea ælmihtig. (112-116a)
>
> He first created, the Everlasting Lord, the Helm of all created things, heaven and earth, and raised up the sky, and established this spacious land by his mighty strength, Lord Almighty.

The pictorial impact of the steadfast King gazing with shrewd perception upon the swart vapours contributes to a dramatic pause in creation's preparations. The passage just quoted, however, actively resumes the thread of the narration, while the poetic language recalls the he ærest gesceop eorðan bearnum / heofon to hrofe (5-6a, "he first created for the children of earth / heaven as a roof") of Caedmon's Hymn. The complex of ideas in the Beowulf scop's song displays common associations of the wordhoard: cwæð þæt se Ælmihtiga eorðan worh(te), / wlitebeorhtne wang (92-93a, "he said that the Almighty wrought the earth, / this glorious field").[37] The succession of creative events is clear: first heaven, the planetary and atmospheric vault, was created, and earth, þis rume

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[37] Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg, p. 4. For close verbal correspondences between the Hymn and the scop's song, see J. B. Bessinger, Jr., "Homage to Caedmon and Others", pp. 91-106.

land,[38] followed. In this last epithet the poet discloses a major attribute of the creation as a whole, its spaciousness, often conveyed in the terms rum, sid, and brad, "spacious", "extensive", and "broad".

The following unit of description both qualifies the foregoing and consolidates with repetition the negative poetic images of darkness and vastness, the primordial vision of heolstersceado:[39]

> Folde wæs þa gyta
> græs ungrene; garsecg þeahte
> sweart synnihte, side and wide,
> wonne wægas. (116b-119a)
>
> The earth was yet grass ungreen; the ocean mantled in swart eternal night, far and wide, with dark waves.

As previously argued, the sweart synnihte here emphasizes, not the presence of evil but the absence of light; the poet evidently wishes to prolong for a moment the description of chaos before the fiat lux is uttered. The dark vision is comprehensive: the pall of blackness entirely shrouds the græs ungrene, the poet's synecdochical term for the whole of chaos upon which form and indeed colour

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[38] In Genesis A, 1787-1790a, God reveals Sichem and the land of the Canaanites to be the rume rice (spacious kingdom) and seo eorðe ælgrene (the earth all green) allotted by Providence to Abraham's posterity. The theme of a new creation, modelled in miniature after God's, is here established.

[39] Heolstersceado, trans. as "a shadow that hides" by Bosworth-Toller, implies, not necessarily the hidden element of evil in chaos, but the mystery of a creation-to-be.

are about to be bestowed. A. N. Doane argues, "ungrene in this context means "not having the presence of God", "before the creating and filling hand of God had touched the unformed world", so that exegetically, the literal and allegorical meanings of the verse are simultaneously suggested".[40]

Although no monsters surface in these primeval wonne wægas, an oblique suggestion of anarchic power about to be conquered appears in the Old English term for "ocean" -- garsecg. Bosworth-Toller translates this as homo jaculo armatus (armed spear-man), which seems to imply not the theological monsters of Sheol, the dragon of Jordan, or Behemoth of the wasteland, but the as yet unconquered forces of the sea hostile to the imposition of form. Patrology is much concerned with the delimiting of the waters, as is the Genesis A creation story, for out of the mereflode (mere-flood) will arise the hyhtlic heofontimber (146a, harmonious heavenly structure), the perfected artefact that will attest to the quelling of these dark waves.

In contrast to the Vulgate narration Fiat lux. Et facta est lux (Genesis 1:3, "Let there be light. And there was light"), the Old English revelation is both pictorial and climactic:

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[40]A. N. Doane, "The Green Street of Paradise", Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 74 (1973), 463.

> Ða wæs wuldortorht
> heofonweardes gast ofer holm boren
> miclum spedum. Metod engla heht,
> lifes brytta, leoht forð cuman
> ofer rumne grund. Raþe wæs gefylled
> heahcininges hæs; him wæs halig leoht
> ofer westenne, swa se wyrhta bebead. (119b-125)
>
> Then wondrously bright was the spirit of the heavenly Guardian borne over the sea with great haste. The Lord of Angels, Giver of Life, bade light come forth over the spacious ground. Quickly was fulfilled the behest of the High King; for him was holy light over the wasteland, as the creator had bidden.

Heroic language shaped in an epithetic mould is here applied to the creation of light. The epithet wuldortorht appears elsewhere in Old English poetry, notably in Cynewulf, and embodies compactly the concepts of majesty and solar brilliance organized around the deity. The expansive revelation of the creation of light contrasts with the starker account of St. Victor in his tract De Fabrica Mundi, which begins In principio fecit Deus lucem[41] ("In the beginning God created light"). The apocryphal 2 Esdras 6:41 more graphically imagines a ray of light brought forth from the "treasuries" of God so that his works might then appear. The Old English emphasis is clear: the designation of God as lifes brytta (122a, Giver of Life) assigns to him alone the capacity to generate

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[41]St. Victor the Martyr, De Fabrica Mundi, PL, 5, 305.

the radiance across the chaotic waves. In a similar fashion, the concept prevailed among the Fathers of the creative succession giving precedence to the earth's bringing forth grass, trees, and herbs before the creation of the sun. Through this chronology, man was intended to ascribe the generation of living things not to solar warmth, but to God who alone wields the power of growth in the multitudinous varieties of vegetation. Something of this attitude is implicit in the phrase him wæs halig leoht / ofer westenne, swa se wyrhta bebead. The westenne (wasteland) will blossom and arrive at fruition in the shape of paradise only through the Creator's behest. The negative description of chaos in the terms dreama lease (108a), wonn and weste (110a), græs ungrene (117a), and wonne wægas (119a), turns presently to positive description of form as the disordered elements assume the shape of the wlite beorhte gesceaft (131a, radiantly-bright creation).

> Ða gesundrode sigora waldend
> ofer laguflode leoht wiđ þeostrum
> sceade wiđ sciman. Sceop þa bam naman,
> lifes brytta. Leoht wæs ærest
> þurh drihtnes word dæg genemned,
> wlite beorhte gesceaft. Wel licode
> frean æt frymde forþbæro tid,
> dæg æresta; geseah deorc sceado
> sweart swiđrian geond sidne grund. (126-134)
>
> Then the victorious King sundered light from
> darkness over the ocean-flood, shadow from radiance.
> He created for the two names, the Divider of Life.
> Light was first through God's word called "day",
> the glorious creation. Well-pleased was the Prince
> at the beginning of that first creation, the first day;
> He saw the dark and swart shadows lessening
> throughout the spacious earth.

Here is set forth the account of the first day, the first temporal unit identified with light. The Vulgate account also reveals God's satisfaction with the divine division:

> Et videt Deus lucem quod esset bona: et divisit lucem a tenebris. Appellavitque lucem Diem, et tenebras Noctem: factumque est vespere et mane, dies unus.
>
> And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. (Genesis 1:4-5)

The Old English poet associates the division of the elements with the flood of ocean; this fact reflects perhaps the influence of the Vulgate association of the hovering of God's spirit over the abyss.[42] The further temporal divisions of _æfen_ (138a, evening) and _mergen_ (155a, morning) reflect the Jewish idea of the new day's beginning at sundown. God's pleasure in the goodness of the first evening's light may be clarified by St. Augustine's comment:

> In eo vero quod dicitur, Vidit Deus quia bonum est; satis significatur, Deum nulla necessitate, nulla suae cujusquam utilitatis indigentia, sed sola bonitate fecisse quod factum est, id est, quia bonum est.43

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[42]Inevitably, Milton's invocation to the Heavenly Muse and Spirit of God springs to mind: "Thou from the first / Wast present, and with mighty wings outspred / Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss / And mad'st it pregnant", _Paradise Lost_, Book 1, 19-22, in _The Poetical Works of John Milton_, Vol. I, ed. Helen Darbishire (Oxford, 1952), 6.

[43]St. Augustine, _De Civitate Dei_, _Lib_. 11, _cap_. 24,

> And by the words, 'God saw that it was good', it is sufficiently signified that God made what was made not from any need, nor for the sake of supplying any lack, but solely from his own goodness, that is, because creation was good.

The explanation of God's satisfaction may be taken further. In contrast to Sumerian and Babylonian creation-myths,[44] the work of God entails no overt cosmic battle to subdue those elements out of which he fashioned middle-earth. The assumption in Genesis A seems to be that se wyrhta (the Worker, the Creator) is manipulating the formless material out of which beauty and shape emerge. Creation's first light and the sequential works of the days are not evidence of emanations from God's mind, but rather substantial and material evidence of his creative power. Creation, separate in itself, may participate in the joys of its Creator by acknowledgement of its source of inception. God's satisfaction is revealed in his giving the first temporal division a name -- dæg. Creation by the word of God is emphasized here to the exclusion of any reference to the Trinity.

Just as the poet announces the climactic advent of the first day, he comments upon its departure.

PL, 41, 338.

[44]See the account of the cosmic struggle between Marduk and Tiamat in S. G. F. Brandon, Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East (London, 1963), in Chapter Three: "Mesopotamia: Creation by Divine Invention or by Conquest of Primordial Chaos", especially pp. 100-103.

Ða seo tid gewat ofer timber sceacan
middangeardes, metod æfter sceaf
scirum sciman, scippend ure,
æfen ærest. Him arn on last,
þrang þystre genip, þam þe se þeoden self
sceop nihte naman. Nergend ure
hie gesundrode; siddan æfre
drugon and dydon drihtnes willan,
ece ofer eordan.

Then that time departed over the edifice of
middle-earth. The Lord, our Creator, afterwards
thrust the first evening upon the shining brightness.
Thick darkness, for which the Prince himself created
the name night, followed; it pressed on the track.
Our Saviour divided them; ever afterwards they perform
and do the will of God eternally over earth.

Temporal rhythm is thus set in motion in accordance with the will of God. At this point, a critical distinction must be laid out. Genesis A 140b-143a offers a rare instance of acknowledgment of any concept approaching the "laws of nature" operative in actual existence. In its accounts of natural phenomena, Old English poetry almost regularly denies or holds in abeyance any sense of natural law functioning independently of human activity. In the Genesis A account of the sundering of light from darkness, however, the temporal design of creation is clearly seen: "Our Saviour sundered them (day and darkness) and ever since they follow out the will of God to perform it eternally over earth". Because no reference has yet been made to the sun as the source of light, we may assume that the radiance of the wuldortorht / heofonweardes gast (119b-120a, Spirit of the Heavenly Guardian, wondrously bright) belongs to the supernatural manifestation of God himself. If, in fact,

the lost material in the manuscript lacuna followed the Vulgate sequence of creation (as seems likely from the foregoing), an account of the creation of the luminaries comprised the work of the fourth day. In any case, the regulated pattern of night and day established in this passage bears relevance to St. Victor's fragment on creation. In the De Fabrica Mundi, the alternation of night with day is stressed, as he emphasizes that day is divinely ordered to bring on night to close the labours of men, and night again regulated to bring on light for the toil of day.[45] Divine charity thus establishes a pattern for the comfort of men. So it is with the Old English conception of time. The poet's assurance siddan æfre / drugon and dydon drihtnes willan, / ece ofer eordan (141b-143a, "ever afterwards they follow out the will of God to perform it eternally over earth"), is perhaps the equivalent of the Vulgate refrain "and it was so".

The second day of creation continues the division of the elements:

> Da com oðer dæg ,
> leoht æfter þeostrum. Heht þa lifes weard
> on mereflode middum weordan

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[45]St. Victor the Martyr, De Fabrica Mundi, PL, 5, 303.

hyhtlic heofontimber. Holmas dælde
waldend ure and geworhte þa
roderas fæsten; þæt se rica ahof
up from eorðan þurh his agen word,
frea ælmihtig. Flod wæs adæled
under heahrodore halgum mihtum,
wæter of wætrum, þam þe wuniað gyt
under fæstenne folca hrofes. (143b-153)

Then came another day, light after darkness. There bade the Guardian of life in the midst of the ocean-flood to be a joyful heavenly structure. Our Keeper divided the seas and he established there the heavens fast. These he raised up from earth through his own word, Lord Almighty. The flood was divided under high heaven by his holy might, the waters from the waters, that yet remain under the firmament as a roof for the folk.

Here is laid out the second of the great acts of division that structure the creation narrative. Following the division of leoht wið þeostrum, sceade wið sciman (127b-128a), God separates the primeval flood, ordaining half of these waters to make up the atmospheric vault, the higher etherial region.[46] The Elohistic account of the waters' separation is of course free of the distinctive Old English imagery. God decrees, Fiat firmamentum in medio aquarum: et dividat aquas ab aquis . . . Et factum est ita. (Genesis 1:6-7, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the

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[46]The distinction is set forth in the Vulg. Psa. 148:4, "Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens". It is the second set of waters to which the OE poet refers.

waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters . . . and it was so").[47] The poet, however, rejects such bareness of detail and focusses on the hyhtlic heofontimber to be founded upon the lonely immensity of the floods. A critical point of understanding arises over this passage. Old English poetry, which at all times demands a willing suspension of disbelief, here posits the establishment of the "harmonious heavenly structure" upon the surrounding sea as a matter, not of scientific relationships, but of divine decree. The poet assumes, as St. Ambrose corroborates, that the earth is not suspended in the middle level of the universe like a balance hung in equilibrium, but that the might of God holds it together by the law of his own will, so that the steadfast should prevail over the void and unstable.[48] Throughout the Psalms and the creation record of Isaias, references are frequent to the founding of the earth in the midst of the flood, and to the spreading out of the atmospheric heaven like a tent, or like smoke.[49]

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[47]Of great interest here is the apocryphal assumption that God invoked the aid of angels in creation. See 2 Esdras 6:41, "Thou didst create the spirit of the firmament (here glossed as "angel") and didst command him to divide and separate the waters, that one part might move upwards and the other part remain beneath".

[48]See St. Ambrose, Hexaemeron Lib. 1, cap. 6:22, PL, 14, 144-5.

[49]See Vulg. Psa. 24:2, Psa. 18:15, Isa. 51:13, 16,

The significance and force of each of these scattered references seem compressed into the single Old English epithet, hyhtlic heofontimber. The sequence of momentous divisions of light from darkness, waters above from waters below, the uprearing of the firmament, the quelling of the floods, on the whole seems anticipative of this first glimpse of the divine artefact, middle-earth itself, the abode of men established as a model of the halls of eternity which God himself is said to inhabit.

The events of the third day of creation witness the emergence of dry land, protected by God with the boundaries established for the seas. In the midst of the poet's calm assurance of God's overshadowing care for middle-earth, the account of creation tantalizingly falls silent.

> Da com ofer foldan fus siðian
> mære mergen þridda. Næron metode ða gyta
> widlond ne wegas nytte, ac stod bewrigen fæste
> folde mid flode. Frea engla heht
> þurh his word wesan wæter gemæne,
> þa nu under roderum heora ryne healdað,
> stowe gestefnde. Da stod hraðe
> holm under heofonum, swa se halga bebead,
> sid ætsomne, ða gesundrod wæs
> lago wið lande. Geseah þa lifes weard
> drige stowe, dugoða hyrde,
> wide æteowde, þa se wuldorcyning

Isa. 45:12, Isa. 40:12, 22; also Job 38 in toto in which God quizzes Job on cosmological problems.

eorðan nemde. Gesette yðum heora
onrihtne ryne, rumum flode,
and gefetero (154-158)

Then came over earth, eagerly journeying the third fair morning. Not yet unto God were the broad tracts and ways useful, but they stood fast covered, the earth with the flood. The Lord of Angels bade through his word that the waters assemble that now under the skies hold their course, their established place. Then suddenly lay the ocean under the heavens, as the Holy One had ordered, broad-stretching. Then was divided the wave from land. The Protector of Life, the Lord of Hosts, beheld there dry places widely outspread, which the Glory-King named "earth". For the waves he established a lawful circuit for the broad flood and fettered.

Prefacing this final act of division, the poet reminds his reader that the spacious ways were not yet "useful" to God. The appearance of dry land corrects that unnyt (useless, vain, empty) condition of the over-ruling flood. The now-divided sea had, in its origins, been a collected whole which, by the injunction of God, parted and gave precedence to drige stowe (164a, dry places). The Vulgate version is congregentur aquae . . . in loco unum et appareat arida (Genesis 1, 9-13, "let the waters be gathered together . . . into one place and let dry land appear"). The Vulgate account is extended to relate the subsequent emergence of vegetation, trees and herbs of the field, both fruit and seed-bearing. It may be inferred that an account of the identical procedure related in the Vulgate priestly writing followed in Genesis A. The pseudepigraphal 2 Esdras 6:42 corroborates the idea of the earth's rendering

service to God:

> On the third day thou didst command the waters to be gathered together in the seventh part of the earth; six parts thou didst dry up and keep so that some of them might be planted and cultivated and be of service before Thee.

This author, displaying the then-current Jewish assumption that the world was created for Israel's sake,[50] implies the moral necessity of cultivating the fruits of virtue. This idea is not entirely removed from the implication in Genesis A 155b-156 of the intended reciprocal interaction between God's protection and man's "usefulness" to him.

A distinctive passage in the sixteenth Ode of Solomon supports the assumption of the poet and apocryphal author about the usefulness of created objects. The Ode extols the work of God's hands and the "fabric of his fingers", continuing in this vein:

> It is He who spread out the earth,
> And settled the waters in the sea;
> He expanded the heavens,
> And fixed the stars;
> And He fixed the creation and set it up:
> And He rested from His works.
> And created things run in their courses,
> And work their works:
> And they know not how to stand (still) and to be idle.[51]

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[50] See 2 Esdras 6, 55-59.

[51] The Odes and Psalms of Solomon, Ode 16, v.v. 10-13, p. 283.

Each of the hexaemeral portions of Genesis A, 2 Esdras, and Ode 16 of Solomon attests to the final aim of God in ordering the creation. This ultimate end is the service given by the orders or ranks of creation to their Prince and Giver of Life. The agent of service is the dry land, to which suzerainty over the flood is allotted. The condition under which the dry land becomes useful, however, is the divine division of wave from land. The stress laid here on acts of division and of uniting fulfils, as far as the manuscript goes, the pattern previously laid out. At 126-7, leoht is divided from þeostrum, sceade from sciman. At 141, God sunders day from darkness; at 146, God divides the floods in holmas dælde. Lines 150-2 reinforce this idea in Flod wæs adæled . . . wæter of wætrum. Lines (162-3) repeat the separation: ða gesundrod wæs / lago wiđ lande. The climactic severance of dry land from the waters recalls God's shutting up the sea with doors and setting bars about it to still the proud waves.[52] The onrihtne ryne (167a, lawful path) established for the ocean waves contributes to the usefulness and obedience that distinguish the thaneship of created objects. And it is while reinforcing the idea of the intricately bound ocean flood

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[52]See Job 38: 8, 10-11.

that the poet's voice is silenced.

Before beginning to examine the account of Eden and the creation of Eve, integral parts of the hexaemeral tradition, it is worthwhile briefly to consider those subjects that may have been treated in the poem where the lacuna now exists. As is well known, three leaves of the poem have been cut out of the Junius manuscript. Conjecture about the contents of this loss is not inappropriate, as the poet has with certainty had access to the lettered tradition which helps us to restore the temporal succession of creation. Earlier in this chapter I have suggested that the hexaemeral account in Genesis A embodies something of the dynamic character of its subject matter, that is, the poem up to this point is a progressive revelation, a cumulative hymn, rather than a postlude on the hexaemeral theme such as we find in the Junius Christ and Satan. It seems likely, therefore, that the poet who has followed the Vulgate account with some respect, albeit adding his own variations, should have continued in the same narrative tenor. The poet might have depended for his substance upon the Vulgate story, either directly or through the medium of paraphrases of scriptural history or patristic commentary, the arguments of which furnished forth abundant exegetical possibilities. Of immediate interest is the summary assertion of Theophilus of Antioch, Similiter tres

illi dies, qui ante luminaria fuerunt, imago sunt Trinitatis, Dei, ejus Verbi, ejusque Sapientiae[53] ("the three days which were before the luminaries are types of the Trinity, of God, and his Word, and his wisdom").

To restore the continuity broken by the manuscript hiatus it will be useful to outline the works of the remaining days or epochs of creation. According to the Vulgate Genesis, the labours of the third day, besides the gathering of the waters and the emergence of dry land, included the earth's yielding new plants and trees, each containing the seed and fruit that promise futurity. The face of middle-earth has become hospitable, bearing the variety of vegetation that led certain Fathers to assert that the first human pair were vegetarian in their unfallen state. Significantly, too, the growth of green and burgeoning things is related as occurring before the ordaining of the sun. The creation account in 2 Esdras 6:44 recalls the "flowers of inimitable colour; and odours of inexpressible fragrance". The priestly author, in closing the account of the third day, relates that God saw that his works were good, a refrain appearing at the conclusion

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[53]St. Theophilus of Antioch, Ad Autolycum, Lib. 2, 15, PG 6, 1078.

of the fourth, fifth, and sixth days also.

The creation of the luminaries as late as the fourth day may reflect God's wish, already indicated, that mankind should ascribe to him alone the fructifying power over creation. The alleged purpose of sun and moon is to "divide the day from the night . . . and for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years" (Genesis 1:14). The sixteenth Ode of Solomon introduces the motif of treasure:

> The treasury of the light is the sun,
> And the treasury of the darkness is the night.
> And He made the sun for the day, that it might be bright,
> But night brings darkness over the face of the earth.
> And [by] their reception one from the other
> They speak the beauty of God.54

Two possibilities arise with reference to the Old English account. The poetic imagery of treasure and its circulation would have been wholly applicable to the creation of sun, moon, and stars. Religious consciousness attaches itself to cosmic symbols, as the widespread veneration of sun and moon among ancient near-Eastern,[55] Egyptian, and Scandinavian people shows. The distinguishing treatment of the luminaries in the newly-Christian account of Solomon's Ode 16 is its

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[54] The Odes and Psalms of Solomon, Ode 16, vv. 15-17.

[55] Compare, for example, the cosmic magic which the Mesopotamians associated with astral bodies, the movements of which contained the "writing of the heavens". See S. G. F. Brandon, Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East (London, 1963), p. 103.

freedom from mythological overtones of worship attached to sun and moon. It seems possible to suggest that the Old English poet, writing about the fourth day of creation, might well have expanded upon the setting up of moon, sun, and stars as treasure-symbols of the cosmic covenant. A second, perhaps far-fetched possibility, may have been a treatment of the luminaries designed to dispel any pagan associations lingering about them, such as are found in the Exeter Riddle 29.[56] The chief support of this conjecture lies in the poet's frequent invoking of other Old Testament passages to substantiate his account, the cosmic questions of Job 38 providing, for example, mythic episodes of the world's beginning. Susie Tucker has pointed out the notion that "sun, moon and stars were created for man's particular benefit", adding that the Anglo-Saxon poet found in them "a demonstration of divine order".[57]

The fifth day in the Vulgate Genesis is devoted to the creation of watery and atmospheric life, both winged fowl and sea monsters. These are the creatures designed by God as subjects for Adam's lordship, as the poet later writes

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[56]PR 3, 195, Riddle 29, 1-14. Certain critics, among them Tupper, Wyatt, and Mackie, interpret this riddle as exposing cosmic warfare between sun and moon, p. 337.

[57]Susie Tucker, "The Anglo-Saxon Poet Considers the Heavens", Neophilologus, 41 (1957), 271.

in his account, "Enjoy the treasures of earth, the fish of the sea, and the birds of heaven" (Genesis A, 200-201a). What may seem a digression here is vital to the understanding of what may have appeared in the break in Genesis A. It must be remembered that the poet was, if anything, a deeply devotional writer. The impact of the hexaemeral account is heightened by the realization that the narrative sets forth exegetical possibilities such as those pointed out by Jean Daniélou in relation to the Hebrew Genesis. He argues,

> We must always be careful to look behind the "illustrative" resemblances which are concerned with images for the theological analogies which constitute typology. . . . [In Genesis] we have an eschatological typology in which the first creation is presented as the type of the new creation which is to be accomplished at the end of time.58

Daniélou then quotes Tertullian's De Baptismo 2 in its admonishment to man that he reverence the waters as the agency by which living creatures were produced in the beginning of time. Could this devotional method as expressed by Daniélou have been operating in the lost portion of Genesis A? It seems that what follows shortly in the course of God's speech to Adam and Eve (Genesis A, 196-205) confirms the existence of a previous elaboration on the art of

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58Jean Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy (Notre Dame, 1956), p. 71.

creation with special reference to those creatures which Adam and Eve are enjoined to use with pleasure and profit. We may note with interest here that the Vulgate Genesis fails to specify any type of sea monster, in contrast to the non-canonical information in 2 Esdras 6, 49:52:

> Then thou didst keep in existence two living creatures; the name of one thou didst call Behemoth and the name of the other Leviathan. And thou didst separate one from the other, for the seventh part where the water had been gathered together could not hold them both. And thou didst give Behemoth one of the parts which had been dried up on the third day, to live in it, where there are a thousand mountains; but to Leviathan thou didst give the seventh part, the watery part; and thou hast kept them to be eaten by whom thou wilt, and when thou wilt.

To the sixth day is assigned the creation of land animals after their kind, and the climactic formation of man. God proposes, in the much-debated phrase, Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram (Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image and likeness"), and the priestly author confirms the proposal's fulfilment. "The focus of interest", writes Robert Davidson, "is that earth-bound creature who forms the apex of the creation pyramid, man, Hebrew, 'ādām, mankind, the human race."[59] Symbolic correspondence is evident in early Christian and Rabbinic writings on the subject of Adam's creation. The tradition

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[59]Robert Davidson, Genesis I-II, p. 23.

was extant that Adam, which in Hebrew signifies "red" because he was made from the red earth kneaded together,[60] as the first moulded man, embodied the whole world. With reference to adam as a generic term for humankind, St. Augustine writes,

> Quatuor enim litterae sunt, A, D, A, et M. Sicut autem Graeci loquuntur, quatuor orbis partes has in capite litteras habent . . . Orientem, Occidentem, Aquilonem . . . Meridiem. Ipse ergo Adam toto orbe terrarum sparsus est.61
>
> There are four letters, A, D, A, and M. According to the Greek tongue these are the initial letters of the four quarters of the earth, the Orient, Occident, the North and South. Therefore Adam himself signifies the whole earth.

Reverberations of this theme occur in Teutonic mythology, the metaphysical connotations of the Scandinavian and Hebrew creation accounts being defined by Grimm thus:

> The main difference between the Scandinavian view [of cosmogony] and the others . . . is that the one uses the microcosm as material for the macrocosm, and the other inversely makes the universe contribute to the formation of man. There [in Scandinavian myth] the whole of nature is but the first man gone to pieces, here man is put together out of the elements of nature.[62]

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[60]Flavius Josephus, Antiquitates Judaicae, Vol. I, 19, trans. H. St. John Thackeray (London, 1930), p. 11.

[61]St. Augustine, Enarratio in Psalmum, 95:15, PL, 37, 1236. The Sibylline Oracles also take up this theme: "This is the God who made four-lettered Adam, / the first one formed, whose name fills east and west, / And north and south", The Sibylline Oracles, Book 3, 25-32.

[62]Grimm, Teutonic Mythology, II, 568.

In recompense for the missing account of Adam's creation which almost certainly appeared in Genesis A (as the links of continuity show), we are given the deliberate and vividly-drawn creation of Eve.

The account of the repose of God upon the seventh day, which appears at the end of the Elohistic narrative (Genesis 2:1-3), is also missing as such in Genesis A. As the ensuing discussion will find, however, a variation of the expression of God's satisfaction appears following his address to his creatures. To preface this examination by way of borrowing a passage to supply continuity, I quote part of St. Ambrose' homily on the sixth day of creation.

> Denique cum fecisset piscium belluas, cum fecisset ferarum genera et bestiarum, non requievit: requievit autem posteaquam hominem ad imaginem suam fecit.63
>
> God did not find rest when he had created such irrational creatures as fish and the various species of wild beasts. He found rest, however, after he had made man to his own image.

The Old English account resumes decisively with God again pondering favourable counsel:

> Ne þuhte þa gerysne rodora wearde,
> þæt Adam leng ana wære
> neorxnawonges, niwre gesceafte,
> hyrde and healdend. (169-172a)

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[63]St. Ambrose, Hexaemeron, Lib. 7, Sermo 9, cap. 8:49, PL, 14, 277.

> Nor did he deem it fitting, the Guardian of the sky, that Adam should longer be the sole keeper and warden of this paradise, the new creation.

This statement recapitulates briefly two previous actions of God, the creation of Adam and his installation in the Garden of God as keeper and husbandman. The vision of Adam at the centre of Paradise recalls the purpose of man's creation. St. Irenaeus writes, Igitur initio non quasi indigens Deus hominis, plasmavit Adam, sed ut haberet in quem collocaret sua beneficia[64] ("In the beginning, therefore, God shaped Adam, not as if he stood in need of man, but that he might have [someone] upon whom to confer his favours"). God's favours, symbolized by the green fields of Eden, also take shape in his allotting to Adam the husbandry of Eden. The Javistic narration relates, Tulit ergo Dominus Deus hominem, et posuit eum in paradiso voluptatis, ut operaretur, et custodiret illum (Genesis 2:15, "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it"). This development on behalf of his creature springs from the fact that, as St. Ambrose writes, Ostendere enim voluit Deus, quia nec mundus ipse haberet gratiam, nisi eum vario

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[64]St. Irenaeus, Contra Haereses, Lib. 4, cap. 14, PG, 7, 1010.

cultu operator ornasset[65] ("God wished to show us that the earth itself would have no attraction, unless a husbandman had improved it with varied culture"). To this point in the poem, however, Adam has been pursuing a solitary existence, encircled by the paradisal groves and rivers, and receiving homage from the peaceful ranks of animals. Perhaps the material lost in the manuscript gap provided an account of Adam's naming the animals, as is found in the Vulgate Genesis, 2:19-20. His lonely kingship over the beasts causes God to produce a helper of the man's own kind.

> Forþon him heahcyning,
> frea ælmihtig fultum tiode;
> wif aweahte and þa wrāde sealde,
> lifes leohtfruma, leofum rince.
> He þæt andweorc of Adames
> lice aleodode, and him listum ateah
> rib of sidan. He wæs reste fæst,
> and softe swæf, sar ne wiste,
> earfoda dæl, ne pær ænig com
> blod of benne, ac him brego engla
> of lice ateah liodende ban,
> wer unwundod, of þam worhte god
> freolice fæmnan. Feorh in gedyde,
> ece saula. (172b-185a)
>
> Whereupon for him the High King, the Lord Almighty, produced a helper, raised up a wife, and then the bright Giver of Life speedily gave her to the beloved man. He drew forth the substance of Adam's body and from him cunningly extracted a rib from his side. Adam was sound asleep, and softly

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[65]St. Ambrose, Hexaemeron, Lib. 1, cap. 8:28, PL, 14, 149.

> slumbered; he knew no pain, nor any part of suffering, nor did any blood come from the wound. From his body the Lord of Angels took a living bone, the man being unwounded. Of this God fashioned a fair maid. Life he breathed into her, and an eternal soul.

The narration suggests cunning workmanship and meditated artifice in the creation of Eve, who springs from Adam's side while he himself is laid low in a strangely-devised sleep, or "trâce" in the Hebrew sense. The Old English poet has brought poetic innovations to the bare Vulgate account of Eve's creation.[66]

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[66]Aaron Mirsky in "On the Sources of the Anglo-Saxon Genesis and Exodus", English Studies 48 (1967), 385-397, offers a boldly-stated hypothesis about the lettered traditions of the Hebrews which, he writes, are "essential because they might possibly have reached the Anglo-Saxon poet" (p. 387). Although he fails to reveal how the excerpts from the Talmud, Midrashim (contemporary exegetical writings), and ancient Hebrew liturgical poems might have influenced the Old English poets (thereby undercutting the validity of his thesis), the parallels he collects between traditional Hebrew accounts of Eden and the revelations of the Old English poet are remarkable. As J. E. Cross has remarked, in his rebuttal of Mirsky's argument, however, Latin tradition was the more likely avenue of dissemination of such knowledge. (See his "The Literate Anglo Saxon: on Sources and Disseminations", Proc. British Academy, 58 (1972), 67-100. Mirsky considers the additions made to the Vulgate account by the OE poet and concludes that the addition of sar ne wiste (179), to take only one of his examples, is also found in Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, a Midrashic book containing Biblical legends compiled in the 8thc, (p. 387). Again, however, Cross has laid out the relevant distinctions among direct, intermediate, and ultimate "sources".

The lack of Adam's song of appreciation, Hoc nunc, os ex ossibus meis, et carno de carne mea (Genesis 2:23, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"), is of little account in the Old English poet's vision of the Prince of Angels withdrawing a rib during Adam's trance and moulding it, like a potter, into the shape of a wife.[67] The kingly epithets for God recall the poet's use of these in his vision of the siblufu of heaven. God has here established a society of love in the shape of man and woman. A function of this community of love, the first human dryht, is the faithful cultivation of Eden, to gain dominion over creation and presumably to win immortality. The human dryht has been consolidated by God's division of Adam himself, as the elements of creation had been sundered beforehand.[68] Philo's disquisition on the creation of Eve

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[67]Alvin A. Lee in The Guest-Hall of Eden, p. 25, considers whether typological symbolism of the Church is to be perceived in the account of God's satisfaction with his new creatures. He points out that Adam's sleep, as viewed by Hilary, was a type of the death of Christ, which brought the Church into being. J. M. Evans in Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition (Oxford, 1968), p. 101, reminds us that Tertullian, one of the earliest Fathers, was responsible for the development of the parallel between Christ and the Church. "Adam's sleep", he writes, "foreshadowed the death of Christ, while the birth of Eve from Adam's rib prefigured the birth of the Church from the wound in Christ's side." Tertullian's De Anima is the treatise which works out these parallels in complex sequences.

[68]Tragedy lies hidden in this fact, as some commentators, Philo among them, have pointed out. The division

entails a "myth" revealing the origin of sense-perception (= aisthesis) as a complement to Adam's mind or nous.[69] Little evidence of the effect of such extremely elaborate and sophisticated reasoning appears in the Genesis A narrative. Instead, the poet focusses on the mystical operation of God upon Adam's rib. The bloodless bone of which Eve was shaped seems to symbolize the peacefully-created, harmonious order between man and wife, initially sanctioned by God as an imitation of which the celestial dryht is the type. The bloodless transaction provides sharp contrast to the theme of fratricide appearing later in Genesis, in which the fraternal harmony of the dryht is violated by bloodshed on the part of Cain, the "cursed fashioner of death" (Genesis A, 1004).

"Life and an eternal soul" are said to have been breathed into the woman. This capacity to inspire life, like the capacity to stir fruition among the trees, belongs properly to God alone. The ece saula bestowed upon Eve distinguishes her from lower orders of creation and recalls

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of the single human figure into two destroys unity. The number two was decreed by some to embody the unity-destroying principle of evil. By the woman, created second after Adam, death entered the world and broke the bond between Creator and creature.

[69]Philo, Legum Allegoria, II:38, p. 249.

St. Augustine's belief, which became axiomatic among the Fathers,

> Animam dico factam a Deo, ut caetera omnia quae a Deo facta sunt; et inter illa quae Deus omnipotens fecit, principalem locum datum esse animae.70
>
> I say that the soul was made by God as all other things that were made by God; and that among the things that God Almighty made, the principal place was given to the soul.

We may fairly infer, from the double phrase feorh in gedyde / ece saula (184b-185a, "Life he breathed in, and an eternal soul"), that the poet believed the human race was intended for immortality.

The poet's further comment betrays a tone of elegiac remembrance:

> Heo wæron englum gelice,
> þa wæs Eve, Adames bryd,
> gaste gegearwod. Hie on geogoðe bu
> wlite beorht wæron on woruld cenned
> meotodes mihtum. Man ne cuðon
> don ne dreogan, ac him drihtnes wæs
> bam on breostum brynende lufu. (185b-190)
>
> They appeared like angels; then was Eve, Adam's bride, a living spirit. In the radiance of youth they were both born into the world by God's might. They did not know how to commit sin or suffer pain, but in the breast of both burned the love for God.

I have earlier drawn attention to the resemblance of the first human pair to the blessed angels in the ranks of heaven. The echo of the poet's exordium sounds here, "Sin they knew not, the framing of crimes, but they in beatitude

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70St. Augustine, Contra Fortunatum: 13, PL, 42, 117.

abode for ever with their Prince". St. Augustine's commentary on life in Paradise is valuable here, for the ideas he assembles are implicit in the brief comment, Heo wæron englum gelice:

> Vivebat itaque homo in paradiso sicut volebat, quam diu hoc volebat quod Deus jusserat: vivebat fruens Deo, ex quo bono erat bonus: vivebat sine ulla egestate, ita semper vivere habens in potestate. Cibus aderat, ne esuriret; potus, ne sitiret, lignum vitae, ne ullum senecta dissolveret. Nihil corruptionis in corpore vel ex corpore ullas molestias ullis ejus sensibus ingerebat. Nullius intrinsecus morbus, nullus ictus metuebatur extrinsecus. Summa in carne sanitas, in anima tota tranquillitas. Sicut in paradiso nullus aestus aut frigus, ita in ejus habitatore nulla ex cupiditate vel timore accedebat bonae voluntatis offensio.71
>
> In Paradise, therefore, man lived as he desired, as long as he desired what God had commanded. He lived in the enjoyment of God and was good by God's goodness; he lived without any want and had it in his power so to live eternally. He had food that he might not hunger, drink that he might not thirst, the Tree of Life that senility might not waste him. He [God] placed no corruption within his body nor without the body any vexations from his senses. No inward disease was feared, nor outside attack. Soundest health blessed his body, total tranquillity his soul. Just as in Paradise nothing was hot or cold, so for its inhabitants nothing threatened injury of [his] good will through desire or fear.

The balanced and rhythmic prose seems to reflect the quality of sanitas (soundness of body and mind) which characterizes the earthly creatures. After the Fall, as Aelfric has

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[71]St. Augustine, De Civitate Dei, Lib. 14, cap. 26, PL, 41, 434.

pointed out, man became prone to sickness and decay while indeed his entire life became suspended between the vicissitudes of fear and desire.

The "love for God" burning in the hearts of Adam and Eve is both a reflection and a reciprocation of the divine love evident in God's preparing the Garden for his creatures' pleasure. The elegiac tenor, verging on melancholy, is implicit here in the poet's verse-making; the reader's remembrance turns upon the Paradise so soon to be lost. Momentarily, however, exegetical implications may be drawn from the innocence of Adam, who, during his fragile suzerainty over creation, functions as a type of Christ. St. Leo the Great explains the typological relation:

> Si, fideliter, dilectissimi, atque sapienter creationis nostrae intelligamus exordium, inveniemus hominem ideo ad imaginem Dei conditum, ut imitator sui esset auctoris; et hanc esse naturalem nostri generis dignitatem, si in nobis quasi in quodam speculo divinae benignitatis forma resplendeat. Ad quam utique nos quotidie reparat gratia Salvatoris, dum quod cecidit in Adam primo, erigitur in secundo.72
>
> If, dearly beloved, we comprehend faithfully and wisely the beginning of our creation, we shall find that man was made in God's image, to the purpose that he might imitate his Creator, and that our race achieves its highest natural dignity, by the form of the divine goodness reflected in us, as in a mirror. And with certainty to this form

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[72]St. Leo the Great, Sermo 12:1, PL, 54, 168-9.

> the Saviour's grace is daily restoring us, so long as that which in the first Adam fell, is raised up again in the second [Adam].

Adam in Paradise becomes a type of Christ in the wilderness, thus forming an exegetical tradition which furnished mediaeval iconography with vivid illustrative possibilities concerning the wild beasts' devotion to Christ, who, as the second Adam, was tempted not in a garden, but in a desert. These animals which honoured Adam and Christ symbolized not unbridled nature and inflamed passions, as Philo asserted, but the peaceful and covenant-keeping order of creation.[73]

The hexaemeral narrative moves on to the benediction on human life, spoken by God directly to his creatures in an utterance which breaks the divine silence in respect to humankind. The anthropomorphically-conceived, speaking God is intimately involved with the lives and destinies of his creatures. Life on middle-earth is fleetingly stable and assured as Adam and Eve are invited and enjoined to assume dominion over eall worulde gesceaft (199b, "all the earthly creation").

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[73]For an example of manuscript illumination on this theme see Old Testament Miniatures: a Medieval Picture-Book with 283 Paintings from the Creation to the Story of David, Introduction and Legends by Sydney C. Cockerell (New York, n.d.). See also the plates on the six days of creation, the Fall, and the expulsion from Paradise.

Da gebletsode bliðheort cyning,
metod alwihta, monna cynnes
ða forman twa, fæder and moder,
wif and wæpned. He þa worde cwæð:
"Temað nu and wexað, tudre fyllað
eorðan ælgrene, incre cynne,
sunum and dohtrum. Inc sceal sealt wæter
wunian on gewealde and eall worulde gesceaft.
Brucað blæddaga and brimhlæste
and heofonfugla. Inc is halig feoh
and wilde deor on geweald geseald,
and lifigende, ða ðe land tredað,
feorheaceno cynn, ða ðe flod wecceð
geond hronrade. Inc hyrað eall." (192-205)

Then the blithe-hearted King, Lord of all creatures, of mankind, blessed the first two, father and mother, wife and husband. He spoke these words: "Multiply now and increase; with your offspring fill the earth all green, with your race, sons and daughters. You two shall dwell in dominion over salt waves and all the earthly creation. Enjoy the treasures of earth, the sea's burden, and the birds of heaven. To you two over the hallowed cattle and wild beasts is dominion granted, and over living things that tread the land, and all races endued with life that the flood spawns throughout the sea. To you two shall all be obedient."

This is an embroidered variation of the bare Vulgate benediction[74] which lacks the characteristic descriptive epithet eorðan ælgrene, a vivid evocation of fertility. The mandate in both texts is clear: just as God governs the

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[74]The Vulgate text is not so bare, however, as to escape the attention of the OE poet who incorporated it into a charm supplicating for the land's fertility: Crescite et multiplicamini . . . See PR, 6, 116-118, 1-82.

celestial ranks, so Adam and Eve are instructed to subjugate the earth and assume lordship over it. It is the same injunction delivered later to Noah and his family in the establishment of a new creation upon the Flood-survivors' emergence from the Ark:

> "Tymaþ nu and tiedraþ, tires brucaþ,
> mid gefean fryþo; fyllaþ eorþan,
> eall geiceaþ. Eow is eþelstol
> and holmes hlæst and heofonfuglas
> and wildu deor on geweald geseald,
> eorþe ælgrene and eacen feoh." (1512-1517)

> "Teem now and multiply, enjoy honour, take delight in peace, fill the earth with your offspring. To you are given your father's home and the fish of the sea and the birds of heaven and the wild beasts; dominion is allotted over the earth all green and the fattening herds."

The link with Adam is apparent: as the first man and wife were created to re-establish a dryht loyal to God and enjoined to replenish the earth, so Noah and his descendants were directed to re-establish the native habitation, their father's home, in a new creation designed after the pre-lapsarian Eden. In both cases God enumerates those orders of creation over which man is supreme. The implication is strong that in the beginning of creation, land and sea animals now ferocious were friendly and obedient to Adam, who had called them all by name. Certain Fathers built upon this idea, declaring that in the beginning, animals now carnivorous were created as vegetarian, bloodshed and the tearing of flesh appearing incongruous on the greensward

of Eden. Universal peace momentarily exists while the creatures honour Adam, their mentor. Conspicuously absent from the Old English account is any reference to the serpent who was "more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (Genesis 3:1).

The following passage suggests the theme of the Sabbath rest and contemplation of the new creation by God.

> Ða sceawode scyppend ure
> his weorca wlite and his wæstma blæd,
> niwra gesceafta. Neorxnawong stod
> god and gastlic, gifena gefylled
> fremum forðweardum. Fægere leoht
> þæt liðe land lago yrnende,
> wylleburne. Nalles wolcnu ða giet
> ofer rumne grund regnas bæron,
> wann mid winde, hwæðre wæstmum stod
> folde gefrætwod. (206-215a)
>
> Then our Shaper perceived the beauty of his work
> and the fruitful prosperity of the new creation.
> The plain of Paradise stood, good and hospitable,
> stored with gifts, endowed with treasure. With
> fair light that pleasant land lay, with a flowing
> stream, a welling fountain. Not yet did clouds
> sombre with wind bear rain over the spacious earth,
> but the plain lay entwined with treasure.

The green plain of Paradise, referred to by the poet as Adam's native home, represents a composite of those rare references in the Old Testament to the configuration and situation of the Garden of Eden. Alan K. Brown has traced the semantic and philological origin of the term for Eden, neorxnawong, interpreting it as Paradīsus, or, as in Augustine's explanation, viridarium, or viridiarium,

a "pleasance", a fruit, herb, or flower garden.[75] The Hebrew Genesis relates that God formed man, planted a garden eastward in Eden, and took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it and keep it. (Genesis 2:7, 8, 15.) Subsequent references in the Old Testament call Eden the Garden of God (Ezechiel 28:13, 31:8, 9). In Joel 2:3, it is the Garden of Eden, in Isaias 51:3, the "garden of the Lord". The neorxnawong of Genesis A shares most features of the same green plain in The Phoenix in its fruitfulness and simultaneous spring and harvest. The present account, however, lacks any reference to the Tree of Life and to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil so vividly described in Genesis B. This, the lignum scientiae boni et mali of the Vulgate, together with the inquisitive serpent, is absent from the Genesis A story. As it stands, the contents of its disclosure are unmarred by any overt reference to the impending felix culpa.

The passage seems to supply the missing account of the blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day, in its sense of fruition and labours accomplished. The picture

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[75]See Alan K. Brown, "Neorxnawong", Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, 74 (1973), 615. Brown also notes the occurrence of the Latin paradîs at Heliand 3136, 5606, and similarly in Old High German and Old Norse. The Exameron Anglice attributed to Aelfric also uses neorxnawong: Paradisum, / ðæt we hatað on Englisc 'Neorxnawong' (Exameron Anglice, (427b-428, "Paradise, that we call in English Neorxnawong").

of the Scyppend contemplating his works with satisfaction over their beauty appears to form a structural complement to the initial portrait of God as heathen chief pausing to take inner counsel prior to creation. The imagery of treasure characterizes the description; paradise is imagined as a plain adored with ornaments in a poetic technique comparable to that evident in The Phoenix. If we recall that meteorological and horticultural precision bears no relevance to the shape and language of myth, we may then suggest that the account of fruition in Paradise implies the world's creation in what is now the spring of the year. The art of patristics has seized upon this possibility to elaborate the concept of the Pasch, the commemoration of creation. In conjunction with the birth of Adam and Eve "in the loveliness of youth", the birth of the world in the youth and spring of time is an assumption wholly consistent with the statements of the Fathers. Gaudentius of Brescia writes in his first Paschal Homily:

> Nam veris tempore Deus condidit mundum. Martio enim mense dixit per Moysen Deus: Mensis hic vobis initium mensium, primus est in mensibus anni.[76]

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[76]Gaudentius of Brescia, De Exodi Lectione Primus, PL, 20. 845.

> It is indeed in the spring time that God created the world. And indeed, it was in the month of March that God said to Moses: "the month shall be for you the first of the months of the year".

St. Ambrose supports and extends this assertion by declaring that God did not wish to produce fruits and blooms amongst the bonds of frost[77] -- hence the validity of the vernal hypothesis. He continues by writing that the Pasch of the Lord is celebrated at the time of new seedlings, the rhythmic recurrence of which displays the providence of God.

The emphasis on the fruitfulness of Paradise finds a complement in the eleventh Ode of Solomon. An encomium of the treasures of Paradise, this Ode outlines the spiritual progress of the soul which is "planted in paradise", descending from the first pair who flourished for a moment amongst its trees. Both Old English poet and apocryphal Ode celebrate the <u>fægere leohte</u> (210b, radiant light) of Paradise:

> . . . I became like the land which blossoms and
> rejoices in its fruits:
> And the Lord (was) like the sun (shining) upon
> the face of the land;
> My eyes were enlightened,
> And my face received the dew:

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[77]St. Ambrose, <u>Hexaemeron</u>, <u>Lib</u>. 1, <u>cap</u>. 4, <u>PL</u>, 14, 139-140.

> And my nostrils had the pleasure
> Of the pleasant odour of the Lord.
> And He carried me into His Paradise
> Where is the abundance of the pleasure of the
> Lord; . . .
> And I said, blessed, O Lord, are they
> That are planted in thy land,
> And that have a place in thy Paradise,
> And that grow in the growth of thy trees;
> And have changed from darkness to light . . .
> For there is abundant room in thy Paradise,
> And nothing is useless therein:
> But everything is filled with fruit.[78]

Lacking the conventional easterly reference to the situation of Eden, and its traditional position upon a mountain-top, the attribution of eternal fruition to Paradise nevertheless has abundant parallels in ancient and apocryphal writings. For example, in the Book of Enoch, the author describes his visionary journey to the east of a great mountain-range, where he finds aromatic trees exhaling the fragrance of frankincense and myrrh, cinnamon and other spices flourishing on the slopes of valleys. There were groves of trees with nectar flowing forth, and trees full of stacte which, when burnt, "smelt sweeter than any fragrant odour".[79] The conceptions of Paradise in the Old English The Phoenix, to

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[78]The Odes and Psalms of Solomon, Ode 11, vv. 12-16, and 18-23, pp. 265-7.

[79]See R. H. Charles, The Book of Enoch (Oxford, 1912), 29-31, p. 53.

be examined in a later chapter, adhere more fully to the complicated varieties of imagery that clustered through centuries around the idea of Eden.

One such traditional assumption was the unchanging temperateness of Paradise. The Genesis A poet writes, Nalles wolcnu ðа giet / ofer rumne grund regnas bæron, wann mid winde (212b-214a, "Not yet did clouds sombre with wind bear rain over the spacious earth"). Unleashed clouds, dark with wind and bearing rain, symbolize mutability and the caprice of weather so soon to descend upon the inhabitants of Eden. The poet emphasizes the peace of Paradise by negative suggestion in the type of construction to be examined in The Phoenix as nalles . . . hwæðre. In place of chaotic wind and rain, the watercourses of Paradise irrigate the land. These are defined as lago yrnende (211b, flowing stream) and wylle burne (212a, welling fountain). It seems likely that a Vulgate phrase gave rise to the poetic conception of welling fountains: fons ascendebat e terra, irrigans universam superficiem terrae (Genesis 2:6, "there went up a mist [or fountain] from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground").

The watery symbolism continues in the next passage:

Heoldon forðryne
eastreamas heora æðele feower
of þam niwan neorxnawonge.
Da wæron adælede drihtnes mihtum
ealle of anum, þa he þas eorðan gesceop,
wætre wlitebeorhtum, and on woruld sende. (215b-220)

Four noble streams held their courses from this new Paradise. They were divided by the Lord's might all from one when he shaped this earth, the glorious water and sent [it] into the world.

A cosmogonic reminiscence upon this same theme occurs in the Book of Enoch:

And through [God's oath] the earth was founded upon the water, / And from the secret recesses of the mountains come beautiful waters, / From the creation of the world and unto eternity.80

The Genesis A passage, Ða wæron adælede drihtnes mihtum / ealle of anum (218-219a, "They were divided by the Lord's might all from one"), seems to suggest the mythological river Oceanus, which encircled the ancient world and, as a figure of legend, was wedded to Tethys, mother of the river nymphs.[81] The Old English poet says that one glorious

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[80]The Book of Enoch, 69, v. 17, pp. 90-91.

[81]See The Sibylline Oracles, Book 3, 23-29, where the author recalls the cosmological picture:

[God] by a word all things
Created, heaven, and sea, and tireless sun,
And the full moon, and stars that shed forth light,
The mighty mother Tethys, fountains, streams,
Imperishable fire, and days and nights.

stream surrounded the middangeard in its infancy, playing thus a variation upon the Vulgate comment, Et fluvius egrediebatur de loco voluptatis ad irrigandum paradisum, qui inde dividitur in quatuor capita.(Genesis 2:10, "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads").

The four streams of Eden in their brief scriptural mention invi ted extended commentary from the Fathers. In the Old English poem, however, the language seems entirely expository. The notations of Augustine and Bede may suggest underlying exegetical meanings. In explicating the four rivers, St. Augustine works out a complicated synthesis of interpretations, based upon the innovations of Philo and St. Ambrose. Corresponding to the four quarters of Eden, the four rivers embodied the four virtues -- prudentia, fortitudo, temperantia, and justitia, ("sagacity, courage, moderation", and "equity").[82] Bede extols the unity revealed by the rivers in fulfilling their courses underground.[83] This possibility seems accurate from the poet's comment, "They were divided by the Lord's might all

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[82]St. Augustine, De Genesi Contra Manicheos, Lib. 2, cap. 10, PL, 34, 202.

[83]Bede, Hexaemeron, Lib. 1, PL, 91, 45-6.

from one".

In the midst of the naming of the rivers and the indication of their respective courses, the poet's voice again falls silent, suspending the telling of the story of creation as a sequential whole.

> Ðæra anne hatað ylde, eorðbuende,
> Fison folcweras: se foldan dæl
> brade bebuged beorhtum streamum
> Hebeleac utan. On þære eðyltyrf
> niðdas findað nean and feorran
> gold and gymcynn, gumþeoda bearn,
> ða selestan, þaes þe us secgað bec.
> Ðonne seo æftre Ethiopia
> land and liodgeard beliged uton,
> ginne rice, þære is Geon noma.
> Ðridda is Tigris, seo wið þeodscipe,
> ea inflede, Assirie belið.
> Swilce is seo feorðe, þa nu geond folc monig
> weras Eufraten wide nemnað. (221-234)
>
> There one is called by earth-dwellers Phison,
> the parts of earth, the land of Havilah, widely
> encompassed with bright streams. On that
> native turf, men discover near and far gold
> and precious stones, the sons of men most good,
> as books tells us. Then, the second, the land of
> Ethiopia: its borders lie round about a
> spacious kingdom that is named Gihon. The
> third is Tigris, a stream of abundant flood, that
> flows toward the nation of Assyria. Likewise is
> the fourth, that now throughout many a people men
> name Euphrates.

Philo, with an eye ever-watchful for allegorical implications, writes of the parallel Biblical source:

> Perhaps in this passage matters are allegorized and
> the four rivers are a symbol of four virtues: of
> prudence, called Phison in respect of frugality;
> of Moderation, called Gihon because it labours
> with regard to food and drink, and produces the
> various pleasures of the belly and those parts
> which are below the belly, and this is earthly;

> of courage, called Tigris, for this checks the affection of anger which rages in us; of justice, called Euphrates, for in nothing do the thoughts of men rejoice and have gladness more than in justice.84

In the Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis, however, the soul's hierarchy is altered somewhat in the substitution of "courage" for the virtue represented by Gihon. This watercourse encompasses Ethiopia, the name of which means "lowness", being cowardly. Tigris is interpreted as "self-mastery". Philo, well-read in Plato, writes that the soul "is three-fold and has one part that is the seat of reason, another that is the seat of high spirit, and another that is the seat of desire".[85] Prudence belongs to the reasonable part, courage to the passionate part, and self-mastery to the lustful part. The Old English poet has followed traditional order by naming Fison first, for "prudence (Phison) has its sphere in the first part of the soul which is the domain of reason".[86] The poet further relates the fabled information,

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[84]Philo, Supplement I: Questions and Answers on Genesis, 1:8, p. 8.

[85]Philo, Allegorical Interpretation, 1:66-69.

[86]Philo, op. cit., 1:71, p. 193.

"as books tells us", that men in that land, encompassed with prudence, discover the most excellent of gold[87] and precious stones. The exegetical meaning is clear: fallen man, by the exercise of prudence, or cleansed perception, can find out the joys of the righteous which are as gold. Adam and Eve, in their likeness to the angels, experienced these joys in Paradise.

The quality of courage, represented by Gihon, is operative in the lives of the world's first parents by their assuming dominion over created orders. Tigris, interpreted as "self-mastery" symbolizes practical control over human desires with an eye to their fitness. God has sanctioned human sexuality, (Temaƌ nu and wexaƌ), giving Adam and Eve power to generate a harmonious family of nations. This last seems to be implied in the outflowing of Eden's four rivers through the lands of Havilah, Ethiopia, and Assyria, and through many another folk-land.

The fourth and overruling virtue is justice, represented in Euphrates which means "fruitfulness". From

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[87]Compare with this garden context the revelations about the creation in the Exeter Riddle 40, a translation of Aldhelm's Riddle 100, "Creatura"; especially the reference to fretted gold: Ic eom fægerre frætwum goldes (46, "I am fair with twisted gold"), PR, 3, 200-203, 46). To the Anglo Saxon poetic mind, gold and its related import suggested a dense fabric of symbolism, chiefly of treasure.

the philosophical viewpoint, justice harmonizes the tripartite soul, as Plato argued. In theological terms, justice is a virtue "fruitful indeed and bringing gladness to the mind".[88] It appears when the soul's three parts function in harmony. The value of the application of Philo's treatise on the four streams of Eden lies in the working out in the later parts of Genesis A of these virtues represented thus in the lives of the patriarchs. Indeed, Genesis A concludes with an account of Abraham's stout-heartedness in willing to sacrifice his son for God's honour. The quality revealed in stiðhydig (2897a) is courage, evident in Abraham's relinquishing of dominion over his son, his best treasure. Thus, the account of Eden's rivers and the human virtues they symbolize provides a fitting conclusion to the story of creation and an anticipative link with the successive events in Israel's history.

In the proposal at the beginning of this chapter, I suggested three perspectives, the philosophical, theological, and mythopoeic, from which the hexaemeral account in Genesis A might be viewed. Evidence of diluted

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[88]Philo, op. cit., 1:72, p. 195.

philosophical and theological elements which shaped the exegetical materials has been acknowledged. I have noted, for example, how St. Gregory Nanzianzen called God "First Cause", while the authors of the Sibylline Oracles adopted for God the classical terminology of "Jove the Thunderer". Latin tradition assimilated and recast Greek and Rabbinic sources, while patristic commentaries elaborated upon episodes and figures in such seminal Hebrew works as The Book of Jubilees. A complex amalgamation of philosophical and religious thought was assembled, even as certain elements were mutually conflicting.[89] Cross has pointed out that collocations of man's life as a journey "would not be incongruous to a Christian Anglo-Saxon who was knowledgeable in the methods of the Biblical commentaries and realized the symbolic application of the historical journey".[90] The archetypal journey implied in the

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[89]See The Book of Jubilees, ed. R. H. Charles (London, 1902), xiii, where we are told that the author's "object was to defend Judaism against the attacks of the hellenistic spirit that had been in the ascendant one generation earlier".

[90]J. E. Cross, Latin Themes in Old English Poetry, Philosophical Faculty of the University of Lund, 1962, p.12.

hexaemeral accounts is the pilgrimage of man from his own creation to his individual day of doom.

With reference to Genesis A, I have noted not so much the centrality of the Vulgate creation story, as the Old English poetic embellishment and expansion of sources. I have argued that the philosophical and theological elements embedded in Genesis A are at all times subsumed under the heading of cosmopoesy. Seen in this way, the hexaemeral tradition in Genesis A functions as the following paragraph outlines:

> So far as literary criticism is concerned, theology and metaphysics are assertive forms of human expression. They are, moreover, outside literature, so that when they influence it they create a centrifugal or outward movement in it which is always, to greater or lesser degree, balanced by the inward pull or movement Frye calls the literal or "literary" meaning, as distinct from the descriptive or outer meaning. Because it is always there in imaginative or hypothetical verbal structures, any theological or philosophical idea included in the poem is present primarily as part of a verbal pattern, as an element in an imaginative or fictional motif.91

The traditional elements of the "verbal pattern" which the Old English poet has adapted from a literary legacy contribute to a vision in Genesis A of creation as cosmopoesy.

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[91]Alvin A. Lee, "OE Poetry, Mediaeval Exegesis and Modern Criticism", Studies in the Literary Imagination, 8 (1975), 55-6.

CHAPTER THREE

HEXAEMERON IN MINIATURE: THE CREATION THEME IN *CHRIST AND SATAN*

Understanding of the creation account in the Junius *Christ and Satan* may be enhanced by our viewing it as an hexaemeron in little. The first 21 lines present a vision of creation in comprehensive mythical terms which exploit in a highly schematized way the features of the hexaemeral tradition which we have examined in *Genesis A*. *Christ and Satan* (1-21), in contrast to the longer poem, is not intended as a full treatment of the creation myth but rather as an introductory panegyric which reveals the scop's recognition of God's power and benevolence in creation. Here is no voice out of the whirlwind, such as we hear in Job 38, but instead a reasoned account of the divine nature derived from an overall viewing of God's labours in setting out middle-earth. In *Christ and Satan* no mention is made of the sequential days of creation in any dynamic sense of ongoing, progressive activity. No cosmic tumult occurs as the firmament is established and the *middangeard* is called into being. Instead, creation here is an accomplished fact: its labours are ended. Creation at once fulfilled and perfected, how-

ever, is upheld and encompassed by the dimensionless care and knowledge of God. The creation account is thus fittingly touched by the implicit sense of wonder that accompanies Caedmon's Hymn and the scop's "Song of Creation" in Beowulf.[1]

The introductory passage of Christ and Satan deserves attention not only for its view of cosmological order but also for its hexaemeral innovation in introducing the apparent rôle of Christ in viewing the completed universe. Each part of Christ and Satan emphasizes the significance of Christ as the Incarnate Word of God. The poet's phrase godes agen bearn (10b, God's own Son) implies the poet's familiarity with the traditional presence of Christ at the world's creation. This theme was much worked over by the Fathers and reached perhaps its most emphatic expression in the Catechesis series of St. Cyril of Jerusalem. Justification for the poem's title is evident throughout Christ and Satan in its record of the cosmic struggle of the Son of God with se alda (34a, the Old One). Against Huppé who asserts that this is "a poem that, by the evidence

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[1]See again in this context J. B. Bessinger, Jr., "Homage to Caedmon and others: a Beowulfian praise song", in which Bessinger imagines "Caedmon's Hymn secularized as a Beowulfian panegyric". He pursues the thematic and verbal parallels between the scop's song and Caedmon's Hymn, in arguing that the Beowulf-poet knew and admired Caedmon's Hymn (95).

of [the] opening lines, should not be called Christ and Satan, but 'The Might of God',"[2] I suggest that the narrative is peculiarly devoted to chronicling in a disjunctive mythical mode the acts of Christ against Satan in the contexts of the Creation, the Harrowing of Hell, and the Temptation in the desolate hall of middle-earth. The centrality of Christ as the Logos through which the world was made forms an important motif in a discussion to follow, of patristic assumptions about the agency of creation.

The hypothesis which I have employed in exploring the hexaemeral elements of Christ and Satan (1-21) is that this poem, like Genesis A, reveals evidence of the influence of a literary hexaemeral tradition even as the lines express the features of that tradition in ancestral Germanic formulae. This hypothesis does not address itself to the problem of whether the poem was intended for recitation, which it may well have been; even so, the possibility of oral delivery would not discount the literary imprint on the poem. As suggested in Chapter One, it becomes evident that the hexaemeral elements in the Old English poems, in contrast to patristic texts, lost much of the dogmatic and "assertive" character of the latter and

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[2]Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry, p. 228.

developed beyond them in the broader terms of cosmopoesy.

Earlier critics and editors of Christ and Satan, while largely ignoring the creation account, have focussed attention mainly upon the vexed problem of manuscript unity. The German scholar Grein, who first entitled these verses Christ and Satan, viewed the poem as a single, coherent structure.[3] In his edition of 1925, M. D. Clubb offered a plea for considering Christ and Satan as a single poem upon three major areas of the divine comedy, Part One comprising the laments of the fallen angels, Part Two, episodes in the life of Christ, and Part Three, the temptation of Christ by Satan.[4] Richard Greene in reviewing the "anachronisms and chronological absurdities" of the poem's arrangement as it stands, proposed the transposing of Parts Two and Three in order that the poem might

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[3]Christian W. M. Grein, Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Poesie, Text I (Goettingen, 1857). Pp. 359-362 summarize the early history of the Junius MS, and of Cædmon II, as Grein calls Christ and Satan. Grein has printed the poem as a unit with nine editorial divisions not observed in the G. P. Krapp edition.

[4]Merrel D. Clubb, ed., Christ and Satan; an OE Poem (New Haven, 1925), pp. xlii-liv. C. W. Kennedy, meanwhile, in translating the second part of the Junius MS, had perceived a collection of "various poems grouped under the title of Christ and Satan . . . written in three different hands". See Kennedy, The Caedmon Poems (London and New York, 1916), p. xii. Fortunately for OE scholarship, recent critics such as Thomas D. Hill have addressed themselves to explicating the poem's artful composition in a critical mode far removed from viewing the Junius MS, as

open with Creation and close with Doomsday.[5] Recently, Geoffrey Shepherd has charged Christ and Satan with "a steady loss of intelligibility which is perhaps the unavoidable and eventual consequence of a style which aspires to be always oracular".[6]

The purpose of this chapter is not to defend the poem's narrative unity, which admittedly is discontinuous, if one seeks unity in terms of clear chronology and linear sequence.[7] Rather, I wish to examine the neglected account

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Kennedy does, p. lxx, as "these poems, artlessly wrought in simple sincerity".

[5]Richard Greene, "A Re-arrangement of Christ and Satan", MLN, 43 (1928), 108-110.

[6]Shepherd, "Scriptural Poetry", 35. This critic appears to echo G. P. Krapp's assertion in his Introduction to the Junius Manuscript, xxxv. Krapp describes Christ and Satan as "a set of lyric and dramatic amplifications of a number of Biblical and legendary themes". Shepherd, 33, proposes that "Christ and Satan is probably better thought of as a collection of related pieces, somewhat like Christ I, than as an attempt at consecutive narrative".

[7]Neil D. Isaacs has offered a fresh perspective on the structure of Christ and Satan. He perceives its central organizing structural principle as operative" in the pattern of the speeches by the seven separate voices, distinct from his own, which the narrator uses". This dialectically dramatic reading of the poem does not diminish the poet's own voice at the opening presentation of creation. See Structural Principles in Old English Poetry (Knoxville, Tenn., 1968), p. 128.

of creation presented in the mythical mode which bears no relevance to historical chronology. The brief vision of creation, to which previous critics have given short shrift, introduces the poem by opening prominent hexaemeral themes clothed in the language of dryht-poetry. This latter is especially significant in the "gifts of men" theme in (19-21). The alleged anachronisms of the poem confront us immediately in the poet's assertion that the power of God became known to men through the wonders of creation "as if", writes Neil D. Isaacs, "anachronistically, men were able to see the creation".[8] The poet's celebration of the creation is of a contemplative order. As in Genesis A, the opening passage provides a bright vision to precede the account of war in heaven and the subsequent fall of the faithless angel-troops. The contrasting pattern of events immediately following the cosmogonic myth darkens the poem; the grievous laments of the oath-breakers provide a conventional lament in opposition to the poet's equally conventional formulaic theme of praise.

> Đæt wearđ underne eorđbuendum,
> þæt meotod hæfde miht and strengđo
> đa he gefestnade foldan sceatas.
> Seolfa he gesette sunnan and monan,
> stanas and eorđan, stream ut on sæ,
> wæter and wolcn, đurh his wundra miht.
> Deopne ymblyt clene ymbhaldeđ

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[8]Isaacs, Structural Principles, p. 131.

meotod on mihtum, and alne middangeard.
He selfa mæg sæ geondwlitan,
grundas in geofene, godes agen bearn,
and he ariman mæg rægnas scuran,
dropena gehwelcne. Daga enderim
seolfa he gesette þurh his soðan miht.
Swa se wyrhta þurh his wuldres gast
serede and sette on six dagum
eorðan dæles, up on heofonum,
and heanne holm. Hwa is þæt ðe cunne
orðonc clene nymðe ece god?
Dreamas he gedelde, dugude and geþeode,
Adam ærest, and þæt æðele cyn,
engla ordfruman, þæt þe eft forwarð. (1-21)

It was not secret to earthdwellers that God had power and strength when he established the regions of earth. Himself he set up sun and moon, stones and earth, the stream outside the sea, water and cloud, through his marvellous might. The Lord in his might wholly embraces the deep expanse and all the earth. He may himself look through the sea and the foundations in the deeps; God's own Son, and he can count of the rain showers each drop. The number of days alone he established through his true might. So the Artificer through his glorious spirit devised and established in six days the divisions of earth, the high heaven and the deep sea. Who may that be who possesses pure knowledge save eternal God? Joys he doled out, powers and language to Adam first, and that noble lineage to the angel-chief who afterwards perished.

The force of the opening negation "it was not secret" strongly implies the intimate involvement of God in the lives of his creatures, those "earth-dwellers" to whom the gift of understanding the noumenal world of God's "might and strength" seems to have been given. A term heavy with mythological overtones, eorðbuendum (= terricolae) firmly establishes the earthiness and the dependent creatureliness of the race of men. Eorðbuendum also shows

semantic relationship to the West Saxon eorðan bearnum (for the children of earth) in Caedmon's Hymn. John Golden's argument in the context of this latter may also be valuable with reference to Christ and Satan (1b). Golden, in suggesting that the phrase "for the children of earth" is an onomastic circumlocution for 'children of Adam', "the protoparens from whom all mankind descends",[9] also reminds us that Jerome, Isidore, Bede and Rabanus Maurus all give "earth" as one of the etymological meanings of "Adam".[10] Christ and Satan opens, then, from the poet's earthly point of view. In his narrative he has reversed the order laid out in Caedmon's Hymn in which God first fashions heofon to hrofe (heaven as a roof). In Christ and Satan, middle-earth in the term foldan sceatas emerges as the first-named created level of the cosmos.

In contrast to the forthright laudatory style of Caedmon's Hymn and again in contrast to the exuberant praise

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[9]John Golden, "An Onomastic Allusion in Caedmon's Hymn?", NM, 70 (1969), 628.

[10]Ibid., 629. See also Morton W. Bloomfield, "Patristics and OE Literature: Notes on Some Poems", Comparative Literature, 14 (1962), 36-43, where the phrase is translated "for the children of the earth". C. L. Wrenn in "The Poetry of Caedmon", Proc. Br. Acad., 32 (1946), 283, uses the Northumbrian version ælda barnum 'for the children of men' which "agrees so markedly with Bede's filius hominum".

of the Hebrew Psalms, the Old English style is more oblique and restrained. The vision of creation appears to be one-dimensional, schematically drawn on a horizontal plane. The highly stylized rhetorical form, beginning with a variation of formulaic language Đæt wearð underne . . . emphasizes the also "one-dimensional" quality of the verse. It derives its strength, not from robust concepts nor from freshness of treatment, but from its associational values which depend on the reader's ability to understand symbolic modes of imagining. To an educated audience versed in the Vulgate, the separate elements of encomium in Christ and Satan (1-21) would have lent themselves to exegetical amplification. While the first few lines of the poem appear to present a highly generic, undisciplined catalogue of subjects, in substance much of their meaning lies in their symbolic value. True to the character of much Old English poetry, no sense of highly visual or tactile encounter with created objects appears in the verse, but instead the elemental and conventional aspects of nature are listed in balanced phrases which imply a sense of a deliberately structured creation. The rhetorical effectiveness of the lines,

> Seolfa he gesette sunnan and monan
> stanas and eorðan, stream ut on sæ,
> wæter and wolcn, ðurh his wundra miht (4-6)

is typical of the style of this Old English poet whose balance in making verses is evident in the measured stateliness of the alliterative lines. His view of creation which presents in flat, emphatic statements a recital of God's accomplished labours, contrasts with the presentation in Isaias of the creative energy of the anthropomorphically-conceived Elohim:

> Quis mensus est pugillo aquas,
> Et caelos palmo ponderavit?
> Quis appendit tribus digitis molem terrae,
> Et libravit in pondere montes,
> Et colles in statere? (Isaias 40:12)
>
> Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Mental, not muscular energy, however, characterizes the Anglo-Saxon imagining of God in creation.

Any investigation of Christ and Satan (1-21) must acknowledge that þa beorhtan gesceaft (138b, the bright creation) reveals the benevolence and designing intelligence implied in the term se wyrhta (14a, wright, workman, artificer, labourer, one who works at some trade). The sequence of the poet's thought waives chronological order as he relates a series of divine acts: "By his wondrous might he established . . . by his strength the Lord upholds . . . the Son of God beholds . . . he numbers . . . by his boundless power he has ordained . . . by his holy spirit he

has devised . . . and founded . . . he first created". Here in the midst of these workmanlike verbs is presented the ordonc (Bosworth-Toller has orþanc = "Orþanc ingenium, cræftica artifex"), that is, mind, genius, wit, understanding, nous or ingenium that distinguishes the godhead from man, as the practise of speech distinguishes man from the beasts. The cosmological and terrestrial order thus laid out reveals a transcendent Creator, not spatially delimited, but expansive in power, one who shapes a "skilful contrivance" (orþanc) and sustains it by his soðan miht (true strength). Among the Fathers too, God's creative power and providential administration find praise. Origen in his On First Principles cannot think with the heretics that the world exists "without an architect or overseer".[11]

The conceptual basis of such terms for God as meotod on mihtum (8a, God in his might) and ece god (18b, eternal God) undoubtedly arises from the Old Testament veneration of Yahweh in a mode of imagining that takes its source from an anthropocentric conception of God. Thus Isaias, of God, Qui sedet super gyrum terrae ("he

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[11]Origen, On First Principles, Book 2, Ch. 1:4, PG, 11, 185.

sitteth upon the circle of the earth") and, in evidence of care for earth-dwellers, extendit velut nihilum caelos, Et expandit eos sicut tabernaculum ad inhabitandum (Isaias 40:22, "stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in"). Again, Job: Et circa cardines caeli perambulat (Job 22:14, "he walketh in the circuit of heaven"). Both generation and sustenance derive from the Godhead as conceived by the Old English poet; the myriad forms of creation (Augustine's rationes seminales) promise futurity while the circular image of God's encompassing the middangeard ensures the faithful protection of a divine gold-lord. The theme in Christ and Satan (1-21) is comparable to that of the Vulgate Psalm 23:1-2:

> Domini est terra, et plenitudo eius;
> Orbis terrarum, et universi qui habitant in eo.
> Quia ipse super maria fundavit eum,
> Et super flumina praeparavit eum.
>
> The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and hath established it upon the floods.

Elsewhere in the Psalms of David we find emphasized God's ownership and unique possession: Quoniam ipsius est mare et ipse fecit illud, et aridam manus ejus fundaverunt (Vulg. Psa. 94:5, "For the sea is his and he made it, and his hands made the dry land"). The motif of unique possession and governance is evident in the Old English

expressions Seolfa he gesette (4a, Himself he set up), He selfa mæg (9a, He may himself), and seolua he gesette (13a, alone he established).

Previously I have suggested that the poet's list of created artefacts seems to offer an arbitrary and ill-defined arrangement. The balanced phrases, however, offer themselves to symbolic interpretation and are heavy with mythical value: foldan sceatas (3b, the regions of earth), sunnan and monan (4b, sun and moon), stanas and eroðan (5a, stones and earth), stream ut on sæ (5b, the stream outside the sea), wæter and wolcn (6a, water and cloud), eroðan dælas (16a, parts of earth) and heanne holm (17a, high sea). Again the poet has reversed traditional hexaemeral order in reciting the creation of the luminaries before "stones and earth". An important feature of the Mediterranean hexaemeral tradition drawn from the Hebrew account of Genesis had been the creation of vegetation before the solar system, so that man might ascribe the power of generation to God alone. The poet recalls the Vulgate division of "waters above from waters below" in his phrase wæter and wolcn (water and cloud), which suggests the fertilizing power of water over the fields of creation.

A major interpretative challenge lies in the water imagery of lines 5-6. God's establishing of water and cloud, as we have seen, recalls the archetypal division of

the flood into the atmospheric heavens and the ordered sea. Formerly a chaotic flood, the waters have received form from the Almighty and now behave in acknowledgement of divine laws. The abyss over which the Spirit of God was moving (ferebatur is the dynamic Vulgate verb), has been transformed: the obedient, newly-"formed" waters honour the barriers which God has founded about the seas. As God avows to Job in the cosmogonic dialogue, Posui ei fines, apponens claustra et portas. Dixit autem ei: Usque huc venies, nec transgredieris, sed in te ipso conterentur fluctus tui (Job 38: 10, 11, "I set my bounds about it, and made it bars and doors, and I said 'Hitherto thou shalt come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"). St. Basil's Fourth Homily on the Hexaemeron is much concerned with delimiting the waters, while St. Cyril of Jerusalem devises elaborate exegetical value from the obedience of the watery element:

> Quis exponat maris profunditatem et latitudinem, aut fluctuum immensum se efferentium impetus? . . . Quod quidem [elementum] impositum sibi mandatum perspicue declarat; dum exurrens descriptam fluctibus suis conspicuam quamdam in littoribus relinquit lineam; videntibus quasi significans se constitutos limites praetergressum non esse.[12]

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[12]St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechesis XI, PG, 33, 650.

> Who can describe the depth and breadth of the sea or the shock of its tumultuous waves? . . . It clearly reveals the decree imposed upon it, when running out it leaves on the sands a distinct line marked by its waves, as though to signify to those who see it that it has not transgressed its appointed bounds.

From divine decree, therefore, arises Christ's ability to quell Leviathan, to turn back Jordan, to walk on the watery path of the sea.

The phrase stream ut on sæ (5b, the stream (or river) outside the sea) has been interpreted by Hill in terms of precise cosmographic significance. He stresses the fact that "both the ancient Germanic world and the world of classical antiquity conceived of the inhabited world as surrounded by water".[13] "One feature of classical cosmography which is particularly relevant", he continues, "is that this great world-encompassing sea is envisioned as a flowing river, and as the border between this world and the next".[14] Hill supports his interpretation of the stream ut on sæ "as a reference to such an earth-encompassing river" by invoking the Visio Sancti Pauli. In this popular mediaeval vision an angel reveals to St. Paul "the river outside the sea": Hic est oceanus qui circuit omnem terram ("Here is Oceanus which circles all the earth").

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[13]Thomas D. Hill, "Apocryphal Cosmography and the Stream ut on Sæ", Philological Quarterly, 48 (1969), 550.

[14]See Hill, op. cit., 551. He quotes the Visio Sancti Pauli in Theodore Silverstein, ed., Studies and Documents IV (London, 1935), 6-12.

The Old English phrase translated as "the river outside the sea" is thus not incomprehensible but full of meaning in its evocation of the Oceanus derived, as we have seen in Chapter One, from the ancients.[15]

An important lexical problem follows closely in the text. As Clubb pointed out, this passage (5b-8) "has puzzled commentators more than any other in the poem".[16] The crux lies in 5a, Deopne ymblyt. In editing Christ and Satan, Krapp accepted Grein's reading of ymbylt, also approved by Clubb who considered it "about equivalent to ymbhwyrft", and admitted a possible relationship to the

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[15]Hill prefers the OE reading stream uton sæ which reinforces the concept in spatial terms of "the river outside the sea" (551-2). As we shall see in the following chapter, The Phoenix presents the same concept of Oceanus in its description of the Earthly Paradise. A concise discussion of the Oceanus legend appears in S. G. F. Brandon, Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East, pp. 162-4. Brandon points out that Oceanus figured on the rim of the cosmic shield of Hephaestus, as recorded in the Iliad xviii, 483-5 (trans. A. T. Murray, Loeb ed., II, pp. 322-5). The circling Oceanus "was also regarded", writes Brandon, "as the source of every form of water, both of the bitter and the sweet". Also, the word Oceanus "has been thought to be a non-personal descriptive term . . . meaning 'circle' or 'that which surrounds'.", p. 163. Jean Daniélou brings this discussion forward to the Christian assimilation of "Oceanus" into the concept of the cosmic Jordan. See From Shadows to Reality (London, 1961), pp. 272-5.

[16]This and the following arguments are from Clubb's edition, pp. 45-7.

verb ymbliđan (to surround). Clubb thus translates 7-8: "The Creator in his might wholly embraces the deep expanse (i.e., the ocean which surrounds the world) and all the earth". In defence of ymb-, Clubb writes that "we have here merely an extension of the identical vocalic alliteration which . . . may have been employed in this case with the conscious purpose of emphasizing the wide inclusiveness of the Creator's grasp".

A second interpretation "accepts the substantive ymblyt (or ymbhwyrft), but changes clene to some word . . . which alliterates with deopne". The most acceptable word, dene "is sometimes used to describe the abyss of chaos or hell". The third solution of the crux is offered by Bright, who considers the three-tiered cosmos in his argument.[17]

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[17]James W. Bright, "Jottings on the Caedmonian Christ and Satan", MLN, 18 (1903), 129-131. His argument develops thus: "It might be supposed that ymblyt of the MS represents ymblyht, the contracted (West Saxon) form of the original (Anglian) ymblyhteđ, and that a full stop follows miht; but the initial acts of the creation are to be recited, in non-biblical order, to be sure, yet in essential agreement with the account in which the dispelling of the darkness from the "face of the deep" upon which moved the "Spirit of God", and the dividing of "the waters from the waters" (cf. wæter and wolcn) are of importance coördinate with the establishment of the earth, the sun, and the moon" (129). He adds, "deopne is to be construed not as abyssus but as qualifying stream, which, like flod in Genesis 150, represents the undivided waters".

I have here accepted the first argument proposed by Clubb.

As we see in the hexaemeral innovation, the elaborate contrivance of the triple-tiered cosmos is continuously subjected to divine scrutiny. The second person of the Trinity, godes agen bearn (10b, God's only Son) gazes through the transparent sea, penetrates to the ocean depths, and counts each drop of the rain-showers. The tradition of God's microscopic knowledge of every created atom characterizes the Latin hexaemera, while certain Greek Fathers assured their audiences of God's knowledge of the infinitesimal elements of creation. St. Clement of Alexandria writes in the Stromatum,

> Deus enim novit omnia . . . et quod fit in theatris, et in partibus rei uniuscujus que, inspiciendo, circumspiciendo, et simul aspiciendo, hoc evenit in Deo. Is enim simul omnia ac unumquodque etiam sigiliatim aspicit uno intuitu, non tamen omnia principale institutum.18
>
> For God knows all things . . . and what applies to theatres, and to the parts of each object, in looking at, looking around, and taking in the whole in one view, applies also to God. For in one glance he views all things together, and each thing by itself; but not all things by way of primary intent.

Especially by way of convincing the heretics and detractors of the Christian faith, other patristic writings emphasized the theme of divine omniscience. St. Irenaeus avowed that

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[18]St. Clement of Alexandria, Stromatum, Lib. 6, cap. 17, PG, 9, 388.

everything which was made had obtained through God's providence its nature, rank, number, and special quality.[19] With reference to the implied theme of microcosm and macrocosm in the Old English terms sæ (9b, sea) and rægnas scuran / dropena gehwelcne (11b-12a, of the rain showers, each drop), it may further be seen in the Contra Haereses that the knowledge of the vast and dimensionless forms of nature properly belongs to their Creator alone. St. Irenaeus wrestles with the philosophic element of cosmic speculation:

> Si quis accipiens a nobis hujusmodi testimonium et consensum, pergat ad hoc, ut et arenam enumeret, et calculos terrae, sed et fluctus maris, et stellas coeli et causas excogitare numeri qui putatur inventus: nonne in vanum laborans? . . .20
>
> If anyone, on obtaining our adherence and consent to this, should proceed to reckon up the sand and pebbles of the earth, yes, also the waves of the sea and the stars of heaven and should endeavour to consider the causes of the number which he imagines himself to have discovered, would not his labour be in vain?

The Old English passage about Christ viewing the translucent sea and the rain-drops presents a textual

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[19]St. Irenaeus, Contra Haereses, Lib. 2, cap. 26, PG, 7, 801.

[20]St. Irenaeus, loc. cit.

problem. In editing this passage, Clubb accepted Grein's emendation of (10a) to read grundas in geofene, (the very bottom of the deep) but Hill remains faithful to the manuscript reading of grundas in heofene (foundations in heaven).[21] He translates this passage, "He himself can look around the sea [and] the foundations in heaven, God's true Son, and He can number the drops of rain, [and number] each drop". In justifying the manuscript reading, Hill argues that

> according to Paul's description of this part of the universe, the river Oceanus serves not only as a boundary between earth and the land of death, but also as support for the foundations of heaven. . . . Within this cosmographic scheme, however, the phrase [grundas in heofene] could readily refer to the foundations of the first heaven which rest on the stream uton sæ, and are nevertheless "in heofene".22

Hill thus convincingly establishes the extra-terrestrial perspective of "God's true Son" in viewing the middangeard and its surrounding sea.

The Christological reference in godes agen bearn is entirely opposite to the poem's overall structure and varying emphases. The phrase suggests, but does not explicitly state, the idea of Christ as co-creator with

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[21]Hill, "Apocryphal Cosmography and the Stream ut on Sæ", 553. See Clubb, p. 48, n. 9-10. Clubb accepts the emendation for its "suitable meaning" and alliteration.

[22]Hill, loc. cit.

God. The prologue to the German Evangelienbuch, we may note, explicitly outlines the divine collaboration of God and his "Word" at creation. This poem, the first known composition in German with a lyrical strophic form, is a hymn to the Logos by the Alsatian monk Otfrid of Weissenburg:

> Er máno ríhti thia náht,
> ioh uurti ooh súnna so glát
> odo ouh hímil, so er gibót,
> mit stérron gimálot:
>
> So uuas er io mit ímo sar,
> mit ímo uuóraht er iz thar:
>
> so uuás ses io gidátun,
> sie iz allaz sáman rietun.[23]

> Before the moon ruled over night,
> Or the sun became so bright,
> or the sky was ever painted
> thick with stars, as he commanded,
> The Word was with him constantly,
> with him wrought all that was to be:
> whatever they created
> they both had contemplated.

Here it is clear that Otfrid thinks of God and his Word as co-creators who, it seems, created the world and its objects after contemplating a supernatural plan or pattern. Here again, in oblique terms, we meet the ancient philosophic concept of a pre-existent pattern for creation.

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[23]Peter Dronke, The Medieval Lyric, p. 38. See also the Hamartigenia of Prudentius, PL, 59, 1011-1078, especially ll. 70-78. Here the Trinity is imagined as a fire of supernatural dimension, the Father being prime mover, the Son being the One who warms with heat, the Holy Ghost gleaming with light.

In still more oblique terms, however, Christ appears as co-creator with God throughout Christ and Satan. The term godes agen bearn (10b) is obviously not intended in opposition to meotod (2a), but may be interpreted in St. Cyril's phrase, Christus, Filius Dei unigenitus et mundi effector[24] (Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God and Creator of the world). Cyril's assertion that Christ made all things is echoed in other patristic writings; the poet of Genesis A too assumes the creation of middle-earth through the agency of God's word: þurh drihtnes word (Genesis A, 130). The emphasis on a creation by words strengthens the position of Christ as co-creator. Hill has recently considered the Christological allusions in the poem, writing that

> the designation of Christ as the Word of the Father is both ancient and widespread, and for the association of brightness and light with the Word, one has to search no further than the introduction to the Gospel of St. John in which the Verbum, which "erat in principio apud Deum" (John 1:2) is also described as the "lux vera, quae illuminat omnem hominem venientum in hunc mundum" (John 1:9).[25]

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[24]St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechesis XI, PG, 33, 722. Neil D. Isaacs also notes the shift "from the Lord (meotod 2a) as Creator to Christ (godes agen bearn 10b) as Creator". See Structural Principles, p. 131.

[25]Thomas D. Hill, "Bryht Word" and "Haelendes Heafod": Christological Allusion in the OE Christ and Satan", ELN, 8 (1970), 7. Hill interprets the Bryhtword of (236b) as a kenning for Christ as "the bright (or illuminating) Word".

St. Cyril represents the extreme theological perspective on this problem of Christ as Creator; he writes

> Omnia effecit Christus . . . non quod Pater sufficienti ad creandum per seipsum potestate carverit; sed quia Filium voluit rebus quas fecisset regnare, ipse exhibens illi rerum creandarum designationem.26
>
> Christ made all things . . . not that the Father lacked power to create the works himself, but because he wished the Son to reign over his own workmanship, furnishing him the design of the things to be made.

Catechesis XI appears to be an appropriate text in reference to Christ's archetypal acts before Creation and after the Fall of Adam's dryht. Although he did not include a specific account of the creation of man, the poet of Christ and Satan was undoubtedly familiar with God's proposal, "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26) and he seems to have assumed the active participation of Christ with the Father in sustaining the world.[27] In the passage about the Harrowing of Hell, a peculiar

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[26]St. Cyril, Catechesis XI, PG, 33, 719.

[27]The anonymous Epistola ad Diognetum, PG, 2, 1177, extols Christ as opifice et creatore omnium; quo coelos condidit, quo mare suis terminis conclusit ("the Artificer and Maker of the cosmos, by whom [God] created the heavens, by whom he enclosed the ocean in its proper bounds").

epithet for Christ appears: se deora sunu, / gasta scyppend (241b-242a, the beloved Son, Shaper of souls). Further, Christ as frumbearn godes (468b, first-born of God) reminds his faithful dryht, Snotre gastas, / ic eow þurh mine mihte geworhte, / Adam ærest and þæt æðele wif (469b-471, "Wise spirits! By my might I fashioned you -- first Adam and this noble woman"). Christ also reminds Adam of the folly committed in Paradise:

> Ic on neorxnawonge niwe assette
> treow mid telgum, þæt ða tanas up
> æpla bæron, and git æton þa
> beorhtan blæda, swa inc se balewa het,
> handþegen helle. (479-483a)
>
> In the new Paradise I set a tree with spreading boughs, whose branches apples bore, and ye two ate the shining fruit as the fiend, the hand-thane of hell, gave instruction.

Finally, in the Temptation section Christ calls himself meotod alwihta, / cyning moncynnes (696b-697a, Lord of all creatures, / King of mankind). By these epithets the poet makes Christ signify that he, who had formerly viewed the cosmic waters, had now entered "historical" time in his temptation by Satan in the context of the postlapsarian world symbolized by the westen. By the internal evidence in Christ and Satan, the epithets for Christ as gasta scyppend, meotod alwihta and cyning moncynnes, seem to resolve the ambiguity concerning the world's creation. God is the actively creating One, Christ surveyed the sea and counted the drops of rain, and

the Spirit planned and established the parts of creation. The rôle of Christ as creator of Adam's dryht and "Shaper of souls" seems to extend the function of the second Person of the Trinity. This theme, however, is a later development; Christ as Creator of the world does not so explicitly appear in Christ and Satan (1-21).

The Church Fathers, however, present strong arguments for Christ as the Person of the Trinity most actively engaged in creation. St. Cyril's Catechesis XI recapitulates the labours of Christ in the Harrowing of hell, preaching to the spirits in prison (I Peter 3:19) and in enduring in triumph the Temptation. In these contexts St. Cyril reminds his audience of Job, who asserted, Qui extendit coelum solus et ambulat super mari tanquam super solo ("He alone stretches out the heavens and treads upon the crests of the sea"). This signifies to those who understand that Christ who, during his presence here walked upon the sea is he who, with his Father, had before created the heavens.[28] God's argument appears in the Catechesis: Aut tu sumens terram lutum finxisti animantem ("Or have you taken the slime of the earth and fashioned a living thing?"). Then, sub-

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[28]St. Cyril, Catechesis XI, PG, 33, 722.

sequently, Aperiuntur vero tibi prae timore portae mortis, janitoresque inferni videntes te timuerunt?[29] ("Have the doors of death been opened unto thee, or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?"). St. Cyril explains this dialogue of God with Job by writing that Christ, who descended into hell to redeem mankind, is he who, in the beginning, had created man out of slime.

The assumption that Christ as Logos functioned as the creative agent of God's will is strengthened by Augustine[30] who bases his proof that God created the world first of all in his Son in John 8:25. Here, it is found, principium provides the key to Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". Against his detractors the Manichaeans Augustine wrote

> Deum in principio fecisse coelum et terram, non in principio temporis, sed in Christo, cum Verbum esset apud Patrem.31
>
> that God in the beginning created heaven and earth, not in the beginning of time, but in Christ, when the Word was with the Father.

In the writings of Clement and Eusebius, according to

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[29]St. Cyril, Catechesis XI, 23. The Septuagint references are taken from Job 38:14 and 17.

[30]St. Augustine, De Genesi ad Litt. lib. imperf.: 103, PL, 34, 222.

[31]St. Augustine, De Genesi contra Manicheos, Lib. 1, cap. 102, PL, 34, 174.

Daniélou, the "first day" is the beginning not of the creation of the world but of "the generation of the Word".[32] Christ's agency in creation attested to by the Fathers appears to be appropriate in the Old English poem, the work of a devout mind highly versed in Scripture. The poet takes up the theme of Christ's acts not in the style of sustained narrative but rather in a series of elaborations on the cosmic acts of Christ designed to stir adoration in the poem's hearers. The discontinuous narrative of Christ and Satan reveals a certain correspondence with the cosmogonic and apocalyptic vision expressed in 2 Peter 3: 4-7. This Epistle brings to remembrance the newly-created 'earth standing out of the water and in the water" which is "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men". The problem of chronology, centering in the term principium (beginning), is resolved by Peter's assurance "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). The mythic "days" of creation may then be conventionally seen as recurring epochs arising from mythical and not historical continuity. The poet's remembrance of God's edicts surfaces in his lines, Daga

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[32]Jean Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1956), p. 251.

enderim / seolua he gesette þurh his soðan miht (12b-13, "The number of days alone he established through his true strength").

The hexaemeral tradition in little appears in the "six days of creation":

> Swa se wyrhta þurh his wuldres gast
> serede and sette on six dagum
> eorðan dæles, up on heofonum,
> and heanne holm. (14-17a)

The artful connotations of se wyrhta have been pointed out. The double-faceted verb serede (= sirwan) reinforces the underlying theme of elaborate skill in the creation of the world. In positive terms, with reference to God, sirwan means "to plan, devise, use art in doing". In negative terms, with reference to deofolcræft (devil-craft), sirwan means "to plan, contrive, devise, plot, attempt with craft". The potential opposite meanings of the single verb emphasize the goodness of God's creative plan in contrast to Satan's insurrective and envious plots. The poet continues in this passage by stating that God invoked his wuldres gast (14b, his holy spirit) in devising and setting up the parts of earth, the planetary heaven and the profound sea. The phrase on six dagum (15b, in six days) reveals the poet's knowledge, (and assumption of his reader's knowledge) of the hexaemeral succession.

The inscrutable nature of the Ancient of Days is implied in the conclusive rhetoric of (17b-18):

> Hwa is pæt ðe cunne
> ordonc clene nymðe ece god?
>
> Who may that be who possesses pure knowledge
> save eternal God?

The foolishness and frailty of man's wisdom is also implicit in the lines which evoke the words of God in Isaias 55, 8-9:

> For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
> neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.
> For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
> so are my ways higher than your ways, and my
> thoughts than your thoughts.

The inscrutability of the divine nature is a theme much explored by the Fathers; St. Cyril of Jerusalem, after examining the character of God the Creator, concludes,

> Naturam quidem Dei intime scrutari impossibile est: at eum ex iis quae conspicimus ejus operibus, glorificationibus et honore prosequi possibile.[33]
>
> It is impossible to examine closely into the nature of God, but, for his works which we see, we can offer him praise and glory.

The shape of the Old English text thus far has been a recital of the marvellous deeds of God, while it concludes with a challenge to the poet's audience to stand in awe before his created artefact. The double meaning of

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[33]St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechesis IX, PG, 33, 642.

ordonc reinforces the artful quality of the creation: the term comprehends such qualities as "mind, genius, wit, understanding", as well as such entities as "a skilful contrivance or work, artifice, device, design".

The miniature hexaemeron which opens Christ and Satan concludes with the imaginatively powerful symbol of the Dryhten as dispenser of gifts. This image, as we have seen in Genesis A, is a chief feature of the hexaemeral tradition, while its presence in the introduction of Christ and Satan provides a natural transition to the laments of the ruined race of angels. The Old English poet imagines God as a generous gold-lord:

> Dreamas he gedelde, duguðe and geþeode,
> Adam ærest, and þæt æðele cyn,
> engla ordfruman, þæt þe eft forwarð. (19-21)
>
> Joys he doled out, powers and language to Adam first,
> and that noble lineage to the angel-chief who
> afterwards perished.

The bestowal of gifts on the creature, a theme often articulated by the Fathers, also finds abundant expression throughout Old English verse, notably in the Exeter Book The Gifts of Men[34] and at the conclusion of Christ II of Cynewulf.[35] In Christ and Satan, Christ, ascended to the

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[34] PR 3, 137-140, 1-113.

[35] PR 3, 26-27, 850-866.

heofonrice (heavenly kingdom), doles out gifts to Adam's race throughout earth in the forms of help and hælo (581a, help and salvation). Undoubtedly, the Scriptural source for a theme elaborated in this way centres in the Vulgate Psalm 67:18, wherein the Lord ascends on high, receives "gifts for men" and "daily loadeth us with benefits". The New Testament takes up the theme in echoing the psalm: "When [Christ] ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians, 4:8). Brief mention of the indisputable source of such a passage in the poem illuminates also the text of St. Gregory of Nyassa in De Beatitudinibus:

> O divitis Domini magnificam largitionem! O largam et uberem palmam! O magnam manum! quanta arcanorum thesaurorum sunt dona!36
>
> How munificent is this rich Lord! How generously he opens his hands to give us his ineffable treasures!

However patently Christian in origin this passage is, the Old English verses give the poem's introduction its peculiarly Germanic character in its evocation of Northern dryht ideals in the concept of treasure circulating among a society of loyal hearth-troops. As I have pointed out, the poet has fashioned his creation account with rhetorical

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[36]St. Gregory of Nyassa, De Beatitudinibus, cap. 7, PG, 44, 1280.

skill to emphasize the contrast between the order, harmony, and cosmos of divine establishment and the disorder, chaos, and revolt of the disloyal troops who sought the windy hall of hell. In contrast to these, Adam was shaped as a thane loyal to his treasure-dispensing Dryhten, and accepting the gifts of dream, dugude, and geþeode as tokens of divine lovingkindness. Adam by disloyalty forfeited each of these, the bestowal of which followed naturally upon the creation of middle-earth.

In the cosmogony of Christ and Satan the ideas of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge are at work in God's shaping of the world. The Old English poet's allegiance to such an idea in his making of the poem is evident in his treatment of the "gifts of men" theme. Each of the terms dreamas, dugude, and geþeode, is like a many-sided jewel illuminating the sentence of the poet. Dream is a term connotative of the rich Germanic legacy of hall-joy, the convivial community of loyal hearth-retainers, the festal mirth at the mead-bench. Bosworth-Toller offers such terms to expand its meaning as: jubilum, laetitia, gaudium, and, in a religious sense perhaps, delirium. Dream, then, is the particular gift of joy that the Dispenser of all treasures doles out to men and angels. Dugude, of multitudinous meanings, signifies the gift of aetas virilis (manhood); it also means

"excellence, virtue, majesty, magnificence, ornament". In terms of advantage, benefit and gain, appropriate translations are commodum, beneficium, lucrum, bonum, prosperitas, munus. Salus (salvation) is a key meaning. Perhaps the most significant term in the context of gift-dispensing, however, is dugude as "that which is seemly, suitable". Because man was made in the image of God it is appropriate that he bear divine attributes; hence, dugude is decorum, (seemliness).

The final term in the triad of gifts is gepeode, the gift of language or tongues, the ability to communicate in words which distinguishes man from the beasts and the lower orders of creation.[37] The element of speech is foremost in many parts of Old English poetic texts: a variety of contexts springs to mind. Gepeode may mean the boasting speech of the faithless Satan[38] who anticipates

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[37]For the view that the animals enjoyed the gift of speech in prelapsarian Eden, see The Book of Jubilees, ed. R. H. Charles (London, 1902), Chapter 3:28: "And on that day [of Adam's expulsion from the Garden] was closed the mouth of all beasts, and of cattle, and of birds, and of whatever walks, and of whatever moves, so that they could no longer speak: for they had all spoken one with another with one lip and with one tongue". R. H. Charles edits this verse, "It seems implied in the text that the common original language of men and animals was Hebrew . . . according to the Jerusalem Targum on Genesis xi:1, all men originally spoke Hebrew, which was the language by means of which the world was created" (pp. 27-8).

[38]PR 1, 11, 278-291 (Genesis B).

mythically the malignant speech of Eden's lying Serpent.[39] Geþeode also recalls the Junius poet's treatment of the confusion of tongues at Babel where, on the green plain of Shinar, boastful men sought to build a way to God.[40] Geþeode may refer to the pharisaical dissimulation of the saints' demonic temptors,[41] or to the curative, reparative speech of the martyrs' confessions.[42] In Christ and Satan geþeode is now the gift of language, specifically that of praise. In his encomium of creation the poet is consciously using one of those "gifts of men" dispensed, among others, by the generous gold-lord who fashioned Eden, when, as St. Ambrose has noted, he first created the world, then adorned it with gifts.[43]

The moral imperative which accompanies the divine gifts, however, influences the entire hexaemeral account. A passage drawn from the Exeter Maxims I expresses concisely the divine compulsion towards the creature:

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[39]PR 1, 18, 496b-521 (Genesis B).

[40]PR 1, 51, 1649-1701 (Genesis A).

[41]PR 3, 57, 266 ff. (Guthlac A).

[42]PR 3, 131, 641-669a (Juliana).

[43]St. Ambrose, PL, 14, 148.

God sceal mon ærest hergan
fægre, fæder userne, forþon þe he us æt frymþe geteode
lif ond lænne willan; he usic wile þara leana gemonian.[44]

Man shall fittingly first praise God, our Father,
for in the beginning he endowed us with life
and fleeting will; he will remind us of those gifts.

The gnomic poet reveals the binding and reciprocal dryht relationship between God as Giver of Life and his creature to whom breath is lent but for a fleeting space. The sententious he usic wile þara leana gemonian recalls the assurance of Christ in Matthew 16:27, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works". J. E. Cross has added an illuminating dimension to the interpretation of the "gifts of men" tradition. He notes that the meaning of modern English talents "is derived from the mediaeval allegorical interpretation of the Scriptural parable in Matt. XXV, 14-30".[45] Cross outlines the explanation of this parable as given in Homilia IX in Evangelia by Gregory the Great. According to Gregory, "the man who went into a far country was Christ as Man returning to heaven",[46] who had before dispensed gifts or

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[44]Exeter Maxims I, PR 3, 157, 4b-6.

[45]J. E. Cross, "The Old English Poetic Theme of 'The Gifts of Men'", Neophilologus, 46 (1962), 66.

[46]Ibid. Cross's article, though brief, is rich

talenta to his servants. Adam, of course, is the human archetype of those who receive gifts, talents, or endowments, from the godly use of which an eternal reward is to be gained. In reminding the reader of Adam, then, the poet establishes himself within the dryht-tradition as a loyal thane of the Lord and provides an appropriate transition in the poem to the laments of the fallen race of angels.

Before leaving the hexaemeral account in Christ and Satan, the "assertive" element of the introduction should be noted. Adam, as I have just suggested, is the human archetype of the pilgrims whose journey runs from their own creation to their individual doom. A major thrust of Christ and Satan is the powerful implication that man can indeed, by a rightly-ordered will, follow Christ rather than Satan. A later admonishment in the poem sums up the purpose of the miniature hexaemeron at the introduction:

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in insights, especially as he cites Bishop Haymo of Halberstadt, (d. 853 A.D.) who synthesized earlier Christian concepts in his homilies and admonished his "brothers" in Christ to fulfil their individual talents.

Gemunan symle on mode meotodes strengðo;
gearwian us togenes grene stræte
up to englum, þær is se ælmihtiga god. (285-7)

Let us ever call to mind the Creator's power; [let us] together prepare a green path upwards toward the angels, where is the almighty God.47

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[47]This translation is offered by Hugh T. Keenan, "Exodus 312: the Green Street of Paradise", NM, 71 (1970), 456:

Let us always remember in heart the strength of the Creator, prepare a green street for us together up with the angels, where the Almighty God is.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PARADISE THEME IN THE PHOENIX

The reader of the Old English poem The Phoenix, is invited to examine the harvest of patristic writings on the theme of the earthly paradise. Such literature as we have seen formed a major hexaemeral resource exploited by the Anglo-Saxon Christian poets. Ever since Gaebler[1] in 1880 discovered and pointed out correspondences between the Old English The Phoenix 443 ff. and St. Ambrose's Hexaemeron V.23.79-80, questions of Christian sources have been resolved into recognition of the influence of the early Church Fathers on the Old English poem. In this portion of the Hexaemeron[2] the fabled Phoenix inhabits the paradisal regions of Arabia and is presented as an emblem of human resurrection. More widely recognized, however, as a chief source for the Old English poem, was the Carmen de Ave Phoenice[3] attributed to the North African Lactantius whose later career turned to that of Christian apologist.

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[1]H. Gaebler, "Uber die Autorschaft des angelsaechischen Gedichtes vom Phoenix", Anglia, 3 (1880), 516 ff.

[2]St. Ambrose, Hexaemeron, Lib. 5, Hom. 7, cap. 23:79.

[3]Lactantius, Carmen de Ave Phoenice, PL, 7, 277-284. (Incerti auctoris)

We also find in his Divine Institutes the vision of an earthly paradise as the focus of apocalyptic expectation. In common with the Greek and Latin Fathers and the Christian poets, then, the Old English poet of The Phoenix exploited and elaborated upon the terrestrial paradise tradition as it circulated among the Mediterranean people and made inroads into northern Europe with the advance of Christianity. A major facet of this myth was the Phoenix fable, centring on the strange birth that forms "one of the most evocative symbols ever devised by the human imagination".[4] In the Old English poetic canon the Exeter Phoenix is the noblest example of mythopoeic incorporation of cosmopolitan legend into an allegorical Christian setting. This poem, more than Genesis A or Christ and Satan, gives the clearest and most abundant evidence of the influence of a complex, literate tradition. The Phoenix invites our consideration of a vision of the created order as cosmopoesy, in an imaginative mode far removed from ponderous "historical" speculation. As John Armstrong persuasively asserts, "Where strongly mythopoeic literature and art are concerned, any sort of dogmatic historicism is . . . misplaced and unprofitable".[5]

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[4]R. T. Rundle-Clark, "The Origin of the Phoenix", University of Birmingham Historical Journal, 2 (1949-50), 3.

[5]John Armstong, The Paradise Myth (London, 1969), p. 5.

In once more assuming the hypothesis that The Phoenix has descended from an elaborate and literary hexaemeral tradition, I shall indicate the different critical aspects to be considered, as they appear in the context of the poem's introduction. The study of the hexaemeral elements focusses on The Phoenix, (1-84) in following the editorial division of these lines into an introductory unit established by Grein[6] and Cook.[7] Thus set apart, lines 1-84 provide an exordium to the poem which sets it at once in the long-established tradition of the earthly paradise, both classical and Christian, and which promises allegorical substance to follow. Against N. F. Blake's statement that "we can read the phoenix story in the first half only in the light of the allegorical interpretation; it has no existence in its own right",[8] I suggest that the introductory lines, like those of Genesis A, can be fruitfully examined as a unit. From a study of the introductions of our three poems we are led to

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[6]Christian W. M. Grein, ed., Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Poesie I (Goettingen, 1857), p. 217.

[7]A. G. Cook, ed., The Old English Elene, Phoenix, and Physiologus (New Haven, 1919), p. 50.

[8]N. F. Blake, ed., The Phoenix (Manchester, 1964), p. 31.

realize that out of conventional poetic and patristic resources the Anglo-Saxon poets, acting as both cosmographers and mythographers, have devised poetry which displays the theological interests of their culture.

Critical inquiry may focus on the ways in which the lines indicated introduce the poem, open some main themes, and anticipate by an allegorical setting the major motif of the Phoenix and its spiritual metamorphoses. The emphases in which the poem varies from the Lactantian Carmen de Ave Phoenice will be examined as well as the incorporation of legendary wisdom and implicit and explicit echoes from patristic and apocryphal tradition. The existence of these in the poem automatically broadens its descriptive and allegorical scope. Scant favourable attention has been given the digressive style which I propose to examine. "Style" is a collective term for those literary devices and techniques by which the elements of language, the Old English wordhoard and Biblical allusion, are employed by the poet to fulfil the associational potential of word and image. The devotional manner, the creation of an artificial setting and an allegorical basis for the poem are elaborated in the art of words as the poem's foundation is set out. The rhetorical or stylistic devices employed by the poet involve such matters as emphasis, repetition, contrast, variation, digression, omission or modification of his sources, and the embellish-

ment of his material. The poet's allegorical method in the shaping of his sources ,takes into account classical myth, traditional heroic and aristocratic language, and patristic concepts of the "good life" and the "happy land". Hence the mistake of critics and editors in referring to The Phoenix (1-380) as a "translation" of the Carmen de Ave Phoenice. How the introduction contributes to making The Phoenix not merely a literary ornament but part of an allegorical progression I attempt to examine in the following. The account of the earthly paradise is fundamental to the art and meaning of The Phoenix. An account of the hexaemeral features elaborated in the poem's introduction will reveal as well how a knowledge of exegetical tradition may extend our understanding of the poem as a whole.

A monumental poem like the Phoenix which draws extensively upon the hexaemeral cast of composition, has attracted the scrutiny of editors and interpreters. The poem's continued existence after a thousand years is owing to its good fortune to be included in the Exeter MS which includes less sophisticated pieces than this. In more modern times, beginning with Germanicist scholarship of the nineteenth century,[9] editorial apparatus has

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[9]Grein's Bibliothek of 1857 limits its discussion of the poem to an historical note on the Exeter Book

been applied to the poem without its leading to any comprehensive and vital conclusions which expand our insights about the native habitation of the Phoenix. Even the collective edition of the Anglo-Saxon Records is definitely committed to "preserving a faithful record of the manuscript and "of taking account of all significant contributions to the understanding of the manuscript. . . .",[10] rather than interpreting the critical problems involved in it. Norman F. Blake, however, has taken in hand both editorial and critical challenges with respect to The Phoenix. Among the poem's editions, Blake's as the most recent is also the most satisfactory in terms of an account of the development of the phoenix-myth and its attendant symbolism. Blake also provides a compilation of modern critical

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(p. 362) and confines its textual notes to variant readings of single words or phrases. The nine editorial divisions are undoubtedly intended to clarify the sequence of the poem, but except for the Introduction, (1-84), the divisions tend rather to categorize and separate the development of the poem as a whole. No extended critical commentary accompanies Grein's edition. The edition by A. S. Cook, The Old English Elene, Phoenix, and Physiologus (New Haven, 1919) traces the development of the Phoenix as a symbol in classical and Egyptian texts and collates critical perspectives on problems of date, authorship and manuscript. Cook favoured Cynewulfian authorship for The Phoenix, basing this on correspondence in phraseology between this and Cynewulf's signed poems. A discussion of the Carmen de Ave Phoenice argues in favour of Lactantius' composition of the poem after his conversion to Christianity. No real elaboration on the influence of possible sources for the OE poet appears in Cook's Introduction and scant sense of the poem as a whole emerges from it.

[10] G. P. Krapp, Preface to The Junius Manuscript, v, PR I.

attitudes toward sources, authorship and date. Less satisfactory, however, is the apologetic tone throughout his introduction to The Phoenix. Indeed, Blake fails to deal very specifically with the Old English poem itself except to point out those qualities and techniques in which he finds it inferior to the Carmen de Ave Phoenice. The implication is strong that in relation to the concise excellence of the Latin poem, the Old English account will prove a disappointment in its alleged "verbosity" and diffuse quality.[11] Yet Blake as editor of the poem has examined it closely, as an earlier article demonstrates. In his "Some Problems of Interpretation and Translation in the Old English Phoenix", he deprecates thedivision of the poem into two sections while insisting on correct translations to aid in understanding the poet's allegorical method.[12] Various observations on the poem's style in his

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[11]Blake, The Phoenix, p. 25.

[12]N. F. Blake, "Some Problems of Interpretation and Translation in the OE Phoenix", Anglia, 80 (1962), 57. Typical surveys of OE literature reveal general inadequacy and platitudinous treatment of the poem. S. B. Greenfield in A Critical History of OE Literature (New York, 1965), p. 185, finds the landscape of The Phoenix "Lactantian" but fails to elaborate. C. L. Wrenn's A Study of OE Literature (New York, 1967), p. 132, alleges, "we find in The Phoenix signs of independent pleasure in the happy contemplation of nature in her seasons". Here is the nadir of critical assumptions about the treatment of "nature" in the poem: one of the major elements of the Earthly Paradise is its very lack of seasons, it being a table-land caught out of the natural cycle of vegetation with its inevitable decay.

introduction to the poem, however, invite challenge. These will be examined in the course of a later discussion of the form and style.

Two studies concerning the historical dimensions of the phoenix-legend and the earthly paradise nexus reveal the literate tradition in which these myths were fostered. First I refer to Rundle-Clark's thorough study of the origins and development of the phoenix legend. Relating that the phoenix enters European literature first through Herodotus, Historia II:73 and is first mentioned in connection with Hermopolis by Tacitus in Annales 6:28, he states,

> The rôle of the bird in Egyptian religion is two-fold: it can be intermediary between mankind and the world of the gods or it can demonstrate by its flight the power of the supreme God of the sky.13

In relation to the Anglo-Saxon treatment of the phoenix we may note that the bird as a symbol evolves toward emblemizing Christ who functions in a symbolic environment as intermediary (or "mediator") between middle-earth and the Kingdom of Heaven. The Phoenix (Christ) in the Old English poem also "demonstrates by its flight the power of the supreme God of the sky". The harmonious dryht

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[13]R. T. Rundle-Clark, "The Origin of the Phoenix", 132.

of birds that follows the noble Phoenix represents the purified "elect" of Christ.[14]

The second article on the dimensions of the related phoenix and paradise myths is Henning Larsen's comparison of the Old English eleventh-century homily (in two manuscripts, CCCC 198 and Cot. Vesp. D 14) with the also eleventh-century Old Norse account AM 194). Attesting to the venerability and the perseverance of the phoenix myth, Larsen views in the correspondence between the Old English and Old Norse versions such similarities "that no other theory than that of direct translation [from OE to ON] will account for them".[15] All motifs of the mediaeval phoenix story here display the same arrangement and emphases, according to Larsen. Although the late Old English account of the earthly paradise is tangential to our study, a number of these correspondences are worth quoting because of their significance in the Lactantian presentation of the terrestrial Garden, and in the Old English poem itself. These parallels are, in order:

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[14]The Phoenix, (589-594a).

[15]Henning Larsen, "Notes on the Phoenix", JEGP, 41 (1942), 79-84. (Here, 82.) The text of the late OE version appears in Rubie Warner, ed., Early English Homilies, EETS CLII (1917).

Paradisus . . . er eigi a͡a himnum ok eigi a͡a iordu.	Paradisum nis naðor ne on heofonum ne on eorþan.
Paradisus er XL milna haerri en Noa flod vard.	Nu is Paradisum feowaertig faeðma hehgra þonne Noes flod waes.
Paradisus er oll iamlong ok iambreid.	Paradisus is eall efenlang and efenbrad.
þaer er hv̊orki hatri ne hungr ok alldri er þar n̊att ne myrkr.	Nis þaer ne hete ne hungor ne þaer niht naefre ne cymeð.

> Paradise is neither in heaven nor on earth . . . now Paradise is forty fathoms higher than Noah's Flood was . . . Paradise is equal in length and breadth . . . nor is there hate nor hunger nor does night [ON = nor darkness] ever come there.

Both the Old Norse version, which cites Moses as its authority, and the late Old English account attributed to a vision of St. John, attest to a mediaeval belief in the antiquity and venerability of the myth of the earthly paradise and the phoenix legend.

In turning now to the problem of the influence of antique tradition on the Old English poem it becomes evident that "originality" is a moot point in the text of The Phoenix. For decades the classic explication of the poem, Emerson's "Originality in Old English Poetry" traces the Anglo-Saxon poet's purpose of making "a thoroughly Christian poem of the Lactantian Phoenix".[16] His study,

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[16]Oliver F. Emerson, "Originality in OE Poetry", RES, 2 (1926), 31. Emerson offers a useful if perfunctory

however, fails to lead his observations about the "Christian baptizing" of the Lactantian poem to any comprehensive conclusions. As a rebuttal to Emerson's assumptions about the Anglo-Saxon poet's "originality", N. F. Blake argues in favour of the overriding influence of "tradition" rather than the dynamics of "originality" in the treatment of the Latin Carmen. He points out that the Old English poet was not the first to christianize the Carmen de Ave Phoenice,[17] adding that "several of the features which Emerson claimed as original are found already in the Life of St. Eligius". The similarities between this ninth-century manuscript (the latter part of which presents a description of the earthly paradise wherein St. Eligius awaits translation to heaven), and the description of the earthly paradise in The Phoenix, are attributed by Blake to the exploitation of common sources. Blake, then, in this context appears to concur with the argument that

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list of pagan omissions in the modification of Lactantius' Carmen carried out by the OE poet. In the first 50 lines of the Carmen the OE poet has omitted the grove of the Sun (l. 9 of Latin), fires of Phaethon (10), waters of Deucalion (14), Aurora (35), Phoebus (41), Sol (43), music of Cyrrhaean strains (48), Cyllenean lyre (50).

[17]N. F. Blake, "Originality in 'The Phoenix'", NQ, 206 (1961), 327. The Life of St. Eligius by St. Audoenus is in the Royal Library, Brussels, Codex 5374-5, as cited in Blake's edition, p. 19.

tradition more than originality or individual talent appears convincingly to have been a major force in the Old English manipulation of the paradisial theme.

Tradition, and, moreover, lettered tradition appears as the major structural and thematic force in J. S. Kantrowitz' argument "The Anglo-Saxon Phoenix and Tradition". In brief, the traditional symbols of the silkworm, eagle, and phoenix are collectively viewed as symbols of the Resurrection, while the central seed-grain metaphor is explicated: "the seed-grain image", she writes,

> here appears as a figurative means for explaining and vivifying the rebirth of the bird which, in turn, functions as the major metaphoric framework for the doctrine of resurrection, providing in each phase of its rebirth a typology for the good Christian and his Saviour.18

J. E. Cross, in what is perhaps the most important recent study of The Phoenix, has developed the matter of tradition further with reference to "the three spiritual senses of Scripture, familiar in patristic exegesis and transmitted in Old English homily".[19] Cross interprets the poem's identification of Christ with the Phoenix in

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[18]Joanne S. Kantrowitz, "The Anglo-Saxon Phoenix and Tradition", PQ, 43 (1964), 13.

[19]J. E. Cross, "The Conception of the Old English Phoenix", in Robert Creed, ed., Old English Poetry: Fifteen Essays (Providence, 1967), 135.

the prefiguration by the Old Testament Phoenix of the New Testament Christ "in a brief but clear typological or allegorical" mode.[20] He develops a persuasive and comprehensive argument recapitulated thus:

> . . . this poem is an effective medieval homily on the Phoenix, in which Lactantius' De Ave Phoenice, the fullest description of the bird, was adapted as a Christian historical explanation, and ideas taken from patristic exegesis and polemic, as well as the Physiologus literature, were elaborated to provide distinguishable tropological anagogical, and typological explanations, so to present a four-fold interpretation of a real and scriptural bird.21

In contrast to the "highly structured fourfold exegetical genre"[22] assumed by Cross, Stanley B. Greenfield views in The Phoenix "a circumambulation . . . on the theme of resurrection".[23] This verbal circumambulation implies, in Greenfield's view, that the Phoenix "is a real bird to the Old English poet, a created being, one of

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[20] Ibid., p. 143.

[21] Ibid., p. 145. Cross has reviewed in a note, (n. 36, 149-50) the application of the Phoenix in patristic homily and commentary.

[22] Stanley B. Greenfield, The Interpretation of Old English Poems (London and Boston, 1972), p. 145.

[23] Ibid., p. 144.

the visibilia of this world in which, as the remainder of the poem shows, we may see invisibilia Dei".[24] Cross's argument that

> the representation of the Phoenix as the good Christian in his earthly nest is a moral or tropological interpretation, the bird as Christian in his heavenly dwelling is an anagogical interpretation, and the bird as Christ is a typical or allegorical interpretation,[25]

implies, for Greenfield, "an order and structure too clean-cut for the actual poetic materials".[26] In terms of the argument of my chapter, however, the "order and structure" perceived by Cross in The Phoenix bears relevance to the unifying principles of exegetical exploration rather than to the discursive mode of composition implied in the term "verbal circumambulation". Cross's argument penetrates to the order and structure, as well as the palpable design, of the intellectual four-fold method of interpretation without diminishing the poem's aesthetic appeal. The quest for allegory appears to be justified by the plain exegetical

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[24] Ibid., p. 141.

[25] Cross, op. cit., p. 136.

[26] Greenfield, op. cit., p. 142.

structure underlying the more "assertive" types of literature which formed in part the Anglo-Saxon Christian poets' likely sources. Applicable in this connection are such exercises as John Cassian's four-fold interpretation of the symbol of Jerusalem,[27] or Philo's highly structured explication of the pleasance of Eden, to be discussed later in this chapter. In the face of these complex and profoundly patterned exegetical modes of writing it seems improbable and unconvincing to argue, as Greenfield does, that Cross's four-fold interpretative approach "though professing to be historical, is, paradoxically, more modern than might appear in its catering to our desire to find a kind of aesthetic-thematic unity in a poem".[28]

A reading of the poem considerably less convincing than Cross's appears in Daniel G. Calder's "The Vision of Paradise: a symbolic reading of the Old English Phoenix". This study offers an aesthetic framework for an "ascending order of beauty "allegedly evident in the poem, and from this intellectual framework it asserts the existence of the theological nexus between beauty and

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[27]See Chapter One, above, p. 17.

[28]Greenfield, p. 145.

salvation; the unifying principle of the poem is to be discovered in terms of a dialectic:

> The Phoenix is not a formal Christian allegory; rather, as an examination of the major symbols will show, it is a rendering of the relationship between beauty and salvation that unites all differing allegorical perspectives in one symbolic vision.29

Much of Calder's argument focusses on the frætwe (treasures, ornament) images throughout The Phoenix, while he attributes to the visual beauty of paradise "the movement towards salvation [which] begins in the perception of adorned beauty".[30] Such assertions about the achievement of grace and salvation through art contribute to a rather unmediaeval interpretation of the poem. These will later be contested in an examination of the poetic use of vegetation imagery which is at least as prevalent as imagery clustered around jewels, treasures and ornaments. The poetic emphasis on "greenness" in the wealdas grene (13b, "green forests"), wuduholt wynlic (34a, "pleasant wood"), the beamas a / grene stondað (35b-36a, "trees [which] stand evergreen"), and so forth

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[29]Daniel G. Calder, "The Vision of Paradise; a symbolic reading of the OE Phoenix", Anglo-Saxon England, 1, 168.

[30]Calder, p. 178.

would seem to belie the type of jeweller's shop image of the poem purported by Calder in his interpretation of the earthly paradise. The "visual"[31] beauty of the retreat alleged by Calder seems secondary to the good works, the green shoots of merit cultivated by the Christian.

Heroic formulaic language is found throughout The Phoenix and the opening gesture Hæbbe ic gefrugnen[32] (I have heard) defines the poem at once as belonging to the body of poetry arising from the ancestral wordhoard but not necessarily intended for recitation. A greater number of Old English scholars[33] are tending to the view that use of formulae which were previously oral does not uniformly imply oral composition or delivery when a literate poet uses them. The Phoenix as it is preserved

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[31]Calder, 170. Alvin A. Lee, in evaluating two kinds of critical theory, distinguishes between their differing emphases. He notes first, the strictly exegetical critic "dedicated to leading the reader's mind away from the text towards invisibilia" (55). Second, he notes the strictly aesthetic critic characterized by "absorption in the intricacies of words as motif". In recognizing the respective shortcomings of each method, Lee offers a plea for a discriminating knowledge of the mediaeval four levels of meaning coupled with modern critical theory and practice. See "Old English Poetry, Mediaeval Exegesis and Modern Criticism", 47-73.

[32]The typical rhetorical phrase is comparable to the opening lines of Beowulf, Exodus, Daniel, Juliana, Andreas and Christ and Satan.

[33]With varied emphases, the scholars who favour the

in the Exeter Book gives abundant evidence of being the literary composition of a very literate poet. In the exploration of the literary paradise of The Phoenix, then, we return to the central hypothesis of these chapters; that is, that the Old English biblically-based poems on creation also reveal their shaping in a complex lettered tradition of hexaemeral writings.

The opening phrase, though typical, is evocative, and not without an implicit sense of wonder as the poet opens his account of the terrestrial paradise. With the advantage of hindsight we realize that what the poet has "heard" owes partial origins to the widely-circulated myths of both pagan and Christian conceptions of the sacred enclave. The rest of his sentence introduces, as a proper exordium does, several important assumptions about the noble land of the Phoenix: its mythic removal (both in moral and imaginative terms), its situation in the East, its superlative nobility, its renown among mankind:

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influence of a lettered tradition on OE poetics would include Larry D. Benson, Jackson J. Campbell, James E. Cross, Philip Rollinson, B. F. Huppé, D. W. Robertson, and M. W. Bloomfield. Acknowledgment has been made throughout this thesis to the contributions of these critics in specific poetic contexts.

> Hæbbe ic gefrugnen þætte is feor heonan
> eastdælum on æþelast londa,
> firum gefræge . (1-3a)
>
> I have heard that far hence in the East
> is the noblest of lands, renowned among
> men.

Each of these qualities attributed to the land of the Phoenix is also unanimously ascribed to Eden or paradise in the Jewish apocryphal literature and the descriptions in the Church Fathers. In the Liber de Paradiso of St. Ambrose, a specific reference to the East is apposite to the poetic text:

> Ergo bene paradisus qui pluribus fluminibus irrigatur, secundum orientem est, non contra orientem, hoc est, secundum illum orientem cui nomen est Oriens, id est secundum Christum, qui jubor quoddam aeternae lucis effudit, et est in Eden, hoc est in voluptate.34
>
> Paradise, a land watered by many rivers, is then appropriately situated in the East and not in the regions facing it. This reference to the East is significant, for the rising sun may be compared to Christ who flashed forth a gleam of eternal light which exists in Eden, that is, in a land of delight.

The imagery associated with the sun in the latter part[35] of The Phoenix thus has a logical purpose, the comparison of Christ's glory with the radiance of luminaries.

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[34]St. Ambrose, Liber de Paradiso, cap. 3:23, PL, 14, 300.

[35]The Phoenix, (589 ff). Compare also the verse, to frean geardum / sunnan togeanes (578b-579a, "to the Lord's dwelling / towards the sun").

Philo in his Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin takes the explanation of the East further. The answer to the problem, "Why is [God] said to have planted Paradise in Eden toward the East?" also applies to the movement in the flight of the Phoenix.

> In the first place, because the movement of the world is from East to West, and that from which movement starts is first. Second, that which is in the region of the East is said to be on the right side of the world, while that in the region of the West is on the left. And so the poet testifies (Homer, Iliad xii, 239; Od. xx, 242), calling the birds in the region of the East "right" and those which are in the region of the West "on the left side". If they go to the right side, it is to the day and the sun; but if to the left, toward evening and darkness..... In the third place, because [Paradise] is wisdom and radiance and light.[36]

Certain Fathers supplemented this by writing that God planted Paradise in the East, representing by that direction the beginning of life for man in concord with heavenly luminaries, the course of which is from East to West. Augustine explained that the location of Eden in the East symbolized the Garden's proximity to the light of wisdom.[37]

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[36]Philo, Questiones et Solutiones in Genesin, I:7. Supplement I. trans. Ralph Marcus (London, 1953), p. 5.

[37]St. Augustine, De Genesi contra Manicheos, II, 9-11, PL, 34. For an account of the Renaissance traditions of paradise, see Joseph E. Duncan, Milton's Earthly Paradise (Minneapolis, 1972), Chapter 7, pp. 188-233. Here we are told that a map of Paradise in the Geneva Bible

The phrase feor heonan (far hence) removes the poet's conception of Paradise from the familiar arena of middle-earth, yet does not identify it as an unearthly dwelling, for the very nature of the terrestrial Paradise is an aspect of the temporally-confined creation.[38] Although the Fathers have drawn certain distinctions between the heavenly Paradise and the earthly, it follows from a study of their writings on this theme that the traditions surrounding the one were extended to the other, that "Eden" and "Paradise" were used interchangeably as terms connotative of "a land of delight". The æþelast londa of the poem, however, I take to mean, not the neorxnawong (397a, plain of paradise) where the reference is definitely to the dwelling of Adam and Eve as wer ond wif (394a, man and wife), but a composite structure of the poet's imagination which garners the qualities of Eden and makes his paradise a noble land in the superlative degree. The

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placed it on the Euphrates. Another investigation of the locus of Paradise was that of Franciscus Junius (familiar to OE scholars) whose popular Tremellius-Junius Bible of 1590 showed a comprehensive study of the ancient geographers. Duncan writes that Junius, in trying to solve the mystery of the location of Paradise, "sought clues in Ptolemy, Herodotus, Diodorus, Curtius, Strabo, Pliny, Dion, Marcellinus" and others (p. 206).

[38]See St. John Chrysostom, In Genesim Sermo, VII PG, 53, 61-69.

description of his Earthly Paradise has a cosmic quality; it symbolizes the heavenly Paradise in little. It shows, too, the qualities of Eden's "otherness" in being set apart from evil doers.

> Nis se foldan sceat
> ofer middangeard mongum gefere
> folcagendra, ac he afyrred is
> þurh meotudes meaht manfremmendum. (3b-6)
>
> This region of the earth is inaccessible to
> many rulers of the world and is set off by
> the might of the Lord from workers of iniquity.

The sacral quality of Paradise is similar to that of the primordial Eden. Just as Paradise is kept inviolate from manfremmendum (evil-doers), so Eden earlier witnessed the expulsion of the original sinners and had its eastern gate guarded by "Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life" (Gen. 3:24).

The phrases feor heonan (far hence) and he afyrred is ([it] is set off), then, exhibit both moral and imaginative implications of otherness. In moral terms, this Paradise is free alike of change and of decay, exempt from the cycle of the seasons and temporal limitations which control the flux of the middangeard. Unmolested by sin and pestilence in the forms of evildoers, intemperate weather, and human tragedy, and untouched by fire or flood, the land flourishes eadig ond onsund (20a, happy and unharmed). From the perspective of middle-earth the con-

templation of Paradise centres around its innocence. With this land are associated those constant and inviolable energies that attest to direction and upholding þurh meotudes meaht (6a, through the Lord's might). The features of the landscape do not include anything approaching an ambiguous moral symbol; Paradise here lacks the fatal Tree and insinuating serpent of the Old English Genesis B. Because the chief actor in this scene is the Phoenix which signifies both the resurrected Christ and also his elect, resplendent with good works, it is fitting that the landscape should pertain to the unfallen order of creation.

The poet's devotional design is evident in the imaginative removal of Paradise in terms of inaccessible topography. Twelve fathoms higher than any of the mountains of middle-earth, untouched by fire and spared by the Flood, Paradise is separated by the river Oceanus and lit, not by the shadowy half-light of any pagan Elysium, but by the taper of heaven godes condelle, glædum gimme (91b-92a, God's candle, the gracious gem). Removal in terms of height and space emphasizes the sanctity of Paradise; the description of its landscape implies an almost encapsulated scene of static beauty which yet conveys an impression of fragility and transience. It is to these qualities of static beauty that the description turns next.

> Wlitig is se wong eall, wynnum geblissad
> mid þam fægrestum foldan stencum. (7-8)
>
> Fair is all that field, dowered with joys, with
> the sweetest fragrances of earth.

Here it may be noted that the Old English poet is anxious to claim for his Christian Paradise certain appurtenances of the pagan otherworld. The two traditions become fused at some points in the new Christian theology. Tertullian, as we have seen in Chapter One, pointed out the correspondences between the divine beauty of Paradise and the Elysian fields. The Cohortatio ad Graecos which J. P. Migne attributed to Justin Martyr, is devoted to the "Christianization of classical myth", while Clement of Alexandria and Lactantius considered "the classical ideas of a golden age existence and of remote, blessed isles" as "distorted reflections of sacred truth".[39]

At this point in the poem, however, is a specifically Christian use of the term wlitig, translated by Bosworth-Toller as "beautiful, comely, fair". Moreover, with reference to the exegetical tradition, wlitig has two special applications: first "of beauty that appeals

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[39]See Joseph E. Duncan, Milton's Earthly Paradise: a Historical Study of Eden (Minneapolis, 1972), p. 25.

to the senses", and second, "of beauty that appeals to the mind". With reference to the fertile beauty of Eden in these terms, St. Ambrose writes,

> Est ergo paradisus terra quaedam fertilis, hoc est anima fecunda, in Eden plantata, hoc est in voluptate quadam vel exercitata terra, in qua animae sit delectatio. Est etiam voûs tanquam Adam: est ei sensus, tanquam Eva.40
>
> Paradise is therefore a land of fertility, that is, a soul which is fertile, planted in Eden. This means a certain delightful or well-tilled land in which the soul finds pleasure. Adam existed there as νοûs [mind] and Eve as 'sense'.

The descriptive term wlitig is applied not only to the Paradise of the Phoenix but also to its nest, which is later presented in the poem as wlitig ond wynsum (203a, fair and comely). The devotional terms of beauty in which the paradisal plain is presented direct the reader's adoration to the Creator. The phrase wynnum geblissad (7b, dowered with delights) implies the generosity of the divine gold-lord who governs this plain, later described as se æþele feld [which] wridaƌ under wolcnum, wynnum geblowen (26b-27, "the noble plain [which] flourishes under the clouds, flowering with delights").

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[40]St. Ambrose, Liber de Paradiso, cap. 3:12, PL, 14, 296. Ambrose borrows here from the line of traditional assumptions established by the Rabbinic authors and Philo.

The sweet savours connected with the green plain of Paradise have their counterpart in biblical and apocryphal sources. The visionary in the Book of Enoch beholds the mountain summit which is the Throne of God, surrounded by fragrant trees. The fiery mountain range through which the spiritual pilgrim penetrates to the celestial summit also contains "aromatic trees exhaling the fragrance of frankincense and myrrh".[41] In their songs, as we have seen, Dracontius and Prudentius specify the roses and lilies perfuming the sacred Garden.[42] The Old English Riddle refashioned from the De Creatura of Aldhelm, refers to creation embodying sweet incense and the fragrance of the rose:

> Ic eom on stence strengre micle
> þonne ricels oþþe rose sy,[43]
>
> I am much stronger in fragrance than incense is
> or the rose.

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[41] R. H. Charles, ed., The Book of Enoch, ch. 24-25, pp. 52-3.

[42] For a comprehensive catalogue of mediaeval meaning attached to certain types of flowers, see Rabanus Maurus, De Universo, PL, 109, 930 and 1115. One significance of the white rose, for example, was the "unfading flower of martyrdom". The lily, too, shared in this connotation.

[43] Exeter Riddle 40, PR 3, 200-203, 23-4.

Sweet savours are here understood as primeval gifts of the new creation. No such revelation of perfumes occurs in the introduction to the Lactantian Carmen de Ave Phoenice, as the Old English poet twice mentions in this section that þær se halga stenc / wunaþ geond wynlond (81b-82a, "there the holy savour abides throughout that land of joy").

In a mode evident in Christ and Satan, the following unit of description identifies the cunning artificer of the plain with the wisdom associated with acts of creation:

> Ænlic is þæt iglond, æpele se wyrhta,
> modig, meahtum spedig, se þa moldan gesette. (9-10)
>
> Matchless[44] is that island, noble its Artificer, wise,
> abundant in power, who established that land.

The challenge here lies in the interpretation of iglond insofar as it defines the situation of Paradise. Following Cook,[45] Krapp glosses the word not "in the specific sense of 'island', but rather in the literal sense of 'water-land', 'land that is reached by water'". Cook associates it in the context of The Phoenix with the Orient.[46] In

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[44]Alternate B-T translations are egregius, elegans, pulcher.

[45]Cook, op. cit., n. 9, p. 102.

[46]Ibid., p. 102.

recalling the old Germanic conception of the world as surrounded by water,[47] Thomas D. Hill, invoking Christian cosmographic terms, interprets the world-encircling Oceanus as "the cosmic Jordan".[48] The æþelast londa of The Phoenix may be interpreted in the archaic poetic term "strand" or water-land along the margin of a river, iglond being a term connotative of separation by a stream or reach of ocean. Oceanus may then be the "cosmic Jordan" that washes the strand or iglond of the Earthly Paradise, itself a sacred enclosure feor heonan (far hence). Rabanus Maurus[49] and Sidonius Apollinarius[50] both emphasize the separation of Eden by a long stretch of ocean.

Again, the function of Oceanus, as Hill points out from evidence in the Visio Sancti Pauli, is to provide support for the foundations of heaven, the celestial Paradise.[51] From such a concept, perhaps, arises the poet's contention,

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[47]See Jacob Grimm, Teutonic Mythology, p. 559.

[48]Thomas D. Hill, "Apocryphal Cosmography and the Stream uton Sæ", PQ, 48 (1969), 551.

[49]Commentariorum in Genesim, Lib. 1, PL, 107, 476 ff.

[50]Carmen II, PL, 58, 654.

[51]Hill, 553. He cites Visio Sancti Pauli, ed. Theodore Silverstein, in Studies and Documents IV (London, 1935), 6-12.

Đær bið oft open eadgum togeanes
onhliden hleoþra wyn, heofonrices duru. (11-12)

When Heaven's doors swing out for the blessed
Their glorious voices ring echoes there.[52]

Such is the poetic elaboration of the mention in the Latin Carmen, Qua patet aeterni maxima porta poli (2, where the doors of the eternal heavens stand open). The Old English poet expands, too, the suggestion of the interplay between earth and heaven; in the Latin Carmen no reference is found to the troops of blessed ones, presumably the saints resting after life's struggle and awaiting the judgment of the just. This suggestion is strengthened by the vision of Judgment briefly revealed in (47-9):

oð bæles cyme,
dryhtnes domes, þonne deaðræced,
hæleþa heolstorcofan, onhliden weorþað.

till the advent of fire, the sentence of God,
when the graves, the tombs of men, shall be
unclosed.

The single reference to fire in the introductory thirty lines of the Carmen is a retrospective one:

Cum Phaethonteis flagrasset ab ignibus axis,
Ille locus flammis inviolatus erat. (11-12)

When Phaeton's chariot set the world aflame,
That place was all inviolate by fire.[53]

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[52]The translation of these lines is from Poems From the Old English, trans. Burton Raffel (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1960), p. 108.

[53]Translated by Ella Isabel Harris in Cook's edition, p. 124.

With reference to the Lactantian poem it may be useful at this point to indicate the type of Christian apology offered by the established works of Lactantius. Writing in a milieu of Christian millenarianism, yet equipped literarily with the metaphors of pagan culture, Lactantius' Divine Institutes embody a conflation of pagan and Christian tradition. In anticipating the renewal of the golden age, Lactantius combines the pastoral elements of the vision of universal peace in Isaias with those of the pagan reign of Saturn and the Messianic prophecy of Vergil's Fourth Eclogue. His Christian expositions are visibly synthetic in texture. In contrast, the Anglo-Saxon poet thoroughly Christianizes his materials from classical tradition, deliberately rejecting or converting to Christian aesthetic terms what he finds in his sources to be inappropriately pagan. No such synthetic mode of apologetics as Lactantius' appears in the Old English poem; the elements are uncompromisingly Christian.[54]

Again, with reference to the Old English ascription of nobility to the Creator of middle-earth, the comments

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[54] Daniel Calder, in "The Vision of Paradise", 167, justifies the exegetical approach to the Lactantian poem "which at no time refers to a system of Christian theology" because the Phoenix "had been a symbol charged with Christian meaning since the earliest patristic writers".

of Lactantius on the workmanship of God bear relevance:

> Est ergo aliquis artifex mundi Deus; et seorsum erit mundus, qui factus est, seorsum ille, qui fecit. . . . Si ergo est constructus, ut domus, nec ipse Deus est, nec elementa, quae sunt partes ejus; quia neque domus habere dominium sui potest, neque illa de quibus domus constat. . . . Sicut enim domus, in usum habitandi facta, per se nihil sentit, dominoque subjecta est, qui eam fecit, aut incolit.55
>
> Therefore, there is a builder of the world, even God; and the world which has been made is distinct from him who made it. . . . If, therefore, it has been constructed as an abode, it is neither itself God, nor are the elements which are its parts, because a house cannot bear rule over itself, nor can the parts of which a house consists. . . . For a house, made for the purpose of being inhabited, has no sensibility by itself and is subject to the master who built or inhabits it.

In a comparable relationship, se wyrhta (9b, the Artificer) of the paradisal plain has constructed it as an abode dependent upon his providence in such terms as þurh est godes (46b, through God's grace), þurh meotudes meaht (6a, through the Lord's might), swa him god bebead (36b, as God bade them), Is pæt þeodnes gebod (68b, it is the Prince's will), and

> þæt onwended ne biđ
> æfre to ealdre, ærþon endige
> frod fyrngeweore se hit on frymþe gesceop. (82b-84)

55Lactantius, Divinarum Institutionem, Lib. 2, cap. 6, PL, 6, 283-4.

> That shall never change till he who shaped it
> in the beginning shall bring the long-established
> work to an end.

Far from representation in terms of pictorial or naturalistic reality, the wynsum wong (13a, fair plain) is schematically rendered in cumulative epithets: Đæt is wynsum wong, wealdas grene, / rume under roderum (13-14a, "That is a fair plain, green with groves, spacious under the skies"). A review of phrases describing the field and grove of Paradise discloses their source in the aristocratic wordhoard: æþelast londa (2b, noblest of lands), foldan sceat (3b, region of the earth), se wong (7a, the plain), þæt iglond (9a, that waterland), þa moldan (10b, the earth), wynsum wong (13a, fair plain), wealdas grene (13b, green with groves), se wong (19b, the field), þæt æþele lond (20b, that noble land), se æþela feld (26b, the noble field), þæt torhte lond (28a, that resplendent land), se sigewong (33a, the victory-plain), sun bearo (33b, sunny grove), wudnholt wynlic (34a, pleasant grove), se æþele wong (43b, the noble plain), þæt tirfæste / lond (69b-70a, that glorious land), þam græswonge grene (78, the grassy plain green), wynlond (82, pleasant land). Such variations on a single theme, using extensive compounds of such terms as wyn-, add to the schematic effect of the cumulative epithets. One repeated variety of phrasing is rume under roderum (14a,

broad under the sky) which reappears in leaf under lyfte (39a, leaf under the sky). The term wealdas grene is the first mention in The Phoenix of the motif of "greenness" which again appears in ac þa beamas a / grene stondaþ (35b-36a, "the trees stand evergreen") and in on þam græswonge grene stondaþ, / . . . beorhtast bearwa. (78, 80a, "on the grassy plain green stands the brightest of groves"). The schematic presentation of the plain's features appears to open the poem to exegetical comparison with the attributes of paradise in apocryphal literature. St. Ambrose comments on the perennial greenness of Paradise:

> ligna semper florentia viriditate meritorum, sicut illud lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum, cujus folium non defluet; quia totus in eo fructus exuberat. Hic ergo paradisus est. Haec igitur sanctorum ligna quae plantata sunt in paradiso, quasi profluvio quodam torrentis spiritus irrigantur. De quo etiam alibi ait: Fluminis impetus laetificat civitatem Dei.[56]
> (Psal. XLV.5)
>
> The woods ever flourish with the green shoots of merit, just like that 'tree which is planted near the running waters, whose leaf shall not fall off' because its fruit is plenteous. Here, then, is Paradise. These woods, therefore, which were planted in Paradise are watered by the out-pouring of the waters of that spirit concerning which He says elsewhere: 'The streams of the river make joyful the city of God'.

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[56]St. Ambrose, Liber de Paradiso, cap. 1, 3-4, PL, 14, 292.

The apocryphal New Testament explicates the paradisal trees thus:

> These trees . . . which are green, are the righteous, which shall possess the world to come. . . . For as in the summer the fruit of every tree is shown and made manifest, so also the works of the righteous shall be declared and made manifest, and they shall all be restored in that world merry and joyful.57

The undying green-ness of the vegetation in Paradise contributes to that denial of cyclic seasonal activities common to middle-earth. A pattern of myth appears which supports the covenantal relationship between the Creator and the creation and is evident in the symbolic colour green.[58]

The description of Paradise continues in highly conventional negative formulae:

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[57]III, Hermas, Similitude IV, 2,3, in The Apocryphal New Testament, ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Herbert G. May (New York, 1973).

[58]For a study of the origin of phrases denoting 'green street', see A. N. Doane, "The Green Street of Paradise", NM, 72 (1973), 456-465. Doane argues for the formulaic provenance of the concept of the green path, although he admits that it owes something to traditional Christian exegetical treatment of such Biblical words as viridis. "The poetic nexus of which grene is only a part surely goes back to early Germanic formulaic poetry which is pre-Christian and continental in its origins . . . we can still see the origins of the grene nexus illustrated by the parallel traditions of it evident in ON, OS, and OE alliterative poetry."

> Ne mæg þær ren ne snaw,
> ne forstes fnæst, ne fyres blæst,
> ne hægles hryre, ne hrimes dryre,
> ne sunnan hætu, ne sincaldu,
> ne wearm weder, ne winterscur
> wihte gewyrdan, ac se wong seomaþ
> eadig ond onsund. (14b-20a)
>
> There neither rain nor snow, nor the blast of frost, nor the blaze of fire, nor the fall of hail, nor the dropping of rime, nor the heat of the sun, nor unremitting cold, nor sultry weather, nor wintry shower shall do any harm, but the land lies prosperous[59] and wholesome.

The Old English poet has elaborated the concise statement in the Latin Carmen, Nec tamen aestivos hiemisque propinquus ad ortus, / Sed qua sol verno fundit ab axe diem. (3-4, "For there neither summer nor winter approach that place, / But there the vernal sun pours the day from the zenith").

This list of exclusions from Paradise not only elaborates the terse Latin statement, but also provides a cumulative rhetorical effect, that is, a piling up of negatives to emphasize the separateness of the plain from the extremes of natural weather. This stylistic habit has given rise to critical depreciation of the style as manneristic. N. F. Blake writes that the frequency of the nis (ne) . . . ac construction "is one of the principal reasons for the poem's verbosity, for it is fatally easy

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[59]Alternate B-T translations for eadig are "happy, blessed, fortunate, rich, perfect", and beatus, felix, faustus, gaudii plenus, abundans, opulentus.

to multiply the negatives in the first half of the construction".[60] Cumulative rhetorical structures, depreciated by Blake as mannerisms destructive to balance, are found throughout the poem's introduction, beginning with line three. A negative statement is adduced, followed or qualified by a positive one. The repetition of these structures helps to define, albeit in negative terms, the qualities of the green plain. In defence of the Old English style which has suffered by comparison with the Latin, it may be argued that Anglo-Saxon poetry generally seeks the expansive and generic, rather than the concise and specific. Here, the presentation of Paradise in negative terms, a fact noted by previous critics and editors,[61] has at times the effect on the reader that the fiery wall described by Tertullian as surrounding paradise had on those approaching the sacred enclave: it blinds us and them to the amoenitas or visual beauty of the enclosure.[62] Tertullian, too, conceived of the secreta

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[60]Blake, edition cited, p. 26.

[61]See, Blake, edition cited, p. 26.

[62]Again, in recalling that the visionary is distinct from the visual, I argue against Calder's assertion that the description of paradise "is strongly visual". Calder, "The Vision of Paradise", 170. Negative description is often one step away from the invisible and ineffable.

Deo regio (secret place of God) in negative terms, adding praise of the immutabile tempus (unchanging weather) in the delectable Garden of God.[63] In such patristic writings, perhaps, lay part of the Anglo-Saxon poet's source and "inspiration", insofar as the term may be applied to a common tradition.

An additional stylistic feature of this passage of cumulative negative formulae is its Leonine or internal rhyme, found occasionally in Old English poetry.[64] Such epithets as fyres blæst, hægles hryre, hrimes dryre, and winterscur emphasize the plain's exemption from these commonplaces of life in the context of the fallen middangeard; the poet allows the imaginative terms to pile up and define by negation the temperate air and scene surrounding the sacred plain. The auditory effect of such terms, as Blake points out,[65] is strangely incantational. The conclusion of this unit of formulaic negation, ac se wong seomad̄ / eadig ond onsund (19b-20a), is the sole positive comment adduced. As the variety of

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[63]Tertullian, De Indicio Domini, 8, PL, 2, 1151.

[64]See The Riming Poem, PR 3, 166-169, 1-87. Leonine rhyme is also found in Guthlac, PR 3, 829-30.

[65]Blake, edition cited, p. 26.

potential translations for eadig shows, the plain is imagined as opulent, full of joy, and felix in the sense of "governed by Providence" or, in Old English terms, "favoured by wyrd".

In confirmation of the joys of the plain, the following statement introduces an element not to be found in the Latin Carmen, but existing in abundance throughout paradisal descriptions in the Fathers: Is pæt æpele lond / blostmum geblowen (20b-21a, "That noble land is abloom with flowers"). Here, however, are no flowers which symbolize the frail "flower of the field", man himself, whose breath expires as the wind passes.[66] The flowers covering the greensward of Paradise share the unfading quality of the roses and lilies of pseudo-Tertullian's conception of the Garden. The flowers, like the evergreen groves, are an outward sign of the noble character of the Earthly Paradise, and they fore-

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[66]The Bible presents clusters of imagery surrounding man as a fading flower; some of these are Job 14:2, "He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down"; Psa. 103:15, "as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth"; Isa. 28:1, "whose glorious beauty is as a fading flower"; and Isa. 40:6,7 "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass".

shadow as well the everlasting glory of the Heavenly. Their presence at the introduction of The Phoenix signifies that this portion, at least, of the original creation has remained eadig ond onsund. The blossoming field functions as the antithesis of images of wilderness exile, juxtaposed in the next descriptive series.

> Beorgas þær ne muntas
> Steape ne stondaþ, ne stanclifu
> heah hlifiaþ, swa her mid us,
> ne dene ne dalu ne dunscrafu,
> hlæwas ne hlincas, ne pær hleonaþ oo
> unsmeþes wiht, ac se æþela feld
> wridaþ under wolcnum, wynnum geblowen. (21b-27)
>
> No hills or mountains stand steeply there, nor do stone ledges rise aloft, as here with us; nor are there valleys, or dales, or earth-caves, mounds, or swellings; nor does anything rough lie there, but the noble field flourishes under the clouds, enhanced by joy.

Here, in reference to the topography with which the Old English poet was familiar (swa her mid us) is also found poetic shaping in terms, perhaps, of the auream mediocritatem of classical tradition. Just as the Earthly Paradise exhibits no excesses in weather, so it shows no extremes in topographical features. Apart from its elevation by twelve fathoms higher than any earthly mountain familiar to the poet, the plain of Paradise is a table-land inaccessible to any ravaging invasion. The line of tradition regarding the elevation and evenness of Paradise is clear; Avitus, too, as we have seen, imagines Paradise as a level plain with encircling

groves.[67]

The technique of negative variation involving the beorgas, muntas, stanclifu, dene, dalu, dunscrafu, hlæwas ne hlincas, forms a continuation of the previous catalogue of seasonal change; the first such list (14b-21a) denies extremes of weather; the second (21b-27) denies extremes of topography. A single qualifying comment intervenes between the two, implicitly reminding the reader that the temperate aspect of the Earthly Paradise supports its flowery spoil through all seasons known to earth-dwellers: Is þæt æþele lond / blostmum geblowen (20b-21a). As previously mentioned, the peaceful plain ablow with flowers functions as an unfallen aspect of creation in contrast to the exilic suggestions of stanclifu and dunscrafu ("rocky cliff" and "mountain cave"), terms appearing in poems[68] of exile elsewhere in Old English poetry. The poet concludes this list with the generically negative yet emphatic comment, ne þær hleonaƀ oo / unsmeþes wiht (25b-26a) "nor does anything rough lie there").[69]

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[67]Avitus, De Mundi Initio, PL, 59, 328 ff.

[68]The stony cliffs appear in The Seafarer (PR.3, 143-147, 23a); the earth-hall or mountain cave appears in The Wife's Lament (PR.3, 210-211, 29a, 36b). Both images appear in the context of exile.

[69]Translated by J. H. Kern, "Phoenix 25", Neophilologus, 12 (1927), 193. Kern supports the MS reading hleonaƀ, assuming oo to be a disyllable.

The positive qualification of this negative catalogue, ac se æþele feld / wridaþ under wolcnum, wynnum geblowen (26b-27), extends the function of the plain's nobility or excellence; the plain becomes an image of the soul flourishing in virtue. Wridan, meaning "to put forth shoots, be productive, grow, flourish", also applies to the activity of the well-tilled and fruitful Christian soul. Later in the allegory of The Phoenix godra . . . dæda (462b-463a, good . . . deeds) are the sweet herbs flourishing under the sky and symbolizing the virtues of the Christian. Appropriate in this context is the definition provided by St. Ambrose:

> Unde plerique paradisum animam hominis esse voluerunt, in qua virtutem quaedam germina pullulaverint; hominem autem et ad operandum et ad custodiendum paradisum esse positum.70
>
> Many hold that by Paradise is meant the soul of man and that, while man was placed there as a worker and guardian, certain seeds of virtue sprouted forth.

Not, however, for the Old English poet the busy husbandry of Milton's Adam and Eve; in this Paradise all labour and contest with sin are absent. The æþele feld is a work or artefact established until the end of time, thriving without infection from the otherwise fallen

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[70]St. Ambrose, Liber de Paradiso, cap. 11:51, PL, 14, 316.

creation. The vegetative splendour of Paradise provides the context for the essential theme of the allegory, the succour of the righteous. This last is emphasized at the poem's conclusion, where Christ and the Phoenix are compared in their resurrective contexts:

> Swa fenix beacnaƀ,
> geong in geardum, godbearnes meaht,
> þonne he of ascan eft onwæcneƀ
> in lifes lif, leomum geþungen. (646b-649)
>
> So the Phoenix, youthful in its home, symbolizes the power of the Son of God when he rises again from his ashes into the life of life, powerful in his limbs.

The description resumes with knowledge gleaned from legendary wisdom about the height of Paradise:

> Is þæt torhte lond twelfum herra,
> folde fæƀmrimes, swa us gefreogum gleawe
> witgan þurh wisdom on gewritum cyþaƀ,
> þonne ænig þara beorga þe her beorhte mid us
> hea hlifiaƀ under heofontunglum. (28-32)
>
> That radiant land is twelve fathoms higher than earth; (thus) wise prophets through wisdom freely reveal to us seekers in their writings); than any of those mountains which here in our midst brightly tower high under the stars of heaven.

Here is a plain adoption by the Anglo-Saxon of the Lactantian Sed nostros montes, quorum iuga celsa pu tantur, / Per bis sex ulnas imminet ille locus (Carmen, 7-8, "Yet by twice six cubits' length that land is higher than our mountains we call high"). The Carmen, however, makes no reference to the writings of scholars or sages, whereas the Old English poet, in typical fashion, occasionally

acknowledges such a source.[71] Not in the Carmen alone is the conception of the height of the "happy land" to be found; patristic tradition abounds in references to its elevation, often combined with the separation of Paradise by a long stretch of Ocean. Both kinds of references emphasize the sequestered quality of Paradise, its removal in actual spatial terms from middle-earth. It is worth noting, too, that the vagueness of the locality of the Earthly Paradise in spatial terms, apart from elevation, contrasts highly with the elaborately charted and measured configurations of the Holy Jerusalem as reported in the vision of John of Patmos.[72]

The following unit of description bears relevance in its central image to various passages in other Old English poems which present some aspect of creation either unfallen or redeemed. This central image is the sigewong (victory-plain) to be found also in saints' legends as the triumphal motif of spiritual conquest:

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[71]Information about the life of the Phoenix is also acknowledged from scholars: Is þon gelicast, þæs þe us leorneras / wordum secgað, ond writu cyþað, / þisses fugles gefær. (424-426a, "Most like is the journey of this bird, as wise men reveal in words and books"). Perhaps the poet here refers to the actual literary tradition upon which he so freely draws.

[72]Revelation 21:10-17. Here, the Heavenly Jerusalem is imagined as situated upon a great, high mountain, a fact which helped to shape assumptions about the height of the

> Smylte is se sigewong; sunbearo lixeð,
> wuduholt wynlic. Wæstmas ne dreosað,
> beorhte blede, ac þa beamas a
> grene stondað, swa him god bibead. (33-36)
>
> Gentle is the glorious plain; the sunny grove gleams,
> the fair forest. The fruits, the bright blooms fail
> to fall, and the trees stand evergreen, as God
> bade them.

With interest it may be noted that the two juxtaposed images, sigewong[73] and sunbearo, appear respectively to present an ancient heroic image drawn from battle formulae and an equally ancient pagan concept of "the grove of the sun". Yoking them in a Christian context, the poet reflects influences from both pagan Germanic and Mediterranean cultures. The distinguishing trait of his "baptizing" of the sigewong[74] and sunbearo,[75] however, is

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Earthly Paradise. Compare also the situation of Paradise in Dante's Paradiso xxvi, 109 f., and Purgatorio xxviii, opposite Jerusalem at the top of the Mount of Purgatory.

[73]Sigewang is defined by B-T in two contexts as "a plain where victory is won, a glorious plain". The first context refers to actual fighting in a dynamic sense; the second context, applicable to The Phoenix, means a place in which evil is already overcome. The first applies to saints' legends.

[74]The sigewong appears in Guthlac A (PR 3.1-818.742), Smolt wæs se sigewong, and in Andreas (PR 2.1-1722, 1581), Smeolt wæs se sigewang. Such nearly identical phrases are accountable to the communal resources of the wordhoard.

[75]See A. S. Cook, edition cited, p. 104, n. 33b. Cook defines the term sunbearo as corresponding to the Solis nemus of the Carmen, (9), where the grove of the sun is sacred to Phoebus.

its susceptibility to exegetical influences. In the context of saints' legends, the concept of the "victory-plain" commemorates a saint's triumph over spiritual wickedness. The gleam or radiance of the "sunny grove" suggests the absence of night and darkness associated in theological terms with evil-doers. Philo explains this concept in the Legum Allegoria:

> Virtue is figuratively called "pleasaunce" and the locality specially suited to the pleasaunce "Eden", which means "luxury". . . . Again the planting of the pleasaunce is "toward the sun-rising", for right reason does not set nor is quenched, but its nature is ever to rise, and, I take it, just as the sun when it has risen fills the gloom of the atmosphere with light, so virtue also, when it has risen in the soul, illumines its mist and disperses its deep darkness.[76]

The observations of a modern scholar on traditions of Paradise may be applied with profit to the wuduholt wynlic (34a, "pleasant wood") which constitutes the sunny grove:[77]

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[76]Philo, De Opificio Mundi: Legum Allegoria, I:45, p. 123.

[77]John Armstrong, The Paradise Myth, p. 10, reminds scholars of the Genesis tradition that "Sumerian myth also has . . . its earthly paradise, the 'bright land of Dilmun', watered by the sun-god, where there is abundance of grain, where there is neither sickness nor death, and the wolf is at peace with the lamb".

> The plesance (locus amoenus) with its background in pagan literature supplemented by the image of the nuptial garden enclosed of Canticles played itself out over against and intermingled with the more strictly religious garden (hortus caelestium deliciarum). The fact that the Garden of Eden had been a place both of virtue and of the Fall, of the divinely-sanctioned sapientia and the humanly-craved scientia, made it possible for the paradisic representations, and all the other trees and flora and fauna therein, to symbolize either caritas or cupiditas.78

The unfalling fruits and the trees evergreen here take their place in that host of epithets for the grove and forests of Paradise. The emphasis is upon green and fruitful trees: wealdas grene (13b, green forests), sunbearo (33b, sunny grove), wuduholt wynlic (34a, pleasant copse), beamas a / grene stondaḍ (35b-36a, trees [which] stand evergreen), wudu (37b, and 65b, wood), bearo (67b, grove), bearwas bledum gehonghe (71, groves hung with fruits), wlitigum wæstmum (72a, glorious fruits), holtes frætwe (73b, treasures of the wood), wudubeama wlite (75a, glorious

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78George H. Williams, Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought (New York, 1962), p. 49. For an extended application of the concept of caritas to specific mediaeval texts, see D. W. Robertson, Jr., "The Doctrine of Charity in Mediaeval Literary Gardens: a Topical Approach Through Symbolism and Allegory", Speculum, 26 (1951), 24-49. The central thesis of this argument is developed from the assertion: "For St. Augustine and for his successors among mediaeval exegetes, the whole aim of Scripture is to promote Charity and to condemn cupidity" (24). Robertson has taken as an illustration of his argument the De Fructibus attributed by Migne to Hugo of St. Victor. In this treatise are found the two archetypal trees signifying Babylonia (= confusio) and Hierosolyma (= visio pacis) which lead the wayfarer, respectively, to hell or heaven.

grove-trees), beorhtast bearwa (80a, the most radiant grove), holt (81a, copse).

It is fitting, then, that the verb lixan[79] ("to gleam, shine, glisten") should characterize the resplendent sunbearo which is, perhaps, a revelation of the fruitful soul. The grove of the Earthly Paradise, flourishing like its individual trees, may be viewed as a "pleasaunce" figuring forth "right reason" as defined by Philo. Again, the field and grove of the Earthly Paradise may represent the rightly-ordered soul in a manner analogous to that in which the hortus conclusus of Canticles is a type of the Church, the spouse of Christ. Notable, too, is the Psalmist's righteous man who is likened to "a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psal. 1:3). The works of the righteous man are associated in a long tradition with the vital leaves and fruit of the grove of Paradise.

The trees of the paradisal grove share in the timeless quality of the Tree of Life in the celestial Jerusalem. The anagogic significance is clear:

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[79]Lixan appears in Christ (PR, 3.440-866, 698), to define the spiritual analogy of the moon and the Church.

> In medio plateae eius, et ex utraque parte fluminis lignum vitae, afferens fructue duodecim, per menses singulos, reddens fructum suum et folia ligni ad sanitatem gentium. (Rev.22:2)
>
> In the midst of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve kinds of fruits, and yielded fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Finally, the anonymous poem De Ligno Vitae which Migne includes among the Fathers provides instruction about the way to heaven through the agency of the boughs of the Tree of Life.[80] It seems likely that the Old English poet had in mind a wide range of speculative sources about the "green tree" with its powers. In this context, N. F. Blake appropriately writes, "Good works are spiritual riches, which we collect here on earth, as the Phoenix collects roots and scents, and which never fail, as the fruit on the trees in the Phoenix's home never fails. This is a cardinal point in the allegory".[81] It may be assumed that the good works of the Christian, subsumed under the quality caritas, are figured forth in the living green-ness of the sun-filled grove of the Earthly Paradise.

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[80] De Ligno Vitae, PL, 2, 1171-1174.

[81] N. F. Blake, "Some Problems of Interpretation", Anglia, 80 (1962), 57.

The poet's descriptive resources to the end of the introductory section reflect the cosmic qualities of the Earthly Paradise; these are emphasized by the lack of seasonal variation. The single assertion in the Carmen de Ave Phoenice, nec tamen aestivos hiemisve propinquus ad ortus (13, "neither summer nor winter approaches that spot"), is expanded, beginning with a stylistic phrase denoting only the lack of seasons:

> Wintres ond sumeres wudu bid gelice
> bledum gehongen; næfre brosniad
> leaf under lyfte, ne him lig sceþed
> æfre to ealdre, ærþon edwenden
> worulde geweorde. (37-41a)
>
> Winter and summer alike the forest is hung with fruits; never shall wither the leaves under the sky, nor ever the flames scathe them, before a change comes over the world.

Thus sequestered from seasonal variation, the land of the Phoenix exhibits both the luxuriance of seed-time and the opulence of harvest. The double focus is taken directly from the tradition of the unchanging quality of the Earthly Paradise, itself an anticipation in anagogic terms of the celestial Paradise.

Although the Earthly Paradise is exempt from seasonal cycles, it is still subject to the temporal confinement of the middangeard, a fact revealed in the phrase ne him lig sceþed / æfre to ealdre, ærþon edwenden / worulde geweorde. Here is revealed a stylistic habit of

turning away from explicit statement in favour of allusiveness or oblique reference. This feature of style has already been alluded to in the negative description of the habitation of the Phoenix, where the effect is rather far from visual. The devotional poet intends the reader ultimately to rest, not in nature and its visual glories, but in the God of nature, the divine gold-lord who fashioned the happy land. Hence the extremely generic terms <u>næfre brosniaþ / leaf under lyfte, ne him lig sceþeþ . . .</u> . (38b-39, "never shall wither the leaf under the sky, nor ever the flame scathe it . . .". The term <u>lig</u> (fire, flame), although possibly a pagan survival with reference to the fire of Phaeton's chariot mentioned in the <u>Carmen</u>, is more likely an allusion, in generic terms, to the fiery judgment awaited by the rest of middle-earth. The <u>lig</u> here is the mythic counterpart of the personified flame of judgment found in <u>Christ</u> III,

> Swa se gifra gæst grundas geondseceþ;
> hiþende leg heahgetimbro.
>
> Thus the greedy spirit shall go sweeping through the world, the ravaging flame through the lofty buildings.

Again, the <u>Christ</u> poet warns of judgment by fire,

> færeþ æfter foldan fryswearta leg,
> weallende wiga.[82]

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[82] <u>Christ</u> III, <u>PR</u> 3.867-1664 (972-3) and (983-4b).

> The smoky flame, a warrior in his wrath, shall
> stalk through the earth.

In functional terms, the reference to fire in The Phoenix, both in the phrase mentioned and in the vision of judgment in (47b-49) oð bæles cyme (until the advent of fire) serves to anticipate the account of the world's future consumption by fire toward the end of The Phoenix.[83] It becomes apparent, too, that the Earthly Paradise is temporally limited, as the enigmatic utterance ærþon edwenden / worulde geweorðe (40b-41a, "before a change comes over the world") shows. Not eternal and forever immutable, the habitation of the Phoenix has a provisional character underlined by the temporal terms ærþon (before) and oð (until). The focus of expectation is, of course, the bæles cyme (74b, "advent of fire") of the universal judgment.

The eschatological reference merges into a remembrance of the Flood with its evocation of chaotic pre-creation waters:

> Swa iu wætres þrym
> ealne middangeard mereflod þeahte,
> eorþan ymbhwyrft, þa se æþela wong,
> æghwæs onsund, wið yðfare
> gehealden stod hreora wæga,
> eadig, unwemme, þurh est godes. (41b-46)

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[83] The Phoenix, (503b ff.).

> When, long ago, the tumult of water, the sea-flood whelmed all of middle-earth, the circuit of the world, the noble plain stood secure from the wave-struggle, entirely unharmed, happy and inviolate, through the grace of God.

Here is both an elaboration of the reference in the Carmen to the waters of Deucalion, and an allusion in oblique mythical terms to the antediluvian waters of chaos itself. To illustrate the first reference, the allusion in the Carmen is brief:

> Et cum diluvium mersisset fluctibus orbem,
> Deucalioneas exsuperavit aquas. (13-14)
>
> And when the earth was whelmed beneath the waves of the great Flood, it lifted up itself above Deucalion's waters.

This flat Latin statement is reworked by the Anglo-Saxon poet, who appears to add a further mythopoeic dimension. The remembrance of chaos, though not explicitly mentioned in the reference, would seem to have been present in his mind as he used the suggestive phrases wætres þrym, yðfare, and, with reference to middle-earth, eorþan ymbhwyrft. In both retrospective and anticipative terms, then, the poet has poised the land of the Phoenix between two imaginative and mythic extremes: the Flood with its attendant cosmogonic implications elaborated in the Junius Genesis A, and the Judgment Day with its apocalyptic fire. In the elements of flood and fire, cosmogony and eschatology

meet at this point in the poem, where the a-historical dimensions and perspectives of the biblical mythology present in the poem are defined.[84] The remoteness and antiquity of the Earthly Paradise are likewise emphasized in this reappearance of the ancient tradition of the sanctity of such an enclave, defined often by its removal from the waters of the Flood.

The poet does not abandon his reference to the Flood, however, before adding an allusion to fire, with its implications of the finite quality of the terrestrial paradise,

> bideð swa geblowen oð bæles cyme,
> dryhtnes domes, þonne deaðræced,
> hæleþa heolstorcofan, ohhliden weorþað. (47-9)
>
> Thus it shall abide blooming until the advent of fire, the judgment of God, when the graves, the tombs of men, shall be unclosed.[85]

This vision of judgment, although appearing intrusive and inappropriate in the description of the Earthly Paradise, nevertheless fixes the latter firmly within the context of universal apocalyptic expectation. It shows, too, the sovereignty of the Creator over time. Without the

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[84] C. W. Kennedy, Early English Christian Poetry (New York, 1963), p. 221, in comparing the style of Cynewulf's poems with that of The Phoenix, suggests the source of the linking of fire and flood in 2 Peter, 3, 6-7.

[85] Raffel, in Poems from the OE translates this pictorially:

reckoning of time, yet not timeless, the Earthly Paradise like the fallen world, awaits the reconciliation of the creation to the Creator. This prediction of coming judgment is expanded later in The Phoenix, (500 ff), where the consuming of middle-earth by fire is portrayed, and the simultaneous succor of the righteous throngs.

The term bæles cyme, however, has an additional meaning entirely applicable to the allegory of the Phoenix. The phrase may refer to rogus pyra (the fire of a funeral pyre). This is certainly the meaning as applied to the funeral pyre collected by the Phoenix; the nest with its assortment of sweet herbs and spices becomes in its burning an analogy of the life, death, purification, and resurrection of the faithful troops:

> Dæt þa æþelan sind
> wyrta wynsume, mid þam se wilda fugel
> his sylfes nest biseteð utan,
> pæt hit færinga fyre byrneð, . . . (528b-531)
>
> These noble ones are the pleasant plants with which the wild bird encircles its own nest, so that suddenly its bursts into flame.[86]

So/ Will it flourish and stay until the fire
Of the Judgment Day when the dead will rise
And their graves stand wide, gaping and dark.
The Phoenix, 46-49, p. 109.

[86]Of interest in this context is Rundle-Clarke's reference in "The Origin of the Phoenix", 131, to "the sacred locality at Hermopolis called the 'Isle of Fire' which was the place where the sun was said to have been hatched from the primeval egg". Because of linguistic

The following negative series assembles in highly generic terms the tragic qualities of human existence outside of Paradise:

> Nis þær on þam londe laðgeniðla,
> ne wop ne wracu, weatacen nan,
> yldu ne yrmðu ne se enga deað,
> ne lifes lyre, ne laþes cyme,
> ne synn ne sacu ne sarwracu,
> ne wædle gewin, ne welan onsyn,
> ne sorg ne slæp ne swar leger,
> ne wintergeweorp, ne wedra gebregd,
> hreoh under heofonum, ne se hearda forst,
> caldum cylegicelum, cnyseð ænigne . (50-59)

> No enemies walk that land, no weeping
> Is heard, no signs of misery, no hate,
> And neither old age nor crime, nor the clutch
> Of death, nor any misfortune, nor feuds,
> Nor sin, nor struggles or vengeance or troubles,
> Nor poverty's anguish or lack of abundance,
> Nor sleep, nor sorrow, nor sudden illness,
> Nor the falling snows of winter or any
> Roughness of weather, biting frost
> Or gleaming icicles, strike at anyone.[87]

In stylistic terms this extended negative catalogue may seem to merit Blake's criticism of its verbosity and diffuseness.[88] It must be remembered, however, that such

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and philological confusion between the terms "lake" and "isle", the Isle of Fire became the Lake of Fire in literature of the underworld. "The creation spot becomes the place where the damned are consumed. Thus the nest in the Isle of Fire as the place where the young bird is born on the primeval mound could become the nest which is consumed."

[87]The translation is Raffel's, p. 109. This passage seems to have captured the essence of the OE catalogue of ills.

[88]Blake, edition cited, p. 25.

cumulative writing in Old English poetry, which also characterizes the hwær com or ubi sunt passages, depends largely upon the assembling of a series, or syntactic parallelisms, each phrase amplifying or qualifying the other. Where the Old English Phoenix has been unfavourably compared with the Latin Carmen in style, the critic has failed to recognize the differing conceptual basis[89] for eloquence in each culture. In contrast to the precision and terse quality of the Lactantian poem, the Anglo-Saxon poet constantly relies upon the associational potential of his pattern; he freely plunders the resources of the wordhoard to the point of repetition and occasional redundancy. Eloquence in this passage arises not only from such variation but also from alliteration and internal or Leonine rhyme.

The absence of both death and the grievous qualities that characterize the life of man in the fallen creation,

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[89]We may note with interest that even in Latin translation the Hebrew epithets for God often display apposition and variation to the point of repetition; see, for example, Isaias 43:15-16:

> Ego Dominus, Sanctus vester, / Creans Israel, rex vester.
> Haec dicit Dominus, / Qui dedit in mari viam,
> Et in aquis torrentibus semitam.

("I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. Thus saith the Lord, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters.")

set apart the home of the Phoenix. Highly generic terms characterize the list of omissions from Paradise; the formulaic language ne lifes lyre, ne laþes cyme (53, nor loss of life, nor the advent of a hateful thing) contributes to an overwhelming cumulative quality. The catalogue is highly conventional as, for example, Blake points out[90] the correspondence between the Old English ne sorg ne slæp (56b, "nor sorrow nor sleep") and the term tristitia (sorrow) in the Life of St. Eligius and semper vigel numquam dormit in aevum ("forever the watchman fails to sleep in eternity") -- sorrow and sleep being said in both accounts to be absent from Paradise. The phrase ne lifes lyre appears in Guthlac B (829a); the reference to slæp ne swar leger (56, "sleep nor dire sickness") has a counterpart in Christ III, (1661a, slæp ne swar leger). The purpose of the poet's catalogue of human ills is to emphasize in negative terms the perfection of the Earthly Paradise. Wintry storm, frost and icicles, the elements of nature that characterize the themes of exile in much Old English verse, are debarred from the dwelling-place of the Phoenix. Wedra gebregd (57b, "change of weather") and the caprice of the elements that make up

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[90]Blake, "Originality in OE Poetry", 326.

part of the exiled Adam's burden, are likewise absent. The protection of the Earthly Paradise by the Prince's will is emphasized by such a series of negations.

At length, the ne . . . ne . . . ac construction produces a positive record of the lagustreamas (62b, "flowing streams") of the terrestrial Garden:

> Dær ne hægl ne hrim hreosaþ to foldan,
> ne windig wolcen, ne þær wæter fealleþ,
> lyfte gebysgad, ac þær lagustreamas,
> wundrum wrætlice, wyllan onspringaþ
> fægrum flodwylmum. Foldan leccaþ
> wæter wynsumu of þæs wudu midle;
> þa monþa gehwam of pære moldan tyrf
> brimcald brecaþ, bearo ealne geondfaraþ,
> þragum þrymlice. Is þæt þeodnes gebod,
> pætte twelf siþum þæt tirfæste
> lond geondlace lagufloda wynn. (60-70)
>
> There neither hail nor frost nor windy cloud descends on the earth, nor does water fall, driven by the gust, but the wondrously splendid streams spring up; they water the land with fair fountains. Beautiful waters from the middle of the grove, which spring ocean-cold from the soil, flow gloriously every month through the whole grove. It is the Prince's will that twelve times the glorious river shall flow through that noble land.

Here is a reworking of the tradition of the four streams of Eden and, in anagogic terms, an anticipation or type of the crystal river of the Apocalypse. Genesis 2:10 relates,

> Et fluvius egrediebatur de loco voluptatis ad irrigandum paradisum, qui inde dividitur in quattuor capita.

> There was a river flowing from Eden to water the garden, and when it left the garden it branched into four streams.91

At length, the encyclopaedic structure of the Bible again presents the archetypal river in Revelation 22:1; St. John relates of the officiating angel:

> Et ostendit mihi fluvium aquae vitae, splendidum tanquam crystallum, procedentem de sede Dei et Agni.
>
> And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

The poet has altered the configuration of the paradisal rivers, however, in invoking the number twelve. Twelve times, we recall, the Phoenix bathes in the spring or brook of its homeland, which is itself twelve fathoms higher than the mountains of middle-earth, and crossed by twelve lagustreamas. During the thousand-year span[92] of its life in the plain of Paradise, the bird regularly notes the hours twelve times day and night, anticipating its westward flight to Syria.

Absent in this account are the traditional four rivers that proceeded out of Eden. This lack is in keeping with the character of the Earthly Paradise which has

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[91]Genesis 2:10, New English Bible (Cambridge, 1970).

[92]St. Ambrose assigns the Phoenix a life-span of 500 years. See Hexaemeron, Lib. 5, Hom. 7, cap. 23:79: "In the regions of Arabia there is reported to be a bird called the phoenix; this bird is said to reach the ripe old age of 500 years".

previously been put forward as a composite structure existing in the poet's imagination, not Eden itself. Hence it is appropriate that the poet has selectively used the tradition, also gleaned from the Latin Carmen, in which the stream of the Earthly Paradise figures as a fons in medio, quem 'vivum' nomine dicunt (25, "a fountain in the midst, which is called "Living"). Whereas the Carmen has the fountain ceaselessly flowing through all the months of the year, the Old English account attributes to "the Prince's behest" that the flowing stream should irrigate twelve times the glorious plain. A suggestion appears in Josephus' Jewish Antiquities that the Garden is "watered by a single river whose stream encircles all the earth and is parted into four branches".[93] The "single river" here is undoubtedly Oceanus, the cosmic Jordan. Philo, too, speculates about the rivers partly accomplishing their courses by flowing underground, for "the origin [of these waters] is a river and not a source".[94] Again, Philo conjectures,[95]

> Perhaps Paradise is in some distant place far from our inhabited world, and has a river flowing under the earth, which waters many great

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[93]Josephus, Jewish Antiquities IV 1:38, p. 19.

[94]Philo, Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin, Lib. I:12, p. 8.

[95]Ibid.

> veins so that these, rising, send [water] to
> other recipient veins, and so become diffused.

St. Ambrose offers a tropological commentary on the paradisal stream which relates the latter directly to the following passage in the poem:

> Ex hac igitur anima quae culta est, non ex ea
> quae inculta fons iste procedit, ut irriget
> paradisum, hoc est, quaedam diversarum
> fruteta virtutum.96
>
> Therefore, the stream that irrigates Paradise rises
> from the soul when well-tilled, not from the soul
> which lies uncultivated. The results therefrom
> are fruit trees of diverse virtues.

The "fruit trees of diverse virtues" are presented in terms of ever-renewed treasure:

> Sindon þa bearwas bledum gehongne,
> wlitigum wæstmum, þær no waniað o,
> halge under heofonum, holtes frætwe.
> Ne feallað þær on foldan fealwe blostman,
> wudubeama wlite, ac pær wrætlice
> on þam treowum symle telgan gehladene,
> ofett edniwe, in ealle tid
> on þam græswonge grene stondaþ,
> gehroden hyhtlice haliges meahtum,
> beorhtast bearwa.97 (71-80a)
>
> The groves are hung with blossomings, fair
> fruits; there never fade the ornaments of the
> wood, holy under heaven, nor do the yellow

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[96]St. Ambrose, Liber de Paradiso, cap. 3:14, PL, 14, 297.

[97]Here, in the ne . . . ac construction is an example of "contrastive collocation" defined by Jerome Mandel as "an absolutely necessary rhetorical tool of the poet" and "a basic structural principle". "Contrastive collocation", he argues, "works constantly in the language of the poem to determine the position and force of particular words in the poetic line". See Jerome Mandel, "Contrast in OE Poetry", Chaucer Review, 6 (1971), 1.

> fruits, the trees' glory, fall to earth. There the boughs laden with ever-renewed fruit stretch magnificently. On that grassy meadow and verdant stands the brightest of groves, joyfully adorned by the might of the Holy One.

In the Earthly Paradise, ripeness is all. Bud, blossom and ripe fruit hang together on the unfading bough, as a mystical analogy of the heavenly Tree of Life "which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2). The fealwe blostman (74b, yellow fruits), deriving from the verb fealwian (to grow yellow, ripen), suggest that fulfilment of virtue which characterizes the fruitful soul when "well-tilled" as distinguished by St. Ambrose. The term fealwe (pale yellow, dusky), implies, too, that stage of ripeness in bud when about to flower; its associational value enhances the beorhtast bearwas (brightest of groves), -- the sunbearo of (33b). Indeed, the focus of this passage is the paradisal grove or copse of evergreen trees which is later identified as the dwelling-place of the Phoenix (85-86). The sun, itself a potent force in the Solis nemus of the Carmen (9), here functions secondarily in lighting the sacred grove; its adornment is by the "power of the Holy One". Hence it is that

> No gebrocen weorþe
> holt on hiwe, þær se halga stenc
> wunaþ geond wynlond. (80b-82a)
>
> The forest suffers no fading of its colour;
> there the holy savour suffuses that land of
> beauty.

Relevant in this context is Philo's definition of the purpose of Paradise:

> It is a dense place full of all kinds of trees. Symbolically, however, it is wisdom or knowledge of the divine and human and of their causes. For it was fitting, after the coming into being of the world, to establish the contemplative life in order that through a vision of the world and the things in it praise of the Father might also be attained. For it is not possible for nature to see nor is it possible without wisdom to praise the Creator of all things. And his ideas the Creator planted like trees in the most sovreign thing, the rational soul. . . . But after the world wisdom came into being, since after the creation of the world Paradise was made in the same manner as the poets say the chorus of Muses (was formed) in order to praise the Creator and his works.98

This passage supports an interesting application to the closing portion of the introduction to The Phoenix. This is the recognition that the "vision of the world" and the things in it refers not to actual visual perception as it is related to the clouded awareness of the earthly man. Rather, the vision of the world here and in the poem refers to the non-visual, to the proper ordering of the soul's

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[98]Philo, Supplement I. Questions and Answers on Genesis I:6, p. 4.

faculties, in the likeness of the heavenly Paradise. The green groves and perennial fruit-bearing of the Earthly Paradise figure forth the activities of the "well-tilled soul" which, later in The Phoenix, is found rejoicing in the lasting benefit of good deeds. To argue, as Calder has done, that the descriptive effect is "strongly visual" is to put forward a dangerous over-emphasis on the visible and tangible, properties which characterize three-dimensional art.

That the effect of such passages of description is strongly non-visual is confirmed by the latent per visibilia ad invisibilia theme in The Phoenix. In the description or rather, negative description of the home of the Phoenix, it seems unlikely that a monk or other reader, newly schooled in the doctrines of the faith, would view the treasures of earth as less fleeting than the hoarded wealth of pagan tradition. The composer of The Phoenix, perhaps bearing in mind the heavenly inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, has not expanded the frætwe complex of images to the exclusion of the symbolism of the fruit of the grove.[99]

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[99]D. W. Robertson, Jr., in "The Doctrine of Charity", 27, has drawn attention to the panels of the Ruthwell Cross, two of which show birds and beasts eating fruit among foliage. The foliage represents the unfading leaves of the Tree of Life and the birds and beasts those Christians who, sheltered in the Word of God, eat the fruit of eternal life.

Hence, the presentation of Paradise in negative, or vague and generic terms and in veiled, oblique implication rather than explicit statement. As in tradition a wall of fire encircled the terrestrial paradise to keep inviolate the holy ground, so the poet, though dwelling upon the amoenitas of the Phoenix's home, never directly exposes in detail its glories. The reader is thereby intended to foster a true "vision of the world", or the temporally-bound Earthly Paradise, a vision suggested by negation. This turning away from the visible to the invisible is a characteristic of early devotional art, and as such it distinguishes the harmonious ordering of the faculties of the "most sovreign thing, the rational soul". It is not inappropriate at this point to suggest that the peaceful homeland in which the Phoenix lives out its thousand years and is renewed, implies the garden context for the contemplative life. A true vision of the world is thus achieved through interior contemplation and praise of the Creator, not through praise of the visual adornment of the creation itself.

The chief elements of the Earthly Paradise -- its remoteness, antiquity, and sacral beauty -- are drawn together in the assertion which concludes the introductory unit of the Phoenix:

þæt onwended ne bid̄
æfre to ealdre, ærþon endige
frod fryngeweorc se hit on frymþe gescop. (82b-84)

Never shall change befall it until He who
in the beginning shaped it bring the old,
long-established work to an end.

The implicit tribute is directed toward the shaping spirit and benevolent governance of the All-Creator, in whose mind and thought the temporal duration of the Earthly Paradise exists.

CONCLUSION

St. Augustine, writing that Adam's life in paradise was exempt from the vicissitudes of fear and desire, was also articulating the mythical modus vivendi towards which the Old English Christian poets aspired. The hexaemeral tradition, gaining momentum through the patristic era, continued to flourish as the mediaeval poets' remembrance turned upon the paradise lost and upon the life cycle of man from his creation to his individual day of doom. Fallen man, cursed with age and death, provides an elegiac focus for the Fathers who view his whole life as prolonged exile, while caught between the extremes of hope and fear. The Old English poems which embody these myths of creation and fall are expressions, not so much of individual devotion as of communal piety which attempts to encounter the divine through the agency of myth. This last is the literary term given to the conception and formulation of archetypal events or desires. A myth of universal dimension such as the "Earthly Paradise", for example, is overlaid with legendary leit-motifs which reinforce and perpetuate the core of myth, itself comprehending and assimilating diverging cultures and traditions. The historical tradition of Eden was re-experienced by the

Old English poets as recurring mythos which defined and gave meaning and hope to man as homo viator.[1] Earlier in this thesis I drew attention to three pervasive myths found throughout the Old English poetic canon, categorizing these as the journey, the ritual, and the return. Each of these stages gives a comprehensive mythic significance, respectively, to the themes of exile, hall-building, and the establishment of a green plain or sanctum which represents spiritual home-coming.

In evaluating the current critical emphasis given to the influence of Christian exegesis in Old English poetry, Philip Rollinson asserts that "a comprehensive knowledge of Christian thought and of the elements of Christian culture has proved to be important for the proper understanding of a number of poems".[2] I have attempted to show in this thesis that Genesis A, Christ and Satan, and The Phoenix are among those poems for which a knowledge of their fostering traditions can cast light on

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[1]See the illuminating distinctions laid out in G. B. Ladner, "Homo Viator: Medieval Ideas on Alienation and Order", Speculum, 42 (1967), 233-49.

[2]Philip B. Rollinson, "The influence of Christian doctrine and exegesis on Old English poetry: an estimate of the current state of scholarship", Anglo-Saxon England, 2 (1973), 272.

many areas and problems of interpretation. Morton Bloomfield, as well, counsels knowledge of Christian modes of thought, as he argues,

> Historically, of course, medieval man tended to think in Christian categories, and most frequently the sententia he put into or discovered in literature was a Christian one. . . . Yet medieval man was also the heir of late classical antiquity and of barbarian cultures, and their categories of thought, their literary genres, their points of view, were also part of this heritage.3

In my introduction to "The Patristic Traditions" I have defined and illustrated a pattern of hexaemeral writings which included biblical (Jewish and Christian), classical, and barbarian elements. The initial study showed that the mutations of the creation, Fall, and Earthly Paradise traditions owed debts to classical cosmography, apocryphal legends, the interpretations of the Alexandrine theologian Philo, and the contributions of the earliest and most original of the Fathers. Indeed, the intellectual environment of Bede and of the Old English Christian poets was anticipated and shaped by the Fathers whose writings found their way into Anglo-Saxon monasteries and centres of learning. Justification for the use of the terms "hexaemeral" and "tradition" has been amply demonstrated by the continuity of themes evident in the works of Basil,

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[3]Morton W. Bloomfield, "Symbolism in Mediaeval Literature", in his Essays and Explorations: Studies in Ideas, Language, and Literature (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp. 84-5.

Ambrose, Augustine, Bede, and Aelfric.[4] I have assembled evidence to prove that the exegetical method united with the hexaemeral tradition during the patristic period, to explicate a variety of myths about creation and paradise. It is this borrowed body of traditions which gives the Old English cosmological poems their derivative flavour.

The theme of creation among the Fathers was seen to be a typological event closely associated with the order of the world's ages which form the links of a teleological chain guiding us through the Bible from Genesis to the Apocalypse. The schema of Biblical exegesis involving the allegorical, tropological and anagogical meanings was demonstrated to be the main interpretative tool used by the Fathers in explaining scriptural mysteries. The existence of an ideal pattern or order in the universe was recognized as an important element of the panegyric hexaemeral tradition. As we followed the poets and Fathers

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[4]Although they are wholly outside the scope of investigation in this thesis, see the works of rabbinical Judaism titled Vita Adae et Evae and Apocalypsis Mosis for an elaboration of hexaemeral themes in the broader context of the life-span of Adam and Eve.

into the field of Biblical myth, we saw in their vision of the domus mundi an integral part of the hexaemeral theme. In so doing, we recognized the patristic authors not as the perpetuators of uniform doctrine but as gifted cosmographers and mythographers.

A parallel exploration of three poetic texts invites our consideration of their differing perspectives. Genesis A, in presenting a comprehensive, chronological, clearly-defined "beginning", reveals the broadest scope and detail about creation, while imparting in the narrative a sense of its dynamic character. A further cosmogonic dimension frames the account of creation in the poet's remembrance of the angels' Fall. As I have suggested, Genesis A is like a cumulative hymn opened by the poet's exhortation to praise the Glory-King of hosts. Both the strictly philosophical and theological perspectives are seen to be inadequate in viewing this progressive hymn. The mythopoeic perspective, however, comprehends the myth of cosmic warfare together with the concept of the dryht which the poet exploits in the introduction and throughout Genesis A. In a comparison of heroic epithets in the exordium of this poem and Caedmon's Hymn, we saw the contrasting emphasis in each poem: the angelic creation receives primary emphasis in Genesis A 1-25a, while the human creation is the focus of the Hymn.

A major emphasis of my examination of Genesis A has been the comparison of the poem's account of creation with the Vulgate's narration. The findings here emphasized the Old English poet's expansion and variation of his sources, as he focusses upon the hyhtlic heofon timber, the harmonious and divinely-ordered heavenly structure created after its model, the celestial mead-hall Jerusalem. To the Vulgate, however, we turned to establish the likely links of continuity in those areas where the Genesis MS is lacking. An additional area of investigation has been the exegetical significance of the four streams of Eden as the poet incorporates this symbolism into his conclusion of the creation story. I have suggested the relevance of the concept of the Pasch to the vernal metaphor found throughout Genesis A, Christ and Satan, and most markedly in The Phoenix. In the first instance, we hear God's benediction spoken upon the eorðan ælgrene (the earth all green); in the second the poet counsels wayfaring man to seek the grene stræte (green path) leading to Paradise; in the third we view the grene wong (green field) and wealdas grene (green forests) of the Phoenix' abode. The continuance of the motif of greenness is impressive, especially as it can be seen operating in the expositions of Philo and the rabbinic commentators on Genesis. It is associated in an extensive range of hexaemeral writings

with the horticultural abundance of the archetypal sacred enclave.

The introductory unit of Christ and Satan I have described as a postlude on the creation theme. Revealing a narrower focus than the expansive scope of Genesis A, the poet contemplates creation in its ideal and finished aspect. The vision is retrospective, fitting indeed for the introduction to a poem which chronicles in a discontinuous mythical mode the acts of Christ against Satan. A latent Christological emphasis appears in the phrase godes agen bearn (God's only Son), while the dryht tradition unites with the gifts-of-men theme to structure the opening of this disjunctive and episodic poem. The study of the miniature hexaemeron in Christ and Satan 1-21 revealed its elements of encomium as an integral part of the hexaemeral pattern.

In our exploration of the paradise theme in The Phoenix we have noted the special literary imprint of the Lactantian De Ave Phoenice upon the poem. In The Phoenix are evident correspondences between classical pagan and Christian mythology, in a synthetic mode characteristic of the Old English poet's method of composition. The Phoenix, to the greatest extent of our three poems, reveals evidence of the influence of a complex and rich literate tradition existing from biblical times.

The ideal symbol of the Phoenix is intimately linked with the earthly paradise myth, for as early as the Midrash Rabba, we find the fabled information that the Phoenix alone of all the beasts and birds to whom Eve offered the forbidden fruit, refused to take and eat it.[5] A distinct analogy is implied between the temptations of Christ in the desert and the Phoenix in the primeval Garden. In viewing the poetic treatment of the terrestrial paradise, I have noted the emphasis on the green plain's provisional or temporally-bound character. It reminds us that creation, even in its idealized aspect, is finite and with the rest of middle-earth, it too awaits the apocalypse. The eschatological hope is linked with the theme of creation in The Phoenix in a brilliant and comprehensive conception. In arguing that the green field and golden grove have an anagogical significance, I have suggested that this earthly Eden embodies, as well, the garden context for the contemplative life.. Throughout the complex and highly derivative description of the terrestrial paradise, I have perceived the emergence of the mediaeval per visibilia ad invisibilia theme.

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[5]See Genesis Rabba, 19:5, quoted in J. M. Evans, Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition, p. 52.

A mental review of the hexaemeral tradition suggests yet one more evocative symbol, drawn from Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica. This is the pagan councillor's image of the flight of a sparrow through the Northumbrian ale-hall as an emblem of human life spent fleetingly in the hall of this world and beset with the uncertainties of hope and fear.[6] Such a picture insistently recalls the contrasting image of the Phoenix in its nest, girded about with good works and confidently awaiting its westward flight to Syria. The lofty, light-filled plain and the yellow fruits of the paradisal grove contribute to a resplendent vision of creation which contrasts with the smoky twilight of the Northumbrian king's ale-hall, an image of creation surrounded by winter storm and the darkness of the unknown. A third, climactic image suggests itself in this context. This, the focus of expectation among the Fathers and devout Christian poets both Latin and Old English, is the eternal city of Jerusalem, the celestial mead-hall to which the expectation of the hexaemeral writers turned. It is this hope, placed in the new creation of God, of which the Old English poems under study are the mature and learned expression.

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[6]Bede's Ecclesiastical History, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), pp. 182-3, Chapter 13, Book 2.

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