HEOROT AND THE PLUNDERED HOARD

HEOROT AND THE PLUNDERED HOARD:

A STUDY OF BEOWULF

By

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ABSTRACT

During the age in which Beowulf was written, Christianity was the prevailing cultural force. Since early medieval religion was rooted in biblical typology, the principles of which were widely disseminated by the liturgy of the Church, we may assume that the resulting Weltanschauung also influenced Old English literature. While it is increasingly being recognized that the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons is the product of the typological imagination, Beowulf is usually regarded as somewhat of an exception. Until now, no typological study of the poem as a whole has appeared.

In order to interpret its major symbols and illuminate its perennial cruces, Beowulf needs to be studied in its literary context. An understanding of the poem is therefore promoted by a consideration of its relationship to the literature of the typology-based tradition: other Old English poetry (which is mostly biblical or hagiographic in theme), the liturgical texts (in which the Scriptures, especially the Psalms, are the prominent sources), as well as the exegetical and homiletical writings of the Church Fathers and their medieval successors. The soundness of taking such material into account in the study of Beowulf is demonstrated by the fact that this method yields not only explanations of many individual elements but also a unified interpretation of the poem in its entirety.

The meaning of Heorot, the goldhall, can thus be determined by

comparing it to structures that are discussed in similar terms in the literature known to the Anglo-Saxons -- for example, the temple or the newly created earth when it is described as a building. As a result it can be shown that, contrary to what some have argued, neither the perfect beginning of the hall nor the misery subsequently caused by the monster Grendel is evidence of the sinful pride of Hrothgar, its builder. Heorot's typological -- and, hence, also baptismal -- connotations lead us to the conclusion that Hrothgar's seemingly reprehensible inertia in the face of Grendel's attacks is entirely appropriate in one who, like the mournful ones in the Old English Advent, can only await deliverance. A discussion of the spring motifs in the poem helps to identify Beowulf as the heroic redeemer which the situation calls for. Numerous other details, when examined in a typological perspective, help to confirm this identity.

Furthermore, Beowulf can be defended against those who cast aspersions on his desire to defeat the dragon and win its gold for his people. The rôle of the thief provides important clues to the meaning of Beowulf's own spoiling of the dragon's hoard. It can be shown that Christ's rifling of the devil's hoard constitutes the paradigm. Like Beowulf's cleansing of Heorot, the plundering is a redemptive activity. Moreover, since the poet presents it as a doomsday motif, it forms an extension of the Flood and baptism typology to which he repeatedly alludes in the earlier presentation of Beowulf's fights with the Grendel kin.

Time and again the Beowulf poet's choice of words and details

reveals that he practised his craft within a tradition in which his creativeness was bound and disciplined by the objectiveness of a particular structure of images. We perceive in all the rich variety of his work the unifying effect of the typological imagination. It is in the typological mode of Beowulf that the key to its meaning and artistry is to be found.

To

ANNE

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It was Dr. Alvin A. Lee who first introduced me to Old English studies ten years ago. Since that time I have on countless occasions enjoyed the lively stimulation of his scholarly guidance. I should like to thank Professor Lee especially for his encouraging interest throughout the preparation of this thesis.

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NOTE ON THE ENUMERATION OF PSALMS

It is appropriate in any study of medieval literature to refer to the Vulgate rather than to the Authorized Version or other English translations of the Scriptures. In view of the differences in enumeration which are found especially in the Book of Psalms, the following table may be helpful:

Vulgate	English Bible
1-8	1-8
9	9 and 10
10-112	11-113
113	114 and 115
114	116 (verses 1-9)
115	116 (verses 10-end)
116-145	117-146
146	147 (verses 1-11)
147	147 (verses 12-end)
148-150	148-150

ABBREVIATIONS

ASPR	The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CL	Comparative Literature
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DACL	Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne et de Liturgie
EEMF	Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile
JEGP	Journal of English and Germanic Philology
MAE	Medium AEvum
MLN	Modern Language Notes
MLR	Modern Language Review
MP	Modern Philology
MS	Mediaeval Studies
NM	Neuphilologische Mitteilungen
NPNF	The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
N&Q	Notes and Queries
PG	Patrologia Graeca. Edited by J.P. Migne. Paris, 1857-86.
PL	Patrologia Latina. Edited by J.P. Migne. Paris, 1844-64.
PMLA	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
PQ	Philological Quarterly
SP	Studies in Philology
UTQ	University of Toronto Quarterly
ZfSL	Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades such scholars as Wilhelm Levison and Dorothy Whitelock have reminded readers of Beowulf that in early Anglo-Saxon times -- the age in which the poem has its origin -- Christianity was the prevailing cultural force.[1] Their studies have helped to vindicate the achievement of Friedrich Klaeber in his seminal article "Die christlichen Elemente im Beowulf",[2] where he catalogued many of the overtly Christian words and images in the poem. But important and illuminating as Klaeber's work in this area may still be, it usually does not reckon with the peculiar nature of early medieval religion and therefore does not explore the potential artistic significance of the so-called Christian elements within the fabric and structure of the poem. As Erich Auerbach has emphasized, early Christianity was rooted in an essential typological awareness which not only influenced late Mediterranean culture but, with its "integral, firmly teleological view of history and the providential order of the world," shaped the thinking of the converted Germanic tribes and captured their imaginations.[3]

Strictly speaking, typology may be defined briefly as the principle of scriptural exegesis according to which the historical realities

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[1] For further information consult Levison, England and the Continent in the Eighth Century, and Whitelock, The Audience of Beowulf. These works first appeared in 1946 and 1951 respectively.

[2] Anglia, 35 (1911), 111-36, 249-70, 453-82; 36 (1912), 169-99.

[3] "Figura", in Scenes from the Drama of European Literature, pp. 56, 58.

(events, persons, or things) of the Old Testament prefigure those of the new dispensation. The Hebrew prophets and also the New Testament apostles clearly made reference to figures or types throughout the Scriptures, but it was left for the Fathers of the Church to develop typology as a body of knowledge. They did so to prove to such heretics as the Manicheans that both Testaments form a unity, and to convince the Jews that the Old Testament was fulfilled in the New. It has been demonstrated with particular clarity by Jean Daniélou that this theology found eloquent expression in the symbolism of the liturgy.[4] Especially by way of the rituals and sacraments of the Church, the principles of typology pervaded Western civilization.[5] In the resulting typological perspective early medieval people saw their place in history and recognized their identity. We may assume that this same Weltanschauung also influenced their literary endeavours.

As for Old English poetry, critics have increasingly perceived and acknowledged that at least the large quantity of obviously biblical and hagiographic verse is the product of the typological imagination. The Old English Advent (Christ I) has even been provided with a book-length typological commentary[6] which places this work solidly in the literary tradition to which the liturgy and scriptural exegesis, along with the Scriptures themselves, form both the background and the source.

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[4]See especially his discussion of typology in The Bible and the Liturgy.

[5]Christopher Dawson, Religion and the Rise of Western Culture, pp. 38, 42-43.

[6]Robert B. Burlin, The Old English Advent.

Attempts to deal in a similar manner with the so-called secular poetry have generally met with greater resistance, and no such study of Beowulf has yet appeared. Those discussing the typological aspect of the poem have for the most part restricted their attention to Grendel's mere and to the hero's descent into its monster-infested waters. With regard to other sections there have been some suggestions inviting further examination and substantiation.[7] Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, the one elaborate study of the Christian meaning of the poem, Margaret Goldsmith's The Mode and Meaning of Beowulf, rejects the typological influence as insignificant and is left only with "the other kinds of allegorical meaning, the moral and the spiritual".[8] Unfortunately, by such an approach one deprives oneself of the possibility of resorting to the objectiveness of the central typological tradition as a means of testing the probability of any proposed interpretation. In the scheme of the accepted four levels -- even if they are not applied rigorously -- the moral or tropological meaning tends to be controlled and restrained especially by the allegorical level in the strict sense of the word, i.e., the exegesis in terms of Christ and the Church. It is this allegorical meaning which holds the moral interpretation in check, rather than vice versa.[9] To consider oneself left with only the moral meaning is to run the risk of getting entangled in a largely subjective reading

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[7] For references to the relevant contributions, see especially Chapter IV.

[8] See p. 74.

[9] See Auerbach, "Figura", pp. 53-60, and Daniélou, From Shadows to Reality, pp. 64, 111-12, 149, on the subordinate role of spiritual or tropological interpretation.

of a poem such as Beowulf. By contrast, the soundness of taking into account the framework of biblical typology that we find represented in strictly allegorical exegesis and in the liturgy is borne out by the manner in which this method enables us to link numerous elements in Beowulf not only with patristic literature and the Bible but also with the other Old English Poems that remain as a legacy of the typology-based tradition.

While a study of typological symbolism in an overtly Christian work may seem a reasonably promising task to set oneself, a similar proposal with regard to a supposedly secular poem is a patently different matter. Although this thesis as a whole is intended to counter any objections that are likely to arise, it may be useful to give here a very brief indication of its general direction. In the first place, in view of the alleged fact that in Beowulf the only biblical references are to the Old Testament and that characters such as Beowulf and Hrothgar appear to be pre-Christian Germanic warriors, it is worth remembering that already at a very early date pagan gods and heroes were typologically interpreted without any suggestion of inconsistency, while the major events of the New Testament -- the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension -- appear to have been entirely neglected in early Christian art.[10] Instead, the significance of these events was conveyed by the depiction of their types. Even when directly biblical themes were used in propagating the Christian

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[10] In this art Christ was portrayed as, for example, Hermes, Orpheus, Helios, and Eros. Gilbert Cope, Symbolism in the Bible and the Church, pp. 40-41. On the absence of obvious Christian themes in the art of the early Church, see e.g. R.P.C. Hanson, Allegory and Event, p. 67.

truth, artists had available to them the entire range of the history recorded in the Old Testament and in the standard Old Testament apocrypha. In comparison the span of New Testament history, found only within the brief compass of the more or less parallel Gospel accounts and in the Book of Acts, is very limited indeed.

Nevertheless, a typological study of Beowulf ought not to posit an implicitly Old-Testament setting. Although in the early Christian view the course of history is a linear progression rather than an infinitely recurring cycle, it is also conceived of as a complete entity in the mind of God. Consequently the history of salvation cannot be regarded simply in terms of straightforward development. Because of the shared and simultaneous meaning of widely separated events, there is no need to look for progress from one Old Testament type to the next. In this exegetical tradition it does not particularly matter, then, whether Noah preceded or followed David. It also makes little difference whether or not an historical event is antediluvian, for it acquires its true meaning from its timeless and ideal model. If, as has been suggested, the typological mode of thought and imagination prevailed in Anglo-Saxon Christianity, it is equally unimportant to establish the exact and logical setting of what happens in Beowulf[11] and to determine to what extent the

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[11] For a different view, see Margaret Goldsmith, "The Christian Theme of Beowulf", Medium Aevum, 29 (1960), in which article she states, "The danger of celebrating a pagan hero he [the poet] has ingeniously avoided by giving his characters a pre-Christian setting, as if they had lived B.C." (p. 83). Lewis Nicholson in "The Literal Meaning and Symbolic Structure of Beowulf", Classica et Mediaevalia, 25 (1964), 151-201, proceeds to refine this point and develops the theory that the poet "was consciously setting forth conditions in the antediluvian world" (p. 154).

characters themselves could have been familiar with Christian doctrine. Such may be the legitimate concern of the archeologist and the modern historian but it does not necessarily promote an understanding of the artistic conception which led to the birth of the poem.

Furthermore, if a saint such as Andrew in the Old English Andreas can in certain situations be presented in a typological aura like that of Moses at the time of the Exodus, we may conclude that the use of typological motifs does not suddenly become improper or impossible after any rigidly drawn historical limit. Though Beowulf, as a man apparently living in the post-Incarnation era, cannot in the theological sense be considered a type of Christ,[12] he can certainly be regarded as a typological hero. It is in this general sense, referring to the influence of an entire tradition as a literary phenomenon, that the word "typological" is frequently used throughout this study.

In a discussion which is neither polemic nor theoretical in its main thrust, the following chapters are intended to let Beowulf speak for itself within its literary context. Hopefully, by showing how the typological perspective manifests itself in the structure and imagery of the poem, this thesis will modestly contribute to the appreciation of its art.

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[12]It is on the basis of this narrow definition of the word "type" that Margaret Goldsmith discards altogether the possibility of typological influence. See Mode and Meaning, pp. 73-74.

I

HEOROT AND THE SONG OF CREATION

The construction of Hrothgar's goldhall has its model in God's creation of the world. Both Heorot and the pristine earth form a circle of light in a vast expanse of darkness and disorder. The parallel between Hrothgar's command to build a great meadhall and the creative work of God is suggested in quite an explicit way, for the song that is chanted by the scop to celebrate the joy prevailing in Heorot is a hymn of creation. Before the poet tells us of the contents of the song, he indicates that the sounds of rejoicing rang forth from day to day ("dogora gehwam", 88),[1] much to the vexation of the monster Grendel. Then, to epitomize the nature of the seledream, he introduces the details of creation which the scop relates to the melodious accompaniment of his harp:

> Saegde se þe cuþe
> frumsceaft fira feorran reccan,
> cwaeð þaet se AElmihtiga eorðan worhte,
> wlitebeorhtne wang, swa waeter bebugeð,
> gesette sigehreþig sunnan ond monan
> leoman to leohte landbuendum,
> ond gefraetwade foldan sceatas
> leomum ond leafum, lif eac gesceop
> cynna gehwylcum þara ðe cwice hwyrfaþ. (90-98)

He who could tell of human beginnings, long ago, said that the Almighty made the earth, a radiantly bright plain surrounded by water; that he, the victorious one, established the brightness of sun and moon as a light to land-dwellers and adorned the face of the earth with branches and leaves, and also created life for every kind of living, moving thing.

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[1] The edition used throughout is F. Klaeber, Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg, 3rd. ed. Quotations from other Old English poems are from G.P. Krapp and E.V.K. Dobbie, eds., ASPR.

The symbolic relationship between Heorot and the newly established earth calls for further attention. As Mircea Eliade has pointed out, "the creation of the world is the exemplar for all constructions".[2] If this axiom in the study of comparative religion serves as a comment on the meaning of Heorot, perhaps it would be helpful to narrow down and particularize its truth and to see how it functions in the cultural context represented in Old English literature, for during the early middle ages the creation of the earth was interpreted as an event of far-reaching significance. As an essential fact in the imaginative network of typological associations which characterized the Christianity of the Anglo-Saxon world, it was linked with the formation of the Church: "Mundi creatio formationem Ecclesiae praefigurat".[3] While primal creation may be the exemplar for all later structures or buildings, it is first and foremost a figure of the house of God. We may, therefore, quite legitimately ask whether the symbolism of the ecclesia is in any way evident in the Song of Creation and whether, in turn, such typological influence has any bearing on the meaning of Heorot. Hrothgar's hall is not a church, but in view of the tradition which prevailed in the age to which the Beowulf poet belonged, an examination of possible typological allusions may help us to recognize the nature of the goldhall's perfection and the imaginative richness of its connotations.

Most of the elements which make up the creation hymn are derived from the Genesis account of the origin of the world.[4] The wlitebeorht

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[2]Patterns in Comparative Religion, p. 379.

[3]Augustine, Confessiones, PL 32, col. 850.

wang, the radiantly bright plain surrounded by water (93), became a reality when God at the beginning of the third day gathered the waters together into one place and caused the dry land to appear: "Congregentur aquae, quae sub caelo sunt, in locum unum: et appareat arida" (Genesis 1:9).[5] In his commentary on the Pentateuch, Bede, the great Anglo-Saxon scholar and exegete, discusses these words of Scripture and makes the expository remark: "Et appareat arida, hoc est, Ecclesia".[6] Here we may note quite incidentally that, while the poet links the creation with Heorot, the Beowulf audience, if typologically aware, could identify even a single detail of the creation story as a type of the Church.

Next the scop sings of the sun and the moon, which God as the victorious one established as a light to land-dwellers (94-95, "gesette sigehreþig sunnan ond monan/ leoman to leohte landbuendum"). The creation of sun and moon is described in Genesis 1:16-17, but the adjective "sigehreþig", or "victorious", cannot be traced back to this passage; however, Bede's comments on the fourth day suggest that the choice of this word was probably no coincidence. His Hexaemeron connects this day, on which sun and moon were formed, with the date when the paschal celebration was later instituted:

> Factum est vespere et mane dies quartus. Haec est vespera illa memoranda, in qua populus Dei in AEgypto in celebrationem paschae

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[4]The parallels between Genesis 1 and the Song of Creation are listed -- though without interpretive comment--by F. Klaeber, "Die christlichen Elemente im Beowulf", Anglia, 35 (1911), 114.

[5]All Scripture quotations are from the Vulgate. Any quoted translations are from the Challoner edition of the Douay Old Testament and the Rheims New Testament.

[6]In Pentateuchum Commentarii, PL 91, col. 196B.

> obtulit agnum hoc mane quod primum post excussum longae servitutis iugum, coepto libertatis itinere, vidit.[7]
>
> "The evening and the morning were the fourth day" (Genesis 1:19). This is that memorable evening when the people of God in Egypt offered in celebration the lamb of the pasch; this is the morning which first saw the yoke of long-lasting slavery thrown off, when the march of freedom began.

After quoting Exodus 12:2, where God tells Moses that the month of the passover is to be the first month of the year, and in the standard typological manner ignoring the normal exigencies of chronology, Bede continues:

> Qua etiam vespera, ad consummanda paschae legalis sacramenta, Dominus noster post esum agni typice mysteria nobis sui corporis et sanguinis celebranda initiavit; quo lucescente mane, quasi agnus immaculatus, suo nos sanguine redimens, a daemonicae dominationis servitute liberavit.
>
> This very evening, to fulfil the sacraments of the pasch of the law, our Lord, after having been consumed as a typological counterpart of the lamb, initiated for us the mysteries of his body and blood as we are to celebrate them; this bright dawn, he as the spotless lamb redeemed us with his blood and freed us from the slavery of demonic power.

The connection between Exodus 12 and a release from daemonica dominatio, from the power of the devil, is a typological commonplace. The deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian house of bondage prefigures in its very details the liberation of the faithful from the clutches of sin and Satan.[8] The fact worth noting is that Bede's discussion of Exodus typology is an integral part of his exegesis of Genesis 1. The adjective "sigehrepig", when used to modify "se AElmihtiga" (92), derives its appropriateness from the divine victory over the dominion of chaos and hell. Strictly

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[7] PL 91, col. 25A.

[8] The fulfilment of Exodus typology is lucidly presented by Jean Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, pp. 86-98.

speaking, that victory was Christ's; however, Old English poetry stresses his divine role as member of the Trinity,[9] and in the contemporary Scriptural view the creation was the achievement of Christ the Word: "In principio erat Verbum . . . . Omnia, per ipsum facta sunt, . . ." (John 1:1, 3, "In the beginning was the Word . . . . All things were made by him, . . ."). The victorious redeemer foreshadowed in Exodus 12 is also the sigehrepig Almighty, the creative Word.

The actual mention of the sun and the moon in Beowulf 94 -- more specific than the Genesis reference to luminaria--is a further indication that the Song of Creation has as its source not simply the literal text of the Bible but the Bible as interpreted in the patristic tradition. The words "et sint in signa et tempora, et dies et annos" (Genesis 1:14, "and let them be for signs, and for seasons and for days and years") cause Bede to embark on a detailed typological explanation of what he took to be the first vernal equinox.[10] The respective positions of sun and moon

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[9]See e.g. Christ I 119-124, where Christ is said to be co-eternal ("efenece") with God the Father almighty. It is also illuminating that the Creator can be called Saviour ("nergend"), as in Genesis 140.

[10]Coeperunt namque discerni temporum vices ex quo sol die quarto mundi nascentis, a medio procedens orientis, aequinoctium vernale suo consecravit exortu, et quotidianis profectibus ad alta coeli culmina scandendo, rursumque a solstitiali vertice ad infima paulatim descendendo, ne mora ab infimis hibernisque locis aequinoctiales gyros repetendo, discretis temporibus quatuor notissimis diebusque praefinitis anni spatium complevit. Sed et luna vespere plena apparens, ea quae in celebrationem paschae servanda erant tempora primo suo praefixit ascensu. Ipsa est enim hora quo non solum antiquus ille populus Dei, sed et nos hodie primam in agendo pascha servamus, cum aequinoctii die transcenso, plena vespere luna, hoc est, quarta decima, in faciem coeli prodierit. Nam mox post haec ut Dominicus dies advenerit, aptum hoc celebrandae resurrectionis dominicae tempus instabit, . . . Hexaemeron, PL 91, col. 21B. (For the changes of the seasons began to be distinguished when the sun on the fourth day of the earth that was being brought forth, proceeding from the middle of the east, with its rising consecrated the vernal equinox, and by climbing in

on the fourth day of creation and on the fourteenth day of Nisan, the passover date, introduce the symbolism of Christ as Oriens, the rising Sun of righteousness. Bede's discussion of astronomical data adds force to the impression that "sigehrepig" and "sunnan ond monan" are meaningfully juxtaposed.

The conviction that the Song of Creation--as, indeed, all of Beowulf--is rich with typological connotations is rendered all the more credible in the light of the great Easter controversy of the Anglo-Saxon age, for it made the location of the sun and the moon with respect to the paschal equinox a matter of widespread public interest. Both Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Christians recognized that the night in which the Israelites were delivered from Egyptian power was also the night in which the people of God were, as a result of Christ's resurrection, freed from eternal death, but since the days of the week do not keep pace with the moon, the first day of the Paschal festival, a Sunday, could not annually fall on the same date. The complexity of the liturgical problems which arose as a result is conveniently outlined in a letter sent

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its daily journeys to the highest point in the sky, by descending again gradually from the solstitial vertex to the lowest point, and by repeating without delay its equinoctial cycles from the remote and wintry regions, completed the space of a year in the four distinct and well-known seasons and the fixed number of days. But the full moon appearing in the evening pointed in its first rising to those seasons which are to be kept in celebration of the pasch. For it is the very hour that not only the ancient people of God but also we today keep as the first for performing the pasch, when after the passing of the equinoctial day, the full moon in the evening--which is the fourteenth--advances into the expanse of the sky. For soon after these things, when the day of the Lord shall have arrived, this season appropriate for celebrating the resurrection of the Lord will follow closely.) Note that when the number 10--which represents the Old Testament or old law and therefore does not belong in the symbolism of a perfect creation--is subtracted from 14, it becomes evident that the fourth day of creation and the fourteenth day of Nisan can be identified with each other.

by Ceolfrith, an eighth-century abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, to Nechtan, king of the Picts.[11] In an attempt to advocate Roman orthodoxy Ceolfrith explains in detail that the full moon before the vernal equinox does not belong to the first month of the year, which according to Exodus 12 is the paschal month. It is not available for the celebration of Easter, for God made the greater light to rule the day and the lesser to rule the night. To clarify the force of this argument, Ceolfrith refers to an older Latin version of Genesis: "luminare maius in inchoationem diei, et luminare minus in inchoationem noctis" (1:16, "the greater light to begin the day and the lesser to begin the night"),[12] for this wording points more directly to the spiritual import of the whole discussion:

> Post aequinoctium veris plenilunium mensis praecipimur observare paschalis, ut videlicet primo sol longiorem nocte faciat diem, deinde luna plenum suae lucis orbem mundo praesentet; quia primo quidem sol iustitiae, in cuius pennis est sanitas, id est Dominus Iesus, per resurrectionis suae triumphum cunctas mortis tenebras superavit, ac sis ascendens in caelos, misso desuper Spiritu, ecclesiam suam, quae saepe lunae vocabulo designatur, internae gratiae luce replevit.[13]
>
> We are commanded to keep the full moon of the Paschal month after the vernal equinox, the object being that the sun should first make the day longer than the night and then the moon can show to the world her full orb of light, because "the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings" (Malachi 4:2), that is, the Lord Jesus, overcame all the darkness of death by the triumph of his resurrection. So, ascending into heaven, he made his Church, which is often typified by the moon, full of the light of inward grace, by sending his Spirit down upon her.

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[11] The entire epistle is included by Bede in his Ecclesiastical History, V, 21. All references are to B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, eds., Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People.

[12] Colgrave and Mynors, Bede's Ecclesiastical History, p. 542.

[13] Ibid., p. 544.

Obviously, the controversy concerning the Easter date was no peripheral squabble carried on by petty churchmen. It touched the orthodox faith in its very core, as Ceolfrith makes perfectly plain:

> Qui ergo plenitudinum lunae paschalis ante aequinoctium provenire posse contenderit, talis in mysteriorum celebratione maximorum a sanctarum quidem scripturarum doctrina discordat: concordat autem eis, qui sine praeveniente gratia Christi se salvari posse confidunt, qui et si vera lux tenebras mundi moriendo ac resurgendo numquam vicisset, perfectam se habere posse iustitiam dogmatizare praesumunt.[14]
>
> Whoever argues, therefore, that the full paschal moon can fall before the equinox disagrees with the teaching of the holy Scriptures in the celebration of the greatest mysteries, and agrees with those who trust that they can be saved without the prevenient grace of Christ and who presume to teach that they could have attained to perfect righteousness even though the true Light had never conquered the darkness of the world by dying and rising again.

In short, those who rejected the orthodox computation of Easter were guilty of the Pelagian heresy. In the Ecclesiastical History Bede's vehement opposition to Pelagianism is a recurring theme.[15] It is the background to the even more predominant emphasis on the paschal controversy. Whatever political motives may have played a part, the entire debate forced one to examine his views regarding the relationship of sun and moon to the springtime equinox.[16] Here is evidence of the theological spirit

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[14] Ibid.

[15] See also ibid., pp. 38, 54-55, 64, 198-202.

[16] Such concerns are reflected e.g. in Willibald's use of Nisan for April, the month when Easter most frequently occurs, in his eighth-century Vita S. Bonifacii, PL 89, col. 614B. An interesting reference to the vernal equinox is found in the Old English Menologium, included in The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems. The lines on March 21 end with this typological remark:

Swylce eac rimcraeftiga
on þa ylcan tiid emniht healdaþ
forðan wealdend god worhte aet frymðe

of the age which produced Beowulf.

If Ceolfrith could as a matter of course link Genesis 1 and Exodus 12 with Christ the Sun of righteousness and with the moon as type of the Church, we may expect the Beowulf poet in some way to share the same traditional imagery. Thus lines 94-95 ("gesette sigehrebig sunnan ond monan/ leoman to leohte landbuendum") in the first place recall the creation of the two great lights that were to shine upon the earth (Genesis 1:16-17, "duo luminaria magna . . . ut lucerent super terram"), but, as F.G. Cassidy has noted,[17] the poet makes a significant change. In Beowulf the light shines not merely upon the earth, but for people. "The sun (and moon) understood as leoman to leohte landbuendum raises a distinct echo of 'a light to lighten the gentiles' (in Simeon's song lumen ad revelationem gentium--hence an allusion to Christ)."[18] In patristic exegesis the gentiles almost invariably represent the Church gathered from among the nations. The moon, as we have seen, is another commonplace figure of the Church. Christ, the Sun, shines the light of his grace upon the moon, which in turn reflects this light upon land-

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on þy sylfan daege sunnan ond monan. (44-47)
(Moreover, on the same date men skilled in reckoning also observe the equinox, because on that very day God the Ruler in the beginning created the sun and the moon.)

The application of the typologically important features of Nisan to both March and April is of course due to the discrepancies between the lunar and solar years.

[17]"A Symbolic Word-Group in Beowulf", J. Mandel and B.A. Rosenberg, eds., Medieval Literature and Folklore Studies: Essays in Honor of Francis Lee Utley, p. 29.

[18]Ibid. The Song of Simeon (Nunc dimittis), one of the canticles of the Psalter, was sung daily in the Divine Office. One of the other suggestive Gospel passages mentioned by Cassidy (p. 30) is John 1:9, where Christ is "lux vera, quae illuminat omnem hominem . . ." ("the true light, which enlighteneth every man . . .").

dwellers. The Song of Creation suggests that the radiance of the newly formed plain is to be identified with that of Heorot. It is intriguing that some two hundred lines later, after another description of the splendour of the hall, the poet quite abruptly, without any immediately realistic link to the course of his narrative, refers to Heorot as "se leoma" (311); in fact, it is a light shining upon many lands: "lixte se leoma ofer landa fela". The brightness of the goldhall is implicitly compared to the universal light of the ecclesia.[19] In lines 94-95, then, we hear the richly resonant echoes of biblical typology reverberating within the very walls of Heorot.

When the Song of Creation continues with the expression that God "gefraetwade foldan sceatas/ leomum ond leafum" (96-97, "adorned the face of the earth with branches and leaves"), it again reflects the assumption that the world was created in the spring season. The springtime adornment of the earth is not directly derived from Genesis but it is a common motif in the writings of the Church Fathers. In commenting on Genesis 1:11-12, where God commanded the earth to bring forth vegetation, Bede remarks, "Patet ex his Dei verbis quod verno tempore mundi est perfectus ornatus".[20] ("It is clear from these words of God that in the springtime the adornment of the earth was accomplished"). Once the perfect

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[19] C.L. Wrenn, Beowulf, p. 192, explains that "se leoma" is "the light from the shining adornments of the hall-building"; however, if we are to read line 311 only in such a realistic sense, we may well ask why Beowulf and his party had to hasten in order to see a hall that was visible in many lands (306ff.) and why they needed a guide (292). Note further that in Christ I the Church as hall is evidently in the same way visible throughout the earth (7-8).

[20] Hexaemeron. PL 91, col. 21B.

dwelling-place has been prepared, a variety of living things are formed to inhabit it (cf. 97-98). In related fashion Heorot is the greatest of hall-dwellings (78, "healaerna maest"), and when Hrothgar commands this folk-hall to be adorned (76, "folcstede fraetwan"), he acts in imitation of God. Indeed, the king's decree is analogous to the divine fiat: "Scop him Heort naman/ se þe wordes geweald wide haefde" (78-79, "He whose word prevailed far and wide shaped for it the name Heorot"). In this context the verb "scop" indicates that Hrothgar is, in fact, a scyppend, a shaper or creator, in his own right.[21]

If we now ask in what manner or to what degree Hrothgar's creation is comparable to God's newly formed world or to paradise, the exegetical tradition which Bede represents as one among many can offer some enlightenment. The Song of Creation alludes to the ideal state of man on the primal earth, but it is not merely a reflection of the poet's literary or archaeological interest in a golden age of bliss. In a typological perspective the radiantly bright plain prefigures the joy and perfection to which fallen man has in principle been restored by Christ and which will ultimately prevail in the paradise to come. As we have already observed from a different direction, the Song thus calls to mind the Old Testament types of the redemption. The Exodus and also the Flood, like the creation, are historical realities in the full sense of the word; at the same time they foreshadow the new creation re-established by Christ

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[21]The name-giving aspect of Hrothgar's creativeness is paralleled in the creation of animal names by Adam, the Creator's first deputy on earth (Genesis 2:19-20). The words "scop" (78, "created") and "scop" ("singer, or poet") produce a potential ambiguity which suggests that the essence of creative power lies in the use of some kind of incantation or "creative word".

and destined to receive its final fulfilment in the new earth. The work of Christ as redeemer is connected, moreover, with holy baptism; the newly baptized catechumen knows himself to be in a sacramental relationship with his Lord. Hence baptism, too, is a fulfilment of the restorations brought about in the Old Testament types. The writers of the early Church therefore invite the catechumens to enter paradise. Cyril of Jerusalem addresses them in his Procatechesis: "Already . . . scents of paradise are wafted towards you; already you are culling mystic blossoms for the wearing of heavenly garlands . . ."[22] By being baptized and thus overcoming the devil they would become new creatures in a new creation. In the words of Origen: "Those who are born again in baptism are placed in Paradise, that is, the Church, there to carry out inward spiritual works."[23] Again it may be inferred that in Beowulf the parallel between Heorot and the wlitebeorht wang points to an analogy between Heorot and the ecclesia.

The springtime setting that is implicitly presented in the Song of Creation does not merely suggest a simple correspondence between the creative acts of God and of Hrothgar. Typologically interpreted, the imagery derived from the third and fourth creation days is more than the poet's invitation to look back nostalgically to original perfection or even to recognize the exegetical intricacies abstractly, for the building of the hall represents the ideal which all the faithful are obliged to put

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[22]L.P. McCauley and A.A. Stephenson, trans., The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, I. (Quotations from the Greek Fathers are given in English translation only.) For Cyril's important contribution to all subsequent paschal and baptismal liturgy, see M.H. Shepherd, The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse, p. 51.

[23]Daniélou, Primitive Christian Symbols, p. 31, quoted from PG 12, col. 100BC.

into practice. The daemonica dominatio to which Bede refers in his Hexaemeron provides the construction of Heorot with its central meaning. After his account of the hall's beginning, the poet ominously remarks:

> heaðowylma bad,
> laðan liges; ne waes hit lenge þa gen,
> þaet se ecghete aþumsweoran
> aefter waelniðe waecnan scolde. (82-85)

It awaited the surges of battle, of hostile fire; the time was not yet at hand for sword-hate between son-in-law and father-in-law to awaken after murderous rage.

Demonic forces evidently constitute an ever-present threat in the world of Beowulf. Even the goldhall harbours within it Unferth the fratricide, who embodies the antithesis to the peace and brotherhood which Hrothgar seeks to establish. The very next lines further develop the allusion to demonic power and so form part of a frame in which the Song is set. The poet tells his audience as if in a brief prologue:

> Ða se ellengaest earfoðlice
> þrage geþolode, se þe in þystrum bad,
> þaet he dogora gehwam dream gehyrde
> hludne in healle; . . . (86-89)

Then the mighty spirit painfully endured hardship for a time, he who dwelt in the darkness, for every day he heard joy resounding in the hall; . . .

After the brief account of the scop's performance -- a fleeting moment of paradisal light and life -- the poet turns again to the darkness lurking outside:

> Swa ða drihtguman dreamum lifdon,
> eadiglice, oð ðaet an ongan
> fyrene fremman feond on helle. (99-101)

So the men lived in joy, blessed, until there was one, a fiend in hell, who began to commit evil deeds.

Since the Song recalls the typology of the Old Testament, this frame is

remarkably apposite. It reveals to us how the description of the newly created earth could serve as a standard for human action in a fallen world.

This edifying aspect of the creation story is stressed particularly by Ambrose when he, too, in his Hexameron relates details of the earth's beginning to the passover and the Exodus. In the same breath he mentions the threefold abjuration of the devil in the baptismal rite,[24] for in the Exodus baptism is prefigured:

> . . . verno tempore filii Israhel Aegyptum reliquerunt et per mare transierunt, baptizati in nube et in mari, ut apostolus dixit, et eo tempore domini quodannis Iesu Christi pascha celebratur, hoc est animarum transitus a vitiis ad virtutem, a passionibus carnis ad gratiam sobrietatemque mentis, a malitiae nequitiaeque fermento ad veritatem et sinceritatem. . . . derelinquet enim et deserit qui abluitur intellegibilem illum Pharao, principem istius mundi, dicens: abrenuntio tibi, diabole, et operibus tuis et imperiis tuis. nec iam serviet ei vel terrenis huius corporis passionibus vel depravatae mentis erroribus . . . .[25]
>
> The sons of Israel left Egypt in the season of spring and passed through the sea, being baptized in the cloud and the sea, as the apostle said. At that time each year the pasch of Jesus Christ is celebrated, that is to say, the passing over from vice to virtues, from the desires of the flesh to grace and sobriety of mind, from the unleavened bread of malice and wickedness to truth and sincerity . . . . The person who is baptized leaves behind and abandons in a spiritual sense that prince of the world, Pharaoh, when he says: "I renounce thee, devil, both thy works and thy power". No longer will he serve him, either by the earthly passions of his body or by the errors of a corrupt mind. . . .

Again it should be emphasized that this discussion arises from the exegesis of Genesis 1. The same moralizing function of this chapter is evident from

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[24]"The threefold renunciation of Satan, or the abjuration of paganism, is . . . common to all the rites." L. Duchesne, Christian Worship, Its Origin and Evolution, p. 332.

[25]Hexameron, I, 4, 14, in CSEL 32.

its use as the first lection of the Holy Saturday liturgy.[26] As a typological text the creation story focuses attention on man's responsibility as member of the ecclesia. Hence the Beowulf poet regarded it as more than a quarry from which to extract literary ornament. When the scop who sings the creation hymn is introduced as "se þe cuþe/ frumsceaft fira feorran reccan" (90-91, "he who could tell of the origin of man, long ago"), the expression "frumsceaft fira" reveals the essential theme of his song, for in the setting of creation God placed man as his viceroy and image-bearer. He who can tell of man's origin is likely to be aware also of man's destiny.

Hrothgar is, in a sense, king of creation. As such it is his task to follow the great example of his divine superior; the realm of the Danes must attempt to meet the standards of the civitas Dei. Above references to the newly created earth as ecclesia -- especially if they have an edifying function arising from the interpretation of Genesis 1 -- thus become all the more applicable to the Danish kingdom, with Heorot at its centre. They are even more meaningful when juxtaposed with the poet's identification of Grendel as the offspring of Cain:

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[26]The collect which traditionally follows this reading in the Roman Missal indicates the specific lesson which the faithful were expected to draw from it: "Deus, qui mirabiliter creasti hominem, et mirabilius redemisti, da nobis, quaesumus, contra oblectamenta peccati, mentis ratione persistere: ut mereamur ad aeterna gaudia pervenire . . ." (O God, who didst wonderfully create man and hast still more wonderfully redeemed him, grant us, we beseech thee, to withstand with a strong mind the allurements of sin, that we may deserve to obtain everlasting joys . . ."). L. Duchesne points out in Christian Worship, p. 308, that the lections for Holy Saturday were "the same in all the Latin rituals". On this uniformity see also A. Baumstark, Comparative Liturgy, p. 35.

> . . . him Scyppend forscrifen haefde
> in Caines cynne-- þone cwealm gewraec
> ece Drihten, þaes þe he Abel slog. (106-08)

. . . the Creator had condemned him as kin of Cain. The eternal Lord avenged the murder in which he (Cain) slew Abel.

In patristic literature Abel is frequently associated with the Church.[27] The contrast in Beowulf between the light of Heorot and the darkness of Grendel's domain is a form of the antithesis between Abel and Cain or between their respective civitates. Heorot is to be associated with the city of Abel, the Church.

The early allusion to Abel and Cain is a further indication that Heorot represents a society in which paradise is the ultimate norm of human activity. The presence of Unferth and the apprehensions of Wealhtheow with regard to the future loyalty of Hrothulf show that it is no easy matter to remain the city of God. Indeed, the foreshadowing of Heorot's destruction by fire as a result of feuding (82ff.) serves as a grim reminder of man's weaknesses and shortcomings. The fratricide of Unferth, the anticipated treachery of Hrothulf, and the fall of Heorot -- all these elements reveal the predicament of the people of God; all three indicate that Heorot's problems are particularized manifestations of a fundamental malady. A primary theme in Beowulf is the evil of fratricide, which inevitably reduces order to chaos, or which leads those identified with Abel into the bondage of Cain. In the society to which the Beowulf audience belonged, social and political harmony -- peace and brotherhood -- was the tangible fruit of obedience.

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[27] See e.g. Augustine, Contra Faustum Manichaeum, XII, 9, in CSEL 25.

Although such a goal was particularly applicable to early medieval societies in north-western Europe that were based on kinship, its relevance was not exclusively confined to them. In Book XIV of De civitate Dei, the section which deals at some length with the two cities of Abel and Cain, Augustine begins his consideration with a brief summary of what is also the ideal in Beowulf:

> Diximus . . . ad humanum genus non solum naturae similitudine sociandum verum etiam quadam cognationis necessitudine in unitatem concordem pacis vinculo conligandum ex homine uno Deum voluisse homines instituere . . . .[28]
>
> As I have already stated . . . God's purpose in choosing to reproduce mankind from one man was not merely to unite the human race in an alliance based on natural likeness but also to bind it up by the tie of kinship, as it were, into a single harmonious whole held together through the bond of peace.

Allusions in Beowulf to the creation, in a context in which the ideal harmony resulting from ties of kinship is constantly threatened, might well have served to recall the above view of God's purpose -- especially if the account of creation was read as a directive focusing on man's responsibility to withstand the allurements of sin. Augustine's expression "in unitatem concordem pacis vinculo" echoes Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians to keep "unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis" (4:3, "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"). This familiar phrase occurs in a New Testament epistle that urgently advocates the unity of the church, comparing it in one image to a building that grows into a holy temple of which Christ is the chief cornerstone (2:20-21). The ecclesia is the fellowship of the children of light; it is a temple that should resound with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual canticles while, characteristically,

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[28] XIV, 1, in CSEL 40.

the devil rages outside (5:8, 5:19, 4:14, 6:11-12). God's purpose with regard to the human race is to be fulfilled in the Church; the harmony of paradise to which Paul alludes is the norm for any community of the faithful.

Augustine declares elsewhere that the ideal as human beings can experience it on earth is Eden. Heorot is an Eden, a paradise, if within it divine precepts are upheld. It manifests ideal conditions in so far as they can exist among mortal men. When he discusses the contrast between Abel and Cain, Augustine mentions that Jews and Manicheans, like Cain, "habitant in terra commotionis, id est in perturbatione carnali contra iucunditatem dei, hoc est contra Eden, quod interpretantur epulationem, ubi est plantatus paradisus"[29] ("dwell in the land of commotion, that is, of carnal disquietude, instead of the pleasure of God, that is, instead of Eden, which is interpreted as feasting, where paradise was planted"). Eden is the state in which man has achieved the harmony that results in feasting. The epulatio, the banquet or festive meal, is a fitting Christian symbol of brotherhood.[30] When Hrothgar distributes rings and treasure at the banquet (80-81, "beagas daelde,/ sinc aet symle"), the feast in Heorot is a scene of Christian heroism. It is another reminder that Hrothgar is a representative of God. In a dryht society the king is a giver of gifts. God (or Christ), too, is a royal gift-giver.[31] In fact, a good king is one of his gifts to man.

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[29] Contra Faustum, XII, 13.

[30] See below, n. 59.

[31] The term "sincgiefa" (treasure-giver), applied to kings in Beowulf, can be used for the divinity, as in Christ II, 460, where it refers

The opening lines of Beowulf make it quite clear that a merciful God who remembers the misery of a nation left "aldorlease" (15, "without a lord") provides a successor to Scyld Scefing; he continues to practise his generosity by bestowing "woroldare" (17, "honour in the world") upon Beowulf Scylding. When Hrothgar builds the goldhall, his act of creation parallels that of God, who also showed his munificence in building a hall. The construction of Heorot is part of a magnanimous scheme. The Old English Genesis relates that after the rebellion of the wicked angels, the generosity of divine grace could not permit glorious thrones to remain unoccupied (cf. 86-91); the Lord therefore determined how he should again establish his "heaven-bright hall for a better host" (95, "swegltorhtan seld, selran werode"). Consequently, he created a "hyhtlic heofontimber" (145), the pleasing heavenlike hall of middangeard, as the home of the human race. If Adam and Eve and their offspring duly obeyed their Maker, they would eventually take the places left vacant in the realm of heaven by the departure of Satan's host.[32] The first stage, then, in God's benevolent plan was the building of a heofontimber, a magnificent hall modelled after its celestial prototype.

Reminding ourselves that the creation in general as well as in many of its particulars prefigures the formation of the Church, we may wonder whether the timbered hall as such -- in Genesis and perhaps in Beowulf -- is another symbol of the ecclesia. Although the metaphor of the newly formed earth as a heavenly and light-filled hall is not found in

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to Christ in a context stressing his role as second person of the Trinity.

[32]See Aelfric in his On the Old and New Testament, as quoted by B.F. Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry, p. 141.

Scripture, there nevertheless are buildings that do serve as types of the Church and hence are analogous to the creation. It is remarkable that these are wooden structures of the kind that one associates with Anglo-Saxon architecture. In the Song of Songs, one example is briefly described: "Tigna domorum nostrarum cedrina, laquearia nostra cupressina" (1:17, "The beams of our houses are of cedar, our rafters are of cypress trees"). As Bede explains, "Domos quippe suas varia per mundum fidelium conventicula nominat, e quibus omnibus ipsa universalis Ecclesia constat"[33] ("Indeed, the various places of assembly of the faithful throughout the world she calls her houses; of all these, the universal Church itself consists"). A more familiar timbered hall that is typologically related to the Church and, hence, to the creation as type of the Church, is the temple of Solomon. The chapters describing the preparations for its construction and the building process itself are replete with references to the necessary timber that was imported from the Lebanon, and we read that Solomon "texit quoque domum laquearibus cedrinis" (I Kings 6:9, "covered the house with roofs of cedar"). The more detailed account of II Chronicles creates a picture of greater splendour: "Domum quoque maiorem texit tabulis ligneis abiegnis et laminas auri obrizi adfixit per totum; sculpsitque in ea palmas et quasi catenulas se invicem complectentes" (3:5, "And the greater house he ceiled with deal [fir] boards, and overlaid them with plates of fine gold throughout: and he graved in them palm trees, and like little chains interlaced with one another."). Bede devotes his De templo Salomonis Liber entirely to an allegorical

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[33] In Cantica Canticorum Allegorica Expositio, PL 91, col. 1100C.

exposition of this building and its contents. He identifies it at the outset as a figure of the Church:

> Domus Dei quam aedificavit res [rex] Salomon in Jerusalem, in figuram facta est sanctae universalis Ecclesiae, quae a primo electo usque ad ultimum, qui in fine mundi nasciturus est, quotidie per gratiam regis pacifici, sui videlicet Redemptoris aedificatur.[34]
>
> The house of God which king Solomon built in Jerusalem was made as a figure of the holy universal Church, which, from the first of the elect to the last who is to be born at the end of the world, is daily being built through the grace of the king of peace, i.e., of its Redeemer.

Like the hall of middangeard in the Old English Genesis, the temple is clearly a heofontimber, constructed according to the divine original. In I Chronicles 28 David gives his son Solomon a complete set of specifications and he adds, "Omnia . . . venerunt scripta manu Domini ad me, ut intelligerem universa opera exemplaris" (28:19, "All these things . . . came to me written by the hand of the Lord: that I might understand all the works of the pattern").[35] Evidently the hall motif in the Genesis poem fits the familiar symbolism of the ecclesia. A royal timbered hall is also the focal point of a Germanic dryht society, but its imagery

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[34] PL 91, col. 737CD.

[35] Cf. Solomon's prayer in Wisdom 9:8-9: "et dixisti me aedificare templum in monte sancto tuo et in civitate habitationis tuae altare, similitudinem tabernaculi sancti tui, quod praeparasti ab initio; et tecum sapientia tua, quae novit opera tua, quae et adfuit tunc, cum orbem terrarem faceres, et sciebat quid esset placitum oculis tuis et quid directum in praeceptis tuis" ("And [thou] hast commanded me to build a temple on thy holy mount, and an altar in the city of thy dwelling-place, a resemblance of thy holy tabernacle, which thou hast prepared from the beginning: And thy wisdom with thee, which knoweth thy works, which then also was present when thou madest the world, and knew what was agreeable to thy eyes, and what was right in thy commandments"). Here it is shown even more clearly that the building of the temple is essentially like the creation of the world.

is apposite to the creation only as a result of typological connections.[36] Newly created middle earth is a dryhthall because the Church, like the temple, was envisaged as such a hall.

Heorot is a similar place of assembly. Indeed, the parallels with Solomon's temple are striking. The Beowulf poet describes a timbered hall (307, "sael timbred") that is ornamented with gold (308, "goldfah"). More specifically, this "goldsele" (715, 1253, 1639, 2083) is covered with plated gold (716, "faettum fahne"). The author of II Chronicles mentions repeatedly that the temple, too, was a wooden structure overlaid with plates of gold (ch. 3). To illustrate further that Heorot and the temple built by Solomon are imaginatively related, here follows an excerpt from the section of the Old English Exodus in which the building of the temple is prophesied:

> Þaer eft se snottra sunu Dauides,
> wuldorfaest cyning, witgan larum
> getimbrede tempel gode,
> alh haligne, eordcyninga
> se wisesta on woruldrice,
> heahst and haligost, haeleðum gefraegost,
> maest and maerost, þara þe manna bearn,
> fira aefter foldan, folmum geworhte. (389-96)

> There later the wise son of David, glorious king, instructed by prophecy, built a temple for God, a holy shrine; he who was of earthly kings the wisest in the world built it highest and holiest, best-known among heroes, greatest and most famous of those (halls) which the children of men, the people throughout the earth, have fashioned with their hands.

The temple may be spoken of in superlative terms, but so is Heorot. It is the greatest of hall-dwellings (78, "healaerna maest"), the best of

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[36]The related hall imagery in Caedmon's Hymn receives only minimal attention in Huppé's discussion of it, Doctrine and Poetry, pp. 114-115. As A.A. Lee observes in his Guest-Hall of Eden: Four Essays on the Design of Old English Poetry, p.24, "Huppé's allegorical reading of Caedmon's Hymn

houses (146, 285, 658, 935, "husa selest"), most illustrious among earth-dwellers (309, "foremaerost foldbuendum"), for such Hrothgar intended it to be:

> Him on mod bearn,
> þaet healreced hatan wolde,
> medoaern micel men gewyrcean
> þonne yldo bearn aefre gefrunon. (67-70)

It entered his mind to order men to make a hall-building, a great meadhall, (greater) than the children of men had ever heard of.

Moreover, while the temple is to be a lofty hall, Heorot also is a high building or "heahsele" (648, cf. 81-82), and just as the temple, according to the Exodus poet, will be situated on the "heahlond" (385) of Sion's mount, so Heorot is located on a height (285, "on heahstede"). Whereas Solomon would follow the prophetic pattern inspired by God (cf. 390, "witgan larum"), Hrothgar, another king noted for his wisdom, follows essentially the same plan, the divine model on which the Song of Creation elaborates.[37]

The fact that Hrothgar built a hall symbolically related to a type of the Church can likewise be clarified by consulting the Andreas poem. When the young men of Mermedonia who had been drowned in a miraculous flood were restored to life and were baptized by Andreas -- and thus in a sense were allowed to re-enter paradise -- the apostle gave

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. . . misses the basic metaphor." I submit that Huppé fails to see the newly created earth as a dryhthall because he does not recognize the aspects which identify the creation as a type of the Church. In other words, he misses the basic metaphor because of a hiatus in his allegorical reading.

[37]There are also parallels with Noah's ark, an undisputed type of the Church. In the Old English Genesis it is regarded as another timbered hall, not unlike Heorot: "geofonhusa maest gearo hlifigean" (1321, "greatest of ocean halls, towering and ready"). Significantly, it is constructed according to a plan revealed by God.

a command very similar to that of Hrothgar. Typologically it is the fitting response to the situation:

> Þa se modiga het,
> cyninges craeftiga, ciricean getimbran,
> gerwan godes tempel. (1632-34)

Then the brave one, the King's craftsman, ordered a church to be built, a temple of God to be prepared.

The parallel with Beowulf becomes still more obvious a few lines later, in the expressions which inform us that Andreas wishes to depart:

> Saegde his fusne hige,
> Þaet he Þa goldburg ofgifan wolde,
> secga seledream ond sincgestreon,
> beorht beagselu. (1654-57)

He said he was eager to forsake the goldborough, the hall-joy and treasure of men, the radiant ringhall.

The converted city, with a new church building as spiritual centre, is described in formulas like those applied to the ringhall (1177, "beahsele") where Hrothgar distributes treasure and where seledream prevails.

There is no imaginative distinction between Heorot and the temple or the Church. The terms used for God's temple in the Paris Psalter confirm this fact, for often it is simply referred to as "godes hus" or "faegere hus". It is also a hall (Psalm 95:8, "halgan healle"), and a place where men frequently distribute valuable spoils: "oft weorðlic reaf/ on huse men her gedaeleð" (Psalm 67:12).[38] In addition, we may note that another figure of the Church is the "healle maerre" or famous hall of the Old English Advent, of which Christ is the cornerstone (Christ I, 3-8, cf. Ephesians 2:20-21). The Beowulf poet quite justifiably

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[38]The Old English of the Paris Psalter here interprets the Latin version of Psalm 67:13a: "speciei domus dividere spolia" ("the beauty of the house shall divide spoils").

presents Heorot as unique, for ultimately it displays the unequalled joy and splendour of the one heavenly hall building that is the exemplar for all seledream.[39] It is one of many noble imitations, each serving the special function called for in its particular literary context.

Heorot is a dryhthall built by a Danish king, but its symbolism in the poem is greatly enriched by its typological associations.[40] Hrothgar's creative urge is divinely sanctioned; it reflects every man's duty to eliminate chaos, replacing it with order, and to aim for the perfection of God's handiwork. A king, because of his royal status, would be all the more obliged to abide by its standards. The hierarchical relationship between God and king as gift-givers comes to the fore in the statement that Hrothgar intended to distribute his wealth "swylc him God sealde" (72, "which God had given him"). Such gift-giving is an integral part of the attempt to reach for paradise. In Beowulf, as in Augustine and the Psalms, a reaching for blessedness and perfection is no vain pursuit. The object, though fleeting, can be grasped as reality in the life of man, for the achievement of paradise, as the Beowulf audience

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[39]A discussion of celestial dryhthall imagery lies beyond the scope of this study. Evidently it would further show how joy in Heorot is related to that which prevails in the hall of heaven, the Church triumphant.

[40]It may be worth noting that the literal Greek meaning of "basilica" is "royal palace". Although scholars disagree about the exact historical connections between the secular basilica and the basilica-as-church, it is likely that an age intensely interested in onomastics retained considerable awareness of the etymology of the word. For evidence of such interest in Anglo-Saxon England, see Fred C. Robinson, "The Significance of Names in Old English Literature", Anglia, 86 (1968), 14-58. Examples of early basilicas in France and England, including wooden ones, are mentioned in DACL, s.v. basilique, and Encyclopedia Brittannica, 11th edition, s.v. basilica. For one example of the contemporary use of the word, see Willibald's eighth-century Vita S. Bonifacii, PL 89, col. 626D, where Boniface before his death asks Lullus to complete the construction of a basilica in Fulda.

knew, is a feature of the new life which commences after the catechumen's victory over Satan in the waters of baptism.

In the Psalms generosity is a virtue of the blessed man who fears the Lord. The beatus vir of Psalm 111 is of particular interest because he has much in common with the ideal king as presented in Beowulf; moreover, the gift-hall at the entrance of which he is portrayed in the Utrecht Psalter may have some bearing on the meaning of Heorot. Augustine supplies the Latin title of this Psalm with an explanation that likewise calls Heorot to mind:

> Credo quod adtendistis, fratres, huius titulum psalmi, memoriaeque mandastis. Conversio, inquit, Aggaei et Zachariae. Nondum erant hi prophetae, cum ista cantata sunt. . . . et ambo post invicem intra unum annum prophetare coeperunt, quod ad renovationem templi, sicut tanto ante praedictum est, pertinere videtur. . . . Templum enim Dei sanctum est, quod estis vos. Quisquis igitur se ad opus huius coaedificationis, et ad spem sanctae firmae compaginis, tamquam lapidem vivum ab huius mundi ruinosa labe convertit; intellegit titulum psalmi, intellegit conversionem Aggaei et Zachariae. Cantet ergo quae sequuntur, non tam linguae voce, quam vitae. Erit enim aedificii perfectio, ineffabilis pax illa sapientiae, cuius initium est timor Domini: inde ergo incipiat, quem coaedificat ista conversio.[41]
>
> I believe, brethren, that you remarked and committed to memory the title of this Psalm. "The conversion", he says, "of Haggai and Zechariah". These prophets were not as yet in existence when these verses were sung. . . . But both, the one within a year after the other, began to prophesy that which seems to pertain to the restoration of the temple, as was foretold so long before. . . . "For the temple of God is holy: which you are." (I Corinthians 3:17) Whoever therefore converts himself to the work of this building together and to the hope of a firm and holy edifice, like a living stone from the miserable ruins of this world, understands the title of the Psalm, understands the conversion of Haggai and Zechariah. Let him therefore chant the following verses, not so much with the voice of his tongue as of his life. For the completion of the building will be that ineffable peace of wisdom, the "beginning" of which is the "fear of the Lord:" let him therefore, whom this conversion builds together, begin thence.

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[41] Enarrationes in Psalms, CXI, CCSL 40.

Augustine treats the temple only as a spiritual structure but the Psalm itself suggests Heorot may share in its significance. The psalmist describes the blessed man as follows: "Gloria et divitiæ in domus eius, et iustitia eius manet in saeculum saeculi. . . . Dispersit, dedit pauperibus; . . . Cornu eius exaltabitur in gloria. Peccator videbit, irascetur" (3, 9, 10, "Glory and wealth shall be in his house: and his justice remaineth for ever and ever . . . . He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor: . . . his horn shall be exalted in glory. The wicked shall see, and shall be angry"). As in Beowulf, glory, riches, honour, and justice belong together. Like the ideal king, the just man distributes his treasures, and the harmony produced by his delight in the commandments of the Lord arouses the envy of Grendel and his ilk. The psalmist does not call him a king, but the illustration in the Utrecht Psalter clearly portrays a rich man seated on a gift-throne at the entrance of his royal hall. Other illustrations in the Utrecht Psalter confirm that these pictorial details are the trappings of royalty.[42] At the same time the hall of the beatus, the symbol of his good deeds, is linked in Augustine's comments on the title to the temple in Jerusalem, that is, to a type of the Church. The royal hall of Psalm 111 is horn-gabled in the strictest sense, for on the top of its roof it bears the antlered head of a stag.[43]

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[42]The royal details are very similar to those in the illustration of Psalm 44, where the text specifically describes a king. The Utrecht Psalter includes at least seven illustrations in which a king in his hall hands out treasures or gathers tribute. Although its origin is obscure, the Utrecht MS is known to have been in England by 1000 AD. Its archetype may date back to the 4th-5th century. See G.R. Benson, "New Light on the Origin of the Utrecht Psalter", The Art Bulletin, 13 (1931), 13ff., and E.T. DeWald, The Illustrations of the Utrecht Psalter, facsimile edition.

[43]For a further discussion of stag or hart symbolism, see Chapter II.

The frequently noted parallel use of the expression "heah ond horngeap" to describe Heorot in Beowulf 82 and the Jewish temple in Andreas 668 may well indicate that in a typological sense the two buildings are related. If a hall with a stag's head projecting from it is properly called by the name of the entire animal (heorot, or hart), it is also noteworthy that in Psalm 77:68 of the Paris Psalter the temple in Jerusalem is said to resemble a related horned beast: "He ꝺGodꝺ þa anhornan ealra gelicast his halige hus her on eorðan getimbrade"[44] ("He built his holy house here on earth most of all like the unicorn"). At any rate, considering the various points of analogy between Beowulf and Psalm 111, one is led to conclude that the symbolism of the "horngeap" hall confirms the Christian connotations of Heorot.

A golden or gold-adorned hall-building with a spiritual dimension is a fairly common image in the literature of the Anglo-Saxon world. In Aelfric's life of St. Swithin a bedridden man has a dream vision in which two saints carry him in flight to a golden church set in a field of flowers:

> hi . . . feredon þone adligan oð þaet hi becomon to sumum aenlicum felda faegre geblowen; and þaer waes an cyrce of scinendum golde and of gymstanum on þam felde, and se halga Swiðun on scinendum maessereafe stod aet ðam weofode, swylce he wolde maessian.[45]
>
> They carried the sick man until they came to a certain glorious plain that was beautifully blooming; and a church of glittering gold and precious stones was located on that plain, and the holy

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[44]The Old English verse of the Paris Psalter here apparently provides an interpretive rendering of the Latin: "Et aedificat sicut unicornium sanctificium suum . . ." (77:69, "And he built his sanctuary as of unicorns, . . .").

[45]G.I. Needham, ed., Lives of Three English Saints, pp. 75-76.

> Swithin in resplendent mass vestments stood at the altar, as he wished to celebrate mass.

Like Heorot, this gold-adorned church is situated on a plain that is reminiscent of paradise. In view of this parallel it is significant that the Beowulf poet uses the word "meodowongas" (1643), usually translated as "plain near the mead-hall". If it is simply rendered as "mead-plains", we can envisage sunlit fields with an abundance of the flowers which bees require to produce honey, the principal ingredient of mead. Paradise, too, was traditionally thought of as a flower-covered plain. Cyril of Jerusalem, when addressing his catechumens, spoke of its fragrant blossoms. In Gregory's Dialogues we find yet another vision of a goldhall in the midst of a beautiful meadow. According to the Alfredian translation, Gregory explains: "þonne se man him geearnaþ þaes ecan lifes leoht mid rumgeofulnesse his aelmaessena, butan tweon hit is cuþ, þaet se getimbrad his hus him sylfum mid golde in þam ecan life"[46] ("Since a man earns for himself the light of eternal life with liberality in almsgiving, it is known beyond doubt that he builds his house for himself with gold in life eternal"). Such a goldsele symbolizes the generous gift-giving that is also characteristic of Heorot and of the temple linked with the 111th Psalm.

In Beowulf the ecclesia symbolism of the hall may illuminate the perennial crux of lines 168-69, thus further revealing the poet's typological awareness: "No he þone gifstol gretan moste,/maþðum for Metode, ne his myne wisse" (which can be tentatively translated: "By no means was he [Grendel] allowed to approach the gift-throne, that precious thing before

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[46]H. Hecht, ed., Dialoge Gregors des Grossen, p. 321.

the Lord, nor did he experience his [God's] love."). It is highly probable that the passage alludes to the right of asylum which early medieval criminals enjoyed in consecrated places and so implies that Grendel was not eligible for this privilege. In the thirteenth-century Rationale Divinorum Officiorum, essentially a compilation of the lore of preceding ages, William Durandus gives as one of the reasons for dedicating a church "ut ad eam confugientes, salventur prout legitur in canone Beati Gregorii. Et ob hoc Joab in tabernaculum fugit, et altaris cornua apprehendit"[47] ("that those who fly for refuge to it may be saved, as we read in the Canons of Gregory. And with this in view Joab fled into the tabernacle and laid hold of the horns of the altar."). The scriptural incident cited here is Joab's predicament when it was known that instead of offering his services to Solomon, King David's chosen successor, he had given his support to Adonias (I Kings 2:28). Since the new king, by ordering Joab killed, simply ignores the right to refuge in the tabernacle, it would appear that the situation is a weak precedent on which to base such a privilege. But if we recall that both the tabernacle and the kingdom of Israel were considered to be commonplace types of the Church, it becomes clear from another section of the Rationale that Solomon's application of justice does not abrograte the right as such. Durandus there explains that "Ecclesia consecrata reos sanguinis ad se confugientes, qui in illa, vel contra illam non deliquerunt, defendit, ne vitam perdant, aut membra"[48] ("a consecrated church defends murderers who take sanctuary in it from losing life or limb, provided that they have not offended in

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[47] I, vi, 5.

[48] I, i, 49.

it, or against it"). This time, too, he refers to Joab, quoting the relevant passage verbatim. The implication is that in his misdeeds (see I Kings 2:5) he had offended against the Church. The Lex Romana Burgundiorum, one of the early codes proving that the right of ecclesiastical refuge was a traditional principle of medieval law, provides for a similar exception to the rule when it stipulates: "Qui vero armatus se intra ecclesiam tueri temptaverit, secundum legem ipsam cum conscientia episcopi abstrahatur"[49] ("But any armed man seeking to protect himself within a church is to be excluded according to the same law with the knowledge of the bishop"). In both instances one who violates the spirit of the law, its fundamental intention, cannot avail himself of the benefits it would otherwise bestow on him.

Christian laws of the same kind were well-known in Anglo-Saxon England. The late seventh-century Laws of Ine declare:

> Gif hwa sie deaðes scyldig 7 he cirican geierne, haebbe his feorh 7 bete, swa him riht wisige.
> Gif hwa his hyde forwyrce 7 cirican geierne, sie him sio swingelle forgifen.[50]
>
> If anyone is liable to the death penalty and he reaches a church, he is to retain his life and to compensate as the law directs him. If anyone is liable to be flogged, and reaches a church, the flogging is to be remitted.

In elaborating on the principle of asylum King Ethelred's 1014 Code devotes special attention to the criminal who, like the armatus mentioned in the Burgundian Code, defies the essence of the law. Ethelred's code begins with these statements:

> Þaet is aerest, þaet he wile, þaet ealle Godes circan beon fulles griðes wurðe.

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[49]Quoted in DACL, s.v. droit d'asile.

[50]Liebermann, Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen, I, p. 90.

> And gif aefre aenig man heonan forð Godes ciricgrið swa abrece, þaet he binnon circwagum mansleaga wurðe, þonne sy þaet botleas, . . .[51]
>
> First, namely, that it is his will that all God's churches are to be entitled to full right of sanctuary.
> And if ever henceforth any man so violates the sanctuary of God's church that he commits homicide within the church walls, then that is beyond compensation, . . .

This legal information may dispel some of the obscurities in Beowulf 168-69, where it is suggested that Grendel is deprived of some privilege. The idea of deprivation is expressed in the phrase "ne his myne wisse" ("nor did he experience his [God's] love"). In C.L. Wrenn's opinion, the translation of "myne" as "love" is strongly supported by the use of the identical phrase "mine wisse" in Wanderer 27.[52] The word "gretan" in line 168 can mean either "approach" or "attack", but if it is connected with deprivation the former meaning is the more fitting. Thus we read that Grendel was not allowed to approach the gift-throne. He was not permitted to draw near to the source of refuge and grace. In other words, the passage clearly labels him as an arch-criminal, one who defies the rule of law. No wonder, then, that the poet continues, "Þaet waes wraec micel wine Scyldinga,/ modes brecða" (170-71, "That was great sorrow, grief of mind, for the friend of the Scyldings"). Admittedly, the gift-throne in Heorot is not the same thing as the altar in the tabernacle or the church; however, as sources or objectifications of grace they are closely related. A king would be likely to dispense mercy and grant asylum while seated on a throne. A bishop would do the same.

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[51] Ibid, p. 263.

[52] Wrenn, ed., Beowulf, pp. 188-89.

The refuge granted in a medieval sanctuary would be issued from an episcopal throne that symbolized the bishop's divinely delegated authority.[53] As Anglo-Saxon laws also indicate, the early middle ages saw no radical distinction between a church building and a king's hall. After stating how slayers are to be dealt with, Edmund's Code concerning blood-feuds goes on to specify: "Gif hwa cyrican gesece oððe mine burh, 7 hine man ðaer sece oððe yflyge: ða þe ðaet doð, syn ðaes ylcon scyldige, þe hit her beforan cwaeð"[54] ("If anyone flees to a church or my residence, and he is attacked or molested there, those who did it are liable to the same penalty as stated above"). But the preponderant legal references to ecclesiastical asylum illustrate that royal buildings provided sanctuary in a derived sense. By the same token the typological imagery of the ecclesia could be extended to apply to the timbered hall of Hrothgar's Danes.

The significance of Beowulf 168-69 now becomes apparent when quoted in context:

> Swa fela fyrena feond mancynnes,
> atol angengea oft gefremede,
> heardra hynða; Heorot eardode,
> sincfage sel sweartum nihtum;
> no he þone gifstol gretan moste,
> maþðum for Metode, ne his myne wisse.
> Þaet waes wraec micel wine Scyldinga,
> modes brecða. (164-71)

So the enemy of mankind, the horrible lone-goer, often committed many works of malice, severe injuries; in the dark nights he dwelt in Heorot, the treasure-decked hall. By no means was he allowed to approach the gift-throne, that precious object before

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[53]Note that this function of the bishop is referred to in the above-quoted Burgundian law.

[54]Liebermann, I, p. 188.

> the Lord, nor did he experience God's love. That was a great sorrow, grief of mind to the friend of the Scyldings.

Grendel, the adversary of the human race, inhabits Heorot only in darkness, for he has no right to be there. To amplify the suggestion that he is a demonic intruder who by his intentional malice has placed himself beyond the rule of law, the poet alludes to the right of asylum. Grendel's being ineligible for refuge marks the depravity of his crimes in and against Heorot as ecclesia. By the slaughter he perpetrates within its very walls he defies the orderly operation of human justice and mercy. Lines 168-69 expand on an idea introduced a few lines earlier, where the poet tells us that Grendel, exposing his utter contempt for the traditional laws of the land, did not wish to settle the feud with money (154, "fea þingian"). The immense grief of Hrothgar shows that in such violation of social responsibility he recognizes the diabolic nature of his enemy. The paradise which he established in imitation of God's original handiwork -- the Danish goldhall, where sorrow and human misery were unknown (119-120) -- has been invaded by "feond mancynnes".

In the Old Testament the bliss of the beati was a reality whenever the inhabitants of the city of God lived in obedience. Brief periods of light, harmony and joy alternated with times of darkness, persecution, and exile. The children of Israel turned to other gods at almost predictable intervals. Scripture equates such apostasy with ignorance of God and of his law.[55] When it is said that the people did not know the Lord, there is no reason at all to assume that they were unacquainted with the existence of God or even unaware of the requirements of proper worship.

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[55]E.g. I Samuel 2:12, Hosea 4:1, 4:6, 5:4.

When the Beowulf poet expatiates on the plight of the Danes and refers to idolatry, he could well be echoing commonplace Old Testament phraseology: "Metod hie ne cuðon" (180, "They did not know the Lord"). It is his way of accentuating the need for deliverance. Since the passage alluding to pagan rites is preceded and followed by brief accounts of Hrothgar's elegiac brooding (170-71, 189-90), it invites examination as a rhetorical unit:

> Monig oft gesaet
> rice to rune; raed eahtedon,
> hwaet swiðferhðum selest waere
> wið faergryrum to gefremmanne.
> Hwilum hie geheton aet haergtrafum
> wigweorþunga, wordum baedon,
> þaet him gastbona geoce gefremede
> wið þeodþreaum. Swylc waes þeaw hyra,
> haeþenra hyht; helle gemundon
> in modsefan, Metod hie ne cuþon,
> daeda Demend, ne wiston hie Drihten God,
> ne hie huru heofena Helm herian ne cuþon,
> wuldres Waldend. Wa bið þaem ðe sceal
> þurh sliðne nið sawle bescufan
> in fyres faeþm, frofre ne wenan,
> wihte gewendan! Wel bið þaem þe mot
> aefter deaðdaege Drihten secean
> ond to Faeder faeþmum freoðo wilnian! (171-88)

Many a mighty one often sat in council; they deliberated what was best for boldminded men to do against sudden terrors. Sometimes at their shrines they vowed honour to the idols, prayed in words that the soul-slayer (devil) should come to their help in the distress of the people. Such was their custom, the hope of the heathen. In their heart they thought of hell; they did not know the Lord, the Judge of deeds; they did not recognize the Lord God, nor indeed could they praise the Guardian of the heavens, the Ruler of Glory. Woe it is for him who must in terrible affliction shove his soul into the embrace of the fire, hope for no comfort, no change at all. Well it is for him who after the day of death may seek the Lord and ask for shelter in the embrace of the Father!

The Danes are not even mentioned by name. As a tribe they are never criticized for initiating their misery by deeds of wickedness. Indeed, nowhere in the poem are they accused of pagan inclinations, and Hrothgar,

their ruler, is consistently upheld as a "god cyning". The reference to idolatrous practices is neither a realistic record of events nor a psychological explanation of guilt. Rather, the quoted digression points to the true nature of the misery that is described and in this way serves an important artistic function. The poet proceeds from the particular to the universal. He begins with sporadic acts of despair (175, "Hwilum . . .") -- a familiar reaction to times of distress even in the Christian age of the Beowulf audience.[56] The comment "Swylc waes þeaw hyra,/ haeþenra hyht" (178-79) shows that such was the custom of heathendom in general. Since "hyra" and "haeþenra" are grammatically parallel, we may translate: "Such was the practice, the hope, of pagans".[57] Even if some Danes committed the same idolatry, the effect of this statement is a widening of perspective. When the poet next mentions ignorance of God, he refers in the first place to Danes who in the Old Testament sense did not know their Creator, but his elaboration in lines 182-83 confirms that he passes beyond Hrothgar's particular problem. His theme here is the helplessness in which divine intervention must be awaited, and heathendom represents this state in its purest form. This train of associations leads then from the heathen predicament to the over-all distinction between the blessed and the damned, between those who may

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[56]An example of such a reversion among the East Saxons is found in Bede's Ecclesiastical History, Colgrave and Mynors, eds., p. 323.

[57]A translation similar in emphasis is proposed by Betty S. Cox, Cruces in Beowulf: ". . . the few of Hrothgar's people who resort to heathen fanes remind the poet of the larger body of all heathens whose custom it was to do the same. Such [too] was their custom, the hope of the heathen, says the poet, making a ghastly comparison for the apostates" (p. 125). It should be added, however, that the logical division of the Danes into two camps is not supported by the text and that for a typologically satisfactory solution it is not necessary.

after death count on the protection of the Father and those who must expect the fire of hell. The general truth of the gnomic conclusion reminds us again of the antithesis between Heorot as ecclesia and the forces of darkness which assault it. Hrothgar's Danes are not censured for backsliding; instead, the poet expresses pity, because a fiend in hell (cf. 101) threatens them with the fate that heathens must endure. Clearly the plight of Hrothgar's realm calls for a supernatural deliverer. Quite appropriately, Beowulf sets out from Geatland a few lines later (194 ff.).

According to a contrary interpretation the traditional turning to the devil is to be identified with the coming of Grendel, so that the latter event symbolizes the active disobedience of Hrothgar's people. It is true, for example, that their misery always follows their feasting, but does life in Heorot therefore stand condemned?[58] Significantly, the goldhall scenes of peace and brotherhood are never criticized at all. The feasting is in itself beautiful and good.[59] The beer-drinking

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[58]Margaret E. Goldsmith, The Mode and Meaning of Beowulf, links Heorot to the city built by Cain (p. 112) and refers to Danish "depravity aggravated by the devilish assaults" (p. 117). To her, "Heorot recalls Babylon" (p. 144), and she sees in the history of the hall "a microcosm of the story of carnal man, his technical achievements, his destructive antagonisms and his ultimate ruin" (p. 248).

[59]The banqueting of God's people is a recurring motif in Scripture. Deuteronomy 12:5-7 promises banquets in the temple of Jerusalem. In Psalm 22 the Lord prepared a banquet in the sight of envious foes (like Grendel?). Proverbs 9:1-2 describes the famous banquet in the house of Wisdom, i.e., the temple; it follows an account of the creation. Isaiah 25:6 announces a banquet on Mount Sion, a figure of the Church. The typological fulfilment of these and other banquets in Scripture is discussed in detail by Daniélou, The Lord of History, pp. 214-40. "Symbel", the Old English word used in Beowulf for a banquet or feast, or "symbeldaeg" often occurs in the Paris Psalter (e.g. 67:2, 71:15, 73:7, 75:7, 117:25). In the Dream of the Rood 141 it is applied to the banquet in heaven. Hence

is part of the paradisal perfection in which the cup is passed around in almost sacramental fashion. The first festive scene in the poem is the occasion when the Song of Creation was clearly sung to the sound of a harp (89 ff.). Another memorable instance follows Beowulf's repudiation of Unferth's abuse:

> Ðaer waes haeleþa hleahtor, hlyn swynsode,
> word waeron wynsume. Eode Wealhþeow forð,
> cwen Hroðgares cynna gemyndig,
> grette goldhroden guman on healle. (611-14)

> There was laughter of heroes, cheerfulness resounded, words were joyous. Wealhtheow went forth, Hrothgar's queen, mindful of courtesy; gold-adorned, she greeted the men in the hall.

The gracious and gold-adorned queen is a symbol of delicate harmony and peace.[60] This scene, like the first, ends with an ominous "oþ þaet" (644,

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it is highly improbable that banquet scenes in Heorot necessarily stand condemned; instead, presented in bono, they are likely to enrich the typological connotations of the goldhall.

[60]"Goldhroden", in Beowulf the standard epithet for queens (614, 640, 1948, 2025), appears to be derived from the imagery of Psalm 44. The queen in the Psalm is dressed "in vestitu deaurato" ("in gilded clothing") and "in fimbriis aureis" ("in golden borders"). Other details of the royalty in the Psalm suggest that the resemblance is more than coincidence. The following exhortation calls to mind the difficulties encountered by early medieval peace-weaving queens: "Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam; et obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui" ("Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear; and forget thy people and thy father's house"). The name of Wealhtheow (=Welsh, or Celtic, captive) suggests that she is another such foreign queen. See Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 440. The king of Psalm 44, like Hrothgar, receives gifts as tribute; he is surrounded by the daughters of kings, while the queen has her virgin companions. Hrothgar, too, is followed by a train of maidens (924) -- not a detail of effeminate weakness but a sign of royal glory, which he shares with a king who was typologically identified with Christ. By the same token the queen is a type of the Church. See Augustine, Enarrationes in Psalmos, CCSL 38, p. 504. It is certainly noteworthy that gold-adorned ladies in Old English poetry are now beginning to be recognized as Church figures. See the discussion of the "sinchroden" princess of The Husband's Message 48 in W.F. Bolton, "The Wife's Lament and The Husband's Message: A Reconsideration Revisited", Archiv, 205 (1969), 337-51, where she is identified as the Old English counterpart of the black and foreign bride

"until"). The pattern also occurs in the celebration of Grendel's defeat, after the hall has been repaired (1232 ff.), and in Beowulf's report to Hygelac about the "medudream" (2016, "mead-joy") that followed the victory over Grendel's mother. Every time the poet describes a scene of feasting, he conveys an overwhelming awareness that the recaptured joy of paradise is ephemeral. The goldsele represents the perfection and light which in this fallen world are constantly besieged by the powers of darkness. Against demonic forces man must wage his battle even though in this life he is doomed to fail. A society based on brotherhood must withstand the fratricides within and the hellish monsters without. In Beowulf this conflict is presented as a particularized form of the struggle which was implied already in the Song of Creation, where the allusions to the ecclesia call to mind the standard for human action. All the subsequent symbel or banquet scenes follow a single plan: after activities that could be called redemptive -- such as the building of a hall or the defeat of a demonic monster -- peace and brotherhood briefly prevail. Though each time joy is transient, while it lasts paradise is typologically very real indeed.

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in the Song of Songs, and the discussion of the "golde geweorded" African maiden of Exodus 580-81 as another type of the Church in John F. Vickrey, "Exodus and the Treasure of Pharaoh", Anglo-Saxon England, 1 (1972), 159-60. Moreover, in Christ I the Virgin Mary, a commonplace ecclesia figure, is also a "beaga hroden" queen (276, 292). Judith, also "golde gefraetewod" (e.g. Judith 171), is yet another. Jackson J. Campbell has recently proposed that Elene, who happens to be "golde gehyrsted" (Elene 331), may likewise be a type of the Church. See his "Cynewulf's Multiple Revelations", Medievalia et Humanistica, 3 (1972), 257-77. In conclusion, it is by no means fanciful to suggest that in his presentation of Wealhtheow the Beowulf poet is at least intermittently alluding to the Church. Hence it is not surprising that she, though a woman, should pass around the cup with its sacramental connotations. The thematic significance of Wealhtheow merges with that of Heorot.

True, feasting is consistently followed by misery, but to attribute the latter to the sinful pride and cupidity of Hrothgar and Beowulf is to misread the poem and to ignore the poet's own obvious interpretation. Admittedly, the festivities of warriors can have an undesirable aspect,[61] for in a fallen world everything, though created good, can manifest itself in malo; however, this aspect is not at all dominant in the poet's presentation of Heorot. One is not justified in introducing the logic that Heorot cannot be good because it also harbours the bad. Conclusions to this effect arise out of the false dilemma according to which Heorot must be regarded as a symbol of wickedness[62] if it is not perfect in the full prelapsarian sense. But if the construction of Heorot is seen in a typological perspective as a literary manifestation of the ecclesia, it is obviously comparable to other "new creations". Noah was a type of Christ, but soon after the Flood this lord of the renewed earth succumbed to drunkenness. The people of Israel were led through the Red Sea, but before long they yearned for the flesh pots of Egypt; Moses himself sinned and was therefore denied entry into the promised land. The catechumen in whose baptism the Flood and the Exodus are fulfilled is still not free from the struggle against sin and

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[61] In the poet's comment that Beowulf "nealles druncne slog/ heaðogeneatas" ("never in drunkenness slew his hearth-companions") we find a hint that such excesses did at times take place. See also the Old English Fortunes of Men 48-57, in the Exeter Book.

[62] Since Heorot is a human creation and will not last forever, Goldsmith feels compelled to state: "The great symbols, Heorot and the treasure, embody the magnificence and the wealth which are a hero's reward. But in the longer perspective they can be seen to be images of man's pride and cupidity, the two fundamental sins which tie the carnal man to the earth" (p. 96).

from the curse of mortality. Along these lines Heorot should be interpreted. Hrothgar and his subjects may not be without sins and weaknesses but in his heroic verse the poet never probes their possible guilt -- just as the Exodus poet does not explore the shortcomings of Moses or the ingratitude of Israel. In Beowulf the emphasis is placed on the suffering of a heroic dryht, not on the guilt of sinners. The typological justification for the inertia of this elegiac stance will be discussed in the next chapter.

II

HROTHGAR AND THE YEARNING HART

Paradise and hell are the polarities that govern the poem. Heorot is morally and imaginatively related to the former, Grendel's mere to the latter. In Hrothgar's description of the mere, which serves as a prelude to Beowulf's second fight, elements from traditional Christian concepts of hell are readily discernible. R. Morris, in the preface to his 1876 edition of The Blickling Homilies,[1] remarked on the resemblance of the setting described in Beowulf to the hell vision in the seventeenth homily; to judge by the following quotation -- one long familiar to students of Beowulf -- it may be assumed that the Beowulf poet used the same or a very similar source:[2]

> Swa Sanctus Paulus waes geseonde on norðanweardne þisne middan-geard, þaer ealle waetere nidergewitað, & he þaer geseah ofer ðaem waetere sumne harne stan; & waeron nord of ðaem stane awexene swiðe hrimige bearwas, & ðaer waeron þystro-genypo, & under þaem stane waes niccra eardung & wearga. & he geseah þaet on ðaem clife

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[1] See pp. vi-vii.

[2] Such is Klaeber's conclusion in Beowulf, p. 183, where he notes that the homily is based on the apocryphal Visio Pauli. The dependence of the poem and the homily on a medieval redaction of the Visio Pauli is discussed by Carleton Brown, "Beowulf and the Blickling Homilies", PMLA, 53 (1938), 905-10. He states, "The phrases common to the two texts -- nidergewitad, harne stan, hrimige bearwas, genipu, nicera eardung -- not only demonstrate the far closer relationship of the Homily to Beowulf than to the Visio but also make it evident that the homilist's source was in English. . . . It is not surprising . . . that the Blickling homilist in transferring from St. Paul's vision to the account of the suffering of souls in hell should have recalled phrases from the description of the dygel lond inhabited by dyrne gastas" (p. 909). If Brown is correct, we may nevertheless assume that the homilist recognized the Beowulf passage as a description of hell.

> hangodan on ðaem isigean bearwum manige swearte saula be heora handum gebundne; & þa fynd þara on nicra onlicnesse heora gripende waeron, swa swa graedig wulf; & þaet waeter waes sweart under þaem clife neoðan; & betuh þaem clife on ðaem waetre waeron swylce twelf mila, & donne ða twigo forburston þonne gewitan þa saula niðer þa þe on ðaem twigum hangodan, & him onfengon ða nicras.
>
> As St. Paul was looking towards the northern region of the earth, from whence all waters pass down, he saw above the water a hoary stone; and north of the stone had grown woods very rimy. And there were dark mists; and under the stone was the dwelling place of monsters and execrable creatures. And he saw that on the cliff there hung on the icy woods many black souls with their hands bound; and the devils in likeness of monsters were seizing them like greedy wolves; and the water under the cliff beneath was black. And between the cliff and the water there were about twelve miles, and when the twigs broke, then down went the souls who hung on the twigs and the monsters seized them.[3]

In Beowulf the dwellingplace of monsters has similar overhanging groves that are rime-covered (1363, "hrinde bearwas"); it is said to be a landscape of dark mists (1360, "genipu"), of wolf-cliffs and windy headlands (1358, "wulfhleoþu, windige naessas"). Furthermore, the devils who in the above-quoted passage resemble monsters and "like greedy wolves" prey upon souls remind us that Grendel greedily devours his victims and that Grendel's mother is herself a "brimwylf" or sea-wolf (1506, 1599), one of the demonic inhabitants of hell. Soon after the Danes and Geats set out for the mere, they observe numerous details which confirm what Hrothgar has said. Although rime or hoarfrost is not mentioned a second time, the woods are decidedly joyless (1416); as in the Blickling hell vision, they are associated with the hoary stone, a mysterious body of water, and the habitat of a large number of water-monsters (1411). Indeed, several times in the poem Grendel's home is

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[3]Text and translation quoted from Morris, The Blickling Homilies, pp. 209-11.

unmistakably identified as hell (e.g. 101, 852). Its hellish nature is a clearly established fact which can serve as a point of departure in further discussion of typological influence.

To an audience familiar with patristic exegesis and liturgical practice, Beowulf's subsequent descent into the mere would call to mind a complex set of sacramental correspondences. As several critics have noted, his submersion is analogous to Christ's descensus ad inferos and, hence, to the baptismal rite;[4] however, even before any reference is made to Beowulf's intention to seek out Grendel's mother in her own dwelling, the poet already introduces the symbolism of sacramental typology. For if the details of hell were not in themselves sufficient to suggest an imaginative association with baptism, Hrothgar's description of the stag on the shore would be a sure reminder that a body of water has two aspects: it can represent the murky depths of hell and the regenerative pool of baptism. To emphasize that Grendel's mere -- whatever else it may also be -- is hell, the poet has Hrothgar point out that the stag refuses to come near it:

> Ðeah þe haeðstapa hundum geswenced,
> heorot hornum trum holtwudu sece,
> feorran geflymed, aer he feorh seleð,
> aldor on ofre, aer he in wille,
> hafelan [beorgan]; nis þaet heoru stow! (1368-72)

Though the heath-stepper, the strong-horned hart, harassed by hounds, should seek the forest after long flight, rather will he give up his life, his spirit, on the shore than save his head by entering. That is no pleasant place!

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[4] E.g. Allen Cabaniss, "Beowulf and the Liturgy", in L.E. Nicholson, ed., An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, pp. 223-32, and M.B. McNamee, "Beowulf -- An Allegory of Salvation?" in Nicholson, pp. 331-52. Both articles will again be referred to in Chapter IV.

Whatever other connotations the stag may have had, in the Christian tradition it belongs to the symbolism of the baptismal rite. Owing to the liturgical importance of Psalm 41, in which it yearns for the brooks of water, the hart was thought to long for the waters of baptism: "Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te Deus. Sitivit anima mea ad Deum fortem, vivum; quando veniam, et apparebo ante faciem Dei?" (41:2-3, "As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?"). This is the passage that was traditionally sung as the catechumens descended to the font. In early times it was sung by the congregation:

> Et quidem non male intellegitur vox esse eorum qui, cum sint catechumeni, ad gratiam sancti lavacri festinant. Unde et solemniter cantatur hic psalmus, ut ita desiderent fontem remissionis peccatorum, quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum. Sit hoc, habeatque locum intellectus iste in ecclesia et veracem et sollemnem.[5]
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> And indeed it is not ill understood as the cry of those who, although they are catechumens, are hastening to the grace of the holy font. Therefore, too, this psalm is ordinarily chanted on those occasions, so that they may long for the fountain of remission of sins, "as the hart panteth after the fountains of waters". Let this be so, and may this meaning retain a place in the Church -- a place both truthful and sanctioned by custom.

The liturgical use of Psalm 41 was chiefly confined to the baptismal rite, which was regularly performed at the end of the Easter vigil. Thus the stag of this psalm became a common baptismal symbol. It occurs, for example, in the baptistry of the Lateran, built in the fourth century, where Englishmen visiting Rome[6] could have observed the streams of water

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[5]Augustine, Enarrationes in Psalmos, XLI.

issuing into the font from the heads of seven stags.[7] Since typologically the appropriate setting for the hart of baptism is paradise, that is exactly where it is found in the decorations of many baptistries of the early Church.[8] It drinks at the springs of the paradise to which man is restored by the sacrament of baptism, for, as we have seen, the Fathers generally identified the garden of Eden, or the perfect earth before the fall, with the ecclesia. Frequently this ornamentation also includes a maritime scene such as the one found in the mosaic pavement of the early French baptistry discovered at St. Dié, which depicts a kind of lake where various sea-monsters splash about.[9] Presumably the Beowulf poet recognized the formal appropriateness of juxtaposing Heorot and Grendel's mere in similar fashion.

If, as will be discussed more fully, Beowulf's descent into the mere has baptismal connotations, the return of the Danes in regaining

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[6]Pilgrimages to Rome were very popular in early Anglo-Saxon times. See B. Colgrave, "Pilgrimages to Rome in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries", in E.B. Atwood and A.A. Hill, eds., Studies in Language, Literature, and Culture of the Middle Ages and Later, pp. 156-72.

[7]Duchesne, Christian Worship, pp. 309-10. H. Leclercq in DACL lists three additional contemporary examples of bronze or silver stags serving the same function (s.v. cerf).

[8]Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, p. 36.

[9]H. Leclercq in DACL, s.v. cerf: "Cette mosaique . . . représente les quatre fleuves du paradis terrestre, et nous retrouverions sans doute ici . . . les cerfs traditionnels venant s'y désaltérer, comme nous l'observons dans beaucoup de sarcophages de la France, du Midi principalement. Ces quatre fleuves s'échappant du centre d'une rosace, ou mieux peut-être du pied d'un rocher, formaient une espèce de lac où nageaient les monstres marins. Ces scènes maritimes qui jouent un si grand rôle dans la partie figurée de l'antiquité chrétienne, étaient un des motifs d'ornementation les plus usités dans les baptistères de l'Italie, temoin celui qu'avait construit le pape Damase au Vatican . . . ."

full possession of their meadhall would seem to be related to the admittance of the catechumen into the Church as full-fledged member; in view of Adam's exile, this admittance, too, is a re-entry. As soon as the waters of the mere are transformed by Beowulf's victory -- in analogy to the waters of baptism, after the symbolic destruction of the sea-dragon which dwells in it -- the stag described by Hrothgar can presumably return to its proper setting, just as the Danes are in fact restored to their proper paradise. The reluctance of the strong-horned stag to seek refuge in the mere,[10] particularly when harassed by hounds ("hundum geswenced"), is a symbolic parallel to the virtual exile of the Danes from their horngabled hall. Hrothgar's dryht is beset by the monsters of the mere. If Heorot is Eden in the patristic sense and if Grendel's mere owes the features of its landscape to a traditional Christian concept of hell, then Hrothgar's remark at the end of the hart vignette is more than simply another example of litotes. When he says, "Nis þaet heoru stow!" ("That is no pleasant place!"), one can hardly fail to conclude that he is comparing the dreadful place (1378, "frecne stowe"), the mere as hell, to the "heoru stow" or pleasant place of paradise.

Evidently there is a highly suggestive relationship between Hrothgar's reference to the baptismal stag and the typological connotations of Heorot. The possibility of a connection between Heorot and

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[10]The hart's reluctance is briefly discussed by D.W. Robertson, Jr., "The Doctrine of Charity in Mediaeval Literary Gardens: A Topical Approach through Symbolism and Allegory", in Nicholson, Anthology: "The example of Adam and Eve has warned him that this is not an effective hiding place. He prefers death to eternal damnation which results from hiding under the wrong trees" (pp. 187-88). Robertson's focus is here on the landscape as "evil garden".

the "heorot" may be further confirmed by early baptistries in which the deer is shown with a serpent in its mouth.[11] Daniélou comments on the tradition thus portrayed: "It is only after vanquishing the serpent that the catechumen may come to the waters of Baptism. . . . And so the representation of the deer which, having eaten the serpent, quenches its thirst at the river of paradise summarized for catechumens all stages of their baptismal initiation."[12] In this connection he then refers to Cyril of Jerusalem, who in his Catecheses instructs his catechumens to perform their daily exorcism throughout the period of instruction. The exorcism expresses the conflict that is waged concerning the soul of the faithful; its purpose is to liberate the soul step by step from the power of Satan in order to culminate in the victory of baptism. One can re-enter paradise only after the devil, the serpent of the sea, has been defeated. An important question therefore arises: "Is it in this tradition, then, [i.e., in the tradition of the serpent-eating hart] that we find part of the meaning of the cleansing of the serpent-filled mere, so that 'Hart' Hall may be restored to its earlier paradisal condition?"[13] Must the hart be able to recognize that the mere has been cleansed, transformed into the water of life, before Heorot can be saved?

To answer such questions it is profitable to have a look at the

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[11]Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, pp. 36-37. This tradition is illustrated and discussed by H.-C. Puech, "Le Cerf et le Serpent", Cahiers Archéologiques, 4 (1949), 17-60.

[12]Daniélou, ibid.

[13]Alvin A. Lee, The Guest-Hall of Eden, p. 210.

serpent-eating stag as found in the literature known to the Anglo-Saxons, for the hostility of the stag towards the serpent is a recurring motif. For example, it is mentioned by Josephus[14] and by Pliny the Elder[15] as if it were a biological fact. In the writings of the Fathers this antagonism takes on additional significance. Jerome in a homily on Psalm 103 remarks: "Montes excelsi cervis. Hoc animal serpentes occidit, et ipsos comedit. Ergo bene in montibus habitat, qui interficit intelligibilem serpentem: qui sapientior erat in paradiso prae omnibus bestiis, qui decepit Evam"[16] ("'The high hills are for the harts' [Psalm 103:17]. This animal kills serpents and eats them; therefore, the mountains are the right habitat for the slayer of the wise serpent, the serpent that, in paradise, was wiser than all the beasts, the serpent that deceived Eve"). The hart is here the enemy of the devil, the serpent or dragon who destroyed the harmony of paradise. It fills the same rôle in a riddle about the basiliscus or serpent written in seventh-century England by Aldhelm of Malmesbury:

> Callidior cunctis aura vescentibus aethrae
> Late per mundum dispersi semina mortis;
> Unde horrenda seges diris succrevit aristis,
> Quam metit ad scelera scortator falce maligna;
> Cornigeri multum vereor certamina cervi. . . .
>
> Of all that breathe refreshing air of heaven,
> I am most cunning, who through all the world
> Flung wide the seeds of death, whence sprang a crop
> Of grim and hideous grain; there with his scythe,
> Measuring the yield to serve his evil plans,
> Roams the Defiler. Never dare I fight

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[14] Jewish Antiquities, II, 246.

[15] Natural History, XXVIII, 149.

[16] Tractatus de Psalmo CIII, CCSL 78, pp. 185-86

The stag with branching antlers. . . .[17]

Here, too, the serpent represents the devil. Alluding to the result of the temptation in Genesis, Aldhelm holds the serpent responsible for introducing death into the world. The stag in the riddle is clearly antithetical to the demonic, for the serpent states that combat with the corniger cervus is something it greatly fears. Since the classical lore concerning harts and serpents lent itself to full exploitation by medieval allegorists,[18] the stag was often used to illustrate some aspect of the life of the saints. When discussing Psalm 140 -- where no stag is mentioned but where the psalmist prays that he might be kept from the snare which the wicked have laid for him -- Jerome is quick to compare the faithful believer to the traditional cervus: "Cervus . . . accipitur in sanctos: quia altus est, et cornua grandia habet, et interficit serpentes"[19] ("The hart . . . symbolizes the saints, for the hart is a noble animal, has great antlers and kills serpents"). As he continues, he again identifies the serpents as demons, for in the literature of the early middle ages the hart and the serpent, like Heorot and the mere, exemplify the contrast between good and evil.

The symbolism of the stag and the serpent receives its most elaborate development in explanations of Psalm 41, especially of the second verse in the Vulgate numbering. Although the serpent is not mentioned in the Psalm, it is very much present in the exegesis of the

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[17]Riddle 88. Text and translation quoted from J.H. Pitman, The Riddles of Aldhelm.

[18]See numerous examples, with textual references, in H.-C. Puech, "Le Cerf et le Serpent", pp. 38, 42-43.

[19]Tractatus de Psalmo CXL, CCSL 78, p. 307.

Fathers. Jerome refers to it to account for the thirst of the hart; his remarks reveal why in many early baptistries the stag is portrayed with a serpent in its mouth. The familiar antagonism between the two creatures is applied to the hostility between the baptismal candidate and the devil. Jerome makes use of the accepted "facts" of nature in the following way:

> Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus. -- Primum enim intelligendum est, quare vel qualiter desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum. Mos est enim ejus, ut inventum serpentem naribus hauriat, et post haec exardescens, exstinguat sitim. Ergo homo Ecclesiae, qui diu in actu venenoso degebat, ubi se perspicit coeno fornicationis, idolatriae fetore repletum, desiderat venire ad Christum, in quo est fons luminis, ut ablutus baptismo accipiat donum remissionis. Scit enim quia nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu sancto, non habebit vitam aeternam. Sed et si quis hodie nostrum, exstinctis vitiis, ignescat in desiderium Dominicae contemplationis, potest et ipse dicere: quia desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus, hoc est: relicto saeculo, ad te desidero transire.[20]
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> "As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after thee, O God." For first it should be understood why and in what way the hart longs for the fountains of waters. For it is its custom that with the breath of its nostrils it draws up the serpent it has found and that, becoming hot as a result, it quenches its thirst. Therefore a man of the Church, who long lived a venomous (ruinous) life, when he sees himself filled with the filth of fornication and the stench of idolatry, longs to come to Christ, in whom is the fountain of light, so that he, cleansed by baptism, may receive the gift of forgiveness. For he knows that unless one is reborn by water and the Holy Spirit, he will not have eternal life (John 3:5). But if one of us today, once his sins have been put away, burns in longing for the contemplation of the Lord, he can indeed say: Because my soul panteth for thee, O God, i.e., because I have abandoned the world, I long to go over to thee.

Jerome assumes that his readers are aware of a stag's habits. He does

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[20] Breviarium in Psalmos, PL 36, col. 949AB, quoted by Puech, p. 39. Augustine provides a very similar interpretation of the hart in his Enarrationes in Psalmos, XLI: "Serpentes necat, et post serpentium interemtionem maiori siti inardescit, peremtis serpentibus ad fontes acrius currit" ("It destroys serpents, and after the killing of serpents it is inflamed with yet greater thirst; having destroyed serpents, it runs to the fountains with thirst more keen than before").

not consider it necessary to relate explicitly that the serpent is devoured, but immediately proceeds to show how a person who recognizes that he is filled with the works of the devil resembles a hart which realizes that the thirst caused by swallowed venom must be quenched forthwith. In imitation of the hart, the catechumen yearns for the waters of salvation. From the waters of hell he will presumably turn away in horror.

The typological dimension of this symbolism comes more clearly to the fore in a homily preached by Jerome during the Holy Saturday vigil preceding Easter. He addresses the neophytes to be baptized on this occasion:

> Sicut desiderat cervus . . . -- Cervorum natura est, ut serpentum venena contemnant, quin potius naribus suis eos extrahant de cavernis, ut interficiant atque dilacerent; cumque venenum intrinsecus coeperit aestuere, quamvis eos non possit occidere, tamen sitis ardorem et incendium commovet. Tunc illi fontes desiderant, ut purissimis aquis ferventia venena restinguunt. Quomodo itaque illi cervi desiderant fontes aquarum, ita et nostri cervi, qui de Aegypto et de saeculo recedentes interfecerunt Pharaonem in aquis suis, et omnem ejus exercitum in baptismo necaverunt, post interfectionem diaboli desiderant fontes ecclesiae, Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum.[21]
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> "As the hart panteth . . ." -- It is the nature of harts to have no fear of the venom of serpents. Rather, with the breath of their nostrils they draw them out of their holes in order to kill and tear them in pieces. But if the venom begins to burn within them -- although it cannot kill them -- it produces a burning, raging thirst. Then it is that they long for fountains and quench the fiery venom with pure waters. Now just as those harts long for the fountains of waters, so also our harts, who, in withdrawing from Egypt and from the world, have put Pharaoh to death in their own waters and have in baptism destroyed his entire army, after the slaying of the devil long for the fountains of the Church, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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[21] In Psalmum XLI, Ad Neophytos, CCSL 78, p. 542, quoted by Puech, pp. 39-40.

This passage provides a more detailed account of the way stags deal with serpents; however, as in the previous quotation the exegete does not stress the method that is employed. It merely illustrates the commonplace hatred between stags and serpents. Once this enmity has been established, Jerome is free to focus on the thirst for the waters of baptism, i.e., on the element in Psalm 41 which here has his attention. Any elaboration on the serpent-eating hart is subservient to the over-all baptismal theme of his preaching. The thrust of the allusions is in the direction of typological concerns.[22] Jerome finds the serpent worth mentioning because, as in the above quotation, it calls to mind the entire complex of sin and the world, from which man must be delivered. A hart standing beside a serpent-infested mere resembles the people of God on the shore of the Red Sea[23] and the neophyte at the font. In spite of all the water imagery, the essential thirst of all three is the yearning for redemption. In their respective circumstances, they must await the liberating grace of God. Since literal thirst is an irrelevant detail, the Beowulf poet does not refer to it. The heorot hornum trum is principally seeking salvation, but first a redeemer figure must come to cleanse the forbidding waters. The same is true of Heorot, the hall. It can only abide the hour of intervention.

The foregoing discussion of patristic stag symbolism may be

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[22]The various homilies on Psalm 41 reveal the very same concern as the frequent depiction of the serpent-eating hart in a typologically significant setting. See the illustrations in Puech, pp. 17ff.

[23]The crossing of the Red Sea as type of baptism and the Egyptian Pharaoh as the serpent defeated in the font are typological commonplaces. See Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, pp. 86-98.

sufficient to suggest the likelihood of iconographic significance in Hrothgar's vignette of the hart as well as the probability of typological influence in the choice of the name Heorot for the royal hall. Nevertheless, the section devoted to the cervus in the Physiologus is also worth examining, for other than the Bible this work was for ages the most widely known work of literature. Judging by the three excerpts included in the Old English Exeter Book we may assume that the Anglo-Saxons, too, were familiar with it.[24] As in Jerome's homilies, the antlered stag of the fifth-century Greek Physiologus inhabits wooded and mountainous regions, and shows open hostility towards serpents; however, this work also contains an interesting reference to the life-span of the beast:

> The stag is like the wood-goat; his horns are divided into three branches, even as the renewal of his life is threefold. For he lives for fifty years and ranges through both the woods of the groves and the valleys of the mountains with eager step as the swiftest runner; he searches out the holes of serpents by their smell and if a serpent has hidden anywhere he smells it immediately and at once brings his nostrils to the entrance of the hole and draws breath. The serpent, coming forth as a result, throws itself into the jaws of the stag; he devours the exposed serpent . . .[25]

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[24]"With the exception of the Bible, there is perhaps no other book in all literature that has been more widely current in every cultivated tongue and among every class of people." E. Sokoll, Zum Angelsächsischen Physiologus (Marburg, 1897), p. 3, quoted in A.S. Cook, ed., The Old English Elene, Phoenix, and Physiologus, pp. lviii-lix.

[25]Pseudo-Epiphanius, PG 43. In the parallel Latin translation offered in PG this important passage and the one below it read as follows: "Cervus similis est silvestri caprae; illius cornua tribus ramis distinguuntur, ut et triplex est ejus vitae reparatio. Vivit enim annos quinquaginta, nemorumque silvas, et montium valles, ut velocissimus cursor contento gradu perlustrat, serpentiumque cavernas odore indagat, et sicubi serpens delitescit, e vestigio subodoratur, statimque nares ad limen cavernae admovet, halitumque trahit; prodens igitur serpens in fauces cervi sese ingerit, ille obvium devorat, . . . Postquam . . . serpentem ex cavernis cepit, illico ad aquarum fontes decurrit: quod si

In addition to placing the stag solidly in the context of baptismal symbolism, the author of this bestiary a second time mentions the fifty-year duration of its life:

> . . . after he takes a serpent from its hole he immediately runs off to fountains of waters: because if he cannot drink his fill within the space of three hours, he dies; if, however, a drink of water falls to his lot, he adds another fifty years to his life. Whence the prophet David says, "As a hart panteth for the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth for thee, O God."

When fifty years have passed, a renewal by baptism is to take place. Fifty years represents fulness of time. This fact is particularly intriguing to the reader of Beowulf, for there a similar significance seems to underlie the repeated use of the number fifty. The Physiologus may offer a clue to its suggestively implied but not readily apparent meaning in the poem. In an effort to arrive at a solution, we can assume that Heorot is not only the focal point of the Danish nation but also, since Hrothgar had it built, the symbol of the king's reign. Like the eponymous baptismal hart, the hall requires restoration after the symbolic fifty years. When Beowulf has overcome Grendel's mother and cleansed the mere, Hrothgar tells him:

> Swa ic Hring-Dena hund missera
> weold under wolcnum ond hig wigge beleac
> manigum maegþa geond þysne middangeard,
> aescum ond ecgum, þaet ic me aenigne
> under swegles begong gesacan ne tealde.
> Hwaet, me þaes on eþle edwenden cwom,
> gyrn aefter gomene, seoþðan Grendel weard,
> ealdgewinna, ingenga min;
> ic þaere socne singales waeg
> modceare micle. (1769-78)

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trium horarum spatio aqua se explere non potest, moritur; sin autem aquae potus obtingat, ad annos denuo quinquaginta vitam protrahit. Unde propheta David: Sicut desiderat cervus ad fontem aquarum, sic desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus (col. 522CD).

> Thus for fifty years I have ruled the Ring-Danes under the heavens and protected them in war from many nations throughout this world, from spears and swords, so that I had no enemy under the expanse of the sky. But, behold, I experienced a reversal in my land, grief after rejoicing, when Grendel, the ancient foe, became my invader; because of that persecution I suffered great heart-sorrow.

After fifty years have elapsed, Hrothgar faces an unprecedented change of fortune. A monster comes as ancient foe ("ealdgewinna") from the sea of serpents, and the stage is set for a version of the ancient struggle (1781, "eald gewin") between the hart -- Heorot and its Danes -- and the serpent or devil as represented by Grendel in this instance. In the fulness of time Beowulf is therefore in a position to win a victory replete with redemptive or baptismal associations.

In Scripture and the Fathers the number fifty is used quite consistently, so that it would not be surprising to find its symbolic meanings reflected in the christianized Physiologus and in Old English poetry. It regularly signifies a completion of some kind. According to Numbers 8:25, the Levites were to retire from their ministry in the tabernacle at the age of fifty, and Bede at once draws a parallel to the rest which Israel enjoyed every fifty years on the occasion of the jubilee as a foretaste of the eternal rest.[26] The divine stipulations regarding the year of jubilee are found in Leviticus 25. An essential element of this redemptive festival is mentioned in verse 10: "Revertetur homo ad possessionem suam" ("Every man shall return to his possession").[27]

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[26] Explanatio in Quartum Librum Moisis, PL 91, col. 362D.

[27] A familiar elaboration on the redemptive year of jubilee is found in Isaiah 61:1-2: "Spiritus Domini super me, eo quod unxerit Dominus me, ad adnuntiandum mansuetis misit me, ut mederer contritis corde et praedicarem captivis indulgentiam et clausis apertionem, ut

It is suggestive that in Beowulf the Danes regain full control of their goldhall, and in that sense return to their possession, after a fifty-year period. Once again we encounter possible ecclesia symbolism, for fifty is the number of the Church in the age to come.[28] Besides its connection with the jubilee, fifty is also in a related fashion the number of Pentecost, the feast of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the fiftieth day after Easter; its function is essentially the same. In Romans 8:23 the apostle Paul refers to the pentecostal gift as only the first-fruits of the Spirit; the event of the fiftieth day receives its ultimate importance only in the light of fulfilled ecclesia typology, for it prefigures the perfection of the new earth. Therefore, it is not surprising that in a discussion of Noah's ark, a type of the church, Augustine links the fifty cubits of its width to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.[29] Noah's baptismal voyage reminds us that Pentecost, Easter, and the sacrament of holy baptism are typologically interrelated as occasions that lead man back to his own possession, to the harmony of

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praedicarem annum placabilem Domino et diem ultionis Deo nostro ut consolarer omnes lugentes" ("The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me: he hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God: to comfort all that mourn") -- a version of which is quoted by Christ in Luke 4:18-19 to show that in his coming as redeemer Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled. The above details of deliverance are all associated with the number fifty.

[28]Rabanus Maurus, Expositiones in Leviticum, PL 108, cols. 529ff., discusses the number fifty in some detail and connects it with the end of time. Augustine, too, repeatedly interprets it as symbolic of eternity or of the Church on the new earth. See especially Sermo CCLII, PL 38, col. 1178.

[29]Contra Faustum, XII, 14.

paradise. The fact that also in England the early Church considered Pentecost, like Easter, a liturgically appropriate time to administer baptism[30] indicates the redemptive aspect of the feast and tends to confirm that the Anglo-Saxons recognized the number fifty as a commonplace spiritual symbol.

It is not made explicit anywhere that this typology does indeed account for Hrothgar's fifty-year reign before Grendel comes, but, remarkably, all the other instances when the same number occurs in the poem serve to strengthen the probability. When Beowulf descends into the mere, the poet tells his audience:

> Sona þaet onfunde se ðe floda begong
> heorogifre beheold hund missera,
> grim ond graedig, þaet þaer gumena sum
> aelwihta eard ufan cunnode. (1497-1500)

> Eager for battle, grim and greedy, she who had held the region of the floods for fifty years found out at once that from above a man was seeking the lair of monsters.

Also in the demonic world the end of fifty years marks fulness of time. By its very nature it may expect the opposite of redemption. Indeed, the indications that the home of Grendel and his mother is an underwater hall (1513), a building with a roof (1515) and walls (1572-73), centred in a realm of numerous evil creatures, reveal that in the mere Beowulf encounters a hellish parody of Heorot and of Hrothgar's dryht. Quite appropriately the change that comes after the symbolic fifty years is the salvation of the one society and the damnation of the other. Later in the poem we discover that Beowulf had been king of the Geats for fifty years when the destroying dragon came (2209, 2733). As we shall

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[30]See e.g. Colgrave and Mynors, eds., Bede's Ecclesiastical History, p. 62, n. 1.

see elsewhere, the concept of chronological fulness or completion here meshes with the doomsday imagery which the dragon as it were introduces into the poem, for in an anagogical perspective the number fifty is associated with the end of time.[31] The day of judgment is to bring the typological fulfilment of both Pentecost and the year of jubilee. Finally, the same number is applied to the dragon. Its length is fifty feet (3042), suggesting that Beowulf is to the dragon what Hrothgar is to Grendel's mother. The length of the dragon reveals that the monster represents a perversion of what Beowulf has stood for during his fifty-year reign. If one should object that spatial dimension is after all different from duration of time, we may refer to the interpretation of the fifty cubits of the width of the ark as prefiguring the fifty days which culminated in the advent of the Holy Ghost.[32]

To return, then, to the point at issue, it would be not at all farfetched or even unlikely that the fifty years of Hrothgar's rule prior to Grendel's assaults have a significance derived from the biblical typology of redemption.[33] It is in the tradition of the serpent-eating

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[31]See Chapter V.

[32]The symbolism of Pentecost and the number fifty is dealt with by Rabanus Maurus, PL 108, cols. 529ff. It should be added that although in the foregoing discussion the stress is placed on the typological importance of the number fifty in connection with the end of a certain length of time, it is also true that e.g. a fifty-year reign as a whole can have the connotations of paradisal rest. Such an explanation would apply not only to Hrothgar's reign but also, and especially, to that of Beowulf, for the peace of the latter is very emphatically contrasted with the warfare which preceded and followed it.

[33]The twelve-year duration of Grendel's hostility (see Beowulf 147) follows the fifty-year reign and thus seems to have a significance apart from it. The suffering of the Danes is then analogous to the tribulation to be endured by God's people at the end of time, before the

hart that we may recognize the cleansing of the serpent-infested mere as the act by which Heorot is restored to its earlier paradisal condition. As Chapter I has shown, such a conclusion does not in isolation depend only on the baptismal connotations of the mere and of Beowulf's subsequent descent or on Heorot's being named after the stag of baptism. Although these factors contribute to a whole, it is equally important that Heorot itself and its construction abound in associations with baptism, for, as has been discussed, the poet links the building of the hall with the typological exegesis of the creation account. The baptismal allusions thus far examined are inextricably woven into the fabric of the poem.

As in the discussion of the Song of Creation, so here, too, we are confronted with the problem of Danish sin and guilt. Is Hrothgar to be condemned for his failure to withstand Grendel's murderous attacks? If Heorot has baptismal significance, such queries will naturally present themselves, for in a "new creation" the monster or serpent has to relinquish his control. The section which the Physiologus devotes to the hart ends as follows:

> Interpretation: Therefore you, spiritual man, have three restorations: namely, the baptism of incorruption, the grace of filial adoption, and penance. If at any time you detect the serpent, i.e., sin, within the recess of your heart, at once have recourse to the fountains of waters, i.e., to the bubbling water springs of the Scriptures, and drink in what is evidently holy grace (as the prophets explain). For if you do penance you will be restored by it when sin has been entirely destroyed.[34]

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final redemption. The twelve-year period therefore is not inconsistent with fifty as symbolic of fulness of time. As Klaeber shows in the introduction to his edition of the poem, the chronology of Hrothgar's life cannot be taken literally (p. xxxii).

One may ask whether Hrothgar and his people should not have detected the serpent of sin within their hearts and whether they should not have shown some initiative in seeking restoration by holy grace. A passage from the previously mentioned Catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem would seem to suggest still more clearly the logical implication of the sacramental allusions in Beowulf:

> The serpent is beside the road, watching those who pass by. Take care that he does not bite you by means of unfaithfulness. He follows with his eyes those who are on the way to salvation, and he seeks whom he may devour. You are going to the Father of spirits, but you must pass by the serpent. How can you avoid him? Have your feet shod with the Gospel of peace, so that, if he bites you, it will do you no evil. If you see any evil thought coming to your spirit, know that it is the serpent of the sea who is setting snares for you. Guard your soul, so that he cannot seize it.[35]

Are we to identify the lurking serpent with Grendel as he awaits his chance to disrupt the harmony of Heorot? Does Heorot then represent the collective soul of Danes who have succumbed to unfaithfulness and evil thought? The difficulties are further compounded with the problem raised by Beowulf's reply when Hrothgar challenges him to seek out the second monster. It may leave the impression that to a certain extent Beowulf finds fault with the aged king: "Ne sorga, snotor guma! Selre biđ aeghwaem,/ þaet he his freond wrece, þonne he fela murne" (1384-85, "Sorrow not, wise warrior. It is better for each to avenge his friend than greatly to mourn"). For twelve years Hrothgar has taken the

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[34] PG 43, cols. 521D-524A (parallel Latin translation, cols. 522D-523A).

[35] Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, p. 24, quoted from PG 33, col. 361AB.

approach which Beowulf here rejects. Yet he addresses Hrothgar as "snotor guma", and a few lines down the poet calls him "wisa fengel" (1400, "wise prince"), taking great pains throughout to portray a good king. Earlier in the poem, when Beowulf's victory over Grendel has the people's attention, the poet is careful to explain: "Ne hie huru winedrihten wiht ne logon,/ glaedne Hroðgar, ac þaet waes god cyning" (862-63, "Nor indeed did they at all blame their friendly lord, gracious Hrothgar, for he was an excellent king").[36] As for the Danes in general, although the monsters regularly attack them while sleeping, they are never condemned for lack of watchfulness. When they slumber in their hall before Grendel's mother comes to avenge her son, the poet even praises them for their valour and concludes that they were a fine and noble nation: "waes seo þeod tilu" (1250). Since in such passages, as in Beowulf's reply to the above-mentioned challenge, no irony seems to be intended, the apparent inconsistency needs explanation, for if the cleansing of Heorot is related to baptism, one would expect Hrothgar and his subjects to be guilty of sin.

At this point it is helpful to remember the complexity of the correspondences by which the creation, the Old Testament types of redemption, the sacrament of baptism, and Christ's descent into hell are all interrelated. To the typological imagination[37] none of the elements comprising this whole could be divorced from the others. Hence,

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[36]See also ll. 1885-87.

[37]For a detailed discussion of the typological imagination, see Robert B. Burlin, The Old English Advent, pp. 2-35.

whenever Beowulf echoes the liturgy and the traditional teaching of the Church concerning baptism, it by the same token alludes to the descensus. If Beowulf himself to a certain degree reminds one of an idealized baptismal candidate, his exploits also serve to recall the victory of Christ. Every catechumen re-enacts Christ's descent. The more he is cast in heroic proportions, the closer will he resemble his model. Being endowed with supernatural power, Beowulf is bound to be an unusually Christ-like protagonist. In the presentation of his successes any features deriving from the liturgy may even tend to be overshadowed by the parallels with the catechumen's most direct anti-type, the Nergend or Saviour himself.

By the same typological heightening of poetic action the frame of mind of the Old Testament patriarchs as they await their deliverance from the bondage of hell receives its counterpart in Hrothgar's lack of heroic energy. In the familiar messianic prophecy of Isaiah 9 those in need of redemption are passive beneficiaries of grace: "The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen" (9:2, "Populus, qui ambulabat in tenebris, vidit lucem magnam, habitantibus in regione umbrae mortis lux orta est eis"). These very words are quoted in Matthew 4:16 to show that Christ had come to fulfil this prophecy. In the canticle of Zacharias -- the Benedictus, regularly found in the Latin Psalters -- we find the attitude of those enduring misery characterized by means of the same images. Zacharias speaks of "the bowels of mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us: To enlighten them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death . . ."

(Luke 1:78-79, "viscera misericordiae Dei nostri, in quibus visitavit nos oriens ex alto; illuminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent, . . ."). Although he once mentions remission of sins (1:77), the stress is on the long-awaited deliverance from enemies (1:71, 74). The same kind of vindication is the theme of the Magnificat, the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55): "He hath shewed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart" (1:51, "Fecit potentiam in bracchio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui"). Like Simeon in the Nunc dimittis (Luke 2:29-32), the faithful can only wait for the light of salvation. Since these canticles regularly sung by the medieval Church[38] present those awaiting the redeemer in such a consistent attitude of expectation, it is not surprising that Hrothgar and the Danes in the same manner sit in darkness until their particular hero comes.

If one counters that the stance of Hrothgar and his people is obviously more elegiac -- and more culpable perhaps -- than that of, for example, Zacharias, we may turn to the numerous presentations of the passively mournful state in the Book of Psalms. A quick survey will illustrate how frequently the righteous there endure the assaults of the wicked without being blamed for their plight. In Psalm 7 the persecuted psalmist is sure that he is upright of heart (9, 11); he even considers it safe to say that if there were any iniquity in his hands he would deserve to fall prey to his foes (4-6). The speaker

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[38]In the observance of the canonical hours the Benedictus, the Magnificat, and the Nunc dimittis were sung daily. See the Roman Breviary.

of Psalm 9, in the same frame of mind, describes his wicked enemy as follows: "His eyes are upon the poor man: he lieth in wait, in secret, like a lion in his den" (9 10 :9, "Oculi eius in pauperem respiciunt. Insidiatur in abscondito, quasi leo in spelunca sua"), and he cries out, "Break thou the arm of the sinner . . ." (15, "Contere bracchium peccatoris . . ."). [39] The same dependence on divine help is expressed in the lament of the righteous one in Psalm 12: "How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?" (3, "Usquequo exaltabitur inimicus meus super me?"). It is the Lord who must turn mourning into joy (27:12). The Church prays for deliverance when the enemies rise up against it and confidently asserts: "All these things have come upon us, yet we have not forgotten thee: and we have not done wickedly in thy covenant" (43:18, "Haec omnia venerunt super nos, nec obliti sumus te et inique non egimus in testamento tuo"). In similar fashion, when beset by those who like canes, or dogs, surround his stronghold in the evening, the author of Psalm 58 declares, "Neither is it my iniquity, nor my sin, O Lord: without iniquity have I run, and directed my steps" (5, "neque iniquitas mea neque peccatem meum, Domine; sine iniquitate cucurri et direxi"). There are countless other Psalm passages in which the afflictions of the faithful are presented without being directly linked to their misdeeds, [40] not to mention the songs of praise for divine aid, for in these, too, any principle of moral causality is generally

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[39] Suggestive details in this Psalm are further discussed in Chapter IV.

[40] E.g. Psalms 6, 10, 16, 27, 37, 39, 53, 59, 63, 68, 73, 82, 85, 93, 101, 108, 119, 122, 139, 141.

absent. The central fact in the Psalms is the faithfulness of God and to this attribute David and others appeal in their suffering. Invariably they do so in an attitude of mournfulness. If the Beowulf poet was at all influenced by the widespread use of the Psalms in contemporary education and liturgy,[41] we may further suppose that this practice left its mark on his portrayal of tribulation. The elegiac inertia of Hrothgar, the good king, and his Danes, that excellent nation, resembles the passiveness of the righteous ones in the Psalms. In Beowulf, too, the wicked lies in wait for the innocent; for, whatever ironies the modern reader may be inclined to detect, the poet insists that evil is all on Grendel's side. We need not therefore assume that the Beowulf poet failed to recognize human sin -- Hrothgar's homily proves the contrary -- but, in a stylized depiction of the oppressed, he seems to have regarded any pinpointing of blame and moralizing about guilt as evidently inappropriate.

In the context of our discussion it is suggestive that also Psalm 41, the baptismal Psalm, is a mournful cry for aid in affliction. The soul of the speaker may be troubled, but there is no hint that he

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[41] Note that in the services of the Divine Office the entire Psalter was used each week (see the Roman Breviary). For the use of the Psalms in education see e.g. G.N. Garmonsway's introduction to AElfric's Colloguy: ". . . by repeating the Psalms after the master, they would have the whole Psalter by heart . . . . The first reading book in the study of Latin grammar was the Psalter, with the words of which the boys were already familiar" (p. 12). Note also the following comment in Celia and Kenneth Sisam, eds., The Salisbury Psalter: "The psalter was the commonest book in Anglo-Saxon times. Many of the devout read it privately; every priest who served a church or chapel must have it; and in great churches or monasteries several copies were needed. Of some twenty-five extant psalters [see Sisam, p. 75, n. 2, and p. 48] produced in England in Anglo-Saxon times, the psalms were wholly or partly glossed in fifteen, and the Paris Psalter has a parallel translation" (p. 75).

has brought his suffering upon himself by sinfulness. He sees his desolation as a form of exile, for he contrasts it with the joy and feasting in the house of God. Moreover, his distress appears to be caused by the enemy, and he waits for God to come and rescue him. As the hart pants for the waters, so the believer yearns for redemption, but he takes no action himself. Those dwelling in Heorot, the hall of the hart, are characterized by a similar attitude. Admittedly, the situations presented in the poem and in the Psalm are not literally identical; at no time does Hrothgar petition God for help. On the other hand, once Beowulf has arrived he is repeatedly acknowledged as God-sent hero, and as in the Psalms -- even in the Psalms of lament -- the Lord frequently receives thanks and praise for his mercy. As Klaeber notes, in no Old English poem is so much gratitude to God expressed as in Beowulf.[42] We may therefore conclude that the differences between the elegiac mood in parts of Beowulf and in Psalm 41 do not overshadow the similarities.

One must keep in mind that the neophyte before baptism is, in a typological sense, an exile and that the use of Psalm 41 in the Holy Saturday liturgy connects him with many others, particularly in the Old Testament, who were likewise comfortless and abandoned. In the baptismal rite the Psalm does not focus on the salvation of individual human beings; rather, it places them in the company of all those exiled from paradise or paradisal bliss. Implicitly it is also the cry of those

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[42]"Die christlichen Elemente im Beowulf", Anglia, 35 (1911), 125: "In keinem ae. gedicht wird gott so viel dank dargebracht wie im Beow., . . ."

who in Beowulf are deprived of joy in Heorot. The argumentum or preface to Psalm 41 in the West-Saxon Liber Psalmorum[43] certainly suggests that the baptismal significance of the hart's panting is applicable to a great variety of possible situations:

> David sang þysne an and feowertigoþan sealm, þa he wilnode to hys eðle to cumanne of his wraecsiðe. And þaet ilce he witgode be Israela folce gehaeftum on Babilonia, þaet he sceoldon þaet ylce don. And eac he witgode be aelcum Christnum men þara ꝺþeȝ geswenced waere , oþþe on mode oðde on lichaman, and þonne wilnode aegðer ge þysses lifes frofre ge þaes toweardan. And eac be Criste and be Iudeum he witgode, hu he wilnode þaet he wurde gedaeled wiþ hy and wiþ heora yfelnesse.
>
> David sang this forty-first psalm when he longed to come out of exile to his homeland. And he also prophesied concerning the people of Israel, captive in Babylonia, that they were to do so, too. And he also prophesied concerning each of those Christian men who were harassed, either in mind or in body, and then longed for comfort both in this life and in that to come. And also he prophesied concerning Christ and the Jews, how he longed to be parted from them and from their evil.

A catechumen is one who like David and like the Israelites in the Babylonian captivity yearns for the end of his "wraecsiþ" and for the return to his "eþel". In Beowulf Hrothgar and the Danes share the same kind of suffering. They yearn for liberty after Grendel has invaded their land, their "eþeltyrf", and driven them from the best of halls so that it stands desolate (410ff.). According to the above-quoted preface such misery is paralleled in the plight of Christians who are "geswenced" by the devil. The panting hart of the Psalm represents both the Old Testament types and the faithful ones of the new dispensation. It is symbolic of those longing to be redeemed. If the Beowulf poet was influenced by biblical typology, the hart on the shore of the mere can in the same way stand for the nation enduring Grendel's form of captivity. Just as Heorot is tormented and oppressed by

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[43] J.W. Bright and R.L. Ramsay, eds. The Liber Psalmorum is mainly a prose translation of Psalms 1-50 which precedes the metrical Psalms (51-150) in the Paris Psalter MS. Psalm 41 appears on pp. 97-99.

Grendel, so the hart is "hundum geswenced". Suggestively, the Christians who in the West-Saxon preface share the longing of the panting hart are also "geswenced". Indeed, there are many indications that the portrayal of Danish grief derives from the baptismal tradition and that an awareness of the Anglo-Saxon typological imagination can help us to interpret the poem.

The likelihood of a link between the elegiac mood in Beowulf and in Psalm 41 may be further confirmed by a glance at the Old English version of the latter as we find it in the West-Saxon prose Psalms, for it shows how the barrier between the Latin of the Vulgate and the vernacular tongue was overcome. When discussing the literary relationship between Latin texts and Old English writings one should realize that the gap between Mediterranean and Germanic diction was considerably narrowed not only by familiarity with Latin among the learned but also by numerous (often interlinear) translations. The assimilation of concepts and images from the Vulgate was the result of a widespread and continuous concern. If this fact is forgotten one may well be somewhat startled by the discussion of Psalm 41 in terms of "wraecsiđ" and "eþel". On the other hand, the student of Beowulf will experience a certain shock of recognition on finding the cervus of the Vulgate transformed into a "heorot" or "heort":

> Swa heort wilnađ to waetre þonne he werig byđ oþþe ofþyrst,
> swa wilnađ min sawl and min mod to þe, Drihten.
> Mine sawle þyrst and lyst þaet heo maege cuman to Gode, for þam
> he is se libbenda wylle; eala Dryhten, hwaenne gewyrđ þaet, þaet
> ic cume and aetywe beforan Godes ansyne?
> Me waeran mine tearas for hlafas, aegþer ge on daeg ge on niht;
> þonne ic gehyrde to me cweþan, Hwaer is þin God þe þu to hopast?
> Ac þonne gemunde ⁊ic⁊ þine aerran gyfa, and gestađelode on me
> mine sawle; for þy ic geare wiste þaet ic sceolde cuman for

> Godes mildheortnesse to þam wundorlican temple, þaet ys Godes hus; þyder ic sceal cuman mid mycelre wynsumnesse stemne, and mid andetnesse, swylce symblendra sweg byð and bliðra. (1-4)
>
> As the hart longs for water when it is exhausted or suffers from thirst, so my soul and my heart long for thee, Lord. My soul thirsts and desires that it may come to God, because he is the living spring; alas, Lord, when will it happen that I may come and appear before God's face? My tears were to me as bread both day and night; then I heard it said to me, Where is your God, in whom you hope? And then I remembered thy former gifts, and I made my soul steadfast within me; because of that, I readily knew that I was to come before God's merciful generosity in the wonderful temple, that is, the house of God; there I am to come with a voice of great rejoicing, and with praise, also the sound of those who are banqueting and of those who are cheerful.

The last part of this passage provides a good example of fairly unobtrusive cultural translation. In contrasting his mournful state with memories of idealized joy, the psalmist speaks of feasting in the house of God. The Old English rendering shows that the translator regarded the temple as a wonderful hall where God in his generosity and benevolence ("mildheortnesse") distributes his gifts ("gyfa") amid the joyful sounds of banqueting retainers ("symblendra sweg"). The psalmist, like Hrothgar, is an exile yearning for <u>seledream</u>. Afflicted by the enemy, he cries out:

> Hwy forgitst þu min, and hwi awyrpst þu me fram þe? oððe hwy laetst þu me gan þus unrotne, þonne me mysceað mine fynd? And þonne hy tobrecaþ eall min ban, and þonne my hyspaþ þa þe me swencaþ; and huru swiðost þonne hy cweðaþ aelce daege, Hwaer ys þin God? For hwy eart þu unrot, min mod and min sawl? and hwy gedrefst þu me? Hopa to Drihtne, for þam ic gyt hine andette; for þam he is min Haelend and min God. (11-14)
>
> Why dost thou forget me and why dost thou cast me from thee? or why dost thou let me go thus dejected, while my foe afflicts me? And while they break all my bones, and while those who harass

> me deride me; and indeed, they do so especially when they say each day, Where is your God?
> Why are you cast down, O my mind and soul? and why do you disquiet me?
> Hope in the Lord, for I will still praise him; for he is my Saviour and my God.

The speaker of the baptismal Psalm, too, is oppressed by a "fynd", and the evil ones harass him ("swencaþ"). In his misery and his aspirations he is closely related to the Danes in Beowulf. In the poem, as in the Psalm, one discovers the imaginative breadth of baptismal symbolism.

The above-mentioned elements of biblical typology did not influence only the Beowulf poet. The elegiac mood which characterizes Hrothgar may, for instance, be profitably compared with the attitude of mournful expectation which the Old Testament faithful exhibit in Christ I, the Old English Advent poem.[44] Some remarkable similarities appear in the brief passages quoted and discussed below. In the first selection[45] those awaiting the Son are in a predicament not unlike that of the Danes:

> Swa þu, god of gode gearo acenned,
> sunu soþan faeder, swegles in wuldre

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[44]The indebtedness of Christ I to biblical typology is thoroughly demonstrated in Burlin, The Old English Advent. When the petitioners in the poem are called the Old Testament faithful, one should remember that typologically these historical persons are to be linked with the people of God in any age.

[45]Based on one of the seven "Major Antiphons" of the Advent liturgy: "O Oriens, splendor lucis aeternae et Sol iustitiae: veni, et illumina sedentes in tenebris, et umbra mortis" ("O Orient, splendour of eternal light, and Sun of righteousness, come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death"). Gregory the Great, Liber responsalis sive Antiphonarius, quoted in Burlin, pp. 41, 100. (The prose translations of the three Old English passages which follow are adapted from Burlin.)

butan anginne aefre waere,
swa þec nu for þearfum þin agen geweorc
bideð þurh byldo, þaet þu þa beorhtan us
sunnan onsende, ond þe sylf cyme
þaet ðu inleohte þa þe longe aer,
þrosme beþeahte ond in þeostrum her,
saeton sinneahtes; synnum bifealdne
deorc deaþes sceadu dreogan sceoldan. (109-18)

As you, God of God truly begotten, Son of the Father, in the glory of the heavens have ever been without beginning, so now in distress your own creation implores most boldly that you send us the bright sun, and come yourself that you may illumine those who long since, covered with smoke and darkness here, have sat in eternal night; enfolded by sin, they had to endure the dark shadow of death.

The last few lines recall the passage in Beowulf where the poet tell us that Grendel

ehtende waes,
deorc deaþscua, duguþe ond geogoþe,
seomade ond syrede; sinnihte heold
mistige moras. (159-62)

was relentless, the dark death-shadow, against warriors old and young, lay in wait and ambushed them. In the perpetual darkness he held the misty moors.

Grendel is here plainly referred to as the dark shadow of death which endures through endless night. We have already noted several instances in which the expression umbra mortis, shadow of death, was used in Scripture to represent the power of the devil. It is a commonplace regularly associated with hellish mists and darkness.[46] Again, one

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[46]Umbra mortis, or the shadow of death, is a recurring expression in Scripture. We have already seen it used in Isaiah 9:2, Matthew 4:16, and Luke 1:79. In Job 10:21-22 it is, along with mist and darkness, one of the features of hell: ". . . terram tenebrosam et opertam mortis caligine, terram miseriae et tenebrarum, ubi umbra mortis et nullus ordo, sed sempiternus horror inhabitat" ("a land that is dark and covered with the mist of death: A land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth"). Umbra mortis is also mentioned in Job 3:5, 24:17, 28:3, 34:22; Psalm 22:4, 43:20, 87:7, 106:10, 14; Jeremiah 13:16.

may wonder how this iconography affects the portrayal of the Danes and whether, like the Old Testament people of God, they, too, are in some way enfolded in sin.

The next quotation[47] hints at what such a conclusion would imply:

> . . . him gehaten waes,
> þaette sunu meotudes sylfa wolde
> gefaelsian foldan maegðe,
> swylce grundas eac gaestes maegne
> siþe gesecan. Nu hie softe þaes
> bidon in bendum hwonne bearn godes
> cwome to cearigum. Forþon cwaedon swa,
> suslum geslaehte: "Nu þu sylfa cum,
> heofones heahcyning. Bring us haelolif,
> werigum witeþeowum, wope forcymenum,
> bitrum brynetearum. Is seo bot gelong
> eal aet þe anum. ⌈Þu for⌋ oferþearfum
> haeftas hygegeomre hider ⌈gesec⌋ es;
> ne laet þe behindan, þonne þu heonan cyrre,
> maenigo þus micle, ac þu miltse on us
> gecyð cynelice, Crist nergende,
> wuldres aeþeling, ne laet awyrgde ofer us
> onwald agan. (142-59)

. . . it was promised them that the Son of the Lord himself would cleanse the peoples of the earth, and would, moreover, in his journey, through the might of the Spirit, seek out the depths. Patiently now, with this knowledge, they waited in chains till the Child of God should come to the care-laden. Therefore they spoke thus, weakened by torments: "Come now yourself, high King of heaven. Bring us salvation, weary slaves of torture overcome by weeping, by bitter tears of burning. Release is dependent all on you alone. Because of their great need you seek here these mournful captives; do not leave behind you, when you turn away, this great multitude, but royally make known mercy upon us, Christ saviour, nobleman of glory; nor let the accursed hold power over us.

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[47] Inspired by the "Major Antiphon": "O Emmanuel, Rex et Legifer noster, exspectatio gentium et Salvator earum: veni ad salvendum nos, Dominus Deus noster" (O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the expectation and Saviour of the nations, come to save us, O Lord our God"). Quoted in Burlin, pp. 41, 108.

In Christ I those who longed for their saviour waited patiently (146). Patience is also what Beowulf expects from Hrothgar (1395), who has, in fact, practised this virtue for years. The Old Testament faithful are care-laden (148); the Danes are in a similar position, for care or sorrow is renewed after Grendel's mother appears (1303). The anticipated action of the Redeemer is summed up in the word "gefaelsian" (144, "cleanse"); it is also used for Beowulf's cleansing of both Heorot and the mere (432, 825, 1176, 1620, 2352). Christ in his journey (146, "siþe") is to seek out the depths (145, "grundas"), where as "aeþeling" he will overcome the accursed one (158, "awyrgde"). Beowulf also, in the course of his "siđ" (501, 1475), is prepared to penetrate the depths (1395, "gyfenes grund"; 1449, "meregrundas"); he, too, is an "aeþeling" who comes to triumph over an accursed monster of the deep (1518, "grundwyrgenne"). The faithful in Christ I are helpless and they admit that release is dependent on their Saviour alone (152-53, "Is seo bot gelong/ eal aet þe anum") -- an expression repeated in lines 365-66. In addressing Beowulf, Hrothgar uses almost exactly the same words: "Nu is se raed [=bot] gelang/ eft aet þe anum" (1376-77).[48] The connection between Christ and Beowulf has its obvious complement in the relationship between the Old Testament believers and the Danes.

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[48]The probability that also in Beowulf this formula is used with typological associations is increased by two instances of similar wording in a clearly Christian or scriptural context. In the Exeter Book the Resignation poem reads: "Eala dryhten min,/ . . . is seo bot aet þe/ gelong aefter life" (108-11); in Psalm 61:1 of the Paris Psalter we find the expression: "aet him is haelu min her eall gelancg."

Although the patriarchs are said to be enfolded in sin, they are never in the first place censured on this account. The Advent poem, like the Psalms and the canticles, emphasizes instead the wretched state of their captivity and their yearning for deliverance. The same applies to Beowulf. The Beowulf poet nowhere mentions that the Danes are punished for any specific act of disobedience. Although the wrongdoing of Unferth and Hrothulf is singled out by Beowulf and the poet respectively, it does not invalidate this point, for their wickedness serves no causal function. Sin is above all the pitiable condition in which man needs a saviour; it does not call for moralistic condemnations by the audience. The poet is therefore quite consistent when he portrays Hrothgar as a sad and helpless old man and at the same time stresses that he is a good and blameless king. This elegiac stance is entirely in keeping with the typological tradition.

Returning now to Beowulf's statement that it is better to avenge one's friend than to sit in mourning over him, we notice that its impact is determined by the influence of typology. Hrothgar is not criticized here for his lack of heroic forcefulness; his weary sorrow is to be expected in one who resembles those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. Beowulf himself says: "Ðys dogor þu geþyld hafa/ weana gehwylces, swa ic þe wene to" (1395-96, "This day have patience in every woe, as I expect you to"). When in the same reply to Hrothgar's challenge Beowulf also declares that it is desirable to achieve fame before death, it can be assumed that in this particular situation his words apply mainly to his own actions (1386ff.). He expresses the duty of the Christian hero, to be performed in imitation

of Christ the "aeþeling".

A third passage from Christ I[49] shows still more conclusively that a parallel exists between the virtual expulsion of the Danes from Heorot and the similar, more directly typological, exile of the believers:

> Þu þisne middangeard milde geblissa
> þurh ðinne hercyme, haelende Crist,
> ond þa gyldnan geatu, þe in geardagum
> ful longe aer bilocen stodan,
> heofona heahfrea, hat ontynan,
> ond usic þonne gesece þurh þin sylfes gong
> eaðmod to earþan. Us is þinra arna þearf!
> Hafaþ se awyrgda wulf tostenced,
> deor daedscua, dryhten, þin eowde,
> wide towrecene. Þaet ðu, waldend, aer
> blode gebohtes, þaet se bealofulla
> hyneþ heardlice, ond him on haeft nimeþ
> ofer usse nioda lust. Forþon we, nergend, þe
> biddaþ geornlice breostgehygdum
> þaet þu hraedlice helpe gefremme
> wergum wreccan, þaet se wites bona
> in helle grund hean gedreose. (249-65)

Graciously bless this earth through your coming, Christ saviour, and the golden gates, which in former days full long ago stood locked, high Lord of heaven, command to open, and visit us then by your very own motion, humble on earth. We have need of your mercy. The accursed wolf, the beast of shadow deeds, has scattered, Lord, your flock, now widely dispersed. What you, Ruler, once bought with blood, the evil one oppresses fiercely, and takes in his bondage against our desires. Therefore, to you, Saviour, we eagerly pray in our innermost thoughts that you may quickly bring help to the weary exiles, that the tormenting murderer to the abyss of hell may fall abject.

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[49]Based on the antiphon: "O Rex pacifice, tu ante saecula nate: per auream egredere portam, redemptos tuos visita, et eos illuc revoca unde ruerunt per culpam" ("O King of peace, you who were born before all ages: come out by the golden gate, visit those you have redeemed, and call them back to that place from which they fell by sin"). Found in many medieval antiphonaries following the "Major Antiphons", quoted in Burlin, pp. 43, 132.

When the poet alludes to the golden gates of paradise[50] which the weary exiles ask Christ to re-open, we are reminded of Heorot, the paradise which Beowulf has come to restore to the mourning Danes. In Christ I the devil -- the accursed wolf, the beast of shadow-deeds (257, "deor daedscua") -- has done the scattering; in Beowulf his counterpart is Grendel, the dark death-shadow (160, "deorc deaþscua").[51] Our third selection from Christ I confirms that Heorot is indeed Hrothgar's paradise. It follows from the similarities between him and the faithful ones in need of redemption -- particularly the lack of defined or specific guilt -- that there is no reason whatsoever to attribute the creation of Heorot or even its later problems to Hrothgar's sinful pride. The happy corollary of our conclusions is that one can fully explore the wide imaginative scope of Heorot's baptismal associations without having to accept Beowulf as a homiletic tract on sin and punishment.

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[50]For confirmation that these golden gates are the entrance to paradise, see Burlin, pp. 135-36.

[51]Burlin notes with regard to l. 257: "Cook, following Cosijn, emends deor daedscua to read deorc deadscua, 'dark shadow of death', apparently a formula for the devil, as in Beowulf 160" (p. 182).

III

ICE-BONDS AND THE RISING SUN

In Part One of Beowulf we find several clusters of spring imagery. The typological significance of the vernal setting of the newly created world has already been discussed in connection with the Song of Creation. Since the symbolism of spring is of fundamental importance in patristic literature, an examination of explicit references to this season may serve to establish whether they in realistic fashion reflect the poet's northern environment or whether they have their origin in the literary conventions of early Christianity. If the latter can be shown, our conclusions will reinforce the assertions made in the preceding chapters, especially those regarding the nature of Heorot.

Of all the references to spring, the image cluster in the Finnsburg episode would seem to be furthest removed from Christian associations. During his winter in Friesland, Hengest as unwilling guest

> eard gemunde,
> þeah þe ne meahte on mere drifan
> hringedstefna,-- holm storme weol,
> won wiđ winde, winter yđe beleac
> isgebinde, oþ đaet oþer com
> gear in geardas,-- swa nu gyt đeđ,
> þa đe syngales sele bewitiađ,
> wuldortorhtan weder. Ða waes winter scacen,
> faeger foldan bearm; fundode wrecca,
> gist of geardum. (1129-38)

thought of his land though he could not drive his ring-prowed ship over the sea -- the ocean surged with storm, strove with the wind;

> winter locked the waves in ice-bonds, until another year came into the dwellings -- as those still do now who ever await an opportunity, the glorious bright weather. Then winter was past; the bosom of the earth was fair. The exile was eager to depart, the guest out of the dwelling.

The same kind of imagery is to be found in the description of the vanishing sword, the weapon used to slay Grendel's mother. Here the poet employs spring details to illustrate the power of God:

> Þa Þaet sweord ongan
> aefter heaþoswate hildegicelum,
> wigbil wanian; Þaet waes wundra sum,
> Þaet hit eal gemealt ise gelicost,
> ðonne forstes bend Faeder onlaeteð,
> onwindeð waelrapas, se geweald hafað
> saela ond maela; Þaet is soð Metod. (1605-11)

> Then the sword began to waste away, the war-blade into battle-icicles, because of the blood shed in that combat. That was a wondrous thing, that it should all melt most like ice when the Father loosens the bonds of frost, unbinds the water-fetters, he who has power over times and seasons. He is the true Lord.

Unlike the former quotation, the latter is a simile clarifying the symbolism of a supernatural event. But in spite of this distinction, they share the same elements. Both stress the melting ice-bonds, the change of seasons, and the concomitant sense of liberation. The two quotations complement each other. The possibility of sailing in the spring, as mentioned in the first, is implied in the melting of ice in the second. In the same way the acknowledgement of God's control over times and seasons in the second passage does not clash with the scop's editorial observation in the first (1135-36), namely that men still annually await the opportunity which the glorious weather of spring affords them. Both descriptions apparently belong to a tradition which is also represented elsewhere in Old English poetry. The gnomic verse of Maxims I in the Exeter Book contains the following passage:

> Forst sceal freosan, fyr wudu meltan,
> eorþe growan, is brycgian,
> waeter helm wegan, wundrum lucan
> eorþan ciþas. An sceal inbindan
> forstes fetre felameahtig god;
> winter sceal geweorpan, weder eft cuman,
> sumor swegle hat, sund unstille.[1] (II, 71-77)

> Frost shall freeze, fire consume wood, earth grow, ice form a bridge, water wear a covering, wondrously lock up the sprouts of the earth. One shall unbind the fetters of frost, God very mighty; winter shall depart, good weather come again, summer brightly hot, the restless sea.

Here the spring details which follow winter are combined in yet another way.

One might expect such imagery to derive from Germanic literary tradition, particularly since it seems to fit climatic conditions in northern Europe; however, this easy assumption loses its credibility when one discovers that patristic writers describe spring in much the same way. Several images that occur in Old English poetry are also used repeatedly by the Fathers. Hippolytus, the first author to express the idea that spring is a figure of the resurrection, already mentioned that according to Jewish tradition the "beginning of months" (cf. Exodus 12:2), the month of the pasch, is the time when "the sailor dares to confront the sea".[2] In a discussion of the octave of Easter Gregory Nazianzen speaks of springtime rebirth and release:

> The sky is its most transparent, the sun at its highest and brightest, the course of the moon at its most brilliant, and the choir of the stars at its purest. The springs run at their clearest, the rivers are most abundant, freed from their fetters

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[1] The sea is here "unstille" because it is no longer ice-locked.

[2] Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, p. 288.

> of ice. The fields are filled with sweet grass, green things spring up, the lamb bounds in the grass. Ships go out from their ports with all the sails filled, . . .[3]

Eusebius in a treatise on the feast of Easter explains why spring is the only season suitable for the resurrection:

> Then the sun begins to run the first part of his course, and the moon at his side, in its full brilliance, transforms the whole course of the night into a luminous day. Ended are the furies of the storms of winter, ended the long nights, ended the floods. Henceforth, in the newness of a shining atmosphere, sailors find the sea calm.[4]

Similar discussions of spring and winter symbolism occur in the paschal homilies of Cyril of Alexandria.[5] The early fifth-century preaching of Gaudentius of Brescia shows that in this respect Greek and Latin churchmen shared the same tradition; with these words he begins a sermon for the Easter vigil:

> Opportuno tempore Dominus Jesus beatissimam festivitatem Paschae voluit celebrari, post autumni nebulam, post horrorem hiemis, ante aestatis ardorem. Oportebat enim Solem Justitiae, Christum, et Judaeorum caliginem, et rigorem Gentilium, ante ardorem futuri judicii, placido Resurrectionis suae lumine dimovere, cunctaque in statum tranquilli primordii revocare, quae fuerant velamine tetro confusa ab illo principe tenebrarum.[6]

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[3] PG 36, col. 620A, quoted in translation by Daniélou, ibid., p.291.

[4] PG 23, col. 696D, quoted in translation, ibid., p. 289. In Willibald's account of the journeys of Boniface very similar details suggest that the patristic imagery of spring was familiar to Anglo-Saxon writers: "Cum vero hibernale iam tempus praeteriret, et calor aestatis candesceret, pristinaque labentis anni renovaretur intentio, omni sollicitudine iter omissum iterando renovare studuit" ("When now the wintertime had passed and the warmth of summer began to glow, and the pristine purpose of the gliding year was renewed, he strove with the utmost solicitude to renew and repeat the journey which he had laid aside"). Vita S. Bonifacii, PL 89, col. 612D.

[5] Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, p. 291.

> The Lord Jesus Christ decreed that the blessed feast of the Pasch should be celebrated at a suitable time, after the fog of autumn, after the sadness of winter, and before the heat of summer. For, indeed, Christ, the Sun of Justice, was to scatter the darkness of Judaism and the ice of paganism before the heat of the future judgment by the peaceful light of his Resurrection, and bring back to the peaceful state of their origin all the things which have been covered with obscurity by the prince of darkness.

The motif of the annual liberation from fetters of ice clearly is a commonplace in the paschal writings of the early Church.

One should keep in mind that the homilies of Eastertide have little significance apart from their relation to the total pattern of redemptive history. To the typological imagination, spring, the resurrection, and the institution of the pasch in Exodus 12 are closely intertwined. Yet another strand, discussed earlier, is the typological view of creation. Gaudentius of Brescia continues from the above-quoted passage with the following explanation:

> Nam veris tempore Deus condidit mundum. Martio enim mense dixit per Moysen Deus: Mensis hic vobis initium mensium, primus est in mensibus anni. Quem mensem verax utique Deus primum non diceret, nisi primus esset; . . . Filius ergo Dei . . . eodem die, eodemque tempore, prostratum mundum propria Resurrectione resuscitat, quo eum prius ipse creaverat ex nihilo.[7]
>
> It is indeed in the springtime that God created the world. And, indeed, it was the month of March that God said to Moses: "This month shall be for you the first of the months of the year." Now the truthful God would not have called this the first month, if it had not been such in fact, . . . This is why the Son of God . . . raised up the fallen world by His own resurrection at the very time in which He first created it out of nothing.

This homily recalls on the eve of Easter that Christ the renewer of

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[6] Sermo I: De Exodi Lectione Primus, PL 20, cols. 843B-45A, quoted in translation by Daniélou, p. 292.

[7] Ibid.

creation is also Christ the creative word of the beginning. Whatever aspect of the history of redemption is being discussed, one is always confronted with the same reality. There is little or no distinction between the theme of a hexameral commentary on the third and fourth days of creation and that of a sermon on the occasion of Easter, the feast marking the fulfilment of the paschal celebration on the fourteenth day of Nisan. These two forms of patristic writing also share the same imagery. In his Hexameron, Ambrose, too, refers to Exodus 12 and to the pasch of the Lord as celebrated in the spring; in the very next sentence he then declares:

> in hoc ergo principio mensium caelum et terram fecit, quod inde mundi capi oportebat exordium. ubi erat opportuna omnibus verna temperies.[8]
>
> Therefore, he created heaven and earth at the time when the months began, from which time it is fitting that the world took its rise. Then there was the mild temperature of spring, a season suitable for all things.

In diction reminding one of the Old English and the patristic descriptions of spring, Ambrose then continues with the contrast between vernal sunshine and the winter's ice:

> unde et annus mundi imaginem nascentis expressit, ut post hibernas glacies atque hiemales caligines serenior solito verni temporis splendor eluceat.
>
> Consequently, the year, too, has the stamp of a world coming to birth, as the splendour of the springtime shines forth all the more clearly because of the winter's ice and darkness now past.

After quoting Genesis 1:11, the account of the creation of plants and trees on the third day, he comments:

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[8] I, 4, 13, in CSEL 32. (The two quotations which follow are also from this source.)

> in quo nobis et moderationis perpetuae divina providentia et celeritas terrae germinantis ad aestimationem vernae suffragatur aetatis. nam etsi quocumque tempore et deo iubere promptum fuit et terrenae oboedire naturae, ut inter hibernas glacies et hiemales pruinas caelestis imperii fotu germinans terra fetum produceret, non erat tamen dispositionis aeternae rigido stricta gelum in virides subito fructus laxare arva atque horrentibus pruinis florulenta miscere.
>
> By this very fact both the constant mildness of divine Providence and the speed in which the earth germinates favour for us the hypothesis of a vernal period. For, although it was in the power of God to ordain creation at any time whatsoever and for earthly nature to obey, so that amid winter's ice and frost earth might bear and produce fruits under the fostering hand of his celestial power, he refrained. It was not in his eternal plan that the land held fast in the rigid bonds of frost should suddenly be released to bear fruits and that blooming plants should mingle with unsightly frosts.

The above miscellany of quotations reveals a glimpse of two closely corresponding totalities, the theological and the imaginative. Wintry darkness and fetters of ice are images of hell and of the power of Satan. The sunshine of spring and the rebirth of nature symbolize the release from daemonica dominatio; the connotations of spring, the season of the creation and the resurrection, are paradisal. The use of the traditional imagery of spring and winter is one manifestation of the unity perceived by the typological imagination. A good example of the resulting iconography in Old English literature occurs in the Andreas poem. After severe torture, the holy man spends the night in a Mermedonian prison, and although there is no indication that it is winter in the realistic sense the poet includes all the features of winter in one brief description:

> Snaw eorðan band
> wintergeworpum. Weder coledon
> heardum haegelscurum, swylce hrim ond forst,
> hare hildstapan, haeleða eðel
> lucon, leoda gesetu. Land waeron freorig

cealdum cylegicelum, clang waeteres þrym
ofer eastreamas, is brycgade
blaece brimrade. Blidheort wunode
eorl unforcuð, elnes gemyndig,
þrist ond þrohtheard in þreanedum
wintercealdan niht. (1255-65)

Snow bound the earth with winter storms; the winds grew cold with harsh hail showers; also rime and frost, hoary warriors, locked up the land of men, the dwellings of the people. The ground was freezing with cold icicles; the strength of the water shrank the streams; ice bridged the black sea-road. The noble earl remained blithe-hearted, mindful of valour, bold and strong in enduring, amid afflictions throughout the winter-cold night.

This winter scene, again with fetters of ice and a fettered sea that one cannot sail upon, does not simply emphasize the fortitude of the hero-saint. It also identifies his imprisonment as suffering inflicted by the powers of hell. The Mermedonians are clearly in league with the devil (e.g. 1168ff., 1297ff.). By firmly resisting all demonic assaults, Andreas is in a sense able to restore paradise:[9] "Geseh he geblowene bearwas standan/ blaedum gehrodene, swa he aer his blod aget" (1448-49, "He beheld blossoming groves that stood adorned with flowers where before he had shed his blood"). Winter implicitly makes way for spring in this moral landscape, and the saint can complete his redemptive activity. Andreas therefore expresses his gratitude to the Lord of victory, by whose grace the transformation occurred (1450-54). As in the above-quoted Maxims and in Beowulf 1609-11, it is the Creator who loosens bonds of ice.

The use of similar winter and spring details in Old English and patristic literature is all the more remarkable in view of B.K. Martin's suggestion that the same details do not appear to belong to some common

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[9]"The immediate result of the hero's struggle . . . is the appearance of a green, blossoming plain, part of the original Paradise." Alvin A. Lee, The Guest-Hall of Eden, p. 94.

Germanic wordhoard of ancient formulaic expressions.[10] He shows that they do occur frequently in Latin writings. His list of parallels includes medieval Christian authors such as Isidore, Venantius, and Alcuin, as well as the classical poets.[11] There is every indication that the fettering of the world until winter departs and the icy bonds are loosened is a traditional Mediterranean motif and that it was interpreted and employed in a Christian manner as an aspect of God's orderly government of the universe. Especially the releasing of fetters was therefore recognized as a potential figure of divine activity in the redemption. It is highly probable that the adaptation of traditional classical images to Christian symbolism was aided by the references to winter that are found in the Scriptures. Psalm 147 calls upon Jerusalem to praise the Lord who not only sends snow and ice but also disperses them: "Emittet verbum suum et liquefaciet ea, flabit spiritus eius et fluent aquae" (18, "He shall send out his word and shall melt them: his wind shall blow, and the waters shall run"). In the classical descriptions of icy fetters that are relaxed in spring, Christian scholars may well have seen indications of the Creator's power as described in Psalm 147.[12]

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[10] "Aspects of Winter in Latin and Old English Poetry", JEGP, 68 (1969), 380.

[11] Ibid., pp. 380-82. See also D. Scheludko, "Zur Geschichte des Natureinganges bei den Trobadors", ZfSL, 60 (1935). See especially Part I, "Frühlingsmotiv in der lateinischen Lyrik bis zum Anfang des 12.Jahrhunderts" (pp. 259-71). Scheludko's article is mentioned by Chauncey Wood, Chaucer and the Country of the Stars, p. 168, n. 10, in a discussion of the typological significance of the spring details and the April date in the General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales. See pp. 161-72.

The question remains whether the similarities between patristic images of spring and those in the two previously quoted passages from Beowulf are more than superficial or coincidental. As for the Finnsburg episode, in all its details the seasonal reference suggests the influence of typological symbolism. Spring, according to the scop, is the time when the melting of ice makes it possible to set out on voyages. We have seen that icy bonds are a patristic commonplace and that Gregory Nazianzen, Eusebius, and Hippolytus all happen to state that spring is the time for sailing, for that is when the storms of winter cease and the bonds of ice are released. The "wuldortorht weder" or glory-bright sky mentioned in Beowulf 1136 provides a further hint. The noun "wuldor", the Old English equivalent of the Latin gloria, is invariably used in Beowulf in a specifically religious sense; in fact, in extant Old English literature "wuldor" (with its compounds) is usually reserved for the description of a divine attribute.[13] Finally, the expression "oþ ðaet oþer

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[12] In Psalm 147:16-17 the Creator is also the one who produces the conditions of winter; the same idea is expressed in the Old English Menologium, l. 205. But the control of the Almightly over the seasons does not take away from the fact that fetters of ice can be associated with hell. In either perspective the same scriptural winter details are employed. Job 37:10 (Vulgate) also suggests that God not only creates frost but also causes the waters to flow freely again in the spring (see also vss. 6, 9). Job 38:29-30 provides another example of icy fetters: "In similitudinem lapidis aquae durantur, et superficies abyssi constringitur" (30, "The waters are hardened like a stone, and the surface of the deep is congealed"). In Ecclesiasticus 43:14-22, a detailed description of winter, another example is found: "Frigidus ventus aquilo flavit, et gelavit crystallus ab aqua; super omnem congregationem aquarum requiescet, et sicut lorica induet se aquis" (22, "The cold north wind bloweth, and the water is congealed into crystal; upon every gathering together of waters it shall rest, and shall clothe the waters as a breastplate"). For other, more incidental, references to snow and ice in Scripture, see Exodus 16:14, Psalm 148:8, Daniel 3:68-70 (the canticle of the three), Wisdom 16:22, 29.

com/ gear in geardas" (1133-34, "until another year came into the dwellings") may indicate that spring was considered to be the beginning of the year. This medieval mode of reckoning time -- one of several systems then in use -- was more than a reflection of the annual cycle of nature in which spring is the season of renewal.[14] The religious significance is primary. The phenomena of nature derive their appropriateness from typology, rather than vice versa. The month of the creation and the resurrection is also the month of the Exodus, and therefore, in spite of astronomical variations and complications, the Mosaic injunction still applied: "Mensis iste, vobis principium mensium: primus erit in mensibus anni" (Exodus 12:2, "This month shall be to you the beginning of months: it shall be the first in the months of the year"). Spring is the yearly celebration of God's might and "wuldor".

The tragic elements in the Finnsburg episode may cause one to forget that the tale is recited by Hrothgar's scop to celebrate Beowulf's victory over Grendel. Hengest, too, is a successful hero, while Finn's Frisians are the villains. The Danes are the victims of an attack, in which Hnaef, their leader, is killed. But they are valiant warriors and by a great display of strength, evidently not expected by the Frisians, they force Finn to come to terms with them:

> Wig ealle fornam
> Finnes þegnas nemne feaum anum,
> þaet he ne mehte on þaem meðelstede
> wig Hengeste wiht gefeohtan,

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[13]Bosworth and Toller, An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, s.v. wuldor.

[14]See Reginald L. Poole, "The Beginning of the Year in the Middle Ages", Proceedings of the British Academy, 10 (1921-23), 116.

ne þa wealafe wige forþringan
þeodnes ðegne; ac hig him geþingo budon. (1080-85)

War carried off all Finn's thanes except for only a few, so that he could not at all continue fighting Hengest on the battlefield; nor could he by warfare protect his woeful remnant from the prince's thane (i.e., from Hengest, the thane of Hnaef); but they (the Frisians) offered them (the Danes) conditions.

The Danes have our sympathy. Left without a lord, "þeodenleas" (1103, cf. 15), they are forced by necessity to submit to the settlement.[15] Ignominy is all on the side of the Frisians. They are the ones responsible for the treacherous assault upon their guests, the kinsmen of their queen. Within their own homeland they are now compelled to share power with the Danes. Both parties are bound by mutual oaths, but it is clear from the scop's account that the agreement is likely to be broken by the Frisians rather than by the Danes. Finn's people must endure the dishonour of their faithlessness:

Ða hie getruwedon on twa healfa
faeste frioduwaere. Fin Hengeste
elne unflitme aðum benemde,
þaet he þa wealafe weotena dome
arum heolde, þaet ðaer aenig mon
wordum ne worcum waere ne braece,
ne þurh inwitsearo aefre gemaenden,
ðeah hie hira beaggyfan banan folgedon
ðeodenlease, þa him swa geþearfod waes. (1095-1103)

Then on both sides they put their faith in a firm compact of peace. With oaths, with undisputed zeal, Finn declared to Hengest that he would

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[15] R.W. Chambers in his Beowulf: An Introduction raises the question, "If Finn made a treacherous attack upon Hnaef, and slew him, how did it come that Hengest, and Hnaef's other men, made terms with their murderous host?" (p. 263), and proceeds to answer it by arguing that Finn is not to blame (pp. 270-72, 283-84) but that the Eotens (identified as Jutes) are the agressors (p. 276). As R.E. Williams in The Finn Episode in Beowulf points out in reply, the poet fails "to express any distaste at Hengest's action" and in l. 1103 simply indicates that the Danes were in a hopeless position (p. 57). Regarding the identity of the Eotens, see the discussion below.

> treat the woeful remnant with honour, according to the judgment of the councillors, that no man there should break the agreement by word or deed, nor should they (the Frisians)[16] ever mention it in malice, though they (the Danes), deprived of their lord, followed the slayer of their ring-giver, since the necessity was laid upon them.

Finn and the Frisians are the villains who must guard themselves against "inwitsearo", enmity or malice. It has already been shown that they are not to be trusted. Hardly able to bear the indignity of their situation, they must swear not to provoke the Danes to renewed fighting by reminding them of their lordless state. In the lines that follow the above quotation, the malice of the Frisians continues to be in focus:

> gyf þonne Frysna hwylc frecnan spraece
> ðaes morþorhetes myndgiend waere,
> þonne hit sweordes ecg seðan scolde. (1104-06)

> if then any of the Frisians should by rash speech call to mind murderous hate, then the edge of the sword had to settle it.

According to the Danish scop, the treaty is here in danger of being broken by the Frisians. His words imply that by contrast his fellow tribesmen could be relied upon to be faithful to it. In lines 1096-1106 we read what Finn has to swear to Hengest, for we witness the entire episode through the eyes of a Dane. Line 1107 (unemended) reveals that we are to be interested in a single oath, that of Finn: "Aþ waes geaefned" ("The oath was sworn"). Being concerned about the security of the Danes, the scop lists the stipulations that the enemy agrees to.

If we accept that the Finnsburg episode is a tale sung in praise of a nation's heroes and in condemnation of its perfidious foes, it may

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[16]This translation follows the reading suggested by E.V.K. Dobbie and others. See Beowulf and Judith, notes on Beowulf 1101, 1102.

be possible to interpret the concluding events along the same lines. When spring finally comes, Hengest is naturally eager to take revenge before sailing home. But our hero, being no faithless Frisian, feels bound to abide by the agreement made with Finn.[17] We know that the Frisians are also under pressure; some of them would likewise welcome open conflict before their guests depart. One of the Frisians, Hunlafing, takes his chance. In the mutual gift-giving that the two tribes have practised as part of their treaty (1089-1094), Hunlafing, perhaps representing his king, gives Hengest a sword which was well-known among the Eotenas or Frisians.[18] It may well have been used to slay many of them. We may speculate further that it was the sword of Hnaef or of another prominent Dane and that it came into the possession of the Frisians when its owner was killed in battle. By giving this particular sword, Hunlafing then violates the agreement, for he in this way arouses memories of the murderous hate (1105). Hunlafing's act must be settled by the sword (1106). The perfidy of the foe solves Hengest's problem. He is now free to avenge his dead lord while still remaining a true hero who

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[17]This particular element of the proposed interpretation is also suggested by Schücking. See Dobbie's note on Beowulf 1142-45: "Hengest was meditating how he might perform his duty of revenge without breaking the oath he had made with Finn."

[18]In l. 2194 we read of a sword which Hygelac "on Biowulfes bearm alegde" ("laid in Beowulf's bosom", possibly on his knees). In l. 1144 the giver of the sword performs a similar act: "billa selest on bearm dyde" ("placed the best of swords in his bosom"); i.e., Hengest receives the sword in what is ostensibly an occasion of ceremonious gift-exchange. In this case it may well be an instance of the giving of treasure which was agreed upon in the treaty. If so, it was probably a public act, witnessed also by Guthlaf and Oslaf (see below). Although it is a widely held view that Hunlafing is a Dane (see Chambers, Beowulf: An Introduction, pp. 252-53), the evidence for it is certainly not conclusive.

keeps his word.

The course of events as outlined above is not an attempt to explore the motivations of Hengest and Hunlafing in psychological fashion; it is simply an elaboration of the steps which the scop himself presents to his audience within eight lines:

> he to gyrnwraece
> swiðor þohte þonne to saelade,
> gif he torngemot þurhteon mihte,
> þaet he Eotena bearn inne gemunde.
> Swa he ne forwyrnde weorodraedende,
> þonne him Hunlafing hildeleoman,
> billa selest on bearm dyde;
> þaes waeron mid Eotenum ecge cuðe. (1138-45)

He thought rather of vengeance for injury than of the sea journey, if he could bring about a battle in which he would be mindful of the sons of the Eotens. So he did not refuse it (i.e., battle) to the ruler of the host when Hunlafing put battle-light, the best of swords, on his knees; its edges were known among the Eotens.

Whatever the exact meaning of "worold raedenne" (emended by Klaeber to read "weorodraedende") may be, the central fact of this passage is clear. The verb "forwyrnde" indicates that when Hunlafing gave him the sword, Hengest let things take their course. According to the interpretation suggested above, he did not at all refuse -- and was, in fact, eager -- to follow the stipulations of the treaty.

Hunlafing's boldness apparently had the desired effect on Guthlaf and Oslaf, for the scop continues:

> Swylce ferhðfrecan Fin eft begeat
> sweordbealo sliðen aet his selfes ham,
> siþðan grimne gripe Guðlaf ond Oslaf
> aefter saesiðe sorge maendon,
> aetwiton weana dael; ne meahte waefre mod
> forhabban in hreþre. (1146-51)

Thus in turn did cruel death by the sword come upon bold-hearted Finn in his own home after Guthlaf and Oslaf uttered their lament

> about the grim attack which followed the sea journey, and were angry at their portion of woes; nor could their restless spirit restrain itself within them.

When the sword was given to Hengest, at least two of his men, Guthlaf and Oslaf, looked on and were reminded of the treachery that occurred after the Danes had first arrived in Friesland ("grimne gripe . . ./ aefter saesiðe"). Again, Hunlafing has openly renewed the conflict in a manner which the treaty was designed to prevent. He has unleashed the restless spirit of the Danes in such a way that, according to the compact, there is no need for Hengest to impose restraint. As the word "swylce" (1146) indicates, there is a connection between Hengest's willingness to let things take the course sanctioned by the treaty and the slaying of Finn. The Danes, including Guthlaf and Oslaf, are within their rights. To the very end of the Finnsburg episode the Scylding warriors behave as heroes should, and they are appropriately rewarded. When Finn is slain they not only take his queen back to her people but also bring with them all the ornamented necklaces and precious jewels (1157, "sigla searogimma") that they were able to plunder from Finn's dwelling. Following their springtime victory, they sail home under glory-bright skies.

Now that we have seen the coherence of the Finnsburg story, one may wonder whether the spring details (1129-38) cannot be sufficiently accounted for in terms of universal human experience, in which the association of winter with suffering and treachery and of spring with liberation and victory surely have an archetypal appropriateness. There is, however, some evidence that the scop -- or, rather, the Beowulf poet -- fashions this raw material in a manner influenced by typological symbolism.

When he four times refers to the Frisians as Eotens (1072, 1088, 1141, 1145), he may well be implying that, as in the commonplace patristic exegesis of Scripture, any wicked character in some way represents the devil. In the scholarly debate on the meaning of "Eotenas" it has frequently been admitted that the word can be translated quite literally as "giants". It is not at all necessary to assume, for example, that the poet must have intended them to be Jutes,[19] for the connotations which the word "eotenas" has elsewhere in Beowulf suggest that the poet introduced the so-called Finnsburg digression with impeccable artistic sense. Grendel, whom we have already seen as death-shadow or devil, is also called a "eoten" (761; cf. 668, "eotonweard" or "watch against a giant"). Moreover, he and the Frisians are guilty of the same fundamental sin: they are the enemies of peace and brotherhood. Just as Grendel sought to destroy a blissful society based on kinship, so the Frisians tear at the social fabric. Finn's marriage to the Danish princess Hildeburh should have ensured good relations between the two tribes, but in their perfidy Finn's people violate the peace-weaving function of such kinship bonds. Like Grendel, they are essentially fratricides.[20] The stylized moral antithesis between Danes and Frisians is already established

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[19]Chambers states that as a common noun Eoten does indeed mean "giant", but, not seeing how this translation can be applied to the Frisians or any other tribe, he assumes that it must be an incorrect scribal transliteration of "Jute" (dative plural Eotum mistaken as Eotenum). See Beowulf: An Introduction, p. 261, also n. 1. Among those rejecting the Jute hypothesis are R.E. Williams, The Finn Episode in Beowulf, pp. 139-43, and R.E. Kaske, "The Eotenas in Beowulf", in R.P. Creed, ed., Old English Poetry, pp. 285-310.

[20]Note that the Beowulf poet identifies eotenas as the offspring of the arch-fratricide Cain. See ll. 106-14.

in the opening lines of the Finnsburg tale:

> Ne huru Hildeburh herian þorfte
> Eotena treowe; unsynnum weard
> beloren leofum aet lindplegan
> bearnum ond broðrum. (1071-74)

> Nor indeed did Hildeburh have reason to praise the faith of the Eotens; she, without guilt, was deprived of her loved ones at the shield-play, a son and a brother.

Right from the start the audience is to note the devilish characteristic of the Frisians, their faithlessness.[21] Within one line this vice is contrasted with the virtue of Hildeburh, who, being Danish, is the guiltless victim ("Eotena treowe; unsynnum weard"). Furthermore, the tragic results of Eotena treow are manifested in the destruction of inter-tribal brotherhood as Hildeburh loses her Danish brother and her Frisian-born son. Finn's people are indeed Eotenas, giants in the true diabolic sense of the word. They are linked with the fiends in hell, of which Grendel (e.g. 101) is one. The nature of Eotenas confirms that the Finnsburg story derives its remarkable unity from the consistent development of what the poet interprets to be its typologically influenced Christian theme. The spring imagery of liberation marks the season of triumph over daemonica dominatio. Hence the tale is particularly fitting for the celebration of Beowulf's parallel victory over Grendel's demonic power.[22]

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[21] Faithlessness is the standard diabolic attribute in Old English poetry. As one of many possible examples, note that the fallen angels in Genesis A are called "werlogan" (36, "faithless ones").

[22] The appropriateness of the Finnsburg episode as a victory lay does not at all invalidate the frequently recognized symbolic juxtaposition of Hildeburh and Wealhtheow. See e.g. Edward B. Irving, A Reading of Beowulf, pp. 134, 137, where the precarious nature of peace and the instability of social harmony are emphasized. The theme of transience is indeed very dominant in the poem. Thus when Heorot is built, its

The description of the sword-blade that melts away after the slaying of Grendel's mother presents a more clear-cut example of typologically significant spring imagery (1605-11, quoted above). Here the poet states unequivocally that God the Father is the one who loosens bonds of ice or water-fetters, for he has power over times and seasons (1611,"saela ond maela"). The latter expression recalls the power by which the sun and moon were called into being on the fourth day, when the Creator declared on the occasion of the typologically important vernal equinox of the beginning: "Sint in signa et tempora, et dies et annos" (Genesis 1:14, "Let them be for signs, and for seasons and for days and years"). Spring imagery offers a suitable reason for drawing attention to God's control over the seasons -- connected,in turn, with Christ's victory at Easter. Since the allusion to the creative word could presumably remind the audience of the connection between the fourth day and the resurrection, the details of the spring simile are highly fitting as a comment on the transformation of the wintry landscape which the defeat of Grendel's mother brings about. When Beowulf, Hrothgar, and their party first approach the rime-covered woods around the mere,

> Ofereode þa æþelinga bearn
> steap stanhliðo, stige nearwe,
> enge anpaðas, uncuð gelad,
> neowle naessas, nicorhusa fela. (1408-11)

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destruction is anticipated (82-83); when Beowulf has destroyed Grendel's mother, Hrothgar responds with an account of the transitoriness of life (e.g. 1761-1760). In an analogous way the defeat of Grendel is followed by various reminders that in this fallen world every victory is fleeting and every bond of peace fragile. Nevertheless, the great banquet scene -- in which the Finnsburg episode is presented by a scop -- serves to celebrate a worthwhile victory. In our reaction to elegiac or tragic elements in the poem we must do justice to the poet's praise of the heroic life. In Beowulf all is not vanity.

> The son(s)[23] of princes passed over the steep rocky cliffs,
> narrow paths, the trails where only one could go at a time,
> the unknown road, steep headlands, many lairs of water-monsters.

It is worth noting that later, when Beowulf has emerged as victor and proceeds to Heorot with his loyal Geats to present Grendel's head to Hrothgar, the return journey is effortless by comparison. Instead of climbing laboriously over cliffs, in single file along narrow trails in the wilderness, "gumdryhten mid/ modig on gemonge meodowongas traed" (1642-43, "Their lord, high-spirited, walked in their company over the mead-plains"). Beowulf's success has transformed the fear which occupied individuals into a communal joy. The "uncuð gelad" or unknown road has become the well-known way (1634, "cuþe straete"). The wintry landscape of hell has made way for a setting in which social harmony dominates. Heorot is once again the scene of festivities and, as suggested by the simile describing the melting sword, winter has changed to spring. The Christ-like hero has restored a paradise.

The aspects of Beowulf's heroism which render such a conclusion all the more credible are dealt with in Chapter IV, but to show that the above-mentioned kind of transformation is influenced by biblical typology a brief discussion of the unknown path in the Old English Exodus poem may be useful. In the Exodus the Israelites on their way from Egypt reach the moorland wilderness of the Guðmyrce by way of a narrow and unfamiliar path: "enge anpaðas, uncuð gelad" (58, identical with Beowulf 1410, as has been widely noted). The phrase "on uncuð gelad" is later used as an

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[23]"Bearn" is either plural (the entire company) or singular (Hrothgar or Beowulf). See Dobbie's note on l. 1408. In the present discussion it can be taken to refer to either the whole party or Beowulf.

elaboration of "ofer grenne grund" (312-13, "over a green plain), so that the one unknown path of the faithful would appear to have two contrasting aspects. First there is the narrow path that leads to some sort of confrontation with demonic power in a hellish landscape. It is the narrow way of Matthew 7:14, which one must follow to achieve everlasting rest.[24] Such rest is in principle brought about through baptism and its types. In the Exodus poem the prerequisite baptismal victory takes place at "AEthanes byrig" (66) or Etham. In view of the common patristic connotations of Etham, it is highly appropriate that the way towards it is characterized by "nearwe" (68), or difficulties, but that the way leading from it, even before the crossing of the Red Sea, is a straight or level highway (126, "rihte straete"). Etham represents the house of the strong one whose vessels can be plundered only after he has first been bound (cf. Matthew 12:29); it is the northern stronghold of the devil.[25] When the children of Israel, in

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[24]This symbolism is a Christian and patristic commonplace. See e.g. Augustine's allusion to Matthew 7:14 in Enarrationes in Psalmos, CCSL, 39, p. 901. "Sed . . . si tribulationum abundantiam cogitemus, et in qua ambulemus via cognoscamus (si tamen in illa ambulamus), quam sit angusta, et per pressuras atque tribulationes perducat ad requiem sempiternam . . ." ("But . . . if we think of the abundance of tribulations, and observe the way in which we are walking, [if indeed we are walking in it], how narrow it is and how through difficulties and tribulations it leads to everlasting rest . . .").

[25]Augustine identifies Etham as follows in his commentary on Psalm 73:15 (CCSL 39, p. 1016): "Quid est Etham? Verbum enim Hebraeum est. Quid interpretatur Etham? Fortis, robustus. Quis, est iste fortis et robustus, cuius fluvios siccat Deus? Quis nisi ille ipse draco? Nemo enim intrat in domum fortis, ut vasa illius diripiat, nisi prius alligaverit fortem. Ipse est fortis, de virtute sua praesumens, et Deum deserens; ipse est fortis, qui ait: Ponam sedem meam ad aquilonem, et ero similis Altissimo. ("What is Etham? For the word is Hebrew. What is the interpretation of Etham? Strong, vigorous. Who is this strong and

obedience to a specific command not found in the Pentateuch, hasten towards Etham, their journey has typological connotations which parallel and thus accentuate the baptismal meaning of the transitus itself. Although their path remains "uncuð", at Etham the chosen people can receive the cloud pillars that are to guide them on the uncharted journey.[26]

Exodus 58 may have been suggested by a scriptural expression: "Sed circumduxit per viam deserti" (Exodus 13:18, "But [God] led them by the way of the desert").[27] In this connection it is interesting that in

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vigorous one whose rivers God dries up? Who but that very dragon [see Psalm 73:14]? For "no one enters into the house of the strong one to plunder his vessels unless he has first bound the strong one" [Matthew 12:29]. This is the strong one relying on his own worth and forsaking God; this is the strong one who says, "I will place my throne in the north, and I will be like the Most High" [Isaiah 14:13].") In an article supplementing his edition of Exodus, Edward B. Irving also recognizes the above etymology for Etham, referring to Cassiodorus and Pseudo-Bede in support of it. Irving further notes that in the Lambeth Psalter "Ethan" is glossed as "sceaþan" (Psalm 73:15, "devil"), and he even suggests that the meaning "fortis" for Etham is probably reflected in Exodus 67: "maegnes maeste mearclandum on" ("greatest in strength in the borderlands"). Nevertheless he concludes, "Such diabolical associations do not seem to be used very specifically, however." "New Notes on the Old English Exodus", Anglia, 90 (1972), 298. In the present discussion the opposite is proposed.

[26]As a result of Christ's plundering of the devil's northern hoard, the city of the north becomes the universal church. See Augustine on Psalm 47:3, CCSL, 38, p. 540. Hence the presentation of the encampment of Etham is marked by an unusual concentration of ecclesia symbolism (Exodus 80b-88a). At Etham the Israelites become the Church as ark and the Church as tent or tabernacle. For a philological argument that the "segle" of line 81 can simultaneously be the sail of the ark and the veil of the tabernacle, see Peter J. Lucas, "The Cloud in the Interpretation of the Old English Exodus," ES, 51 (1970), 272-311. Note also that in Hebrews 8:2 the antitype of all earthly tabernacles is the true tabernacle "quod fixit Dominus et non homo" ("which the Lord hath pitched, and not man"). This typological perspective is reflected in Exodus 82-85.

[27]Edward B. Irving, The Old English Exodus, p. 71. Another possible source is Psalm 76:19-20, mentioned by Alvin A. Lee, The Guest-Hall of

Joshua 3:4 the crossing of the Jordan -- like the crossing of the Red Sea, a type of baptism -- is also associated with an unknown path.[28] The Book of Wisdom, in which the departure from Egypt is dealt with at length, provides an instance that may be more directly relevant: ". . . ignis ardentem columnam ducem habuerunt ignotae viae, et solem sine laesura boni hospitii praestitisti" (18:3, "they received a burning pillar of fire for a guide of the way which they knew not, and thou gavest them a harmless sun of a good entertainment"). An Old English parallel to this ignota via occurs in Psalm 77:52 of the Paris Psalter, where in an elaboration not found in the Vulgate the Israelites are said to have been led along unknown paths ("wegas uncuðe") in their trek from Egypt to the Red Sea.[29] An "uncuð gelad" or ignota via would seem to be

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Eden, pp. 47-48, n. 33.

[28]"Sitque inter vos et arcam spatium cubitorum duum milium, ut procul videre possitis et nosse per quam viam ingrediamini, quia prius non ambulastis per eam" ("And let there be between you and the ark the space of two thousand cubits: that you may see it afar off, and know which way you must go: for you have not gone this way before").

[29]See also Psalm 106, which deals with deliverance from the shadow of death and alludes to the Exodus from Egypt. An unknown path is mentioned in vs. 4; in a wilderness those in need of redemption "found not the way of a city for their habitation" ("viam civitatis habitaculi non invenerunt"). The Paris Psalter reads: "ne meahton ceastre weg cuðne mittan,/ þe hi eardunge on genaman." The introduction of the word "cuðne" shows that we have here another instance of the "uncuð gelad". As in the Exodus poem, it becomes a straight or level road, for the Lord "led them into the right [or straight] way, that they might go to a city of habitation" (106:7, "deduxit eos in viam rectam, ut irent in civitatem habitationis"). In the Paris Psalter, in viam rectam is rendered as "on rihtne weg". In the Psalm, as in Exodus 126, the "uncuð gelad" becomes a straight highway (cf. "rihte straete"). Jerome comments: "Et deduxit eos in viam rectam: ut per hanc viam . . . irent in civitatem habitationis, in ecclesiam eius" ("'And he led them into the right [or straight] way', that by this way . . . they might enter the city of habitation, his Church"). Tractatus de Psalmo CVI, CCSL 78, p. 198. Since the straight road in both

an appropriate feature of a typologically charged situation.

As we might expect, the imagery of salvation is intensified in the presentation of the crossing, the central event in the Old English Exodus. Here the unknown path is at the same time a level plain, for a new creation emerges from the depths:[30]

> Wegas syndon dryge
> haswe herestraete, holm gerymed,
> ealde staðolas, þa ic aer ne gefraegn
> ofer middangeard men geferan,
> fage feldas. (283-87)

> The paths are dry, the highways grey, the sea swept aside; the ancient foundations, of which I have never in the world heard before that men passed over them, radiant fields.

The dry ground is analogous to the dry land which first appeared when God spoke the words, ". . . et appareat arida" (". . . and let the dry land appear"), and the waters were gathered into one place on the third day of creation (Genesis 1:9). The "ealde staðolas" or ancient foundations call to mind the references in the Psalms to the foundations of the earth, especially in Psalm 17:16, "Et apparuerunt fontes aquarum, et revelata sunt fundamenta orbis terrarum ab increpatione tua, Domine, ab inspiratione spiritus irae tuae" ("Then the fountains of waters appeared, and the foundations of the world were discovered: At thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the spirit of thy wrath"). From a typological perspective it is

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the Psalm and the poem is linked with the symbolism of the ecclesia (see our discussion of Etham), it is indeed probable that "rihte straete" (126) is the Old English rendering of recta via, and, further, that the known and unknown paths in Exodus as well as Beowulf witness to the richness of texture which these poems owe to typology.

[30]The reminders of primal creation in the depths of the sea are briefly noted by Alvin A. Lee, The Guest-Hall of Eden, p. 42.

fascinating to observe that Psalm 17 appears almost verbatim in II Samuel 22 as David's thanksgiving for his deliverance from four giants. Evidently a cluster of allusions to the drying up of the Red Sea in imagery that recalls the creation -- when the foundations of the world were first laid and the waters were first parted -- forms the psalmist's proper response to the destruction of the devil and his ilk. In the Exodus poem the brief description of the dry path with its reference to the ancient foundations of the world is in much the same way connected with the downfall of a common type of the devil, the Pharaoh of Egypt.

A third detail in the above quotation from Exodus is the radiance of the fields at the bottom of the Red Sea -- related in kind to the radiance of the plain of paradise as described elsewhere in Old English poetry.[31] As recent studies have shown, the greenness of this path or plain -- not mentioned until line 312 -- is a feature it shares with other, mostly later, paths in medieval literature that represent paradise or lead to heaven.[32] It seems not to have been recognized that the Book of Wisdom is the likely source of this tradition; in its treatment of the transitus the dry sea bottom sprouts forth as a meadow (19:7-8):

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[31] E.g. in Genesis A, 165, 171, 196, 213. Since the plain is in Exodus also the path of God's chosen people, it has a possible parallel in Proverbs 4:18, "Iustorum autem semita quasi lux splendens, procedit et crescit usque ad perfectam diem" ("But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards, and increaseth even to perfect day"). In Exodus, too, the just are travelling towards a state of perfection. The Promised Land is a type of heaven or paradise (cf. ll. 542-48).

[32] See Hugh T. Keenan, "Exodus 312: 'The Green Street of Paradise'", NM, 71 (1970), 455-60, as well as Fred C. Robinson, "The Old English Genesis, ll. 1136-37", Archiv, 204 (1967), 267-68. Note also the "grôni uuang,/ paradise gelîc" (3135-36, "green plain, like paradise") in the Old Saxon Heliand.

> Nam nubes castra eorum obumbrabat, et ex aqua, quae ante erat, terra arida apparuit, et in mari Rubro via sine impedimento, et campus germinans de profundo nimio; per quem omnis natio transivit, quae tegebatur tua manu, videntes tua mirabilia et monstra.
>
> For a cloud overshadowed their camp, and where water was before, dry land appeared, and in the Red Sea a way without hindrance, and out of the great deep a springing [germinating, sprouting forth with green shoots] field: Through which all the nation passed which was protected with thy hand, seeing thy miracles and wonders.

This passage is an extended allusion to the appearance of dry land, terra arida, and to the first growth of green grass, herba virens, on the third day (Genesis 1:9-13). Like the green grass on which Adam once walked (Genesis 1136-37), the path prepared on the sea-bottom is a paradisal via sine impedimento. Already in the Book of Wisdom the "uncuð gelad" through the Red Sea was metaphorically identified with the primal creation.[33]

In Exodus the "uncuð gelad" points to the poet's interpretation of the departure from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea as a type of baptism, for it is the unknown path associated with the defeat of the devil and with the resulting new creation. This brief discussion, which suggests that even the more or less peripheral details of the poem can be typologically explained, may also shed light on Beowulf 1410. Beowulf, too, leads a troop along an "uncuð gelad" to an encounter with the

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[33]Further evidence of such identification in Jewish tradition is found in a Hebrew prayer for the last day of Passover in which the bottom of the Red Sea is linked with the original paradise: "and he rebuked the Red Sea, and the raging waves dried up, and they (the Israelites) walked through abysses as on paved roads; on both sides he brought up trees laden with fruit, and he caused sweet springs to gush out for them in the abyss, and perfume of sweet spices to spread its scent before them." Quoted by M. Gutmann in his German translation of the Book of Wisdom (Altona, 1841), and, in turn, cited in Joseph Reider, ed. and trans., The Book of Wisdom, p. 218.

demonic. Just as in Exodus, the path in Beowulf becomes in its second aspect a straight and level road. In Exodus the "enge anpaðas" are not associated with a wintry landscape, although on their way to the devil's stronghold the Israelites quite properly travel north (68). After his victory in the mere, Beowulf and his men can walk over a green and grassy plain (1643, cf. 1881) which, as the word "meodowongas" may suggest, is a paradise covered with the flowers of spring. Like Moses and his people, who in their situation are also victorious, they tread the vernal plain of a new creation.

Other victory plains in Old English poetry help to corroborate our discussion. On the occasion when wicked Mermedonians are destroyed by a miraculous deluge, Andreas passes through the water on dry ground:

> Him waes gearu sona
> þurh streamraece straet gerymed.
> Smeolt waes se sigewang, symble waes dryge
> folde fram flode, swa his fot gestop. (1579-82)

> A street was at once cleared, ready for him, through the water-course; pleasant was the victory-plain. Wherever his foot trod, the ground was dry from the flood.

The "smeolt sigewang" is comparable to the green fields at the bottom of the Red Sea, and thus also to the mead-plains in Beowulf. In Guthlac A the green plain is similarly associated with a triumph over demonic power. After Guthlac has resisted the efforts of fiends to imprison him in hell -- "in the dreadful dwelling, the deep abysses down beneath the headlands" (562-63, "in þaet atule hus,/ niþer under naessas neole grundas") -- he is rewarded by being borne along to a plain of victory:

> Smolt waes se sigewong ond sele niwe,
> faeger fugla reord, folde geblowen;
> geacas gear budon. Guþlac moste

eadig ond onmod eardes brucan.
Stod se grena wong in godes waere. (742-46)

Pleasant was the victory-plain and new the hall, delightful the sound of birds, blossoming the land. Cuckoos proclaimed spring. Guthlac, blessed and steadfast, could enjoy his dwelling. The green plain stood in God's keeping.

As in Beowulf, the defeat of fiends or monsters causes the attention of the poet to shift from the cliffs and headlands connected with hell to the mead-plains of paradise.

In Guthlac A the imaginative force of the "grena wong" is made unusually explicit. The poet clearly associates it with the passing of the symbolic winter of hell, for he depicts a flowering vernal plain in which cuckoos announce the springtime beginning of a new year. The passage in question appears to be derived from an element in the description of the blossoming spring-garden of the Song of Songs, a familiar type of the new creation:[34] "Iam enim hiems transiit, imber abiit et recessit, flores apparuerunt in terra nostra, . . . vox turturis audita est in terra nostra, ficus protulit grossos suos, vineae florentes dederunt odorem suum" (2:11-13, "For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land, . . . the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land: The fig tree hath put forth her green figs: the vines in flower yield their sweet smell"). This is the very garden in which the timbered hall of the ecclesia (1:16) is situated. It is the pleasant plain which compares to the "meodowongas"

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[34]In the Procatechesis of Cyril of Jerusalem the catechumens are understood to be on the threshold of the vernal garden of paradise. The springtime baptismal rite is to allow them to enter the new creation. The blossoming plain is linked with the royal hall where the eucharistic banquest is to take place. Cyril's allusions to the Song of Songs are pointed out by Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, p. 193.

in Beowulf, with Heorot in their centre. In Guthlac A the analogous "sigewong" is the setting of yet another such hall-building ("sele niwe"). As for the voice of the turtle dove in the Song of Songs, in Guthlac A it has become the sound of cuckoos ("geacas") -- a substitution which, according to W.F. Bolton, we also find in The Husband's Message.[35] A traditional harbinger of spring,[36] the cuckoo is a fitting denizen of a paradisal plain. A further link with the vernal setting of the newly created earth is evident in the use of the adjective "sigehreðig" to describe Guthlac upon his return from hell: "Sigehreðig cwom/ bytla to þam beorge" (732-33, "Exulting in victory the builder [of his dwelling] came to the barrow"). In the creation hymn sung after Heorot was built, "sigehreþig" (Beowulf 94) is applied to the Creator-Redeemer, in allusion to the patristic exegesis of Genesis 1. As we have seen, the epithet derives its appropriateness from the Easter victory of Christ.[37]

Since Guthlac acts in imitation of Christ, his "sigewong" is essentially the green victory-plain of primal creation. Indeed, the

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[35]"The Wife's Lament and The Husband's Message: A Reconsideration Revisited", Archiv, 205 (1969), 338, 345. Bolton makes detailed use of Bede's commentary on the Song of Songs to confirm the conclusions which M.J. Swanton arrived at by a thematic approach, namely that The Husband's Message is a statement in which Christ responds to the Church in exile. See Swanton, "The Wife's Lament and The Husband's Message: A Reconsideration", Anglia, 82 (1964), 269-290. Bolton remarks at the end of his article: "The ecclesiastical culture of Anglo-Saxon England still has much to tell us about its vernacular literature" (p. 351), which includes Beowulf.

[36]As English counterpart of the scriptural turtle dove, the cuckoo is the bird of spring in the familiar Middle English "Cuckoo Song" beginning with: "Sumer is y-cumen in,/ Lude sing, cuccu!" (B.M. MS Harley 978, f. 11b [c. 1260]). See Celia and Kenneth Sisam, eds., The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse, pp. 15-16, 571.

[37]See Chapter I.

creation of the world provides the typological paradigm for all those who either imitate or prefigure Christ in his creative and redemptive acts. If the creative aspect is stressed, the Old English poet may present a heroic figure who is, like Guthlac in Guthlac A, a "bytla". If redemption is emphasized, he may portray redeemers such as Andreas, Moses in the Exodus poem, or Beowulf. But there is no essential distinction: each of these human creators and redeemers in his own way restores the green plain of the pristine earth by overcoming the power of the devil. As far as Beowulf is concerned we may therefore conclude that there is every reason to interpret the spring imagery of the vanishing sword-blade, as well as the related shift in focus from the wintry landscape of the mere to the "meodowongas", in the light of the recurrent typological symbolism in Old English poetry.

In addition to the two spring passages discussed so far -- in the Finnsburg episode and in the account of the victory over Grendel's mother -- we find several related details in the description of the contest with Brecca. It would appear that after Beowulf destroyed the "mihtig meredeor" (558, "mighty sea-beast") a change in the weather occurred: "Leoht eastan com,/ beorht beacen Godes, brimu swaþredon" (569-70, "Light came from the east, the bright beacon of God; the waters became still"). At any rate, in many of the patristic and Old English passages quoted earlier in this chapter the calming of the sea marks the passing of winter and the return of springtime opportunities for sailing. Beowulf's success in the Brecca episode provides mankind with the very same benefits. By the defeat of sea-monsters, one of which is singled out for special attention, the sea is again made safe:

syðþan nā
ymb brontne ford brimliðende
lade ne letton. (567-69)

No longer did they hinder seafarers on their voyage over the high flood.

We know from Beowulf's own account that before the transformation the perils of winter prevailed:

. . . unc flod todraf,
wado weallende, wedera cealdost,
nipende niht, ond norþandwind
heaðogrim ondhwearf; hreo waeron yþa.
Waes merefixa mod onhrered. (545-49)

. . . the flood drove us apart, the surging sea, coldest of storms, night growing dark, and the northern wind came battle-grim against us; the waves were rough. The temper of the sea-monsters was aroused.

The wintry storms from the north are identified with the hostility of sea-beasts, and when the latter are destroyed, the light from the east shines forth over the pacified waves.

As others have noted before, the struggle at sea in the Brecca episode foreshadows the later fight with another sea-monster, Grendel's mother. The parallels are certainly striking. In both instances the foe is quelled, the waters are calmed, and the light of spring prevails. Since the monster-killing in the swimming adventure also has an important social dimension, both victories could be called redemptive events. In the description of the contest with Brecca the calming of the sea and the light from the east, specifically said to be the bright beacon of God, combine to suggest that the hero's exploits are to be linked with the deliverance by Christ. By relating the Brecca adventure to Hrothgar's court Beowulf may well be revealing his credentials as a Christ-like redeemer.

To explore this possibility further, it may be profitable to turn briefly to the symbolism of the east as the direction from which the Oriens, the Sun of righteousness, must rise. The rôle of Christ as Oriens is connected with redemption in the Song of Zacharias: "visitavit nos oriens ex alto, inluminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent, ad dirigendos pedes nostros in viam pacis" (Luke 1:78-79, "the Orient from on high hath visited us: to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet into the way of peace"). The identification of the Oriens as the Redeemer is based on the typological exegesis of a variety of Old Testament passages.[38] Since the divine intervention was traditionally expected from the east it is likely that the Beowulf poet by mentioning the light from the east ("leoht eastan com") enabled his audience to make the appropriate typological connections. In view of Hrothgar's elegiac stance -- his waiting in darkness for the light of grace -- the allusion to solar typology is particularly fitting.

This impression is reinforced by Beowulf's second reference to the sun when at the end of the same speech he announces his intention to grapple with Grendel and predicts his success:

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[38]E.g. Ezekiel 43:2, Baruch 4:36, 5:5, Zechariah 6:12 (Vulgate only); see also Malachi 4:2, where Christ is the Sun of righteousness rising with healing in his wings. Moreover, in Matthew 24:27 Christ compares his second coming to lightning from the east ("fulgur . . . ex oriente"). Note also the combination of Oriens and Sol iustitiae in the fifth of the "Major Antiphons". See Burlin, The Old English Advent, pp. 41, 100. For a discussion of the scriptural basis of solar typology, see Burlin, pp. 100-04. For a list of patristic discussions of the Oriens, see Bouyer, The Paschal Mystery, pp. 280-81.

Gaeþ eft se þe mot
to medo modig, siþþan morgenleoht
ofer ylda bearn oþres dogores,
sunne sweglwered suþan scineð! (603-06)

He who may will afterwards go brave to the mead, when the morning light of another day, the sun clothed in brightness, shines from the south!

A literal reading of these lines may yield the information that Beowulf expects Heorot to be open for mead-drinking the next day. The detailed mention of the sun shining from the south is then pointless verbosity or decorative elaboration. From this literal perspective there is also no need to announce that the Danes will be able to feast in Heorot, for they do so right after Beowulf has ended his speech. Since the immediate context of the above-quoted remark obviously passes the bounds of ordinary probability, there is no need to restrict the import of Beowulf's words to a naturalistic level. We may conclude first of all that he is forecasting the end of a symbolic exile. Even though Grendel comes only at night, his nocturnal attacks symbolize perpetual misery. Beowulf proposes to relieve Danish suffering in its totality. When he declares that Hrothgar's warriors will be able to enjoy their mead-drinking in the light of the southern sun, he confidently foretells Grendel's defeat. Again he associates the sun with a redemptive act. The sun shining from the south apparently has the same connotations as the light coming from the east.

This identification of south and east may seem rather arbitrary, but the likelihood of its occurrence in Beowulf is forcefully corroborated by the writings of the Church fathers and by other Old English poems showing patristic influence. We find it presented by Ambrose when in his

Hexameron he comments on the Song of Songs 1:6:[39]

> In meridiano pascis, in ecclesiae loco, ubi iustitia resplendet, ubi fulget iudicium sicut meridies, ubi umbra non cernitur, ubi maiores dies sunt, quod eis sol iustitiae tamquam aestivis mensibus diutius immoretur. . . . [Synagoga] solem iustitiae non videbat et videbat illum non ex alto supra caput suum, sed ex meridiano inluminantem, quando hiems illi erat. Ecclesiae autem dicitur: hiems abiit, discessit sibi: flores visi sunt in terra, tempus messis advenit. Ante adventum Christi hiems erat, post adventum Christi flores sunt veris et messis aestatis. Ex meridiano ergo et ex gentium conversione illum inluminantem videns obumbratur. Populus autem gentium, qui erat confusionis, gentiles, qui sedebant in tenebris, lucem viderunt magnam; qui sedebant in regione umbrae mortis, lux orta est illis, magna lux divinitatis, quam nulla umbra mortis interpolat. Ideo ex alto inluminat, quia et hoc scriptum est dicente Zacharia: in quibus visitavit nos oriens ex alto inluminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent.[40]

> You feed in the south, in the pasture of the Church, where justice shines, where judgment gleams like the noonday (cf. Psalm 36:6), where no shadow is seen, where the days are longer because the Sun of righteousness remains in them for a longer time just as in the summer months. . . . The Synagogue did not see the Sun of righteousness and did not see it overhead, shining from on high, but rather, since it was winter for them, shining from the south. But this is said to the Church: "The winter is now past, is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in the land, the time of the gathering of honey has come" (Canticle 2:11-12).[41] Before the coming of Christ it was winter; after the coming of Christ there were the flowers of spring and the honey-gathering of summer. Therefore, seeing the sun shine from the south and from the region of the conversion of the gentiles, the Synagogue lies in shadow. But the nations -- who were the people of confusion, the gentiles -- "who sat in darkness, have seen a great light. To them that sat in the region of the shadow of death, a light has arisen" (Matthew 4:16, Isaiah 9:2), the great light of divinity, which is not darkened by any shadow of death. So it shines

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[39] In the Vulgate text, 1:6 includes the phrase "ubi cubes in meridie" (Douay: "where thou liest in the midday"); however, the version which Ambrose quotes in his Hexameron (IV, 5, 22) reads: "ubi manes in meridiano" ("where thou remainest in the south"). The Latin substantive meridianum means "the south".

[40] IV, 5, 22.

[41] Note that in this partial quotation of Song of Songs 2:11 Ambrose uses the expression "tempus messis" ("time of the gathering of honey"), which fits the spring context better than the Vulgate "tempus putationis" ("time of pruning").

> from on high, because it is written as Zacharias spoke: "In which the Orient from on high has visited us to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:78-79).

Although the respective locations of the Church and the Synagogue may be somewhat confusing, it is clear that Ambrose does not distinguish between the light from the south and the Oriens, which is by definition the light from the east. When the southern or eastern sun shines, the anti-Christian synagogue may lie in the shadow of death but for the Church the darkness of winter is past. Ambrose states in express words that Christ is the one who changes winter to spring. Indeed, by his redemptive activity he creates a green pasture abounding with the flowers of spring. It is noteworthy that in the particular version of the Song of Songs here quoted by Ambrose, this is a paradisal plain from which honey may be gathered. The pasture of the Church would appear to be a mead-plain of the kind mentioned in Beowulf. This combination of details in a work widely known in Anglo-Saxon England renders it all the more probable that the light from the east and the sun from the south, which Beowulf connects with completed and anticipated heroism respectively, both represent the one Sol iustitiae.

A more explicit linking of south and east is found in Jerome's commentary on the doomsday prophecy of Zechariah 14:4-5:

> Postquam mons Olivarum ad Orientem et Occidentem vocatione Gentium et abjectione Judaeorum fuerit separatus, rursum alia scissura fiet Aquilonis et Austri. Aquilo jungetur Occidenti, Auster Orientali plagae; ad sinistram stabit Circumcisio, ad dextram populus Christianus. De his duobus ventis Ecclesia loquitur: Surge, Aquilo, et veni, Auster, ut Aquilone vento frigidissimo recedente, qui interpretatur diabolus, Auster calidus ventus adveniat, quem sponsa perquirens, ait: Ubi pascas, ubi cubas, in meridie? De quo et Abacuc mystice loquitur: Deus de Theman veniet, pro quo in Hebraico scriptum est: Deus ab Austro, id est, a luce plenissima. . . . Cum . . . tanta fuerit duorum populorum in toto orbe divisio, ut

> alii ad Orientem et Austrum, id est, ad dextram: alii ad Aquilonem et Occidentem, ad sinistram videlicet separentur, tunc quicumque sanctus est fugiet ad vallem montium Dei, . . .[42]
>
> After the mount of Olives shall have been separated towards the east and the west by the calling of the gentiles and the rejection of the Jews, again another rent shall be made of the north and the south. The north shall be joined to the west, "the south to the region of the east"; to the left the Circumcision will stand, to the right the Christian people. The Church will say concerning the following two winds: "Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind" (Canticle 4:16), so that, with the extremely cold north wind receding, which is interpreted as the devil, the warm south wind may come, seeking which wind the bride says, "Where dost thou feed, where dost thou lie in the midday?" (Canticle 1:6). About which also Habakuk mystically speaks: "God will come from Theman" (3:3), for which is written in Hebrew: "God from the south, i.e., from the fullest light." . . . when the separation of the two peoples in the entire world shall have been so great that some are separated to the east and south, i.e., to the right; some to the north and west, i.e., to the left, then whoever is holy shall flee to the valley of the mountain of God, . . .

Twice within this passage south and east together form the direction associated with the Church and with salvation. Moreover, the south, as region of the fullest light, is here associated with redemptive intervention. It is antithetical to the diabolic north. Again we may conclude that in an Old English poetic passage dealing with heroic deliverance references to light from the east as well as the south are not likely to be mere coincidence.

Evidence of the influence of the above-described patristic tradition in Old English poetry is available in Genesis B 667, where the dwelling-place of God is said to be located in both south and east ("þaet is suð and east"). As George P. Krapp points out in his notes, various

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[42] PL 25, col. 1525, quoted by Albert S. Cook, The Christ of Cynewulf, p. 180. Cook cites another instance of the identification of south and east in one of Gregory's homilies (PL 76, cols. 1062-63), pp. 180-81.

editors took "suð and east" to be the equivalent of "suðeast" on the ground that the poet's mention of two directions at once is illogical.[43] Be this as it may, from a typological perspective the one location is indeed south and east simultaneously, so that the line requires no emendation. Depending on how it is used, a reference to the south-east can nevertheless allude to the typologically significant characteristics which south and east share.[44] In Christ III the Creator-Redeemer is accordingly expected to come from the south-east on the occasion of

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[43] The Junius Manuscript, p. 169, note on Genesis 667.

[44] Cook (p. 181) draws our attention to the fact that Bede in his Ecclesiastical History twice refers to the south-east in connection with heavenly revelation or divine intervention. Before the passing of Chad, Owine heard the sound of sweet singing "from the south-east, that is, from the highest point of the rising of the winter sun" ("ab euroaustro, id est ab alto brumalis exortus"). Colgrave and Mynors, eds., pp. 340-41 (iv, 3). When Dryhthelm had been left in darkness and isolation at the mouth of hell, his guide reappeared and led him "in the direction of the rising of the winter sun" ("contra ortum solis brumalis"). Ibid., pp. 492-93 (v, 12). In the Old English quoted by Cook (p. 181) this reads: "suðeast on þon rodor, swa-swa on wintre sunne upp gongeð" ("south-east in the sky, where in winter the sun comes up"). Dryhthelm is led to "a very broad and pleasant plain, full of . . . a fragrance of flourishing flowers" ("campus . . . latissimus ac laetissimus, . . . flagrantia [fragrantia] vernantium flosculorum plenus"). It is encompassed by a wall and flooded by light brighter than that of the noontide sun. Dryhthelm is told that it is not the kingdom of heaven, but it is clearly a paradisal abode of the blessed. It is marked by the flowers, fragrance, and noonday light of the garden in the Song of Songs; moreover, it is a hortus conclusus or a "garden enclosed", which in the Song of Songs (4:12) is a figure of the ecclesia. In Bede's account we therefore have another instance of the paradigm that is followed in the Old English poetry discussed above. The reference to the south-east in such a context is further evidence that its typological significance was understood in Anglo-Saxon England. In view of the possible influence of Virgil's description of the Elysian fields (Aeneid VI) on early medieval representations of the paradisal plain, we should keep in mind that Christians interpreted classical works allegorically. On the exegesis of Aeneid VI, see Pierre Courcelle, "Les Pères de l'Eglise devant les Enfers Virgiliens", Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age, 22 (1955), 1-70.

judgment day:

> Þonne semninga on Syne beorg
> suþaneastan sunnan leoma
> cymeð of scyppende scynan leohtor
> þonne hit men maegen modum ahycgan,
> beorhte blican, þonne bearn godes
> þurh heofena gehleodu hider oðyweð. (899-904)

> The suddenly to mount Sion from the south-east the light of the sun shall come from the Creator shining more brilliantly than men can think of in their minds, glowing brightly, when the Son of God shall appear here through the vaults of the heavens.

The word "suþaneastan" cannot be taken to indicate the poet's sense of logical realism, for without any apparent awareness of inconsistency he in the next lines refers only to the east:

> Cymeð wundorlic Cristes onsyn,
> aeþelcyninges wlite, eastan fram roderum,
> on sefan swete sinum folce,
> biter bealofullum, gebleod wundrum,
> eadgum ond earmum ungelice. (905-09)

> The presence of Christ, the radiance of the noble King, shall come out of the skies from the east, sweet (i.e., gentle) in heart to his people, bitter to the wicked, wondrously varied, unlike to blessed and wretched.

The light of Christ -- the Oriens and the Sol iustitiae -- can shine from east or south-east to mark the day of the final judgment, the culmination of all redemptive events. Since the ultimate punishment of the wicked and the deliverance of the faithful on doomsday form the paradigm of the heroic deeds of those who imitate Christ, the two references to the sun in the account of the contest at sea can quite plausibly help to authenticate Beowulf's position as exemplary Christian aeþeling.

In addition to the spring imagery in the Finnsburg story, in the melting of the sword-blade, and, indirectly, in the account of the contest with Brecca, there is, finally, the departure of Beowulf and his men from

the land of the Geats -- an event marked by a sense of freedom and release from the limitations which winter no doubt imposed on heroic activities. If Beowulf is a Christian warrior who sets out to overcome the enemy of God, a springtime voyage would, typologically speaking, be very appropriate and wholly in keeping with the spring symbolism that we have discussed. The impression that a contrast between spring and winter may be significant in this particular context meshes with the total effect of the almost one hundred lines (100-93) which precede the introduction to Beowulf's plan. This section is devoted completely to Grendel's reign of darkness, during which the Danes helplessly await the advent of their salvation. Since Beowulf appears as their Oriens to dispel this dark deaþscua or death-shadow, we have a further indication that the poem is indeed the imaginative product of a culture in which typological exegesis prevailed. The thematic and rhetorical unity of patristic descriptions of spring is reflected in the linking of the fallen paradise of Heorot to the coming of a heroic redeemer. The question now arises to what extent Beowulf measures up to this rôle.

IV

BEOWULF AND SPRINGTIME HEROISM

When he presents Beowulf for the first time the poet declares him to be of all mankind the greatest in strength (196, "moncynnes maegenes strengest"), and, from that point on, the peerlessness of the hero is repeatedly emphasized. When the Geats arrive in Hrothgar's realm, the Danish coastguard is immediately struck by his unique presence (251, "aenlic ansyn", see also 247-250). Grendel, too, is soon forced to acknowledge that Beowulf has a mightier handgrip than anyone he has ever encountered throughout the regions of the earth (751-53, cf. 789). Indeed, after the defeat of Grendel numerous Danes readily affirm that there is no better or more worthy warrior anywhere on the spacious earth (857-861). In itself this fact is not very surprising. One may well expect the protagonist of a heroic poem to be thus universally acclaimed.

For our discussion of Beowulf the expected matchless qualities of the hero become more significant when we notice that the terms in which he is praised seem to indicate typological influence. In the above-mentioned examples it is already suggestive that the one who is to redeem the Danes from the shadow of death is a peerless fighter; there is, however, more conclusive evidence that the poet understood the heroic ideal to be embodied in the one exemplary and matchless warrior, namely Christ. When Beowulf has triumphed over Grendel, Hrothgar's words convey this notion implicitly:

> Nu scealc hafaƀ
> þurh Drihtnes miht daed gefremede,
> ðe we ealle aer ne meahton
> snyttrum besyrwan. Hwaet, þaet secgan maeg
> efne swa hwylc maegþa swa ðone magan cende
> aefter gumcynnum, gyf heo gyt lyfaƀ,
> þaet hyre Ealdmetod este waere
> bearngebyrdo. (939-46)

> Now a warrior has, through the might of the Lord, performed the deed which all of us with our wisdom could not accomplish. Behold, whatever woman has born such a son among the peoples, if she yet lives, may indeed say that the ancient Lord was gracious to her in her childbearing.

In the second sentence of this quotation Klaeber saw a possible echo from Luke 11:27:[1] "Beatus venter qui te portavit, et ubera quae suxisti" ("Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck"). Wrenn in his edition of Beowulf recognizes the possibility but adds that "so natural and widespread a sentiment scarcely need have a definite 'source'".[2] On the other hand, it may be that this alleged prevalence is nevertheless a biblical reminiscence.

The same blessedness of the mother of the hero is also a familiar element in the annunciation to the virgin Mary: "Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus . . . invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum: ecce concipies in utero et paries filium et vocabis nomen eius Iesum" (Luke 1:28, 30-31, "Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women . . . for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus").[3] It is worth noting that

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[1] Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg, pp. 166-67.

[2] Wrenn, p. 202.

Hrothgar's exclamatory "Hwaet" is paralleled by the Latin "Ave" as well as by "ecce". Aside from the structural similarities between the Old English and scriptural expressions of praise, it is also interesting that Hrothgar should refer to the grace of the "Ealdmetod", for in an echo of the annunciation of the birth of the Son of the Most High a trinitarian distinction between God the Son and God the Father, the Ancient of days (cf. Daniel 7:9, 13) is very fitting. We need hardly explain that Beowulf is not Christ and that the virgin Mary is not his mother, but if Christ represents the heroic ideal it is understandable that Hrothgar, after stating that Beowulf did what no one before him could accomplish, should complete his praise in familiar diction alluding to Christ, the unique redeemer.

In other parts of the poem Beowulf is presented in a similar manner. If one accepts the idea developed in the previous chapter that the account of the Brecca episode identifies Beowulf as a Christ-like hero, Hrothgar's words after Beowulf has been accepted as champion of the Danes gain special significance, for here the king declares that he has never before in his life entrusted Heorot to any other man (655-57). A few lines later the poet confirms that God himself has appointed Beowulf as hall-guard against Grendel (665-67). Hrothgar's attitude

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[3]Strangely enough, Klaeber fails to mention this familiar "Ave Maria" passage of the Annunciation. In "Die christlichen Elemente", 35 (1911), 468, he does draw our attention to the words of Elizabeth: "Benedicta tu inter mulieres, et benedictus fructus ventris tui" (Luke 1:42, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb"), as well as to expressions in the Magnificat: "Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est" (Luke 1:48-49, "For, behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed. Because he that is mighty hath done great things to me").

remains unchanged even after the attack by Grendel's mother, when he tells Beowulf: "Nu is se raed gelang/ eft aet þe anum" (1376-77, "Now is help again dependent on you alone") -- an expression which, as we have seen, may well be rooted in Old English Christian usage.[4] Following the victory in the mere he addresses Beowulf in words that have a somewhat messianic ring:

> Đu scealt to frofre weorþan
> eal langtwidig leodum þinum,
> haeleđum to helpe. (1707-09)

You are to be a lasting consolation to your people, a help to men.

Again there are echoes of the Song of Zacharias, in which the Lord is said to have provided redemption for his people (Luke 1:68, 77), and of the Song of Simeon, the one who waited for "the consolation of Israel" and in similar vein sang of the salvation of all peoples (Luke 2:25, 31). Hrothgar makes his remarks when, "aefter deofla hryre" (1680, "after the fall of devils"), the golden hilt of the giants' sword has come into his possession and when he has recognized an analogy between the typologically significant destruction of giants in the Deluge and the triumph of Beowulf over the Grendel kin (1687ff.). A scriptural allusion would not be out of place in the quoted lines. At the very least one is compelled to admit the possibility that the poet with uncanny consistency introduces the biblical reminiscences not merely as isolated echoes but as integrated elements within their poetic contexts.

The influence of the typological exegesis of Scripture on the portrayal of the hero can be further demonstrated in a variety of his

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[4] See Chapter II.

acts and attributes. Attention has been drawn, for instance, to the parallel between Beowulf's mode of fighting when he defeats Grendel and the way in which God (the Creator-Redeemer) punishes the rebellion of the fallen angels.[5] The King of the heavens in his wrath seized his foes with hostile hands and crushed them in his grasp (Genesis A 61-62, "grap on wraðe/ faum folmum, and him on faeðm gebraec"), thus driving them forth on their long journey to the depths of hell. In similar fashion Beowulf overcomes Grendel by his mighty handgrip and forces him to flee to the troop of devils in hell (756, "deofla gedraeg"; 852, "þaer him hel onfeng"). As for the wrestling motif in Genesis A, it is not derived from any scriptural source; however, in traditional Christian iconography it is by no means a foreign element. First of all, the powerful hand of the Lord as warrior is mentioned with striking frequency in the Scriptures, particularly in the Psalms and canticles. Two examples may suffice.[6] In Psalm 20:9 the king (who in the typological interpretation of this Psalm and others is regularly interpreted to be Christ) is addressed as follows: "Inveniatur manus tua omnibus inimicis tuis; dextera tua inveniat omnes qui te oderunt" ("Let thy right hand be found by all the enemies: let thy right hand find out all them that hate thee"). In Psalm 97:1 the faithful are invited to sing unto the Lord a new song because he has revealed his justice in the sight of the

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[5]Lee, The Guest-Hall of Eden, p. 201.

[6]Other references to this hand or arm include Exodus 15:6, 12, 16 (the first canticle of Moses), where the Lord is called a "man of war" (3, "vir pugnator"), as well as Psalm 17:36, 19:7, 43:4, 44:5, 59:7, 72:24, 73:11, 76:16, 78:11, 79:16, 88:11, 14, 22, 26, 107:6, 117:16, 135:12, 138:10, not to mention other parts of Scripture.

gentiles: "Salvavit sibi dextera eius, et bracchium sanctum eius" ("His right hand hath wrought for him salvation, and his arm is holy"). The same mighty hand turns up later in the Gospel of Nicodemus, the apocryphal work which greatly contributed to the concept of Christ's descent into hell to overcome the devil. Hades there tells Satan, "But whereas you say that you heard how he [Christ] feared death, he said this to mock and laugh at you, being determined to seize you with a strong hand".[7] Whatever other analogues may exist in non-Christian literature, a handgrip mightier than that of any man on earth (751-53) is remarkably suitable as an attribute of Christ-like heroes.

In the Old Testament there are several warriors who, as Christ figures, are obviously to be included in the above-mentioned classification and who also, like Beowulf, are famous for the strength of their hands. In each case this strength is presented as a very special gift or as a sign of God's gracious help. One such hero is the young David. Jerome informs us that the name David means "fortis manu" ("strong with respect to his hand"), and he adds, "Prima enim nostra victoria pugnam habet atque luctam: propterea dicitur fortis manu David"[8] ("For our first victory involves fighting and wrestling: therefore it is symbolized by David, strong-handed"). The wrestling of David is here understood to be representative of what believers also experience. It is an aspect of Christian heroism. In the case of David this method of

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[7] New Testament Apocrypha, I, edited by E. Hennecke, p. 473.

[8] Tractatus de Psalmo LXXX, CCSL 78, p. 78. The same etymological interpretation of the name David is mentioned by Caesarius of Arles (early sixth century) in Sermo CXXI, CCSL 103, p. 506.

Christian warfare is described at length when, seeking permission to fight Goliath, he presents king Saul with his credentials:

> Dixitque David ad Saul: Pascebat servus tuus patris sui gregem, et veniebat leo vel ursus et tollebat arietem de medio gregis, et persequebar eos et percutiebam eruebamque de ore eorum; et illi consurgebant adversum me, et apprehendebam mentum eorum et suffocabam interficiebamque eos: nam et leonem et ursum interfeci ego servus tuus. . . . Et ait David: Dominus qui eripuit me de manu leonis et de manu ursu, ipse me liberabit de manu Philisthaei huius. . . . (I Samuel 17:34-37)
>
> Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, or a bear, and took a ram out of the midst of the flock: And I pursued after them, and struck them, and delivered it out of their mouth: and they rose up against me, and I caught them by the throat, and I strangled, and killed them. For I, thy servant, have killed both a lion and a bear: . . . And David said: The Lord, who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. . . .

In a setting that structurally parallels Beowulf's repudiation of Unferth's criticism, David here establishes himself as a monster-queller and so stills the voices of incredulity (cf. 17:33). One who can barehanded kill a lion and a bear is also able to slay a Philistine giant, for, as in Beowulf, the distinctions made between various kinds of monsters are not essentially significant. David's courage is later celebrated by the author of Ecclesiasticus: "Cum leonibus lusit quasi cum agnis et in ursis similiter fecit sicut in agnis ovium" (47:3, "He played with lions as with lambs: and with bears he did in like manner as with the lambs of the flock"). The likelihood that the above quotation from I Samuel 17 or the allusion to it in Ecclesiasticus 47 has any bearing on the work of the Beowulf poet is considerably increased by the popularity of the subject in Anglo-Saxon art. The Vespasian Psalter depicts David standing as he kills a lion by tearing its jaws apart with his hands. In the

Junius Psalter he does the same, this time placing a knee between the lion's shoulders.[9] Significantly enough, no such incident is mentioned anywhere in the text of the Psalms. For some reason David's display of the strength in his hands seems to have appealed to Anglo-Saxon imaginations. If we keep in mind that David was considered to be one of the types of Christ and that the evil creatures he overcomes are thus to be associated with the devil,[10] it will not surprise us to see his mode of heroism represented in Beowulf to enhance the latter's greatness.

The same style of fighting also characterizes Samson, another Christ figure from the Old Testament. On his way to Thamnatha (Timnath), where he was to marry a Philistine woman, he encountered a raging young lion: "Irruit autem spiritus Domini in Samson, et dilaceravit leonem quasi haedum in frusta discerpens nihil omnino habens in manu" (14:6,

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[9]See David H. Wright's facsimile edition of The Vespasian Psalter, fol. 53r (capital illustration for Psalm 52). In his introduction Wright shows that the subject "remained popular in insular art" (p. 76) and in this context (p. 77) points to the variations found in the Junius Psalter. See plate VIj, showing fol. 118r (initial to Psalm 109), which follows Wright's introduction.

[10]"Prius tamen quam veniret David, cum iam unctus esset a beato Samuhele, sicut et ipse Sauli regi suggessit, et leonum et ursum sine armis occidit; sed leo et ursus ambo typum diaboli praeferebant: qui pro eo, quod de ovibus David aliquid invadere ausi sunt, ipsius David virtute sunt suffocati. Hoc totum, fratres carissimi, quod tunc in David legimus figuratum, in domino nostro Jesu Christo cognoscimus esse conpletum: tunc enim et leonem et ursum strangulavit, quando ad inferna descendens omnes sanctos de eorum faucibus liberavit." ("When David had been anointed by blessed Samuel before he came, he had killed a lion and a bear without any weapons, as he himself told king Saul. Both the lion and the bear typified the devil, for they had been strangled by the strength of David for having dared to attack some of his sheep. All that we read prefigured in David at that time, dearly beloved, we know was accomplished in our Lord Jesus Christ; for he strangled the lion and the bear when he descended into hell to free all the saints from their jaws.") Caesarius of Arles, Sermo CXXI, CCSL 103, p. 506.

"And the spirit of the Lord came upon Samson, and he tore the lion as he would have torn a kid in pieces, having nothing at all in his hand"). The typological significance of this deed is expounded by Bede in the following passage from his Quaestiones Super Librum Judicum:

> Samson autem interpretatur sol. Sed quia et Redemptor noster sol appellatur, audi ipsum Dominum Jesum per prophetam eo nomine vocitari: Orietur vobis sol justitiae, et sanitas in pennis ejus. Vere enim hic sol justitiae est qui omnium credentium mentes coelesti munimine clarificat: hic vere Nazaraeus est, et sanctus Dei, cujus in similitudinem ille Nazaraeus est nuncupatus. Iste ergo, cum tenderet ad mysterium nuptiarum, leo rugiens occurrit ei. Sed quis primum erat in Samson obvium leonem necans cum petendae uxoris causa ad alienigenas tenderet, nisi Christus, qui, Ecclesiam vocaturus ex gentibus, vincens diabolum, dicit: Gaudete, quia ego vici mundum?[11]
>
> Samson is interpreted as "sun". But since also our Redeemer is called "sun", listen to the same Lord Jesus being called by that name by the prophet: The sun of righteousness shall arise for you, and health in his wings (Malachi 4:2). For this truly is the sun of righteousness who enlightens the minds of all believers by its heavenly protection: this truly is the Nazarite and the holy one of God, in whose likeness he (Samson) was called a Nazarite. Therefore when he was making his way towards the rite of marriage, a roaring lion opposed him. But who was in the first place in Samson slaying the lion that was in the way, when he was going towards the land of the foreigners for the sake of seeking a wife, other than Christ, who, about to call the Church from among the nations, overcoming the devil, says: Rejoice, since I have overcome the world (cf. John 16:33)?

With his bare hands Samson subdues the lion, a type of the devil; the hero, a figure of Christ the Oriens, exercises his strength for the salvation of the Church.[12] Again, in spite of obvious differences between

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[11] PL 93, cols. 428D-29A.

[12] Samson's hand-strength may be regarded as equal to that of thirty men. The chapter which describes the killing of the lion also includes his slaying of thirty Philistines for the sake of their shirts and tunics. See Judges 14:12-13, 19. Beowulf, who has in his handgrip the strength of thirty men (379-81), later robs thirty enemies of their battle garments (2361-62) on an occasion when he appears to owe his success to his "hilde-

the two narratives concerned, it is entirely possible that Beowulf, linked as he is with the rising sun that shines redemptively over Heorot-as-ecclesia, can be regarded as a fighter in the tradition of Samson and David.

In the Stuttgart Psalter, produced by Anglo-Saxon monks on the Continent,[13] Christ himself is depicted as a hero in this tradition. Here, too, he is noted for his mighty handgrip, for in the illustration of Psalm 9:35-36 he uses it to break the arm of Antichrist. The relevant text includes the following petition: "Contere bracchium peccatoris et maligni" (9:35, "Break thou the arm of the sinner and of the malignant"). In depicting the power of Christ's mundgripe, the artist was apparently influenced by the mighty hand in a preceding verse: "Exsurge, Dominus Deus, exaltetur manus tua" (9:33, "Arise, O Lord God, let thy hand be exalted"). Judging by other scriptural passages, it is fitting that the wicked or the devil should be punished by having his arm broken or torn off. In Job 38:15 we read: "Auferetur ab impiis lux sua, et bracchium excelsum confringetur" ("From the wicked their light shall be taken away, and the high arm shall be broken"). Another instance of this kind of injury is mentioned in Psalm 36:17: "Quoniam bracchia peccatorum conterentur; confirmat autem iustos Dominus" ("For the arms of the wicked shall be broken in pieces; but the Lord strengtheneth the

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grap" (2507-08). Since Samson is a typologically significant hero, the parallel is suggestive.

[13]The Stuttgart Psalter is an eighth-century MS attributed to an English continental centre and known to have belonged to Echternach in the ninth century. See E.A. Lowe, Codices Latini Antiquiores, in which it is listed as item 1353.

just"). In Jeremiah 48:25 we read that proud Moab endured judgment so that "bracchium eius contritum est" ("his arm is broken"). A more elaborate reference to the breaking of the enemy's arm is found in Ezekiel 30:21-25, where it is the fate suffered by the Pharaoh of Egypt. The prophet is addressed as follows:

> Fili hominis, bracchium Pharaonis regis Aegypti confregi, et ecce non est obvolutum ut restitueretur ei sanitas, ut ligaretur pannis et fasciaretur linteolis, ut, recepto robore, posset tenere gladium. . . . Ecce ego ad Pharaonem regem Aegypti et comminuam bracchium eius forte, sed confractum, . . .
>
> Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharao, king of Egypt: and behold, it is not bound up, to be healed, to be tied up with clothes, and swathed with linen, that it might recover strength, and hold the sword. . . . Behold, I come against Pharao, king of Egypt, and I will break his strong arm, which is already broken: . . .

From these quotations we can deduce several facts that are of interest to the reader of Beowulf. One is that the arm of the enemy, including such a commonplace type of the devil as the Egyptian Pharaoh, is indeed a proper object of attack. If Beowulf is a Christ-like hero, it is not at all unusual that he should defeat "Godes andsaca" (786), God's adversary, by breaking off his arm. Another noteworthy point is the scriptural assumption that, directly antithetical to that of God, the foe also has a mighty arm or hand. In Beowulf the hand of the Christian hero likewise has its inverted counterpart in the claw of the fiend:

> foran aeghwylc waes,
> stiðra naegla gehwylc style gelicost,
> haeþenes handsporu hilderinces
> eglu unheoru. (984-87)

> each of the strong nails was at its tip most like steel, the horrible, monstrous claw of the heathen warrior.

The vividness of these loathsome details indicates that the poet conceived

of the parallel between the hands of Grendel and Beowulf in morally contrasting terms influenced by typology. The above-quoted scripture references to the hand and arm of God and of his adversaries reveal a possible -- and readily available -- model for precisely such an antithesis.

The suggestion that Grendel's arm, too, has typological connections may be reinforced by a consideration of its use as trophy:

> Þaet waes tacen sweotol,
> syþðan hildedeor hond alegde,
> earm ond eaxle -- Þaer waes eal geador
> Grendles grape -- under geapne hrof. (833-36)

> That was a clear sign after the bold warrior laid down his hand, arm, and shoulder -- there it was all together, Grendel's claw -- under the vaulted roof.

The poet shows its importance by drawing our attention to it three more times. He informs us that many a Dane went to the high hall to see the rare wonder (920, "searowundor"). At the sight of the lofty roof shining with gold and the hand of Grendel (926-27, "steapne hrof/ golde fahne ond Grendles hond") Hrothgar upon his arrival is led to respond by thanking God for the deliverance from devils and demons (928; 939, "scuccum ond scinnum"). When the poet tells us for the fourth time that the warriors beheld the hand over the high roof (983, "ofer heanne hrof hand sceawedon"), he provides the loathsome details quoted earlier (984-87). The central significance of the arm as trophy has a remarkable parallel in the victory of Judas the Maccabee over Nicanor. This Judas is another type of Christ,[14] while his opponent is described in I Maccabees as a

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[14]Rabanus Maurus mentions in passing that "Judas . . . plerisque in locis typum tenet ipsius Salvatoris" ("Judas . . . in very many places

great enemy of Israel (7:26), noted for his treachery and pride (7:27, 30, 34) and for his angry threat that he would destroy the temple of God (7:35). In the final battle Nicanor is slain:

> et caput Nicanoris amputaverunt et dexteram eius, quam extenderat superbe, et attulerunt et suspenderunt contra Ierusalem. Et laetatus est populus valde, et egerunt diem illam in laetitia magna. . . . Et siluit terra Iuda dies paucos. (I Maccabees 7:47-48, 50)
>
> and they cut off Nicanor's head, and his right hand, which he had proudly stretched out, and they brought it, and hung it up over-against Jerusalem. And the people rejoiced exceedingly, and they spent that day with great joy. . . . And the land of Juda was quiet for a short time.

Although in Beowulf the decapitation of the foe occurs later, in both texts -- at Heorot and Jerusalem respectively -- a hand is hung up in triumph. Heorot, symbolizing the ecclesia, is once again shown to be analogous to Jerusalem, a commonplace type of the Church. In both situations the victory calls for great rejoicing and is followed by a short time of peace, but the most suggestive point in the multiple analogy is the possible antecedent for Grendel's arm as "tacen sweotol".

The author of II Maccabees is more elaborate in his account:

> Praecepit autem Iudas, qui per omnia corpore et animo mori pro civibus paratus erat, caput Nicanoris et manum cum umero abscissam Ierosolymam perferri. Quo cum pervenisset, convocatis contribulibus et sacerdotibus ad altare, accersit et eos qui in arce erant et, ostenso capite Nicanoris et manu nefaria, quam extendens contra domum sanctam omnipotentis Dei magnifice gloriatus est, linguam etiam impii Nicanoris praecisam iussit particulatim avibus dari, manum autem dementis contra templum suspendi. (II Maccabees 15:30-33)
>
> And Judas, who was altogether ready, in body and mind, to die for his countrymen, commanded that Nicanor's head, and his hand, with the shoulder, should be cut off, and carried to Jerusalem. And

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prefigures the Saviour himself"). Commentaria in Libros Machabaeorum, PL 109, col. 1147C.

> when he was come thither, having called his countrymen, and the priests, to the altar, he sent also for them that were in the castle, and shewing them the head of Nicanor, and the wicked hand which he had stretched out, with proud boasts, against the holy house of the almighty God, he commanded also, that the tongue of the wicked Nicanor should be cut out, and given by pieces to birds, and the hand of the furious man to be hanged up over-against[15] the temple.

Aside from the divergence in the reference to Nicanor's tongue, this passage is noteworthy because it gives the exhibiting of the trophy even greater prominence than it has in I Maccabees 7. Moreover, as in Beowulf 834-35, not only the hand of the furious one but also his arm and shoulder are included. To make the parallel still more precise, II Maccabees 15 mentions the temple, rather than the more general Jerusalem, as in I Maccabees 7. Although there is no distinction between the temple and the city as types of the Church, the hanging of the hand against the former provides a closer resemblance to the display of Grendel's claw over the goldhall of the Danes. The use of the hand as trophy in both Books of the Maccabees forcefully increases the likelihood that the hand imagery in the poem has antecedents in Scripture.[16]

A closer look at the biblical portrayal of the wicked further confirms that the similarity to Grendel is not merely a matter of coincidence. In two of the previously mentioned Psalms that refer to the

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[15]The preposition "contra", translated in the Douay version as "over-against", here simply means "against", as in the expression "against the wall". See Lewis and Short, A Latin Dictionary, s.v. contra.

[16]It is interesting that in II Maccabees 15 there are additional details belonging to a treatment of the hand motif. Judas armed his men "not with defence of shield and spear" (15:11, "non clipei et hastae munitione"), so that they can later be described as "fighting with their hands" (15:27, "Manu . . . pugnantes").

mighty hand of God, the enemy lies in ambush, plotting the downfall of the blessed. In Psalm 36:12-13 (cf. vs. 32) this motif is combined with yet another, the characteristic hope that will be deceived: "Observabit peccator iustum et stridebit super eum dentibus suis. Dominus autem irridebit eum, quoniam prospicit quod veniet dies eius" ("The sinner shall watch the just man: and shall gnash upon him with his teeth. But the Lord shall laugh at him: for he foreseeth that his day shall come"). We recognize Grendel here as he hovered about and lay in ambush (161, "seomade ond syrede"), and we are reminded of his last journey to Heorot, when he "mynte" (712, 731), or intended, to accomplish his deeds of violence but when his hope of great feasting (734, "wistfylle wen") failed to be realized.[17]

In Psalm 9 the lurking sinner is presented in a still more suggestive context. First we read of the appropriate ambush: "Insidiatur in abscondito, quasi leo in spelunca sua: insidiatur ut rapiat pauperem" (9:30, "He lieth in wait, in secret, like a lion in his den. He lieth in ambush, that he may catch the poor man"). In the next verse the Psalm continues: "In laqueo suo humiliabit eum" ("In his net he will bring him down"). In Beowulf such a laqueus, a net or trap, is mentioned when the hero, upon his return to Geatland, dutifully passes on some of Hrothgar's gifts to Hygelac. The poet interjects:

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[17]Similar frustration of desire is summed up in the expression "him seo wen geleah" ("his hope deceived him" or "their hope deceived them") as it is applied to the dragon's intention of destroying all living things (Beowulf 2323), to the desire of the Mermedonians to eat their prisoners (Andreas 1074), to the rebellion of the wicked angels (Genesis A 49). In the same way the hope of Holophernes played him false (Judith 61-64). Grendel's plans are thwarted like those of all wicked foes in Old English poetry and in Scripture.

Swa sceal maeg don,
nealles inwitnet oðrum bregdon
dyrnum craefte, deað renian
hondgesteallan. (2166-69)

So must a kinsman do, and not weave a net of malice for another, prepare death for a companion with secret cunning.

These lines recall the contrast between Beowulf, who does not trap others in nets of malice, and the eoten Grendel, who apparently does. The poet's remark about the "inwitnet" immediately follows the end of Beowulf's report to Hygelac on his adventures in Denmark, in the course of which account he for the first time mentions that Grendel almost caught him in a somewhat similar trap:

Glof hangode
sid ond syllic, searobendum faest;
sio waes orðoncum eall gegyrwed
deofles craeftum ond dracan fellum.
He mec þaer on innan unsynnigne,
dior daedfruma gedon wolde
manigra sumne. (2085-91)

A pouch hung wide and wondrous, fixed with cunningly wrought bands; it was all skilfully devised by the power of the devil and with dragon skins. He, the fierce evildoer, intended to put me, though guiltless, into it with many others.

Both times the Beowulf poet associates the evil device with works of malice and cunning. Like the laqueus, it is something used by a peccator, though obviously not as a glove in the normal sense; it is difficult to conceive of a glove fixed or held fast with bands of any kind, but even if it is a glove,[18] Grendel uses it as an "inwitnet". The various Psalms in which the laqueus is mentioned[19] are rather vague in their description,

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[18]It may well be that there are Nordic analogues to such a huge glove; however, those who mention the possibility are unable to show that it was then used in the manner of Grendel. See Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 205.

although they clearly do indicate the physical possibility that one can be caught within it as within Grendel's "glof"; however, it is above all the generalized snare of the wicked or the devil rather than any specific net or trap. The imagery of the devil's snare is used with the same vagueness in the Old English Andreas poem when Matthew complains: "Hu me elþeodige inwitwrasne/ searonet seowaƀ!" (63-64, "How for me the hostile people sow [or knit together] a chain of malice, a cunningly wrought net"). Mermedonian hostility is here compared to a chain or fetter as well as to a "searonet". The important point is that metaphorically it is a diabolic contraption. The malice which Matthew is forced to endure is, among other things, like a cleverly sewn net or snare. Grendel's "glof" is a more concrete object, but it is likewise an instrument that devils have sewn together (of dragon skins). The parallels between the generalized "searonet" of Andreas and the laqueus in the Psalms on the one hand, and Grendel's "glof" on the other help us to see how the latter essentially functions in the text. We do not read that Grendel always put his victims into it; instead, he devoured them. We do not read that he normally carried with him a sack large enough to hold Beowulf along with many others. We do not even read that, as an exception to his usual practice, he intended to carry Beowulf off in it to his lair. Since there is no evidence in the poem that it served any realistic purpose, we may well regard it as

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[19] See e.g. Psalm 34:7, 90:3, 139:6. These are among many instances mentioned in Klaeber's comment on the "inwitnet" in l. 2167; he suggests that the word corresponds to the biblical laqueus. See "Die christlichen Elemente im Beowulf", 35. (1911), 134. In this connection Klaeber does not refer to the glove.

an object mentioned for symbolic reasons. After all, it is introduced into Beowulf's report quite separately from Grendel. The "glof" is simply there: "Glof hangode . . ." When Beowulf says that Grendel could not put him into a pouch fashioned by the craft of demons, he seems to be telling Hygelac that he did not get caught in the snare of the fiend. The "glof" is then a form of the scriptural laqueus, Grendel and Beowulf being representatives of the peccator (or the devil) and the defender of the poor and weak (or Christ) respectively. We are thus reminded that in typological terms Beowulf's fight with Grendel has its exemplar in Christ's warfare against Satan.

Since the nature of Beowulf's heroism is intertwined with the kind of enemies he encounters, it may be useful to determine the significance of Grendel's cannibalism at this point. In his first address to Hrothgar, Beowulf already mentions the possibility that Grendel may devour him (448-49), for such was his practice:

> Wen' ic þaet he wille, gif he wealdan mot,
> in þaem guðsele Geotena leode
> etan unforhte, swa he oft dyde. (442-44)

I expect that, if he can prevail, he intends to eat the people of the Geats fearlessly in the battle-hall, as he often did (to the Danes).

We later find out that Grendel has devoured at least thirty of Hrothgar's warriors (1581-83). The subsequent devouring of Hondscioh provides a clear illustration of Grendel's methods; he seized the sleeping thane and

> slat unwearnum,
> bat banlocan, blod edrum dranc,
> synsnaedum swealh; sona haefde
> unlyfigendes eal gefeormod,
> fet ond folma. (741-45)

> without restraint he tore and bit into the body, drank blood from the veins, swallowed huge pieces; soon he had consumed the dead man entirely, feet and hands.

When Beowulf reports this incident to Hygelac he calls Grendel a "muđ-bona" (2079, "mouth-slayer" or cannibal). In fact, cannibalism is one of Grendel's most prominent characteristics.

From the Brecca episode we know that Beowulf is eminently qualified to deal with a "muđbona". The "merefisc" that dragged him down to the sea-bottom was no ordinary fish but a "fah feondscađa" (554, "hostile fiendish foe") able to hold him firmly in its fierce grasp or claw (555, "grim on grape"). It was one of the evildoers (559, "lađgeteonan") slain by the hero so that they could not devour him. Instead of presenting the sea-monsters as wild beasts that instinctively prey on men, Beowulf portrays them in anthropomorphic terms:

> Naes hie đaere fylla gefean haefdon,
> manfordaedlan, þaet hie me þegon,
> symbel ymbsaeton saegrunde neah. (562-64)

> By no means did they, the wicked doers of evil deeds, have joy of their feasting in that they partook of me, sat around a banquet near the bottom of the sea.

The enormity of their malice is conveyed by their resemblance to human cannibals. Their desire to eat Beowulf is not a realistic detail of animal behaviour. By the same token, Grendel's man-eating habits, too, link him with wicked men, not with predatory beasts in any zoological sense. His cannibalism shows his great moral corruptness, a quality that he shares with the man-eating Mermedonians in Andreas.

The parallel with Andreas is especially noteworthy since cannibalism is not a trait of the Germanic "eoten".[20] According to Rosemary Woolf,

the Beowulf poet "almost certainly acquired this idea, not from native tradition, but from a Christian source or from a classical source made available through monastic libraries". She sees here "an intricate relationship" between Andreas, Beowulf, and their possible sources "which it is not now possible to unravel".[21] Be that as it may, the use of the cannibalism motif by Christian poets can more readily be accounted for by its frequent occurrence in Scripture. The man-eating habits of the wicked would at least justify the moralization of any analogous elements in pagan-classical works. While it is true that in Scripture such devouring is mentioned only in a metaphorical sense, the details are nevertheless vivid at times. In Micah 3:2-3 the oppressors of the people are addressed as cannibals: "qui . . . violenter tollitis pelles eorum desuper eis et carnem eorum desuper ossibus eorum" ("you that . . . violently pluck off their skins from them, and their flesh from their bones") and "qui comederunt carnem populi mei et pellem eorum desuper excoriaverunt et ossa eorum confregerunt et considerunt sicut in lebete et quasi carnem in medio ollae" (you "who have eaten the flesh of my people, and have flayed their skin from them; and have broken and chopped their bones, as for the kettle, and as flesh in the midst of the

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[20] O.F. Emerson quotes Bouterwek to the effect that man-eating giants were not known in Germanic paganism ("Menschenfressende Riesen kennt das germanische Heidentum nicht"). "Legends of Cain, especially in Old and Middle English literature", PMLA, 21 (1906), 878, n. 1. Stanley B. Greenfield in his Critical History of Old English Literature, p. 103, agrees with Rosemary Woolf (see below) that Grendel's cannibalism is "not typical of the Germanic eoten, or giant, even if it is of the later troll (cf. the ON Grettissaga)".

[21] Review of Kenneth R. Brooks, ed., Andreas and the Fates of the Apostles, in Medium Aevum, 32 (1963), 135.

pot"). In Isaiah 9:12 we read that the Syrians and Philistines "devorabunt Israel toto ore" ("shall devour Israel with open mouth"). Proverbs 30:14 speaks of "generatio, quae pro dentibus gladios habet et commandit molaribus suis, ut comedat inopes de terra et pauperes ex hominibus" ("A generation, that for teeth hath swords, and grindeth with their jaw-teeth, to devour the needy from off the earth, and the poor from among men"). Of particular interest, in view of their possible influence on Old English poetry, are the comparatively frequent references in the Psalms and canticles. In Psalm 13, which is repeated practically verbatim as Psalm 52, the fool who says in his heart that there is no God is one of those "qui devorant plebem meam sicut escam panis" (13:4, "who devour my people as they eat bread"). Psalm 26:2 mentions the wicked who draw near "ut edant carnes meas" ("to eat my flesh"). In the Canticle of Habakuk, which, also in Anglo-Saxon monasteries, was included in the Divine Office, the allusions to the Exodus indicate that the Egyptians are the ones who resemble a cannibal: "exsultatio eorum, sicut eius qui devorat pauperem in abscondito" (3:14, "Their joy was like that of him that devoureth the poor man in secret").[22] These and other instances of

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[22]Since the Egyptians in the Song of Habakuk are compared to Grendel-like cannibals, it is suggestive that God's victory over them enables the prophet to conclude: "ego autem in Domino gaudebo et exsultabo in Deo Iesu meo. Deus Dominus fortitudo mea et ponet pedes meos quasi cervorum et super excelsa mea deducet me victor in psalmis canentem" (3:18-19, "But I will rejoice in the Lord: and I will joy in God, my Jesus. The Lord God is my strength: and he will make my feet like the feet of harts: and he, the conqueror, will lead me upon my high places, singing psalms"). In Beowulf, too, a victor opens the way to festivities in a high place (as discussed later in this chapter); moreover, Habakuk uses the hart as a symbol of the liberated believer, possibly suggesting to Anglo-Saxon monks, who every week repeated his words, that Heorot in demonic captivity represents an intolerable situation and calls for redemption.

the cannibalism motif[23] should suffice to show that Grendel's rôle as mudbona could quite conceivably be derived from Christian tradition.[24]

The numerous parallels between Scripture and Beowulf are not literary echoes in any narrow sense. If we remind ourselves that biblical references to the conflict with the wicked -- especially in texts with a liturgical function -- were readily interpreted typologically as allusions not simply to historical situations but also to present reality, seen in the light of Christological fulfilment, then we recognize all the more clearly that the Beowulf poet was influenced accordingly. Then we perceive in all the rich variety of his work the unifying effect of the typological imagination. The enemy's diabolic characteristics and the hero's rescuing activity may not directly reflect the rôles of Satan and Christ, but the mutual antagonism between the latter two nevertheless provides the exemplar. It encompasses and constantly overshadows the poet's structure of images. When Beowulf tells of Grendel's defeat, his words thus call to mind the traditional binding of Satan: "Ic hine hraedlice heardan clammum/ on waelbedde wriþan þohte" (963-64, "I thought to bind him quickly on the slaughter-bed

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[23]See also, e.g., Psalm 43:12, 78:7; Isaiah 49:26, Job 19:22, Jeremiah 51:34.

[24]In her review of Brooks's Andreas, Rosemary Woolf points out that the Andreas poet, in contrast with the Greek and Latin versions of the Andreas legend, is indifferent to the other habit of the Anthropophagi, that of compelling their prisoners to drink a potion transforming them to an animal-like state (p. 135). Perhaps this indifference can be accounted for by the absence of such a potion in the scriptural cannibalism passages. Another possible connection between cannibalism and Christian tradition is to be found in the biblical notion that the devil goes around seeking whom he may devour. See I Peter 5:8-9, a passage read in monasteries every day as "short lesson" at Compline.

with harsh fetters"). Although in one sense Beowulf did not succeed, he makes clear that Grendel was bound all the same:

> hyne sar hafaþ
> in nidgripe nearwe befongen,
> balwon bendum; þær abidan sceal
> maga mane fah miclan domes,
> hu him scir Metod scrifan wille. (975-79)

> Pain has encompassed him closely with forceful grip, with baleful bonds; there the creature stained with wickedness must await the great judgment, how the glorious Lord will judge him.

Just as Christ was thought to have fettered the devil in chains that would hold him captive until the final destruction at the end of the world,[25] so Beowulf binds Grendel until the final punishment on doomsday (977-79). Hrothgar, too, uses this bond imagery when he recalls that Beowulf killed Grendel "þurh haestne had heardum clammum" (1335, "in a violent manner with harsh bonds"). Grendel meets the fate of the devil and his ilk, for he lies bound in hell. In a parallel way the Egyptian host in Exodus was bound and fettered by death in a figure of hell, the Red Sea (470-71, "faeste gefeterod, . . ./ searwum aesaeled"). Although Beowulf in the first fight -- and, for that matter, Moses, in the Exodus poem -- did not descend into hellish depths, as Christ did, there are additional suggestions that this model was not far from the poet's imagination. When Beowulf by defeating Grendel had completed his redemptive cleansing (825), he rejoiced in his night work (827, "Nihtweorce gefeh"). In his earlier adventures he had likewise destroyed hellish monsters at night (420, cf. 565). We meet here the motif of the redemptive night as celebrated in the liturgy of Holy Saturday. In the Exsultet by

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[25] See Chapter V.

Ambrose,[26] regularly sung on that occasion, the Eve of Easter is typologically equated with the night "in qua primum patres nostros filios Israel eductos the Aegypto mare rubrum sicco vestigio transire fecisti" ("the night in which thou didst lead our fathers, the children of Israel, out of Egypt and make them cross the Red Sea on dry foot"). It is also the night in which Christ was victorious over hell, the night of rejoicing which is in apostrophe addressed as "vere beata nox" ("truly blessed night"). When a hero rejoices in his nocturnal conquest over the monsters of hell, it is likely that he acts in imitation of Christ and of such a Christ-figure as Moses. As we have seen time and again, the Beowulf poet's choice of words and expressions allows for a multifocal response that resembles and is closely related to the way in which he and his contemporaries interpreted details in Scripture and liturgy. In their works of biblical exegesis as well as in so-called secular literature they worked in related imaginative modes, within the same over-all typological structure of meaning. The Beowulf poet practised his craft within a tradition in which the free play of his imagination was bound and disciplined by the objectiveness of typological complexity. Hence the frequent occurrence of elements that reach out to the all-embracing reality on which the poem depends and to which it essentially gives expression. Again, the rich variety of above-mentioned parallels between Scripture and Beowulf is not evidence that the poet and his audience were merely interested in contemporary belles-lettres; rather, it points to the potential meanings -- elusive but ultimately

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[26]The Exsultet is included in the liturgy for Holy Saturday as found in any Latin missal.

identifiable -- that are communicated to those who have an ear to hear. It is in the typological mode of Beowulf that the key to its meaning and artistry must be found.

The imaginative richness of the typological tradition is further demonstrated in Beowulf's second major contest in the poem, the defeat of Grendel's mother. This episode introduces additional ways in which the hero of an Old English poem can be a Christ-like redeemer. Because of the comparatively obvious similarities between Beowulf's descent into Grendel's mere and Christ's descent into hell, critics interested in the typological elements in the poem have so focused their attention on this one section that they have made it appear somehow more significant than the fight with Grendel. While we can make grateful use of the discussions by Allen Cabaniss and M.B. McNamee,[27] these should not lead us to ignore the unity of the first two contests. It is one thing to observe the parallels between the two descents and from there to arrive at the conclusion that Beowulf is an allegory of salvation; it is quite another to note the very same parallels as a particularly clear indication of a mode which can be shown to prevail thoughout. The poet himself helps us in maintaining the proper proportions when he says about Grendel's mother:

> Waes se gryre laessa
> efne swa micle, swa bid maegþa craeft,
> wiggryre wifes be waepnedmen. (1282-84)

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[27]Cabaniss, "Beowulf and the Liturgy", in L.E. Nicholson, ed., An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, pp. 223-32. McNamee, "Beowulf -- An Allegory of Salvation?" ibid., pp. 331-352.

> The terror was less by just so much as the strength of women, the war-horror of a woman, is less than of a man.

It should be noted that, according to the poet's own account of Beowulf's victory, the high point in the victory over Grendel's mother (discussed below) is the decapitation of Grendel, her son. The second episode is not to be regarded as, by itself, the thematic centre of Beowulf. Rather, it offers further proof that the poet, influenced by typology, saw Christ, the embodiment of the heroic ideal, as Beowulf's exemplar.

By the same token, Grendel's mother, like Grendel himself, is the wicked one or the devil. It might seem dubious to assert that the connotations of Grendel apply equally to his mother, but the poet has made himself perfectly clear on this point. Grendel, whose typological significance we have just explored, is a member of "Caines cyn", since from Cain the fratricide

> . . . untydras ealle onwocon
> eotenas ond ylfe ond orcneas,
> swylce gigantas, þa wiđ Gode wunnon
> lange þrage. (111-14)

> . . . sprang all evil breeds, giants and elves and monsters, also the giants who for a long time strove with God.

Efforts at scientific classification are pointless here; neither is it possible to distinguish between aquatic and terrestrial creatures. Grendel more consistently resembles a human being than his mother does, and the poet connects him primarily with fens and moors, the elements of a wasteland or place of exile which fit into the experience of the Beowulf audience. The human characteristics of Grendel's mother are left comparatively vague; she is identified more directly with a setting that would be less familiar and, hence, even more obviously iconographic.

We do not learn of Grendel's underwater lair until after his death.

The seventeenth Blickling Homily, partly quoted earlier, proves that it was not unusual to combine land and water imagery in the portrayal of hell. The confusion of the two is thought to derive from Job 26:5, which was read as a reference to the place inhabited by the sons of Cain: "Ecce gigantes gemunt sub aquis, et qui habitant cum eis" ("Behold, the giants groan under the waters, and they that dwell with them").[28] Since Beowulf 111-114 includes such giants or "eotenas" among Cain's progeny, it is not incongruous that

> Grendles modor,
> ides aglaecwif yrmþe gemunde
> se þe waeteregesan wunian scolde,
> cealde streamas, siþðan Cain weard
> to ecgbanan angan breþer,
> faederenmaege. (1258-63)

> Grendel's mother, woman, she-monster, was mindful of her misery, she who was doomed to dwell in the dreadful water, the cold currents, after Cain became sword-slayer of his only brother, his own father's son.

In the same context we next read: "Þanon woc fela/ geosceaftgasta; waes þaera Grendel sum" (1265-66, "From him [Cain] sprang many fated demons; Grendel was one of them"). The differences in the way the poet refers to Grendel and Grendel's mother show once again that any biological inconsistency did not trouble him. In the typological perspective a monster is a monster. Using an underwater setting for the second fight, he presents Grendel's mother, though not uniformly, as the sea monster required by the typological allusions. Thus she is a guardian of the

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[28]The possible connection between this passage and the description of Grendel's abode was first pointed out by S.J. Crawford, "Grendel's Descent from Cain", MLR, 23 (1928), 207; 24 (1929), 63.

deep (2136, "grundhyrde"), banished to the cold currents. She is an accursed monster of the watery depths (1518, "grundwyrgenne") -- a term suggesting a parallel to the execrable monsters ("wearga") of the Blickling hell vision and to the accursed one ("awyrgde") of Christ I 158, whom the expected Saviour is to overcome. By his word choice the Beowulf poet provides important hints that the hero's descent into the mere is analogous to Christ's descensus ad inferos. Moreover, we know from one of Beowulf's earlier redemptive ventures that he has some experience in warfare in the watery depths. We have seen that the death of monsters in the Brecca episode foreshadows the defeat of Grendel. In a more readily apparent way it also anticipates the slaying of Grendel's mother. As "merewif mihtig" (1519) she is of a kind with the anthropomorphically depicted "mihtig meredeor" (559) that was hoping for a banquet near the sea-bottom (564, "saegrunde neah"). In Beowulf a monster-slayer always has his paradigm in Christ's conquest of the devils of hell.

Grendel's mother is also called a sea-wolf (1506, 1599, "brimwylf"). As the wolf-simile in the Blickling Homilies suggests, the poet here, too, attributes demonic qualities to Beowulf's opponent in the second fight. The Exodus poem supplies another illustration. In the poetic treatment of a scriptural narrative which has obvious typological significance, the Egyptian warriors are described as battle-wolves (181, "heorowulfas"). They are the demonic forces from which Moses, a type of Christ, delivered the people of Israel. The account of the passage through the Red Sea in Exodus 14:24-31 is one of the traditional readings of the Holy Saturday liturgy; in the commemoration of Christ's descent into hell,

the Church conveyed the typological teachings concerning baptism, for the waters of the Red Sea prefigure an aspect of the waters of the font. Again, the typological influence on Beowulf is apparent.[29] In Christ I the expression "awyrgda wulf" (256, "accursed wolf") is applied to the monster which has scattered the flock, and Christ must come to release them from the miseries of exile and bondage by commanding the golden gates of paradise to re-open. It is worth noting that Satan, here referred to as a wolf, acts in the manner of Grendel -- further evidence that we are not to draw any sharp distinctions between the action of Grendel and of his "brimwylf" mother.

When circumstances require it, Beowulf's antagonist has the

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[29]Although the contrast between sheep and wolves is a common one, the typologically important rôle of the Egyptians as wolves or of the devils in hell as wolves is not directly derived from the canonical Scriptures; however, in the apocryphal Book of Enoch the Egyptians who were drowned in the Red Sea are repeatedly called wolves: "But the wolves began to pursue those sheep till they reached a sea of water. And that sea was divided, and the water stood on this side and on that side before their face, and the Lord led them and placed himself between them and the wolves. And as those wolves did not yet see the sheep, they proceeded into the midst of that sea, and the wolves followed the sheep, and [those wolves] ran after them into the sea, And when they saw the Lord of the sheep, they turned to flee before His face, but that sea gathered itself together and became as it had been created, and the water swelled and rose till it covered those wolves. And I saw till all the wolves who pursued those sheep perished and were drowned." Enoch 89:23-27, in a translation by R.H. Charles. There is some evidence that the Book of Enoch was known in the Old English period. See Ogilvy, Books Known to the English, 597-1066, p. 69. Other sections are also of interest to students of Beowulf: e.g. ch. 106, a fragment on Noah and on the origin of the giants who are to be cleansed from the earth in a great deluge; ch. 76, with its references to the hoar-frost of the north; and ch. 77, describing a northern area which, like the Grendel landscape, "contains seas of water, and the abysses and forests and rivers, and darkness and clouds" -- all adjacent to a "garden of righteousness" which may call Heorot to mind. With an emphasis on other aspects of the poem, the possible relevance of the Book of Enoch to Beowulf studies has recently been brought to the fore by R.E. Kaske, "Beowulf and the Book of Enoch", Speculum, 46 (1971), 421-31.

characteristics of the ancient dragon which Christ overcame in the watery depths of hell; when the situation early in the poem calls for an envious murderer who disrupts the harmony of an ideal society, the monster takes on the characteristics of Cain. Grendel is a "sceadugenga" (703, "walker in darkness"), a "wonsaeli wer" (105, "wretched man") exiled to a land of mists and shadows. But he is also an "ellengaest" (86, "bold demon") and a "feond on helle" (101, "fiend in hell"). Essentially Grendel and his mother represent the same demonic power. In both fights Beowulf's success is analogous to the victory of Christ. Judging by the Grettissaga, one may perhaps assume that Beowulf's single exploit, his cleansing of Heorot, is presented in a manner determined by a Germanic narrative pattern in which the hero, after subduing a Grendel-like troll-wife, seeks out a second giant in his cave.[30] In Beowulf the gender of the monsters is reversed, for the male is defeated before the female. This arrangement may reflect the influence of the Book of Enoch on the motifs of typological literature. In a fragment of the Book of Noah (Enoch 60:7-8) we read: "And on that day were two monsters parted, a female monster named Leviathan, to dwell in the abysses of the ocean over the fountains of waters. But the male is named Behemoth, who occupied with his breast a waste wilderness named Dûidâin, on the east of the garden where the elect and righteous dwell, . . ." While Grendel's mother recalls Leviathan and Grendel can be linked with Behemoth, both monsters in Beowulf are characterized by the same demonic

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[30]See Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. xv, xvi.

identity.

The variations in their portrayal represent no dichotomy but suggest that each of the two divisions of Beowulf's unified adventure among the Danes is marked by its own typological decorum. Both Behemoth and Leviathan, as described in Job 40 and 41, are impersonal creatures, but it seems credible that of the two the beast of the land should be identified in Beowulf with evil in the comparatively more human form. Since God had expressly forbidden the slaying of Cain, it was perhaps inappropriate to present the death of Grendel, Cain's offspring, right in Heorot as the direct result of Beowulf's power.[31] Furthermore, Grendel's escape to the mere, where hell received him (852, "him hel onfeng"), is quite in keeping with the desired fate of the tormenting murderer in Christ I:

> Forþon we, nergend, þe
> biddaþ geornlice breostgehygdum
> þaet þu hraedlice helpe gefremme
> wergum wreccan, þaet se wites bona
> in helle grund hean gedreose. (261-65)

> Therefore, to you, Saviour, we eagerly pray in our innermost thoughts that you may quickly bring help to the weary exiles, that the tormenting murderer to the abyss of hell may fall abject.

This passage, belonging to the section in which Satan's malice is described, confirms once again that the influence of typology is by no means confined to the account of Beowulf's descent into the mere. The relatively impersonal "merefisc" quality of Grendel's mother does not imply, at least from the perspective of typology, that she is more a monster than her son. By reason of her environment she is simply linked

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[31] This point is made by Stephen Bandy, "Caines Cyn" (diss.), p. 80.

more closely with one of the manifestations of the demonic, the Leviathan of Scripture. While the term "brimwylf", as has been noted, helps to connect Grendel's mother with such devil figures as the Egyptians of Exodus, her affinities with Leviathan provide evidence of the very same typological significance. The interchangeable nature of diabolic features is evident in e.g. Ezekiel 29:3-4, where an Egyptian Pharaoh described as a great dragon happens to show obvious resemblance to the scaly sea-beast Leviathan in Job 41:1-2. A Pharaoh, too, can be a hron or whale.

The typologically symbolic associations of Grendel's mother may be more readily apparent than those of Grendel; however, the thematic function of the two is exactly the same. Their similarity is also exhibited in the Beowulf poet's emphasis on their pedigree. Since they are both specifically connected with the giants before the Flood, the "giganta cyn" who are also "Caines cyn", the poet reminds us that the Exodus account is not the only source of the typological motifs in Beowulf. The Great Deluge is another type of Christ's descent into hell and, therefore, also of baptism. The giants, like the Egyptians, also prefigure the dragon vanquished on Holy Saturday. The poet stresses that the analogies between this type and Beowulf are not confined to Grendel's mother. The characteristic expression used in the poem to describe the punishment on the giants is: "He him ðaes lean forgeald" ("He [God] paid them their reward for that"). It first occurs when the Flood is mentioned as part of the introduction to Grendel (114). It is again connected with the destruction of "giganta cyn" (1690) in the comment: "him þaes endelean/ þurh waeteres wylm Waldend sealde" (1692-93,

"The Ruler made them a last payment for that through the water's surging flood"). The expression used in line 114 occurs in exactly the same form in line 1584 to describe the defeat of Grendel; it is an event clearly influenced by the typology of the Flood.

Of the victories over Grendel and Grendel's mother, Beowulf's latter feat may seem to be the greater. Although its symbolism is more obviously related to typology, one should not assume that it must therefore be of greater importance to a typological interpretation of the poem. The poet draws no such distinctions. Beowulf mentions the fate of the Grendel kin in one breath and even suggests that the death of Grendel's mother is secondary:

> gromheort guma, mordres scyldig, ond þa þas worold ofgeaf Godes andsaca ond his modor eac. (1681-83)[32]
>
> And then the hostile-hearted creature, God's enemy, guilty of murder, gave up this world, and his mother did too.

The focus is on Grendel, the enemy of God. Indeed, from a typological perspective the highlight of Beowulf, Part One, is the point when the hero discovers the body of Grendel and hacks off his head. It is here that the poet, by his use of the expression "He him þaes lean forgeald", draws the parallel with the punishment of the giants in the Genesis Flood. Here, finally, Beowulf has achieved what he set out to do.

In the light of scriptural and patristic references to the head of the dragon, Grendel's head makes a fitting trophy. Already in the protevangel of Genesis 3 we read that the seed of the woman is to crush the head of the serpent (3:15).[33] The same motif occurs in an ancient

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[32]Cf. ll. 1282-84.

Greek prayer for blessing baptismal water: "Thou, thou hast sanctified the waters of the Jordan by sending from on high thy Holy Spirit, and thou hast crushed the heads of the dragons hidden therein."[34] Cyril of Jerusalem, after dealing with the baptism of Jesus, states: "The dragon, according to Job, was in the water, he who received the Jordan in his maw [cf. Job 40:18]. When, therefore, it was necessary to crush the heads of the dragon [Psalm 73:14], descending into the water, he bound the strong one, that we might receive the 'power to tread upon serpents and scorpions' [Luke 10:19]."[35] As Cyril's allusion suggests, in Psalm 73 the heads of monsters have a similar prominence: "Contrivisti capita draconum in aqua. Tu confregisti caput draconis"[36] (13-14, "Thou didst crush the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou hast broken the head of the dragon"). The considerable attention devoted to the heads of demonic creatures indicates that as a symbol of victory Grendel's head may well have biblical and typological precedents. We have seen that in the two Books of the Maccabees Nicanor's head, along with his hand, was clearly regarded as such a trophy and that it was therefore taken to

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[33]Two of the principal ways in which the defeat of a devil was conceived of are crushing (as here and in the citations below) and binding or fettering. Both methods are important in Beowulf. The references to binding have been mentioned earlier in this chapter. See also the binding of the devil in the Epistle of Jude and in the Gospel of Nicodemus. As for crushing, or grinding, Beowulf tells Hrothgar in his defence of the Brecca contest that he "forgrand gramum" (424, "crushed the hostile ones") and that he will deal with Grendel in the same fashion (424-26).

[34]Quoted by Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, p. 42.

[35]Catecheses, III, 11.

[36]This is the version used by Augustine in Enarrationes in Psalmos. The Vulgate renders "caput" as "capita" (plural).

Jerusalem or to the temple. In chapter 13 of the book of Judith, the head of Holophernes, a prominent type of the devil,[37] serves the same purpose. The events are vividly rendered by the Old English verse of the Judith poet:

> genam ða þone haeðenan mannan
> faeste be feaxe sinum, teah hyne folmum wið hyre weard
> bysmerlice, ond þone bealofullan
> listum alede, laðne mannan,
> swa heo ðaes unlaedan eaðost mihte
> wel gewealdan. Sloh ða wundenlocc
> þone feondsceaðan fagum mece,
> heteþoncolne, þaet heo healfne forcearf
> þone sweoran him, þaet he on swiman laeg,
> druncen ond dolhwund. Naes ða dead þa gyt,
> ealles orsawle; sloh ða eornoste
> ides ellenrof oðre siðe
> þone haeðenan hund, þaet him þaet heafod wand
> forð on ða flore. (98-111)

> Then she seized the heathen man firmly by his hair; with her hands she drew him towards her to his shame, and with cunning overcame the wicked one, the hateful man, as she could most easily have complete power over the accursed one. Then she with the braided locks with gleaming sword struck the hostile foe, so that she cut his neck half through; and, drunk and wounded, he lay in a swoon. He was then not yet dead, all lifeless; then courageously the valiant woman once again smote the heathen hound, so that his head rolled forth on the floor.

Holophernes is, if not a wolf, a heathen hound, and for that reason he is quite properly beheaded. The typological similarities between him and Grendel become still more pronounced in the following lines:

> Laeg se fula leap
> gesne beaeftan, gaest ellor hwearf
> under neowelne naes ond ðaer genyðerad waes,
> susle gesaeled syððan aefre,
> wyrmum bewunden, witum gebunden
> hearde gehaefted in hellebryne
> aefter hinsiðe. Ne ðearf he hopian no,

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[37] Cf. Rabanus Maurus, Expositio in Librum Judith, PL 109, col. 575, where the head of Holophernes is connected with the head of the serpent in Genesis.

> þystrum forðylmed, þaet he ðonan mote
> of ðam wyrmsele, . . . (111-19)

> The foul trunk afterwards lay dead; the spirit departed elsewhere, under the steep headland, and there it was humbled, ever after fettered in torment, surrounded with serpents, bound with agonies, firmly held captive in hell-fire after death. Nor need he hope, covered with darkness, that he may leave that serpent-hall, . . .

The fate of a heathen fiend is here depicted in some detail. We are reminded that Grendel, too, was considered to be bound when defeated, and the hell which seized him is later described as a hall (1513, "niðsele") down in a mere infested with serpents and dragons (1510, cf. 1425ff.). (The fact that this hall is also his home simply reveals another of Grendel's diabolic aspects.) Clearly the Beowulf poet did not consider the victory over Grendel as a unique event. The parallels with the fate of other monsters or devils -- Holophernes and e.g. the Egyptian hosts that were fettered in the Red Sea as hell[38] -- point to the paradigm found in the binding of Satan. Decapitation is yet another detail that can reveal the devilish identity of a foe.

Just as Grendel's head was taken to Heorot, the head of Holophernes is carried to the holy city (203) of Bethulia. Judith displays it to her Hebrew compatriots (174) and addresses the crowd:

> Her ge magon sweotole, sigerofe haeleð,
> leoda raeswan, on ðaes laðestan
> haeðenes heaðorinces heafod starian,
> Holofernus unlyfigendes. (177-80)

> Victorious heroes, leaders of the people, here you can clearly gaze upon the head of the most hateful heathen warrior, of Holophernes now dead.

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[38] In Exodus 572 the Red Sea is thought of as an underwater hall. In Christ and Satan hell is a windy hall below the headlands (31, 135). The Beowulf and Judith poets use the same hall imagery.

Like Grendel's hand it is what the Beowulf poet would call a "tacen sweotol" (833). The scriptural source mentions that it was exhibited upon the walls (Judith 14:7). Moreover, the reaction of the Bethulians is much like that of Hrothgar when he looks upon Grendel's head and says:

> Þaes sig Metode þanc,
> . . . . . .
> þaet ic on þone hafelan heorodreorigne
> ofer eald gewin eagum starige! (1778-81

Thanks be to the Lord . . . that I with my eyes may gaze upon that gory head after the ancient strife!

While in Judith there is only one trophy, in Beowulf there are two, but in both poems they have a typological significance derived from a victory over the powers of hell.

The typological importance of the decapitation motif in Old English literature is further borne out by its occurrence in a homily of Aelfric on the book of Judith:

> Heo eadmod and claene and ofercom þone modigan
> lytel and unstrang and alede þone micclan,
> forðan þe heo getacnode untweolice mid weorcum
> þa halgan geladunge, þe gelyfð nu on god,
> þaet is Cristes cyrce on eallum cristenum folce,
> his an claene bryd, þe mid cenum geleafan
> þam ealdum deofle of forcearf þaet heafod.
> aefre on claennysse Criste þeowigende. (410-17)[39]

She, humble and pure, overcame the proud one though she was slight and weak and conquered the great one because it is beyond doubt that she in her works signified the holy ecclesia that now believes in God, the Church of Christ among all Christian folk, his one pure bride, who with keen faith cut off the head of the ancient devil, ever serving Christ in purity.

Since Judith is a woman she cannot be considered a type of Christ, but

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[39]Bruno Assmann, ed., Angelsächsiche Homilien und Heiligenleben.

like other heroines she is a figure of the Church. The distinction is not fundamental, for a male warrior can be Christ-like, in the typological sense, only if he is a member of the ecclesia, i.e., of the bride. The ancient devil is the common foe of both Christ and his Church. Whether he appears in the form of Holophernes or of Grendel, he is quite properly beheaded.

Another instance of the same motif is found in David's victory over Goliath, who was also a type of the devil.[40] When Goliath fell, David ran towards him and with the giant's sword cut off his head (I Samuel 17:51). Once again we find that the slayer took the head to a place with typological connotations, in this case Jerusalem (17:54). This time the sword is more in the centre of interest. I Samuel 17:50 specifically mentions that David took the sword because he did not have one with him; besides, the same sword is referred to later, in I Samuel 21:9, when David takes it from the tabernacle to use it against the Philistines. Its typological significance was noted by Caesarius of Arles: "Quod autem David non habens gladium ascendit super Goliam, et suo eum proprio gladio interfecit, designatum est quod in adventu Christi suo gladio diabolus victus est"[41] ("The fact that without a sword David stood over Goliath and killed him with his, shows that at the coming of Christ the devil was defeated with his own sword"). Since Holophernes, too, was killed with his own sword, it would seem likely

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[40]See e.g. Isidore, Allegoriae Quaedam Sacrae Scripturae, PL 83, col. 113B.

[41]Sermo CXXI, CCSL 103, p. 508.

that such a situation has a bearing on Beowulf's use of the mysterious sword in the fight with Grendel's mother.

In the hour of need it is the Lord who revealed the giant's sword to Beowulf, just as he revealed the sword of the enemy to Judith and to David.[42] The poet stresses its great size, for it is a giant's weapon in the fullest sense:

> Geseah ða on searwum sigeeadig bil,
> ealdsweord eotenisc ecgum þyhtig,
> wigena weorðmynd; þaet waes waepna cyst, --
> buton hit waes mare ðonne aenig mon oðer
> to beadulace aetberan meahte,
> god ond geatolic, giganta geweorc. (1557-61)

He (Beowulf) then saw among the weapons a victorious sword, an ancient sword of giants, strong in its edges, the glory of warriors. That was the choicest of weapons -- except that it was greater than any other man could bear to the battle-play, excellent and splendid, the work of giants.

As Beowulf himself reports to Hrothgar,

> . . . me geuðe ylda Waldend,
> þaet ic on wage geseah wlitig hangian
> ealdsweord eacen -- oftost wisode
> winigea leasum --, þaet ic ðy waepne gebraed. (1661-64)

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[42] It is of interest that in the Sarum Missal, edited by J. Wickham Legg, p. 454, the blessing of a new sword ("Benediccio ensis novi") presents only David and Judith as a warrior's models: "sicut david et iudith contra gentis sue hostes fortitudinis potencia victoriam tribuisti, ita tuo auxilio munitus contra hostium suorum sevicias victor ubique assistat, et ad sancte ecclesie tutelam proficiat" ("as thou didst grant David and Judith victory over the enemies of their people by the power of fortitude, so, defended by thy help against the cruelties of his enemies, may he everywhere be in the position of victor. And may he be of use to the protection of holy Church"). Since David and Judith both owed their fame to the beheading of their foe, decapitation seems to have been regarded in the middle ages as a paradigmatic way to use the sword in the service of the Church. According to J. Wickham Legg it is traditionally thought that the Sarum Use was established by St. Osmund, who died in 1099; the earliest MSS are from the thirteenth century (pp. v-vi). It is not improbable that a form of the above-mentioned benediction was used even before St. Osmund's time.

> The Ruler of men granted to me that I should see a huge and ancient sword hang gleaming on the wall -- most often he has guided those bereft of friends -- so that I swung the weapon.

Beowulf is here guided as Judith and David once were. The only "eacen" or huge sword in the poem -- it was so large that no other man could use it -- resembles the sword of Goliath. The beheading of Grendel -- and possibly of his mother --[43] serves to extend the parallel still further.

The decapitation of Goliath was known to the Anglo-Saxon audience not only from the account in I Samuel 17 but also from Psalm 151, the apocryphal or so-called supernumerary Psalm translated from the Septuagint and frequently included in early medieval Psalters.[44] In its regular preface it is identified as a genuine Psalm of David, composed when he fought in single combat with Goliath ("Hic psalmus proprie scriptus est a David, et extra numerum cum pugnavit cum Golia"):

> Pusillus eram inter fratres meos, et adolescentior in domo patris mei; pascebam oves patres mei. Manus meae fecerunt organum, et digiti mei aptaverunt psalterium. Et quis annuntiavit Domino meo? Ipse Dominus, ipse omnium exaudivit me. Ipse misit angelum suum et tulit me de ovibus patris mei et unxit me in misericordia unctionis suae. Fratres mei boni et magni, et non fuit beneplacitum in eis Domino. Exivi obviam alienigene, et maledixit me in simulacris suis. Ego autem evaginato ab eo ipsius gladio amputavi

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[43] Adrien Bonjour sees evidence of the latter in ll. 1566-68, where we read that Beowulf grasped Grendel's mother by the neck ("wið halse . . . grapode") and broke her vertebrae ("banhringas braec"). See Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 65.

[44] It is included in the Salisbury, Vitellius, Arundel, and Vespasian Psalters as well as in Exeter MS Harley 863, in the Codex Amiatinus (produced in Northumbria c. 700), and in continental MSS, e.g. the Utrecht Psalter. See Celia and Kenneth Sisam, eds., The Salisbury Psalter, pp. 6, 7, 21. In the Utrecht Psalter it appears after the canticles instead of following the 150 Psalms. It is also included in the Stuttgart Psalter.

caput eius, et abstuli obprobrium de filiis Israhel.[45]

I was insignificant (or puny) among my brethren, and younger (than them) in my father's house; I tended my father's sheep. My hands made a musical instrument, and my fingers tuned a psaltery. And who told my Lord? The Lord himself, he of all listened to me. He sent his angel and took me from my father's sheep and anointed me in the mercy of his anointing. My brothers were handsome and tall, and in them it was not well-pleasing to the Lord. I went forth to meet the foreigner, and he cursed me by his idols. But I drew his own sword and cut off his head, and removed reproach from the children of Israel.

This widely-known summary of events omits such intermediate steps as David's use of his sling and concentrates instead on Goliath's being slain by his own sword as the way in which the victory was achieved. It contrasts this heroic feat with David's insignificance before the fight. Beowulf offers a suggestive parallel to this contrast. After the beheading motif has been introduced for the second time (2138) and after Beowulf's success in battle is also acknowledged at Hygelac's court, the poet recalls that Beowulf, too, was formerly underrated:

Hean waes lange,
swa hyne Geata bearn godne ne tealdon,
ne hyne on medobence micles wyrdne
drihten Wedera gedon wolde;
swyde wendon, þaet he sleac waere,
aeðeling unfrom. Edwenden cwom
tireadigum menn torna gehwylces. (2183-89)

He was long despised, for the sons of the Geats did not consider him brave, nor was the lord of the Weders willing to do him much honour

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[45]The following gloss is provided in the Vespasian Psalter: "lytel ic wes betwih brodur mine 7 iugra in huse feadur mines. ic foedde scep feadur mines. honda mine dydun organan. fingras mine wysctun hearpan. 7 hwelc segde dryhtne minum. he dryhten he allra geherde mec. he sende engel his 7 nom mec of scepum feadur mines 7 smirede mec in mildheartnisse smirenesse his. brodur mine gode 7 micle, 7 ne wes wel gelicad in him dryhtne. ic uteode ongegn fremdes cynnes men 7 wergcweodelade mec in hergum heara. ic sodlice gebrogdnum from him his agnum sweorde. ic acearf heafud his 7 on weg afirde edwit of bearnum israele." See Sherman M. Kuhn, ed., The Vespasian Psalter, pp. 146-47.

> on the meadbench; rather, they thought that he was sluggish, a feeble warrior. There came a reversal for the famous man, for every affliction.

The slack youth may be commonly found in folktales, but the examples which are normally adduced[46] bear less resemblance to Beowulf than the David of Psalm 151. Furthermore, such tales are not particularly helpful in the attempt to explain why the Beowulf poet includes the motif when he does. Klaeber remarks that the "introduction of the commonplace story of the sluggish youth is not very convincing".[47] The typological perspective allows for a more probable solution. We may perhaps suppose that at the point when Beowulf's resemblance to David (as victor by decapitation) has been most clearly established, the poet extends the parallel a little further and tells us that Beowulf, too, was formerly underrated as an insignificant youth. Keeping in mind that David is a type of Christ, we can draw a further parallel with the rejection of Christ before his particular victory, when he compared himself to a prophet not without honour save in his own country or when he is prefigured by Isaiah as the one despised and rejected of men.[48] At any rate, the hero as weakling fits at least as well into a typological interpretation as into any other.

Aside from the beheading of enemies with their own weapons, the sword is also in a more general way wielded by the Lord himself to destroy

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[46] See e.g. Klaeber, Beowulf, p. xiv, n. 3.

[47] Ibid., p. 207.

[48] Mark 6:4, Matthew 14:57, Isaiah 53:2-3. See also Psalm 21:7. Cf. Beowulf's remark in ll. 1838-39 that one who trusts in his own merit ought to go to a far country.

the oppressor. In a prophecy of deliverance Isaiah declares: "In die illa visitabit Dominus in gladio suo duro et grandi et forti super Leviathan serpentem vectem et super Leviathan serpentem tortuosum et occidit cetum qui in mari est" (27:1, "In that day the Lord, with his hard, and great, and strong sword, shall visit Leviathan, the bar serpent, and Leviathan, the crooked serpent, and shall slay the whale that is in the sea"). Grendel's mother, another whale or sea-monster, is in fact destroyed by such a sword. The "wlitig" or gleaming quality of the sword in Beowulf may call to mind some of the descriptive details in the Second Canticle of Moses, where the following oath of God is quoted: "Si acuero ut fulgur gladium meum, et arripuerit judicium manus mea: reddam ultionem hostibus meis, et his qui oderunt me retribuam. Inebriabo sagittas meas sanguine, et gladius meus devorabit carnes, . . ." (Deuteronomy 32:41-42, "If I shall whet my sword as the lightning, and my hand take hold on judgment: I will render vengeance to my enemies, and repay them that hate me. I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh, . . ."). The general context of this passage is the deliverance from Egypt when it is about to culminate in the entrance into the promised land. Interestingly enough, the sword is personified in an almost Anglo-Saxon manner. It is not merely fanciful to assume that details of the Second Canticle of Moses have a bearing on Old English poetry, for in the Psalters of the early middle ages this hymn follows the First Canticle of Moses (Exodus 15:1-19). The latter, in which the Lord is described as a "man of war", is entirely devoted to the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea. Very suggestively, in the

Exodus poem the destructive action of the raging waves in which the battle-wolves perish is initiated by an ancient sword (495, "alde mece").[49] The Egyptians are the monsters of the "mere" (459, cf. 300). Also in Beowulf's marine confrontation with a wolf of the mere (1506, 1599, "brim-wylf") a sword provided by God would seem to be a very appropriate weapon.

In the fight with Grendel's mother the failure of Beowulf's normally invincible handgrip may at first sight appear to be a confusing element in the poem, but as we have seen, the use of a sword can certainly be justified on typological grounds. The Lord has a mighty hand but also makes use of a great sword; types of Christ can exhibit the same kind of logical inconsistency. After the elaboration on David's mighty handgrip, we find him in need of Goliath's sword to complete his victory. The lack of success in applying his handgrip in the second fight does not imply an indictment of the hero. Rather, there is a contrast between the weapon supplied by man and the sword revealed by the grace of the Lord. Beowulf never blames Hrunting; when for the first time in its existence it fails (1522-28), he even absolves it of responsibility: "Ne meahte ic aet hilde mid Hruntinge/ wiht gewyrcan, þeah þaet waepen duge" (1659-60, "I could not do anything with Hrunting in the fight, though it is a good

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[49] This sword image in Exodus may be derived from the great sword which, according to Wisdom 18:14-16, destroyed the Egyptian firstborn. In Wisdom 18 this event merges with the drowning of the host in the Red Sea (see esp. vs. 5). Moreover, in the Exsultet of the Holy Saturday liturgy the night of the vigil which is typologically the night of Christ's victory in hell is also, simultaneously, the occasion of the paschal solemnities (when the Egyptian firstborn were slain but those of the Israelites were saved by the blood on the doorposts), the time of departure from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the victory over the power of darkness. The sword-like function of the light-pillar in the Exsultet is further discussed later in this chapter.

weapon"). When in the struggle Beowulf casts it aside, the poet without the slightest suggestion of irony continues to regard it as a praise-worthy object (1531-33). The sword has an identity of its own which is unaffected by the guilt of Unferth, its fratricidal owner. In harmony with typological influence, it is simply inadequate in a situation calling for a weapon provided by the intervention of grace. As for Beowulf's handgrip, its failure, too, is mentioned without any hint of shortcomings on his part. We can assume that his method of warfare in subduing Grendel does not this time fit the circumstances. Significantly, in his own report to Hrothgar he omits the brief reliance on the strength of his hand (1659-64).

The Beowulf poet sees the decapitation of a monster by means of a special sword as a highly significant detail. He concludes his commentary on Beowulf's second fight with the words: "Ond hine þa heafde becearf" (1590, "And then he cut off his [Grendel's] head"). He further mentions that the hero took the head with him to the surface (1614), that four of the Geats with difficulty carried it to Heorot on the shaft of a spear (1637-39), and that, carried by the hair,[50] it was presented to Hrothgar and displayed to the Danes assembled in the gold-hall (1647-50). Later Beowulf in his report to Hygelac seems to apply these particulars

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[50]While it may be argued that "be feaxe" (1648, "by the hair") is the obvious way to carry a head, it should be noted that along the path from the mere it was transported in a different manner. Since fiends are also seized by the hair in Solomon and Saturn 100 (cf. 130, "feondes feax") and Judith 99, one wonders whether the Old English poets are echoing the biblical notion that wicked or demonic characters are hairy, as e.g. the pilosi or hairy ones in Isaiah 34:14 (Vulgate). See also Psalm 67:22, where the hairy crown of sinners is mentioned in an elaboration on the smiting of their heads.

not to the head of Grendel, which he fails to mention this time, but to that of Grendel's mother, for he says: "Ond ic heafde becearf/ in ðam guðsele Grendeles modor . . ." (2138-39, "And in that war-hall I cut off the head of Grendel's mother . . ."). Since Beowulf or the poet apparently recognizes no essential distinction between the two monsters, we have here yet another confirmation of the unity which Part One of the poem owes to biblical typology. The seeming carelessness reflects the fact that to the typological imagination all conflicts in which a monster is defeated, especially if its head is crushed or cut off, have their exemplar in the battle between Christ and Satan. Regardless of whether Grendel or his mother or both are beheaded, the decapitation brings Beowulf's Danish adventures to a climax because it points to the one great victory over the devil.

We are to remember that this victory of Christ and all the heroic deeds of Old Testament saints that foreshadow it are typologically related to the victory achieved by the faithful at the time of their baptism. As we have seen in the section on Hrothgar and the baptismal stag, the poet is aware of the whole imaginative complex that is involved, for the reference to the hart on the shore implicitly identifies the mere as a hellish place awaiting a baptismal cleansing. In harmony with this introduction to Beowulf's descent, the poet observes a certain decorum arising from the sacramental rite. In moments of introspection the candidate for baptism would prepare to die symbolically with Christ. The subdued hero, too, considers at length the possibility of death. Indeed, the waiting Danes later conclude with certainty that Beowulf has been killed by the monster, and in their habitual despair they leave the scene

of action. At the same time it is clear from the start that the venture is not doomed to failure,[51] for the poet in his elaborate description of Beowulf's warlike accoutrements stresses the virtues of the battle-corslet (1443, "herebyrne") to which the hero subsequently owes his survival (1503-05, 1552). This emphasis may reflect the pre-baptismal anointing of the catechumen on his chest and between the shoulder blades,[52] but it should also be noted that it was commonplace in the early Church to compare baptism to enlistment in the Militia Christi. Cyril of Jerusalem thus exhorts the baptismal candidate in military fashion:

> You are taking up arms against the enemy. You are taking up arms against heresies, against Jews, against the Samaritans, against the Gentiles. Your enemies are many: take plenty of ammunition; you have target in plenty. You must learn to shoot down the Greek and do battle with heretic, Jew, and Samaritan. Your weapons are sharp, and sharpest of all is "the sword of the Spirit". But your own right hand must strike with a holy resolution, to fight the fight of the Lord, if you would conquer the opposing powers and make yourself proof against every stratagem of heresy.[53]

Beowulf's venture is likewise an example of Christian heroism. Although Grendel's mother is not literally a Jew, a Samaritan, or a Gentile, we

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[51] In connection with baptism the combined expectation of death and victory is found in e.g. Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12.

[52] Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, p. 42. The suggestion that the liturgy has here influenced Beowulf is made by McNamee in his "Beowulf -- An Allegory of Salvation?" Nicholson Anthology, p. 340, n. 19. The rich variety of scriptural and liturgical echoes in the account of Beowulf's actual descent is so thoroughly documented in the wellknown studies by McNamee and Cabaniss that the parallels need only be touched on here. The discussion that follows is an attempt at further explanation of typological elements.

[53] Procatechesis, 10. The military aspect of baptism is a common theme in patristic writings. See the various quotations in Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, pp. 58-59.

are to keep in mind that Cain and his kin were regarded as types of such foes; in the underwater struggle Beowulf quite properly wields a special weapon to fight the good fight with his own right hand.

The account of Beowulf's second fight includes several other elements that may be derived from the symbolism of the baptismal rite. It is suggestive that the slaying of Grendel's mother is immediately followed by the sudden appearance of radiant light (1570ff.). Before proposing liturgical parallels, we would do well to examine how this light functions in the context. The poet refers to it as "se leoma", a word which elsewhere in the poem denotes an object that is a source of light.[54] It is also a term that can be applied to a sword (1523, "beadoleoma"; 1143, "hildeleoman") because of the light that reflects from it. It may be that the poet sees the victorious sword as another "leoma". The passage in which the word occurs seems to allow for this linking of disparate elements. Except for the lines in which we see the gloomy onlookers on the shore of the mere (1591-1605), Beowulf 1557-1617 is entirely devoted to the description and use of the giant sword and to its subsequent melting. A partial quotation may show that "se leoma" can be regarded as a sword without our having to wrench the passage to fit a preconceived and fanciful notion:

bil eal ðurhwod
faegne flaeschoman; heo on flet gecrong,
sweord waes swatig, secg weorce gefeh.
Lixte se leoma, leoht inne stod,
efne swa of hefene hadre scineð

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[54]In ll. 94-95 the sun and the moon are "leoman". For a related suggestion regarding "leoma" in l. 311, see Chapter I. Note that also in ll. 1517 and 2769 "lęoma" refers to light shining from a specific source.

> rodores candel. He aefter recede wlat;
> hwearf þa be wealle, waepen hafenade
> heard be hiltum . . . . (1567-74)

> the blade went right through the doomed body; she fell to the floor. The sword was bloody, the man rejoiced in his work. The "leoma" glittered, light stood within, just as the candle of the sky shines brightly from heaven. He gazed along the hall and turned then to the wall, raised the weapon firmly by its hilt . . .

Judging by the use of four different nouns in succession -- "bil", "sweord", "leoma", "waepen" -- we may perhaps consider it possible that sword and "leoma" are imaginatively linked. The melting of the sword-blade is, after all, related to the passing of wintry darkness and the coming of spring.

In the Holy Saturday liturgy, the Church's concentration of baptismal symbolism, the paschal candel has a prominence which may be analogous to that of the great sword. After this candle has been lit with "new fire", God is asked to regard its brilliance, so that "in quocumque loco ex huius sanctificationis mysterio aliquid fuerit deportatum, expulsa diabolicae fraudis nequitia, virtus tuae majestatis assistat"[55] ("into whatever place the same shall be carried from this mystery here sanctified, the wickedness of the craft of the devil may be driven forth, and the power of thy majesty be present"). As the liturgy continues, the lighted paschal candle is the most conspicuous object, and its symbolism is clearly central in the Exsultet:

> Gaudeat et tellus tantis irradiata fulgoribus: et aeterni regis splendore illustrata totius orbis se sentiat amisisse caliginem. Laetetur et mater ecclesia tanti luminis adornata fulgoribus: et magnis populorum vocibus haec aula resultet . . . .

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[55]From the liturgy for Holy Saturday in the Roman Missal.

> Let the earth, too, rejoice, illuminated by such great radiance: and enlightened by the splendour of the eternal king, let it know that it has put away the darkness of the whole world. Let mother Church also be glad, adorned by the brilliance of so great a light; and may this hall resound with the mighty voice of the peoples . . . .

We are reminded here that Beowulf's victory results in joyful feasting in another hall, Heorot as ecclesia. When the light symbolized by the glittering sword has transformed the season and the landscape, the power of the devil has been driven forth. The analogies with the Holy Saturday liturgy extend also to the previously discussed symbolism of the "uncuð gelad" and the green paradisal plain, for in the Exsultet the occasion when the paschal candle is lit is identified with the first passover, the Exodus, and the crossing on dry land through the Red Sea, as well as with the night when Christ overcame the devil and ascended from hell in triumph. In this context one aspect of the candle is its association with warfare, for it militantly puts wickedness to flight. Indeed, in the Exsultet its scriptural type is the cloud-pillar which caused the defeat of the Egyptian devils: "Haec igitur nox est: quae peccatorum tenebras columnae illuminatione purgavit" (This, then, is the night which cleared away the darkness of sinners by the light of the pillar). In view of the warlike aspect of the paschal candle, a link with the sword in Beowulf already begins to seem more plausible.

Instead of comparing a candle with a sword, the Beowulf poet may be reversing the pattern when he compares the "leoma" (tentatively to be identified here as the sword) to a candle. At least, its light is said to resemble "rodores candel", the candle of the sky that shines brightly from heaven (1570-72). According to Klaeber, the designation of

the sun as candle points to the solemn use of the candle in the liturgy.[56] Even if the term was sometimes secularized in Old English literature, the predominance of the Church renders it highly probable that the Christian connotations of the candle were available for poetic application. Furthermore, we should not assume that the comparison of the "leoma" to the sun-as-candle is a naturalistic detail that obviously bypasses any typological or liturgical allusion. In the Exsultet the paschal candle on Holy Saturday implicitly functions as sun, for we repeatedly read that the darkness of the night makes way for the light of day; besides, a reference to the sun is always a potential allusion to the typology of the Oriens. In short, the simile in Beowulf 1570-72 can very easily connect the "leoma" with the candle of the paschal rite.

We have already dealt with the typological significance of the later melting of the sword in the manner of ice. The melting of the wax of the paschal candle apparently has a related meaning, for it, too, is a symbol of spring. This vernal symbolism is present in the so-called Virgilian digression found in many early medieval missals. To this day the melting of the candle, "made from the work of bees" ("de operibus apum"), is mentioned in the Exsultet.[57] The Virgilian digression, an

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[56]"Die christlichen Elemente im Beowulf", 35 (1911), 122.

[57]"Jam columnae hujus praeconia novimus quam honorem Dei rutilans ignis accendit; qui licet divisus in partes mutuati luminis detrimenta non novit. Aliter liquentibus ceris, quas in substantiam pretiosa hujus lampadis apis mater eduxit" ("We already know the excellency of this pillar, which for the honour of God the sparkling fire doth kindle. Which, though into parts it be divided, suffereth not loss by the borrowing of its light. For it is fed by melting wax, which the bee hath wrought into the substance of this precious candle").

elaboration on this activity of the bee, underlines the fact that the candle dispels not only the darkness of night but also the gloom and frost of winter:

> Apis caeteris quae subjecta sunt homini animantibus antecellit. Cum sit minima corporis parvitate, ingentes animos angusto versat in pectore; viribus imbecilla, sed fortis ingenio. Huic, explorata temporum vice, cum canitiem pruinosa hyberna posuerint et glaciale senium verni temporis moderatio deterserit, statim prodeundi ad laborem cura succedit; dispersaeque per agros, libratis paululum pinnis, cruribus suspensis insidunt, parte ore legere flosculos, oneratae victualibus suis ad castra remeant; ibique aliae inaestimabili arte cellulas tenaci glutino instruunt, aliae liquantia mella stipant, aliae vertunt flores in ceram, aliae ore natos fingunt, aliae collectis e foliis nectar includunt. O vere beata et mirabilis apis! Cujus nec sexum masculi violant, foetus non quassant, nec filii destruunt castitatem! Sicut sancta concepit virgo Maria: virgo peperit et virgo permansit.[58]
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> The bee excels the other living creatures which have been made subject to man. Although it is least in bodily size, it cherishes great thoughts within its small breast; it is weak in strength but strong in talent. When the round of the seasons has been completed, when frosty winters have laid aside their hoariness and springtime's mildness has supplanted icy decay, immediately to it [the bee] comes with zeal for advancing to labor. Scattered through the fields, wings poised delicately, legs uncertain, they settle suddenly with mouth to suck the blossoms. Laden with their nourishment, they wander back to the hive. And there some with incredible art build little cells with firm glue, some compress the flowing honey, some turn flowers into wax, others form offspring with the mouth, still others envelope the nectar with leaves gathered together. O truly blessed and marvelous bee! The males never violate the other sex, they do not shatter the embryo, nor do births destroy chastity! Thus the holy Virgin Mary conceived: as a Virgin she brought forth

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[58] L. Duchesne, Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution, p. 255. Cabaniss draws our attention to this passage in the course of his brief description of the Holy Saturday liturgy. See "Beowulf and the Liturgy", Nicholson Anthology, p. 228, where he offers an English translation (here quoted). The eulogy of the bee is found in the Missale Gothicum, Vetus Missale Gallicanum, and Missale Vesontionense. See J.M. Neale and G.H. Forbes, eds., The Ancient Liturgies of the Gallican Church, in which the passage appears on pp. 90, 185, and 265 respectively. Louis Bouyer in The Paschal Mystery, p. 371, notes that the eulogy was also included in the Roman liturgy but "has since been deleted".

and as a Virgin she remained.

Although the conclusion of this passage leads us away from a consideration of the candle's wax,[59] the numerous spring details that precede it suggest

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[59]Cabaniss, in Nicholson Anthology, pp. 229-30, declares that in view of the probable familiarity of the Beowulf poet with the eulogy of the bee, "it is suggestive if the name Beowulf is correctly interpreted as 'Bee-wolf' or 'Bee-foe' (that is, 'Bear')", as proposed by R.W. Chambers in his Beowulf: An Introduction, pp. 365-69. Cabaniss adds: "It is by no means far-fetched or improbable to suppose that the mention of one thing may evoke a train of thought dealing with the precise opposite." It would seem even less improbable, perhaps, to suppose that it evoked associations involving points of similarity. If, like Cabaniss, we take the "wulf" element in the name as a generalized equivalent of "foe" or "warrior", "Beowulf" could refer to a warrior who in some aspect resembles a bee; i.e., the component parts in the name need not form a contrast. If this suggestion has any validity at all, it is noteworthy that the bee of the eulogy is also a hero whose exploits are linked with spring. (Although in the last sentence the Virgin Mary is regarded as a bee, this comparison is not developed throughout but is inserted almost as an afterthought.) In Willibald's Vita S. Bonifacii we find that the bee details could indeed be applied to a saintly hero. In language that recalls the eulogy, Willibald compares Boniface to "prudentissimae apis, quae suctim camporum circumvolat arva, et numerosam redolentium herbarum copiam pennigeris molliter perstrepens alis circumvolat, carpentique rostro pertentat melliflua, ubi nectaris latet dulcedo, et suis eam omni penitus mortiferi succi amaritudine contempta, alvearis invehit" ("the most prudent bee, which flies around the fields and meadows in its peculiar way, and, gently whirring its feathery wings, goes among the vast numbers of odorous herbs, and with its gathering mouth tests where the honey-flowing sweetness of nectar is hidden, and, utterly disdaining all bitter and deadly sap, bears the sweetness to the hives"). PL 89, col. 614C. It is further suggestive that the bee is frequently the example of unsuspected excellence. In a note on the possible origin of the eulogy in the Holy Saturday liturgy, Cabaniss wonders whether its origin could ultimately be scriptural. He points out that in the Septuagint and in some of the Old Latin versions of the Bible the familiar passage in which the sluggard is urged to consider the ways of the ant (Proverbs 6:6-8) continues with an expansion on the similar virtues of the bee. See Nicholson Anthology, p. 228, n. 9. Still another scriptural reference to the bee is found in Ecclesiasticus 11:3, "Brevis in volatilibus est apis, et initium dulcoris habet fructus illius" ("The bee is small among flying things, but her fruit hath the chiefest sweetness"). Since we are informed that in his youth Beowulf's ability was not recognized, he could be considered a bee who, contrary to expectations, is also an excellent warrior, a true "beo-wulf". At any rate, it would seem that such suggestions are as probable as any others and perhaps deserve further consideration.

that the paschal candle itself is composed of material owing its origin to the passing of winter. Hence the melting wax in the sacred rite points to God's control over times and seasons as manifested in the release from icy fetters. The identification of the melting sword and the burning candle would, typologically considered, be within the realm of probability. Such likelihood is increased still further by the poet's telling us that the sword both melted and burned up (1615-16, "gemealt" and "forbarn", cf. 1667), just as a lighted candle would.

The typological allusiveness of which the Beowulf poet takes advantage permits a glittering sword to be associated with the transforming and supernatural light of the paschal candle. Nevertheless, it simultaneously remains a sword, and its being consumed is also attributed to the hot blood of the monsters (1615, 1668). Even so, on this more literal level the melting of the sword is not a sign of the enemy's success but of the hero's divinely ordained victory. In one sense the sword is still a weapon belonging to the foe. When it begins to melt we are reminded that in Andreas God's intervention caused the weapons of the heathen Mermedonians to melt away like wax (1145-46, "Het waepen wera wexe gelicost/ on þam orlege eall formeltan"). The simile probably shows the poet's familiarity with Psalm 67:3: "Sicut fluit cera a facie ignis, sic pereant peccatores a facie Dei" ("As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God"). In Andreas the image is rendered more concrete, for this time the swords become like wax. Thus we have here an implicit analogue for a connection between a sword and a candle. No matter where we turn in the account of the second

fight, we are always led back to the influence of the Bible and the liturgy. Whatever aspect of the melting sword we may consider, we are never far removed from the symbolism of Eastertide.

As we have noted, the passage in which the sword is central (1557-1617) is interrupted by the shift to the waiting spectators on the shore. With an obvious kind of irony this apparent digression accentuates the typological meaning of Beowulf's success. Immediately after recording the beheading, the culmination of the redemptive act, the poet turns to the deliberations of Hrothgar and his sorrowing counsellors; they do not expect Beowulf to emerge "sigehreðig", exulting in victory (1597). Earlier we saw that the word "sigehreðig" is likely to refer to Christ's Easter victory and to the related triumphs of his followers.[60] To the audience of the poem it is perfectly clear that Beowulf is "sigehreðig" in the full paschal or baptismal sense. While the Danes think that the "brimwylf", the sea-monster or devil, has destroyed their hero (1599), the audience already knows how mistaken they are in this assumption. The abrupt mention of the ninth hour (1600, "Ða com non daeges") reminds us that the dramatic irony of the situation is stylized and traditional. The ninth hour is the hour of redemption, for it marks the time of Christ's victorious death (Mark 15:34-37).[61] From the Gospels

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[60] See Chapters I, III.

[61] It was also at the ninth hour that Christ experienced the greatest isolation (cf. Matthew 27:46). The paradoxical significance of the hour is clearly shown in an Oratio ad Nona in the Missale Gallicanum, Neale and Forbes, p. 180: "O salutaris hora Passionis! O magna maximarum gratiarum nona hodierna, maxima horarum hora!" ("O wholesome hour of the Passion! O today's great ninth hour of the greatest favours, greatest hour of hours!"). In this prayer Christ is addressed as "triumphator

we know that the disciples did not recognize the significance of the event and continued in their despair. Hrothgar and his party exhibit the same pre-redemption pessimism. The implication is that rejoicing would be more appropriate. Indeed, in a baptismal context a reference to the ninth hour may well indicate that it is the time at which celebration can begin. According to John Chrysostom it was at this very hour that newly baptized catechumens, after taking part in the Holy Saturday vigil and after having achieved victory and gained rescue in baptism, were led into the Church to enjoy their first eucharist.[62]

As if to confirm the hints in the digression, the poet's attention suddenly reverts to the bottom of the mere, where the melting and burning sword-blade marks the beginning of a new creation. Then, having cleansed the monster-infested waters, Beowulf emerges rejoicing in sea-booty (1624, "saelace gefeah"), just as Christ, according to the Exsultet, ascends from hell in triumph ("ab inferis victor ascendit"). In analogy with

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mirabillis, auriga supreme, Deus pie, gloriosissime propugnator" ("wonderful victor, highest helmsman, kind God, most glorious defender"). The meaning of None in the Divine Office is derived from the same event. The so-called Old English Benedictine Office, edited by James M. Ure, p. 98, explains: "and on done timan sculon geleaffulle men hi georne gebiddan and gemunan þaet wundor þaet þa geworden weard, þa se sylfa for mancyn dead geþolode þe eallum mancynne lifes geude" ("and at that time believing men eagerly pray and remember the miracle that then took place, that he himself [Christ] suffered death that he might grant life to all mankind"). The collect that follows recalls that also at the ninth hour Christ commanded the crucified thief to enter the paradisal dwelling ("intra menia paradysi transire"); he is thus petitioned as "salvator mundi" to bestow the same reward upon all the faithful. The reference to None in Beowulf is briefly discussed, moreover, by Lewis E. Nicholson, "The Literal Meaning and Symbolic Structure of Beowulf", Classica et Mediaevalia, 25 (1964), 179-80: "The hero effects the Danes' rescue at the crucial ninth hour (l. 1600), but their behaviour contrasts ironically with that expected of Christian neophytes."

[62]Nicholson, ibid., p. 180.

baptism and Christ's victory, Beowulf's action brings about the restoration of the paradisal features of the society which has its centre in Heorot. His venture calls to mind the use of Psalm 22 as a compendium of sacramental typology.[63] The still waters of peace which are mentioned in this Psalm are identifiable with the mere after Beowulf has cleansed it (1630). The "meodowongas" (1643) that lead to Heorot recall the pastures of the same Psalm.[64] Cyril of Jerusalem sums up the typological interpretation of these details as follows: "The place of pasture is the Paradise from which we fell, to which Christ leads us and establishes us by the waters of rest, that is to say, baptism".[65] The same Psalm ends with the partaking of the inebriating chalice and the everlasting eucharistic feasting in the house of the Lord. The very same motif occurs in Psalm 41, the baptismal Psalm. Jerome explains:

> . . . cum illis diabolus insultaret, et diceret Ubi est Deus tuus? nunc ad corpus Xpisti admissi et in vitali fonte renati confidenter loquuntur, et dicunt: Transibo in locum tabernaculi admirabilis usque ad domum Dei. Domus Dei ecclesia est, hoc est admirabile tabernaculum: quia habitat in eo vox exultationis et confessionis et sonus epulantium.[66]
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> . . . when the devil continued to taunt them spitefully with: "Where is your God?" (Psalm 41:4), they speak up boldly now that

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[63]See Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, pp. 177-90.

[64]Augustine in his Enarrationes in Psalmos refers not simply, as in Psalm 22:2, to a place of pasture ("in loco pascuae") but to a place of newly sprouting pasture ("in loco pascuae incipientis"); thus he adds a detail that meshes very well with the previously discussed transformation of the landscape, including the appearance of a newly created green plain. Cf. the "campus germinans" in Wisdom 19:7, as mentioned in Chapter III.

[65]Quoted in Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy, p. 181, as translated from PG 69, col. 841A.

[66]In Psalmum XLI, Ad Neophytos, CCSL 78, p. 543.

> they have received the body of Christ and have been reborn in the life-giving waters, and repeat: "I shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God" (41:5). The house of God is the Church, the wonderful tabernacle, for in it abide cries of joy and thanksgiving and the sounds of the feasting ones.

Similar festivities take place in Heorot to mark yet another baptismal triumph. The head of the monster shows once again that the Church is rescued when hell is overcome.

Of the types of baptism and of Christ's descensus, the Flood is one of the more familiar examples. The Deluge motif is also the typological allusion which the Beowulf poet develops most explicitly. He is quite specific in interpreting the inscriptions on the sword which God had provided, thus noting some of the particulars of an event which has a parallel in Beowulf's defeat of the Grendel kin. The two occurrences may not match literally. Grendel's mother, unlike the "giganta cyn" (1690), was not destroyed in a flood; in the same way, Christ's descent into hell does not in its details exactly resemble its type, the Deluge. Typologically, however, no distinction whatsoever exists. Noah's role was thought of as a conquest of the dragon which dwelt in the waters of the Flood; Christ showed that he was the anti-type of Noah when he also overcame the serpent in the watery depths of hell, and the catechumen in the baptismal pool symbolically re-enacts this victory. In terms of typological symbolism, therefore, the poet's interpretation of the inscription on the sword-hilt very directly recalls Beowulf's own exploit. Noah, Christ, and the baptized catechumen, in their own respective ways, are new Adams of new creations. Beowulf, too, restores a paradise. Hence it is highly suggestive that the hilt on which an important type of

baptism is recorded belongs to the very sword which by its connections with the paschal candle and the typology of the Oriens introduces the imagery of spring.

When the Danish episode comes to an end, Beowulf as "guðrinc goldwlanc graesmoldan traed" (1881, "the warrior glorious with gold walked over the grassy plain") -- a golden hero in a setting of paradisal green. Upon his return to Geatland we again see him making his way along a plain by the sea (1964, "saewong"). The poet adds: "Woroldcandel scan,/ sigel suðan fus" (1965-66, "The world candle shone, the sun eager from the south"). As a comment on the nature of Beowulf's actions this brief sentence could hardly have been more specific. The poet's word choice allows us to attribute to the sun not only the vernal connotations of the paschal candle but also the symbolism of the Sun of righteousness shining from the direction of the south. Beowulf has completed a springtime task of Christian heroism.

V

DOOMSDAY AND THE PLUNDERED HOARD

One may ask whether the typological aura of the hero in Beowulf, Part One, is also evident in the final struggle in Part Two. In some recent criticism there is a tendency to cast aspersions on Beowulf's desire to defeat the dragon and to win its gold for his people. His interest in the treasure is then seen as a sign of pride or cupidity,[1] notwithstanding the triple testimony of the poet, Wiglaf, and the messenger that he is throughout his reign an ideal king. Such criticism assumes that Beowulf eventually succumbs to the very temptations that Hrothgar warns him against after the defeat of the Grendel kin.[2] In the course of the present discussion particular attention will be paid to the role of the thief in Beowulf, for his thematic function provides important clues to the interpretation of Part Two of the poem.

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[1] A recent spokesman for this view is Margaret E. Goldsmith in The Mode and Meaning of Beowulf. See e.g. p. 96.

[2] The poet does not make this connection. Moreover, even a brief analysis of Hrothgar's so-called homily will show that the extended reminder of human mortality (1753-68) is not causally linked with the sin that Hrothgar warns against. Instead it may be argued that he is elaborating on the fate of the giants, as inscribed on the sword-hilt. Their wickedness is exemplified not in Beowulf but in Heremod, who was identified with giants already in l. 902. Richard N. Ringler, convinced by a study of the verbal texture, proposes that Hrothgar's words are applicable not only to Heremod but also to Grendel. "Him Seo Wen Geleah: The Design for Irony in Grendel's Last Visit to Heorot," Speculum, 41 (1966), 65. See also N.F. Blake, "The Heremod Digressions in Beowulf", JEGP, 61 (1962), 278-87.

A defence of the hero's actions in Part Two first of all requires an explanation of his troubled response to the news that his royal hall has been consumed by the dragon's fire:

> Þaet ðam godan waes
> hreow on hreðre, hygesorga maest;
> wende se wisa, þaet he Wealdende
> ofer ealde riht ecean Dryhtne
> bitre gebulge; breost innan weoll
> þeostrum geþoncum, swa him geþywe ne waes. (2327-32)

That was grief to the soul of the excellent one, greatest of heart-sorrows; the wise one thought that he, contrary to ancient justice, had bitterly angered the eternal Lord. His breast was troubled within by dark thoughts, as was not usual for him.

Before taking this reaction simply as evidence of guilt, one should note the manner in which the destruction takes place. The theft of the precious cup from the heathen hoard arouses the demonic rage of the dragon and unleashes unprecedented devastation:

> Ða se gaest ongan gledum spiwan,
> beorht hofu baernan,-- bryneleoma stod
> eldum on andan; no ðaer aht cwices
> laðˇ lyftfloga laefan wolde. (2312-15)

Then the demon began to spew flames, to burn the bright dwellings. The flare of the fire brought fear upon men. The loathsome air-flier did not wish to leave anything living there.

One of the dwellings destroyed by the dragon is the hall of the king:

> Þa waes Biowulfe broga gecyðed
> snude to soðe, þaet his sylfes ham,
> bolda selest brynewylmum mealt,
> gifstol Geata. (2324-27)

Then quickly, according to the truth, the terror was made known to Beowulf, that his own home, the best of buildings, the gift-throne of the Geats, was melting in the surges of flame.

The dragon's fire belongs to the same imaginative context as the doomsday conflagration described in Christ III:

> Swa se gifra gaest grundas geondseceð;
> hiþende leg heahgetimbro
> fylleð on foldwong fyres egsan,
> widmaere blaest woruld mid ealle,
> hat, heorogifre. Hreosað geneahhe
> tobrocene burgweallas. Beorgas gemeltað
> ond heahcleofu, . . . (972-78)

> Thus the greedy demon shall go searching throughout the lands; the ravaging flame, the far-famed blast, hot and devouring, shall hurl the lofty swellings, the world with everything in it, to the ground by the terror of fire. City walls shall fall down all shattered. Mountains shall melt, and towering cliffs, . . .

In both accounts lofty buildings are consumed. In both catastrophes the effect of fire is a melting process. Moreover, the dragon, the "gaest" in Beowulf, in his behaviour resembles the "gifra gaest" of the final judgment in Christ III. Just as the prowling dragon did not wish to leave any creature alive, so the deadly flame in Christ III is to devour every living thing (981, "wihta gehwylce"). The action of the thief in Beowulf introduces the imagery of doomsday.

The final judgment ultimately brings about the deliverance of the saints by the baptism of fire.[3] Nevertheless, in prophetic passages of the New Testament the end of the world is announced as a time of great suffering. It is not presented simply as something to look forward to. In the brief apocalypse of Mark 13, Christ declares: "Erunt enim dies illi tribulationes tales quales non fuerunt ab initio creaturae, quam condidit Deus usque nunc, neque fient" (13:19, "For in those days shall be such tribulations as were not from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, neither shall be").[4] In the second epistle

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[3]As fulfilment of Flood and baptism typology, the baptism of fire is discussed by Daniélou, From Shadows to Reality, pp. 86, 89, 94-95.

of Peter, where it is noted in some detail that the judgment is the final fulfilment of the Flood, the destructive aspect of the baptism by fire, especially its dissolving or melting effect, is accentuated:

> Adveniet autem dies Domini ut fur: in quo caeli magno impetu transient, elementa vero calore solventur, terra autem et quae in ipsa sunt opera, exurentur. Cum igitur haec omnia dissolvenda sint, quales oportet vos esse in sanctis conversationibus, et pietatibus, exspectantes, et properantes in adventum diei Domini, per quem caeli ardentes solventur, et elementa ignis ardore tabescent? Novos vero caelos, et novam terram secundum promissa ipsius exspectamus, in quibus iustitia habitat. (3:10-13)
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> But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief, in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence, and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth, and the works which are in it, shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these things are to be dissolved, what manner of people ought you to be in holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord, by which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with the burning heat? But we look for new heavens and a new earth, according to his promises, in which justice dwelleth.

Peter refers several times to the fire of judgment. While he does mention the promised new earth, he devotes considerable attention to the forces of annihilation; he points to them to show the need for godliness. Although the action of the fire-dragon in Beowulf is only an anticipation of doomsday, the above-quoted passage helps to explain Beowulf's introspection. The resulting anxiety is a standard soul-searching in response to the divine judgment. As the following quotation from Christ III should also prove, it is not necessarily a sign of Beowulf's guilt:

> Forþon nis aenig wundor hu him woruldmanna
> seo unclaene gecynd, cearum sorgende.
> hearde ondrede, ðonne sio halge gecynd,

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[4]Augustine states that it is usually impossible to distinguish whether such passages refer to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem or to the ultimate fulfilment of this event on the day of judgment -- which is a suggestive comment on the use of doomsday imagery in Beowulf. See De civitate Dei, XX, 6.

hwit ond heofonbeorht, heagengla maegen,
for ðaere onsyne beoð egsan afyrhte,
bidað beofiende beorhte gesceafte
dryhtnes domes. (1015-21)

Wherefore it is no wonder that the unclean race of men, grieving in sorrows, should greatly fear, when the holy race, radiant and heaven-bright, the host of archangels, shall be struck with fear before that countenance; the glorious creatures shall in trembling await the judgment of the Lord.

If even the archangels are likely to tremble with fear on the day of judgment it is surely not unusual for a good and wise king (cf. 2327, 2329) to be troubled on hearing of a conflagration that has the characteristics of the fire of doomsday.

The poet mentions Beowulf's uneasiness a second time: "Him waes geomor sefa,/ waefre ond waelfus" (2419-20, "His mind was sad, restless and ready for death"). Klaeber cautiously points to a possible precedent in the sadness unto death which Christ experienced in the garden of Gethsemane:[5] ". . . coepit pavere et taedere. Et ait illis: Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem" (Mark 14:33-34, ". . . he began to fear, and to be heavy. And he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death"). To show that the allusion is more than an isolated coincidence,[6] Klaeber notes several other similarities to the Gethsemane episode. The disciples abandon their master in time of need: "Tunc discipili eius reliquentes eum omnes fugerunt" (Mark 14:50, "Then his disciples leaving him, all fled away"). In the same manner Beowulf's followers flee to the wood to save their lives (2598-99). In Wiglaf's heroic assistance

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[5]"Die christlichen Elemente im Beowulf", Anglia, 36 (1912), 192-93.

[6]Note the similar atmosphere that marks the Old Saxon treatment of the Gethsemane episode in Heliand 4714-4810.

Klaeber sees something of Peter's readiness to come to his Lord's defence (Matthew 26:51, John 18:20). When Beowulf orders his men: "Gebide ge on beorge" (2529, "Remain on the mound"), his words are reminiscent of Christ's command as given at the Mount of Olives: "Sustinete hic et vigilate" (Mark 14:34, "Stay you here, and watch"). We may add that Beowulf seems to regard Christ as paradigm when he continues: "Nis þaet eower siđ,/ ne gemet mannes, nefne min anes" (2532-33, "It is not your undertaking, nor a thing fit for a man except for me alone"). While the parallel between Christ in Gethsemane and Beowulf near the dragon's hoard is not applicable to every detail, there is enough evidence to suggest that the poet sees the action of his hero as an imitation of Christ and so offers an adumbration of the gospel accounts.

The two preceding paragraphs explaining Beowulf's frame of mind in the concluding section of the poem may seem quite unrelated. The one connects him with the attitude appropriate even to archangels on the day of judgment; the other suggests that to a certain extent he acts as Christ did in Gethsemane. A look at the context of the Gethsemane episode as it is presented in the synoptic gospels may prove enlightening at this point. In Matthew the chapter describing the anguish of the Lord in the garden comes after the chapter in which Christ predicts the time of tribulation. This prophecy clearly fits into the typology of the baptism by fire: "Sicut autem in diebus Noe, ita erit et adventus Filii hominis" (24:37, "And as in the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be"). A little earlier the same chapter contains the familiar prophecy of "wars and rumours of wars": "Consurget enim gens in gentem, et regnum in regnum . . ." (24:6-7, "For nation shall rise

against nation, and kingdom against kingdom . . ."). In Mark 13-14 and Luke 21-22 we find the same overall pattern. The gospel chapters describing the agony of Christ in the garden belong to a context that is marked by an overwhelming sense of the passing of things. Like the evangelists, the Beowulf poet combines motifs of doomsday and Gethsemane. In Beowulf it is the messenger who speaks of wars and rumours of wars. When he reaches the Geats to announce the death of their king, he foretells the misery which is to follow a fifty-year reign of peace; Franks, Frisians, and Swedes can now be expected to launch their hostilities. The same theme is taken up by the woman who in her dirge laments the approach of slaughter, terror, and captivity:

> swylce giomorgyd Geatish meowle
> aefter Biowulfe bundenheorde
> song sorgcearig, saede geneahhe,
> þaet hio hyre hearmdagas hearde ondrede,
> waelfylla worn, werudes egesan,
> hyndo ond haeftnyd.[7] (3150-55)

Likewise a Geatish woman, with her hair bound, sang in sadness a dirge for Beowulf, declared again and again that she sorely dreaded the onset of evil days, great slaughter, terror among the host, humiliation and captivity.

The details of her "giomorgyd" accord with Christ's prophecy as we find it in the Gospel of Luke: "Erit enim pressura magna super terram, et ira populo huic. Et cadent in ore gladii; et captivi ducentur in omnes gentes, . . ." (21:23-24, "For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: . . ."). Throughout Part Two of Beowulf the poet conveys his tragic vision in the manner of the

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[7] Textual changes listed in Klaeber's Second Supplement, p. 470, are incorporated in ll. 3150, 3154.

Gospels.

The apocalyptic passage in Matthew is of particular significance in an examination of Beowulf. It indicates the typological link between the days of Noah and the coming of the Son of man, or between a type of baptism and the ultimate purification by fire which is the fulfilment of all baptismal symbolism. The reference to Noah confirms that it is reasonable to connect the dragon with the specific form of evil confronted by Beowulf in his struggle against the Grendel kin. Noah was victorious over the giants that appeared after the fratricide of Cain;[8] Beowulf triumphs also over fratricidal forces which, in imitation of Cain, seek to destroy a harmonious society. In the second epistle of Peter the same relationship between a past event and its future counterpart is presented:

> . . . caeli erant prius, et terra de aqua, et per aquam consistens Dei verbo: per quae, ille tunc mundus aqua inundatus periit. Caeli autem, qui nunc sunt, et terra eodum verbo repositi sunt, igni reservati in diem iudicii, et perditionis impiorum hominum. (3:5-7)
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> . . . the heavens were before, and the earth, out of water, and through water, consisting by the word of God: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of the ungodly men.

In this passage, too, the Flood is a type of the fire of judgment. Like Matthew 24:37-39, it recalls the wickedness of the giants, to which the Grendel kin and also the dragon are related; however, the Matthew text may provide an additional clue to the unity of Beowulf. It indicates

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[8]For Noah as type of Christ, see Daniélou, From Shadows to Reality, pp. 92-93.

that the Gethsemane episode, because of its proximity to Christ's apocalyptic prophecy and its similar atmosphere of gloom and anguish, could well be associated in the typological imagination with the eschatological aspect of the Flood.

Christ uses his reference to the Deluge to explain that the end will come suddenly, for only the Father knows the day and hour (Matthew 24:36). The control of God the Father over times and seasons is a wellknown scriptural concept which we find expressed in similar terms in Mark 13:32-33 and Acts 1:7.[9] Since the day of the Lord will therefore come without warning, it is compared to a thief in II Peter 3:10 (quoted earlier). Using the same image Christ declares in Matthew 24:43-44:

> Illud autem scitote, quoniam si sciret paterfamilias qua hora fur venturus esset, vigilaret utique, et non sineret perfodi domum suam. Ideo et vos estote parati: quia qua nescitis hora Filius hominis venturus est.
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> But this know ye; that if the goodman of the house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open. Wherefore, be you also ready, because at what hour you know not, the Son of Man will come.

The reference to the thief concludes a lengthy account of the signs that are to mark the sudden end, while it also introduces the parables of the faithful and unfaithful servants (24:45-51), the wise and foolish virgins (25:1-13), and the talents (25:14-30). Judgment is an element which all three parables have in common; they are suitably followed by a description of the final judgment itself, when the sheep will be separated from the

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[9]Cf. Matthew 25:13, I Thessalonians 5:1, Zechariah 14:7, Wisdom 8:8. The same concept is also discussed in hexameral commentaries on the fourth day of the creation week, when the sun and moon were called into being. See Chapter I.

goats (25:31-46). (The very next chapter includes an account of the Last Supper and of Christ's agony in Gethsemane.) The general context of the thief-metaphor in Matthew 24[10] may well cause one to wonder if it has any bearing on the apparent connection between the thief in Beowulf and the doomsday imagery which he unexpectedly introduces by his treasure theft.

While in II Peter 3 it is the day of the Lord that is compared to a thief, in Matthew 24 the thief is analogous to the Lord himself. Chapter 12:29 of the same Gospel also uses this image, for here we find yet another reference to a house that is plundered without warning: "Aut quomodo potest quisquam intrare in domum fortis, et vasa eius diripere, nisi prius alligaverit fortem? et tunc domum illius diripiet" ("Or how can any one enter into the house of the strong, and rifle his goods [literally: vessels], unless he first bind the strong? and then he will rifle his house"). Christ resorts to this illustration when the Pharisees

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[10]It also occurs, in practically identical wording, in Luke 12: 39-40. In Gregory's expository remarks on this passage, quoted verbatim by Bede, In Lucae Evangelium Expositio, CCSL 120, the theme of vigilance is stressed. Gregory is quoted and translated by Margaret Goldsmith in her discussion of Hrothgar's homily (Mode and Meaning, pp. 197-98): "Nesciente enim patrefamilias fur domum perfodit, quia dum a sui custodia spiritus dormit, improvisa mors veniens carnis nostrae habitaculum irrumpit, et eum quem dominum domus invenerit dormientem necat, quia cum ventura damna spiritus minime praevidet, hunc mors ad supplicium nescientem rapit." ("While the householder is unaware, the thief breaks into the house, because while the spirit sleeps, neglecting its guard, unforeseen death comes to burst into the little dwelling of our flesh, and kills him whom he finds sleeping, the master of the house, since when the spirit does not look ahead to the penalties to come, death snatches him unawares to torment.") Note that in this explanation, which concentrates on the tropological aspect, it is the slumbering householder who is the sinner. Though the thief in general terms represents the coming of death, he is evidently God's agent. Jerome in his comments on Matthew 24:42-43 in a corresponding way stresses the unexpectedness of the thief rather than any wickedness. See his Commentariorum in Evangelium Matthaei, PL 26, col. 80C.

accuse him of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. His answer is that he is able to rob Satan of his possessions because Satan is in his power.[11] Comparisons involving Christ and a thief are not confined to the Gospels. In Revelation 3:3 we read: "Si ergo non vigilaveris, veniam ad te tanquam fur, et nescies qua hora veniam ad te" ("If then thou shalt not watch, I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come to thee"). Chapter 16:15 has a similar directness: "Ecce venio sicut fur. Beatus qui vigilat . . ." ("Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth . . ."). In I Thessalonians 5 it is again the day of the Lord that comes as a thief: "De temporibus autem et momentis, fratres, non indigetis ut scribamus vobis; ipsi enim diligenter scitis quia dies Domini, sicut fur in nocte, ita veniet" (1-2, "But of the times and moments, brethren, you need not that we should write to you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord shall so come, as a thief in the night"). Two verses later the comparison is made a second time:

> Vos autem, fratres, non estis in tenebris, ut vos dies illa tanquam fur comprehendat; omnes enim vos filii lucis estis et filii diei: non sumus noctis neque tenebrarum. Igitur non dormiamus sicut et ceteri, sed vigilemus et sobrii simus. (4-6)
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> But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief; for all you are children of light, and children of the day: we are not of the night nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as others do: but let us watch and be sober.

From these New Testament quotations a pattern including such elements as vigilance, plundering, and unexpectedness begins to emerge,

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[11]Accounts of the same incident, including a version of the image of the plundered strong man, are found in the other synoptic Gospels. See Mark 3:27 and Luke 11:21-22.

but before attempting to summarize the apparent convention we should turn to its possible roots in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 53, interpreted as a prophecy of Christ's passion, the prophet states that the redeemer "shall divide the spoils of the strong" (53:12, "fortium dividet spolia"). Also in Isaiah 49:24-25 we read about the treasure of the strong:

> Nunquid tolletur a forti praeda? aut quod captum fuerit a robusto salvum esse poterit? Quia haec dicit Dominus: Equidem et captivitas a forti tolletur, et quod ablatum fuerit a robusto salvabitur.
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> Shall the prey be taken from the strong? or can that which was taken by the mighty be delivered? For thus saith the Lord: Yea, verily, even the captivity shall be taken away from the strong: and that which was taken by the mighty, shall be delivered.

From the context of these passages -- see 53:12 and 49:25-26 respectively -- it is clear that "spoils" and "prey" here refer to people in need of liberation. In a more elaborate form this imagery occurs in Isaiah 45, a prophecy concerning Cyrus as a figure of Christ:

> Haec dicit Dominus christo meo Cyro, . . . : Ego ante te ibo et gloriosos terrae humiliabo, portas aereas conteram et vectes ferreos confringam et dabo tibi thesauros absconditos et arcana secretorum. (1-3)
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> Thus saith the Lord, to my anointed Cyrus, . . . : I will go before thee, and will humble the great ones of the earth: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and will burst the bars of iron. And I will give thee hidden treasures, and the concealed riches of secret places.

In verse 13 it is once again made clear that the treasures are captives to whom Cyrus is to grant release.[12] In the prophecies of Isaiah, then,

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[12]"Ipse aedificabit civitatem meam et captivitatem meam dimittet" (45:13, "He shall build my [the Lord's] city, and let go my captives"). The identification of treasures with captives shows that typologically the theme in Isaiah 45 is the harrowing of hell. The imagery of vss. 1-3 is also found in Psalm 106, where the captives are redeemed from darkness

the strong or mighty are depicted as possessors of treasure hoards and it is the task of the redeemer to plunder these.

When in the Gospels Christ on two occasions illustrates his point by referring to the house of the strong, he is alluding to familiar, even proverbial, material from the Old Testament. It was after all his intention not to obscure the point in question but to elucidate it. He develops the motif to exploit the concept that one must be vigilant (Matthew 24:43-44); by implication it is the strong one who shows his sinfulness when he fails to keep watch. In I Thessalonians 5 it is particularly obvious that sleep is the characteristic of the wicked. The same idea underlies the use of the thief image in II Peter 3 as well as Revelations 3 and 16. All the New Testament references or allusions to the sudden plundering reveal the ultimate moral contrast between the slumbering strong one and the treasure thief. In the New Testament, as in the Old, the rifling of a hoard is an image of redemption.

The above-mentioned passages from the Old and New Testament form the background to the use of the plundering motif in patristic writings. When Augustine interprets the strong man in Matthew 12:29 as the devil, out of whose bondage Christ plunders his faithful ones,[13] his typological

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and the shadow of death (10) because the Lord "contrivit portas aereas et vectes ferreos confregit" (16, "hath broken gates of brass, and burst iron bars"). This Psalm was commonly interpreted as referring to Christ's descent into hell. See e.g. Cassiodorus, Expositio in Psalmum CVII (in which he refers to the preceding Psalm), CCSL 98, p. 990.

[13]Matthew 12:29 is repeatedly referred to in De civitate Dei, XX, 7-8, in connection with Augustine's discussion of the final judgment.

exegesis is solidly based on Scripture. In early medieval tradition the binding of the strong one was a common allusion to Christ's victory over hell on Holy Saturday and to the harrowing of hell, but Augustine reminds us that the typological perspective was not thus limited to a single historical event:

> Haec autem adligatio diaboli non solum facta est, ex quo coepit ecclesia praeter Iudaeam terram in nationes alias adque alias dilatari; sed etiam nunc fit et fiet usque ad terminum saeculi, quo solvendus est, quia et nunc homines ab infidelitate, in qua eos ipse possidebat, convertuntur ad fidem et usque in illum finem sine dubio convertentur; et utique unicuique iste fortis tunc adligatur, quando ab illo tamquam vas eius eripitur.[14]
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> The devil's binding has been a fact from the day the Church began to expand beyond Judea into nation after nation. What is more, this binding is a present fact, and will continue until his liberation at the end of the world. The devil is bound whenever men are converted to the faith from the infidelity in which he possessed them, and there will certainly be conversions until the end of time. At any rate, for each such convert, plundered from him like a vessel, that strong one is bound.

The binding of the devil and the plundering of his hoard began when Christ descended into hell, but subsequently the same occurs each time a convert to Christianity receives the sacrament of baptism. The process is to be brought to completion at the end of the thousand years.[15] In Book XX of De civitate Dei, the section dealing solely with the final judgment, Augustine repeatedly mentions the plundering of the strong man's house as an analogy to the redemption of Christ. He employs the same imagery elsewhere, as for example in his commentary on Psalm 58, where he also compares each convert to a plundered vessel:

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[14] De civitate Dei, CSEL 40, XX, 8.

[15] See De civitate Dei, XX, 7-13.

> Si intellegantur qui sunt fortes, primo ipsum diabolum Dominus fortem dixit: . . . Alligavit ergo fortem vinculis dominationis suae, et vasa eius arripuit, ac vasa sua fecit.[16]
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> If it is to be perceived who the strong are, at first the Lord called the devil himself the strong; . . . He has therefore bound the strong with the chains of his dominion, and he has carried off his vessels, and has made them his own vessels.

In patristic literature, as in Scripture, such plundering of treasure is the proper business of a redeemer, i.e., of Christ and his types. It now remains to be seen whether in Beowulf, too, the robbing of treasure from a dragon's hoard can be considered an exemplary and Christ-like act.

Just as the house of the strong one is an image of hell, so the dragon's house (2232, "eorðhuse") appears to be a hellish place. It resembles the hell-settings depicted in other Old English poems. In Guthlac A it is presented as "that dreadful house, the deep abysses down below the headlands" (562-63, "þaet atule hus,/ niþer under naessas neole grundas"). In Christ and Satan hell is located "in the deep current, down below the headlands in the deep abyss" (30-31, "in ðone deopan waelm/ niðaer under nessas in ðone neowlan grund"). The Judith poet describes hell as a "serpent-hall" (119, "wyrmsele"), also "below a steep headland" (113, "under neowelne naes"). The dragon's hall in Beowulf is situated "near the water's waves, newly built by the headland" (2242-43, "waeteryðum neah,/ niwe be naesse"). It is suggestive that at least three editors emend "niwe be naesse" to read "niwel [or: niwol] be naesse" ("deep down by the headland").[17] The reference to depth is

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[16] In Psalmum LVIII, Sermo I, Enarrationes in Psalmos, CCSL 39. Such allusions to Matthew 12:29 are common in patristic literature. In his Enarrationes in Psalmos Augustine mentions this text eight times. See CCSL 40, p. 2225.

beyond dispute in a passage where we later read that the earth-hall (2410) is to be found "under the ground near the surging water and the tumult of the waves" (2411-12, "under hrusan holmwylme neh,/ yðgewynne"). Later, when a messenger is sent to the Geats to report on the outcome of Beowulf's struggle, he has to make his way to the top of the cliff (2893, "up ofer ecgclif"). The poet refers to him as the one who rode up over the headland (2898, "se ðe naes gerad"). We may conclude that the hoard is located below the headlands and by the turbulent sea. Moreover, it can be reached by way of a downward path unknown to men (2213, "stig under laeg/ eldum uncuð"), the kind of passage which is elsewhere associated with typologically important instances of deliverance from the power of the devil.[18] The dragon, then, is in the position of the strong one whose house is to be plundered unexpectedly. Even without the help of the conjectural readings suggested by various editors to fill the gaps in the mutilated text of lines 2215-2220, it is clear that someone took the path to the heathen hoard (2216, "haeðnum horde") and with his hand (2216) took something adorned with treasure (2217). The probability that the passage shows the influence of a scriptural convention is greatly strengthened by the poet's next comment. He adds that the dragon was asleep when tricked by the strength or cunning of a thief (2218-19, "he slaepende besyred wurde/ þeofes craefte"). His lack of vigilance is an important detail, for it is again mentioned when we

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[17]This emendation is proposed by Thorpe, Sedgefield, and Trautmann. See Dobbie, ed., Beowulf and Judith, p. 233.

[18]See the discussion of the "uncuð gelad" in Chapter III.

learn of his intention to seek out the one who had "dealt grievously with him in his sleep" (2295, "him on sweofote sare geteode"). In Matthew 24:43-44 and 12:29 it is implied that the Lord will come as a thief to plunder the devil's hoard when the devil is likewise asleep. Also in Christ III, where the sudden plundering occurs in a clearly eschatological context, the slumber of the wicked coincides with the thief-like coming of the Lord on the Lord's day:

> Ðonne mid fere foldbuende
> se micla daeg meahtan dryhtnes
> aet midre niht maegne bihlaemeð,
> scire gesceafte, swa oft sceaða faecne,
> þeof þristlice, þe on þystre fareð,
> on sweartre niht, sorglease haeleð
> semninga forfehð slaepe gebundne,
> eorlas ungearwe yfles genaegeð. (867-74)

> Then suddenly at midnight the great day of the mighty Lord shall dash in its power upon the bright creation as often a stealthy foe, a thief in his boldness, who goes forth in the darkness, in the black night, suddenly surprises men without cares, bound in sleep, and brings down misery on men unprepared.

The faithful, on the other hand, have nothing to fear (875-77). The calamity caused by failure to watch is the characteristic fate of the strong one and his followers. As in the various scriptural references to the approach of the thief (quoted above), vigilance is the mark of the faithful. His failure to watch shows the dragon to be one of the wicked. If this identification is correct, we may assume that the word "þeof" ("thief") as applied to the anonymous intruder therefore has no criminal connotations.

In anticipation of possible objections to an attempt to link the treasure theft in Beowulf with typological symbolism, a few apparently discordant details may require some explanation. When the thief

is called "synbysig" (2226) we need not interpret this compound as evidence of condemnation by the poet.[19] It can mean "troubled by sin", or "distressed by sin". There is no need to conclude that the distressing sin is that of the "synbysig secg" himself. Neither is there convincing proof of his individual guilt when the thief is later presented as a captive (2408, "haeft") who is forced to serve as guide to the hoard. It can be argued that Beowulf practises normal caution until he knows the origin of the precious cup and the obligations to which he commits himself by accepting it. At this point Beowulf is not aware that the vessel comes from a heathen hoard guarded by the dragon, and he still requires the services of a guide. After the thief has served this purpose he is not referred to again. Indeed, in the two sections where he is mentioned he remains a remarkably anonymous figure. When we first meet him he is said to be "some slave" (þeow[20] nathwylces") motivated by an unspecified misfortune (2223, "for þreanedlan"). When he is later described as the "sad-minded captive" (2408, "haeft hygegiomor"), there is certainly no clear indication that Beowulf is the one who at this point must be held responsible for his misery. It may well be that he shares in the generalized suffering of the mournful captives ("haeftas hygegeomre") in Christ I 154 and that their prayer for redemption applies also to him: "ne laet awyrgde ofer us/ onwald agan" (Christ I 158-59,

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[19]Note that Klaeber in his edition of the poem marks "synbysig" as a word "not elsewhere found in poetry (or prose)" (p. 293).

[20]Only the first letter of "þeow" is legible in the MS. For arguments that the word is indeed "þeow", rather than "þegn", see Dobbie, Beowulf and Judith, p. 232, and Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 208.

"do not let the accursed one hold power over us").[21] The act of the thief then serves as an appeal to Beowulf to complete the plundering and so overcome the dragon's power.

Because of the damaged state of line 2216 in the manuscript, it is not immediately clear that the object which the thief has carried off is a precious vessel, but it is soon identified as such in lines 2231 and 2282. Once again we may note a parallel with the scriptural

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[21]See the discussion of the sorrowing captives in Chapter II. The redemptive or baptismal aspect of the thief's rôle as "haeft" has been pointed out by Lewis E. Nicholson, "The Literal Meaning and Symbolic Structure of Beowulf", Classica et Mediaevalia, 25 (1964), 195-96, n. 94: "The theme . . . of a captive who seeks to return to his lord and be reconciled is regularly associated with deliverance from sin in Baptism." Nicholson illustrates this statement by quoting from a homily by Narsai: "As exile he stands naked, without covering; and he shews him (the priest) the toil and labour of his captors' house: 'I appeal to thee, O King,' cries the captive to the King's servants, 'approach the King and entreat for me, that he may be reconciled to me. Enter and say to him, "One of thy servants has returned from captivity, and lo, with love he beseeches to see thy face." I have verily been made a captive by the slave that rebelled against thy lordship; free my life from his slavery, that he may not deride me. I am thy servant, good Lord, and the son of thy handmaid, why should I serve a wicked slave who has revolted from thee? Heretofore I have wickedly served the all-wicked one; ransom me from him, that I may be thine, for thine I am.'" The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai, translated by R.H. Connolly, pp. 38-39. Although it is unlikely that this fifth-century Syriac Church Father was known in Anglo-Saxon England, he eloquently expresses the traditional view of baptism See also the context of the above quotation, pp. 38-40. The same theme is presented by more familiar writers such as John Chrysostom. Nicholson quotes from his Baptismal Instructions: "As soon as they come forth from those sacred waters, all who are present embrace them, greet them, kiss them, rejoice with them, and congratulate them, because those who were heretofore slaves and captives have suddenly become free men and sons and have been invited to the royal table." Cyril of Jerusalem in his Procatechesis, 16 (listed among Nicholson's further references), supplies the following details (McCauley and Stephenson, trans., Works): "Great is the prize set before you in Baptism: ransom for captives, . . . the grace of the adoption of sons. But a dragon lies in ambush for the traveller; . . . In your journey to the Father of souls, your way lies past that dragon." Baptism as a ransom for the devil's captives is a common theme in patristic writings.

plundering motif. The "sincfaet" and the other golden cups stolen from the hoard have their apparent source in the vasa, or vessels, of the strong one in Matthew 12:29. We are to remind ourselves here that the concept of the Lord himself as a robber of precious vessels is a scriptural and patristic commonplace.[22] The thief in Beowulf and, later, also Beowulf himself are in good company. The plundering of the hoard is an act performed in imitation of Christ's victory over hell.

Since the dragon does not show violence until he has been provoked by robbery, one may be inclined to argue that he is somewhat justified in his anger; however, the poet's sympathetic presentation of the thief is matched by a forthright condemnation of those who hide a treasure:

> Þa wæes gesyne, þæt se siđ ne đah
> đam đe unrihte inne gehydde
> wraete under wealle. (3058-60)

> Then it was clear that the way of him who had wrongfully hidden the ornaments under the wall (or, in an equally possible translation, below the cliff) had not prospered.

The dragon who kept the treasure concealed and the heathen who hid it in the first place are both essentially anti-social, for they prevent others from letting gold serve its normal function in a harmonious society,

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[22] It is worth noting that of all the components of the treasure in Beowulf, cups or vessels are mentioned most frequently: "sincfaet" (2231), "faeted waege,/ drincfaet dyre" (2253-54), "faeted waege" (2282), "sincfaet" (2300), drincfaet dyre" (2306), "mađþumfaet maere" (2405), "orcas" (2760), "fyrnmanna fatu" (2761), "bunan ond discas" (2275), "bunan ond orcas,/ discas" (3047-48). For the metaphor of mankind as vessels (though not necessarily valuable ones) see also Psalm 2:9, 30:13; Jeremiah 19:11, 22:28, 25:34, 48:38; Hosea 8:8, Acts 9:15, Romans 9:21-23, II Timothy 2:20-21, I Peter 3:7, Revelation 2:27. Note further that in Hosea 13:15 the Lord as redeemer "shall carry off the treasure of every desirable vessel" ("diripiet thesaurum omnis vasis desiderabilis").

where peace and brotherhood manifest themselves in gift-giving and gift-receiving. A hidden treasure serves no purpose. Thus when a man comes to take a cup from the hoard, intending to put it back into circulation (see 2282), the poet sympathizes with him: "Nealles mid gewealdum wyrmhord abraec" (2221, "Not at all of his own accord did he break into the hoard of the dragon"). After describing the thief's escape he further comments:

> Swa maeg unfaege eaðe gedigan
> wean ond wraecsiþ se ðe Waldendes
> hyldo gehealdeþ! (2291-93)

So the undoomed man is able easily to survive woe and exile, he who relies on the protection of the Ruler.

Like Grendel and his mother, the dragon embodies the spirit of Cain[23] and is therefore hostile to the restoration of social equilibrium; he gives way to the anger which springs from avarice, a combination of sins associated with the first fratricide. When the dragon guards his gold-hall, he is in an ironic position. As defender of a kingdom without subjects, in which gold is not and cannot be put to proper use, he is hardly justified in seeking reparation by laying waste the realm of an ideal king. Since the circulation of treasure, like the feasting and music in Heorot, represents social harmony, the two parts of Beowulf clearly deal with the same conflict. The dragon, like the race of giants and monsters, stands for the kind of wickedness which the Flood once cleansed. The identification of the dragon with the Grendel kin and, hence, with the typological symbolism of the Deluge, suggests the under-

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[23]The connection between Grendel and the dragon and their mutual Cain-like significance is explored and documented by David Williams, "Cain and Beowulf" (diss.). See pp. 200-03.

lying unity of the poem. From this unity the thief derives his full significance, for in his exemplary theft he opposes the evil forces which always threaten peace and brotherhood.

As for those who originally hid the treasure, they share in the dragon's condemnation. The apparent inconsistencies in the history of the hoard have tended to obscure their place in the poem. Klaeber, for example, provides the following summary:

> Long, long ago (3050a) the hoard had been placed in the earth by illustrious chieftains (3070). A curse had been laid on it. After a time, it was discovered and seized by certain warriors (2248f.), who made good use of it. The last survivor of this race returned the treasures to the earth, placing them in a barrow or cave. There the dragon found them and kept watch over them for three hundred years (2278), until the theft of a cup aroused his anger and brought on the tragic fight, . . .[24]

Since we are told on one occasion that the treasure was buried by the so-called last survivor and on another that it was concealed by illustrious chieftains, Klaeber's logical judgment leads him to distinguish between two widely separated historical events. The evidence may be worth re-examining. In the first place it is suggestive that just prior to the introduction of the last survivor the treasure which he buried in the earth-house (2232) is labelled as a heathen hoard (2216). As member of a noble race that lived long ago (2233-34), he may well belong to the race of the famous princes about whom we read later that they laid a heathen curse on their gold. When, upon the death of his companions, he conceals the treasure, a hiding-place is available:

Beorh eallgearo
wunode on wonge waeterydum neah,

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[24]Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 209.

. . . . . nearocraeftum faest. (2241-43)

A barrow was all ready on open ground by the water's waves, . . . held fast with artful barriers.

The typological aspect of its location has been mentioned earlier. It now appears that the burial of the hoard is not simply an act of an individual but that the barrow had already been prepared for the occasion by the noble race of which he was a member. When the last survivor assigns the gold to the ground from which it was formerly taken (2247-49), he is only referring to the obvious fact that as ore it was once dug from the earth. Since we later read that the famous princes hid their wealth in the very same barrow, we may conclude that they are the ones responsible for rendering it "nearocraeftum faest" (2243), evidently by their incantations. The last survivor of long ago (2233, "on geardagum") is one of the men of old (3052, "iumonna") whose gold lay bound by a spell. When Wiglaf later finds the vessels of an ancient race, lacking someone to polish them (2761, "fyrnmanna fatu, feormendlease") and when we are repeatedly reminded that the treasure has been affected by rust and neglect (2760-64, 3047-49), there is no indication at all that the last survivor belonged to a second ancient race and that the gold was hidden a second time.[25] Instead, the references to the later condition of the unused treasure point back to the time when the survivor deposited it in the new barrow and sang his elegiac lay:

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[25]The view that the treasure was placed in the barrow only once, finds support in a comment by Johannes Hoops on l. 3070 (where the "Þeodnas maere" are said to have concealed the gold): "Þeodnas maere sind die früheren Besitzer des Schatzes. Nach 2237ff. war es nur einer, der letzte seines Stammes." Kommentar zum Beowulf, p. 327. Hoops evidently does not distinguish between two separate occasions.

guðdeað fornam,
feorhbealo frecne fyra gehwylcne
leoda minra þara ðe þis lif ofgeaf,
gesawon seledream. Nah, hwa sweord wege
oððe feormie faeted waege,
dryncfaet deore; dugud ellor sceoc.
Sceal se hearda helm hyrstedgolde,
faetum befeallen; feormynd swefaþ,
þa ðe beadogriman bywan sceoldon;
ge swylce se herepad, sio aet hilde gebad
ofer borda gebraec bite irena,
brosnaþ aefter beorne. (2249-60)

> Battle-death, terrible disaster took away each of the men, of my people, who gave up this life, had seen the last of hall-joy. I do not have anyone who is to wield the sword or polish the beaten-gold cup, the precious drinking vessel; the warriors have gone elsewhere. The sturdy helmet adorned with gold must be deprived of its beaten plates. The polishers slumber who ought to make the war-masks gleam; and likewise the corslet, which in battle, amid the crashing of shields, endured the cutting of swords, follows the fighter to decay.

The lay of the last survivor sketches for us the doom of a society. The burial of heathen treasure marks the end of the same ancient race that laid its curse on the hoard.

The fate of the famous princes has a parallel in the oracle of Baruch, traditionally one of the twelve lections of the Holy Saturday liturgy.[26] Those in Israel who have forsaken wisdom are there admonished as follows:

> Ubi sunt principes gentium, et qui dominantur super bestias, quae sunt super terram? qui in avibus caeli ludunt, qui argentum thesaurizant et aurum, in quo confidunt homines, et non est finis adquisitionis eorum? qui argentum fabricant et solliciti sunt, nec est inventio operum illorum? Exterminati sunt et ad inferos descenderunt, et alii loco eorum surrexerunt! (3:16-19)
>
> Where are the princes of the nations, and they that rule over the beasts that are upon the earth? That take their diversion with the

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[26] See e.g. A. Cabaniss, "Beowulf and the Liturgy", in Nicholson Anthology, p. 229, and J.W. Bright, "The Relation of the Caedmonian Exodus to the Liturgy", MLN, 27 (1912), 100.

> birds of the air, That hoard up silver and gold, wherein men trust, and there is no end of the getting? who work in silver, and are solicitous, and their works are unsearchable. They are cut off, and are gone down to hell, and others are risen up in their place.

Also in Beowulf the famous princes of long ago occupied themselves with their valuable possessions. Moreover, when the last survivor in describing his desolation mentions that "ne god hafoc/ geond sael swingeð" (2263-64, "nor does the good hawk sweep through the hall"), the poet may be alluding to the principes gentium who once took their diversion with the birds of the air (3:17). A few verses later Baruch connects these princes with the giants:

> Ibi fuerunt gigantes nominati illi, qui ab initio fuerunt, statura magna, scientes bellum. Non hos elegit Dominus, neque viam disciplinae invenerunt, propterea perierunt; et, quoniam non habuerunt sapientiam, interierunt propter suam insipientiam. (3:26-28)
>
> There were the giants, those renowned men that were from the beginning, of great stature, expert in war. The Lord chose not them, neither did they find the way of knowledge: therefore did they perish. And because they had not wisdom, they perished through their folly.

In Beowulf, too, the illustrious men of old were well-equipped for warfare. The last survivor informs us that they possessed swords, helmets, battle-masks, corslets, and shields (2252-59) but that, for reasons on which he does not elaborate, every one of his people nevertheless died in battle.

The linking of the vanished race with the hell-like location of its treasure hoard may already be sufficient to identify these men of old ("iumenn" or "fyrnmenn"). The reason for their downfall is then left understood. Like the giants of Baruch's oracle, they may have perished because, being heathens, they did not find the way of knowledge. The Beowulf poet does indeed take it for granted that the princes of

bygone days were a race of giants. The barrow or "eorðreced" (2719, "earth-hall") is twice said to be the work of these giants (2717, "enta geweorc"; 2774, "eald enta geweorc"). While "enta geweorc" may have been a formulaic term indicating impressiveness, it is unlikely that in a poem dealing with giants and related monsters its meaning must be restricted only to this level. Earlier, in Part One, a similar expression is used for the golden hilt of the giant sword that Beowulf found in Grendel's hall: "enta aergeweorc" (1679). In the account of the struggle with Grendel's mother the entire sword is described as "ealdsweord eotenisc" (1558, "ancient sword made by giants") and "giganta geweorc" (1562, "work of giants"). When the hilt is presented to Hrothgar, the poet's commentary implies that the giants who made it were the ones that perished in the Flood:

> on þaem waes or writen
> fyrngewinnes, syðþan flod ofsloh,
> gifen geotende giganta cyn,
> frecne geferdon; þaet waes fremde þeod
> ecean Dryhtne; him þaes endelean
> þurh waeteres wylm Waldend sealde.
> Swa waes on ðaem scennum sciran goldes
> þurh runstafas rihte gemearcod,
> geseted ond gesaed, hwam þaet sweord geworht,
> irena cyst aerest waere,
> wreoþenhilt ond wyrmfah. (1688-98)

> There was engraved upon it the origin of that ancient strife after which the Flood, the gushing ocean, struck down the race of giants -- they suffered terribly. That was a people estranged from the eternal Lord; through the rush of water the Ruler granted them their final reward. Thus, by means of runic letters on plates of shining gold, it was rightly marked down, set forth and recorded, for whom that sword had first been wrought, the choicest of blades, with its hilt of twisting patterns and its gleaming serpent forms.

Since the giants are associated with the ancient strife that resulted in the Flood (cf. "fyrngewinnes"), it is noteworthy that the giants referred

to in Beowulf, Part Two, are "fyrnmenn". Besides, like the giants who made the giant sword, the members of the vanished race were also wonder-smiths (cf. 1681), for the last survivor's words can be taken to suggest that they fashioned their treasures from ore. The last survivor further declares that every one of his people perished in a terrible disaster (2250, "feorhbealo frecne"). Admittedly, he once refers to their fate as "guðdeað", death in battle; however, the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea -- typologically identical with the Flood -- was also an instance of death in battle. In the Exodus poem, as we have seen, they were even slain by an ancient sword ("alde mece"). If we consider the catalogue of the war equipment which the ancient race in Beowulf possessed, it is certainly surprising that the nature of the battle is not specified. The answer appears to be that the poet is not thinking of ordinary warfare. Instead, he stresses the fact of their total extinction: "Ealle hie deað fornam" (2236, "Death took them all away"). The last survivor provides the same information near the beginning of his lay (2249-51) and he concludes it with these words: "Bealocwealm hafað/ fela feorhcynna forð onsended!" (2265-66, "Ruinous death has sent forth many races of living creatures"). The perishing of his race has its paradigm in the Flood.

The connection between "enta geweorc" and the imagery of the Deluge can be demonstrated with reference to other Old English poems. In The Wanderer the formula occurs in this context:

> Ylde swa þisne eardgeard aelda scyppend
> oþþaet burgwara breahtma lease
> eald enta geweorc idlu stodon. (85-87)

Thus the Creator of men laid waste this earthly dwelling until,

deprived of the tumult of its inhabitants, the ancient work of giants stood empty.

Like the plaint of the last survivor, The Wanderer shows us the extinction of a race and the destruction of its glory. In The Wanderer we find the same ubi sunt theme with its detailed recollection of bygone joys. If we regard the poem as a study of a man cut off from grace and estranged from God,[27] it is not surprising that the deprivation which he experiences is implicitly compared to the punishment of a giganta cyn similarly alienated from the Lord: it is the Creator who laid waste the earth. Here, too, the desolation of the "enta geweorc" has its model in the effect of the Deluge as judgment. When the Wanderer poet adds that only a wall adorned with serpent-shapes (98, "wyrmlicum fah") remains, we may recall that the giant sword, the "enta geweorc" in Beowulf, Part One, is also covered with serpentine forms (1698, "wyrmfah"), while in Part Two the "enta geweorc" as treasure hoard is even more closely associated with a "wyrm".

In Andreas the combination of the Flood and the work-of-giants motif is particularly direct. Andreas

> be wealle geseah wundrum faeste
> under saelwange[28] sweras unlytle,

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[27] See Lee, The Guest-Hall of Eden, pp. 136-43, for a convincing discussion of The Wanderer as "a poem about the world . . . where divine grace (1-2) is not visibly operating and where everything is seen to be under the sentence of Judgment (85-87)" (p. 136).

[28] The MS reading "under saelwange" ("under the earth") is here retained in favour of the common emendation "under saelwage" ("in the hall"). Typologically speaking, the imprisoned Andreas is indeed "under the earth", in the hell from which he is subsequently delivered by passing through water along a dry path (1581).

stapulas standan, storme bedrifene,
eald enta geweorc. (1493-95)

saw by the wall, wondrously firm under the earth, great pillars standing, columns beaten upon by the storm, the ancient work of giants.

In passing we should here note a parallel with what Beowulf saw:

seah on enta geweorc,
hu ðа stanbogan stapulum faeste
ece eorðreced innan healde. (2717-19)

He beheld the work of giants, how within the age-old earth-hall held stone arches firm upon pillars.

Andreas addresses the marble pillars as follows:

Laet nu of þinum staþole streamas weallan,
ea inflede, nu ðe aelmihtig
hateð, heofona cyning, þaet ðu hraedlice
on þis fraete folc forð onsende
waeter widrynig to wera cwealme,
geofon geotende. (1503-08)

Let streams now burst forth from your base, a flood of water, now that the Almighty, the King of the heavens, commands you to send forth quickly upon this proud people far-flowing water for the destruction of men, a gushing sea.

The ensuing "geofen geotende" is typologically of a kind with the gushing sea of Beowulf 1690. As we have seen in our earlier discussion of the "uncuð gelad", it is also the sea through which Andreas passes on dry ground.[29] As far as the Beowulf and Andreas poets are concerned, the Flood motif in its destructive and redemptive aspects is inseparable from the typology of the Exodus and the crossing of the Red Sea. Behind the apparently illogical blending of diverse historical elements we see the controlling imaginative structure in which the Redemption is the central truth. In the total pattern that is represented also in The Wanderer,

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[29]See Chapter III.

Andreas, and Beowulf, Part One, a reference to "enta geweorc" serves potentially to remind us of sinners, devils, and giants and of their wicked pride. The same applies to Beowulf, Part Two.

Right after the very first mention of the hoard, the details of its location and the last survivor's account of its former possessors show that the designation "haeðnum horde" (2216) is no coincidence. The poet in fact introduces these elaborations to stress the heathen aspect of the treasure. The dragon's occupation of the barrow then follows naturally, for the dragon and the ancient giant race are thematically equivalent. This fact is indeed taken for granted when we are told that the dragon must needs seek out and guard "haeþen gold" (2276). The section that has just been discussed in some detail (Beowulf 2210-77) allows for neither a romantic view of the dragon nor a sentimental interpretation of the survivor's lay. The poet, for one, is entirely in favour of the plundering:

> Ða waes hord rasod,
> onboren beaga hord, bene getiðad
> feasceaftum men. (2283-85)

> Then the hoard was rifled, the hoard of rings diminished, a boon granted to the destitute man.

One may question the sense of robbing a hoard that is unmistakably in the power of the devil. Would a plunderer not be tainted by his deed or even corrupted by his desire? The above quotation as well as the previously cited indications of approval reveal that the poet saw no problem here. It has also been shown that in the scriptural and typological perspective the rifling of a hellish hoard is a standard image of redemption. The power of the foe lends glory to the act and renders

the gold all the more precious.[30]

When the dragon is "since bereafod" (2746, "robbed of treasure) a redemptive triumph has again been achieved. Sent by Beowulf, Wiglaf is appropriately "sigehreðig" (2756, "exulting in victory") as he enters the barrow. The adjective occurs here for the third time in the poem, and again its typological connotations are apparent.[31] Wiglaf is "sigehreðig" because the dragon has been deprived of the vessels of the ancient giant race (2761, "fyrnmanna fatu").[32] The poet's diction is highly suggestive:

> Swylce he siomian geseah segn eallgylden
> heah ofer horde, hondwundra maest,
> gelocen leoðocraeftum; of ðaem leoma stod. (2767-69)

> Also he saw an all-golden banner hovering (or standing) high above the hoard, greatest of hand-wrought wonders, woven with skilful fingers. Light shone forth from it.

This "segn" calls to mind the light-giving cross which Constantine saw in the heavens as a sign of victory and which was represented on his banner (Elene 124, "segn"; see 79-137).[33] The relation between cross and

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[30] In scriptural and typological instances of the spoiling of an enemy, the value of the latter's treasure is never questioned. Cf. the concept of Egyptian gold in Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, I, xl, 60. Also in any realistically considered heroic context one would expect the heirlooms of a celebrated foe to constitute a glorious prize. It may well be that in Beowulf these two perspectives merge when the words "etonisc", "eotonisc", or "entisc" are applied to swords and helmets (2616, 2979).

[31] These connotations are mentioned in Chapters I, III, and IV.

[32] See the account of the plundering in ll. 2756-64. Note that in the lines which follow (2764-66) the gnomic interjection to the effect that buried gold can easily overpower a man, then applies not to Wiglaf or Beowulf but to the dragon and his ilk.

[33] The "sacramental overtones" of the "segn" in the dragon's cave are briefly touched on by Nicholson, "The Literal Meaning and Symbolic

banner is also rendered familiar by the imagery of a hymn by Venantius Fortunatus which has a place in the liturgy of Good Friday: "Vexilla regis prodeunt,/ Fulget crucis mysterium"[34] ("The banners of the King advance, the mystery of the cross shines forth"). In Beowulf Wiglaf discovers the "segn" in a hoard below the headlands and the poet singles it out for special attention: "segn eac genom, beacna beorhtost" (2776-77, "He also took the banner, the brightest of beacons"). In Elene another beacon, the cross of Christ, has also been hidden under a steep cliff (831, "under neolum niðer naesse gehydde"). It has been concealed by the Jews (e.g. 836), who, being typologically identical with the race of giants, are later referred to as heathen (1075). It is called a "goldhord", and the devil, like the dragon in Beowulf, is enraged by the plundering:

> Hwaet is þis, la, manna, þe minne eft
> þurh fyrngeflit folgaþ wyrdeð,
> iceð ealdne nið, aehta struðeð? (902-04)

Lo, what man is this who because of the ancient strife again destroys my followers, increases the old hostility, plunders my possessions?

The word "eft" suggests that the same thing has happened before, and as the devil continues he reveals that the treasure thief in Elene follows the example of the Saviour: "symle cirde to him/ aehte mine" (914-15, "he [Christ] constantly drew my possessions to himself"). Again the loss

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Structure of Beowulf", p. 188. Its possible association with the cross is also discussed by F.G. Cassidy, "A Symbolic Word-Group in Beowulf", in Mandel and Rosenberg, eds., Medieval Literature and Folklore Studies: Essays in Honor of Francis Lee Utley, pp. 31-33. Note further the paschal connotations of "leoma" in l. 1570, on the occasion of the parallel victory in Grendel's hall. See Chapter IV.

[34] The Penguin Book of Latin Verse, p. 122.

of treasure means the liberation of men. In Beowulf the relation between Christ and the thief is presented less directly but the pattern is the same. This cursory comparison may suffice to show that Wiglaf's special interest in the golden "segn" links his act of plundering with the typological tradition that we discern also in Elene.[35]

In Beowulf the treasure-theft motif is presented with an emphasis on its eschatological aspect. Aside from the imagery of final destruction in this part of the poem, it is noteworthy that in the mysterious curse doomsday and the plundering are mentioned together:

> Swa hit oð domes daege diope benemdon
> þeodnas maere, þa ðaet þaer dydon,
> þaet se secg waere synnum scildig,
> hergum geheaderod, hellbendum faest,
> wommum gewitnad, se ðone wong strude,
> naefne[36] goldhwaete gearwor haefde
> Agendes est aer gesceawod. (3069-75)

> Thus did the famous princes, who put it there, solemnly lay a curse upon it till doomsday, so that the man who would plunder the place would be guilty of sins, confined in cursed places, held fast in bonds of hell, smitten with plagues, unless God's grace had before more readily favoured the one eager for gold.

This is an evil spell, and the famous princes responsible for it are guilty of attempting to keep the treasure out of circulation, thus rendering it useless. From their point of view, as from the dragon's,

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[35]For a discussion of the quest for the cross-as-treasure, see Lee, The Guest-Hall of Eden, pp. 95-99. Note that the burial and "invention" of the cross and its connections with treasure form a motif that also occurs in The Dream of the Rood. Lee draws attention to it on p. 99.

[36]In l. 3074 Klaeber's emendation is included without further ado since any discussion of it will not significantly affect the present interpretation, which follows the widely held view that ll. 3074-75 indicate Beowulf's innocence. See Klaeber, Beowulf, p. 227, as well as Dobbie, Beowulf and Judith, pp. 272-74.

the thief who plundered that place -- "se ðone wong strude" -- would deserve the punishment which they could allot to him. But the hoard can be kept hidden only if God allows it. He who is in control of times and seasons will determine when the powers of darkness have to give up their treasure. As a reminder of God's rule the curse includes a reference to doomsday, for that is when the final surrender is to take place and the demons will be destroyed. The last two lines (3074-75) make allowance for the fact that God will put an end to the devil's dominion when he sees fit. Only the Father knows the day and hour. It is appropriate that Beowulf, as a Christ-like thief in his own right, completes the plundering at a time which in the poem is an anticipation of doomsday. The death of the hero follows the end of the dragon's rule so closely that the two are almost simultaneous. The repeated scriptural references to the mystery of the unexpected end of this world are transferred to the mystery surrounding the "endedogor" (2896, cf. 3035) or last day of Beowulf's life. To be more precise, the imagery of doomsday is introduced because the poet regards Beowulf's death as an eschatological event:

> Wundur hwar þonne
> eorl ellenrof ende gefere
> lifgesceafta, þonne leng ne maeg
> mon mid his magum meduseld buan.
> Swa waes Biowulfe, þa he biorges weard
> sohte searonidas; seolfe ne cuðe,
> þurh hwaet his worulde gedal weorðan sceolde. (3062-68)

It is a mystery where an earl, mighty in valour, may come to the end of life, when he may no longer sit in the mead-hall with his kinsmen. Thus it was with Beowulf, when he sought out the guardian of the barrow and the violence of battle; he did not himself know through what his passing from the world was to come about.

The general statement about the unknown hour of a hero's death is followed by two examples. The first of these concerns Beowulf: "Swa waes Biowulfe . . ." The second illustration is the already quoted passage outlining the curse, which also begins with "swa": "Swa hit oð domes daeg diope benemdon/ þeodnes maere . . ." The structural parallel confirms that the two mysteries are essentially one.

Since the final victory and the passing of the hero constitute, as it were, the doomsday of the poem, the occasion is a suitable one for pushing the dragon into the sea (3131-32), in anticipation of the fate of the ancient serpent of the Apocalypse, who after the thousand years will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (20:10). The poet himself directs us to this suggestion when he first mentions the spell in a passage which has essentially the same significance as the above-discussed incantation:

> Him big stodan bunan ond orcas,
> discas lagon ond dyre swyrd,
> omige þurhetone, swa hie wið eorðan faeðm
> þusend wintra þaer eardodon;
> þonne waes þaet yrfe eacencraeftig,
> iumonna gold galdre bewunden,
> þaet ðam hringsele hrinan ne moste
> gumena aenig, nefne God sylfa,
> sigora Soðcyning sealde þam ðe he wolde
> --he is manna gehyld-- hord openian,
> efne swa hwylcum manna, swa him gemet ðuhte. (3047-57)

By him (the slain dragon) stood drinking vessels and cups; plates lay there and precious swords eaten through by rust, just as they had been there in the earth's embrace for a thousand winters. Then that mighty heritage, the gold of the men of old, was bound with a spell, so that none among men was allowed to touch that ring-hall unless God himself, the true King of victories -- he is the helper of men -- granted to whom he would to open the hoard, even to that man whom he thought fit.

The clause beginning with "nefne" confirms that God will decide when the

time is ripe for plundering; the events of the poem show that Beowulf is the man of God's choosing. The symbolic "þusend" links the whole episode of the third fight with the end of the millennium, the point of time which lends appropriateness to the release of the dragon from his hall and his raging about the countryside at the end of Beowulf's life.

Whatever may ultimately be done with the treasure, the death of the hero is presented as a worthwhile sacrifice. Beowulf offers thanks to God for having been able to win such gain for his people (2794-98), and he continues:

> Nu ic on maðma hord mine bebohte
> frode feorhlege, fremmaþ gena
> leoda þearfe. (2799-801)

> Now that I have prudently sold my life for the hoard of treasures, attend further to the need of my people.

The spoiling of the hoard, related in purpose to Christ's plundering of the devil's house, is a deed performed for the good of the Geatish nation. It may seem at times that Beowulf's death is in vain; surprisingly, however, interest in the hoard does not cease once he is gone. The allusion in the curse to the plundering of treasure at the time determined by God comes after the messenger has already proposed its destruction by fire, and it is still considered important to remove the wealth from the dragon's hall. The Geats evidently do so very eagerly (3126-31). The apparent confusion may in part reflect the influence of the Gospels. There, too, the sacrifice of the redeemer is closely related to a prophecy of approaching slaughter and captivity. When the messenger declares that the gold must melt in the fire (3010ff.), he re-introduces the imagery of doomsday. He then continues to expound his

apocalyptic pessimism[37] with details that accord with the tribulation foretold by Christ. Nevertheless, in the same context the messenger speaks of Beowulf's sacrificial death in terms that fit the redemption.[38]

The positive value of Beowulf's accomplishments is maintained to the very end. The spiritual importance of his victory over the dragon is transferred to his barrow. It is above all in this sense that he has won treasure for his people. In his own mind, too, the "biorh" represents his true significance as Christ-like hero. After thanking God for the treasure, Beowulf devotes considerable attention to the monument that is to be built in his memory:

> Hatað heaðomaere hlaew gewyrcean
> beorhtne aefter baele aet brimes nosan;
> se scel to gemyndum minum leodum
> heah hlifian on Hronesnaesse,
> þaet hit saelidend syððan hatan
> Biowulfes biorh, ða ðe brentingas
> ofer floda genipu feorran drifað. (2802-08)

> Bid the men bold in battle make a mound, splendid after the funeral fire, at the headland by the sea. It shall tower high upon Hronesness (the Headland of the Whale) as a reminder to my people, so that seafarers, those who sail their ships from afar through the dark mists of the seas, may henceforth call it Beowulf's Barrow.

The last lines of Christ II illuminate the spiritual import of this command:

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[37]The term "apocalyptic pessimism" is used in E. Hennecke, ed., New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 2, p. 589, where we read in a further discussion of this pessimism: "To the depreciation of this Age there corresponds an intensification of the desire for and speculation about the Beyond." In the poem the latter element is represented in the symbolism of Beowulf's barrow (discussed below).

[38]In this connection the messenger uses the words "geceapod" (3012, "purchased") and "gebohte" (3014, "paid for "). Beowulf himself stated earlier that he had sold (2799, "bebohte") his life for the treasure. Such verbs are related in Christ III to the Saviour's sacrificial death: "gebohte" (1462), "gecypte" (1471), and "ceapode" (1095). See Klaeber, "Die christlichen Elemente im Beowulf", Anglia, 36 (1912), 192.

Nu is þon gelicost swa we on laguflode
ofer cald waeter ceolum liðan
geond sidne sae, sundhengestum,
flodwudu fergen. Is þaet frecne stream
yða ofermaeta þe we her on lacað
geond þas wacan woruld, windge holmas
ofer deop gelad. Waes se drohtað strong
aerþon we to londe geliden haefdon
ofer hreone hrycg. Þa us help becwom,
þaet us to haelo hyþe gelaedde,
godes gaestsunu, ond us giefe sealde
þaet we oncnawan magun ofer ceoles bord
hwaer we saelan sceolon sundhengestas,
ealde yðmearas, ancrum faeste.
Utan us to þaere hyðe hyht staþelian,
ða us gerymde rodera waldend,
halge on heahþu, þa he heofonum astag. (850-66)

Now it is as if we were faring in ships on the flood over the cold water, voyaging on ocean steeds, in vessels upon the wide sea. The flood is perilous, the waves exceedingly great, the billows windy over the deep road on which we are tossed through this changeful world. Hard was the wayfaring before we had traversed to land over the stormy, heaped-up waters; then help came to us, God's spiritual Son, who led us to the haven of salvation and gave us grace so that we may learn where we are to moor the sea steeds, the ancient wave-horses, firmly with anchors over the side of the ship. Let us fix our hope on that haven which the Ruler of the skies prepared for us, in its holiness on high, when he rose to the heavens.

The perilous flood which is here described represents the life of man in this world as he awaits the Parousia. It is the realm of the hron, the cetus of the Vulgate, also called Leviathan, the dragon of the sea. Just as Christ, the ascended Lord, is the guide to the haven of salvation, so Beowulf, who rose to the judgment of the just (2820), provides by his example a beacon for the Geats. The monument on Hronesness, which marks the conquest of the hron or dragon of hell,[39] will remind them of their

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[39]Such a connection between Hronesness and the dragon, or Leviathan, is suggested also by Nicholson, "The Literal Meaning and Symbolic Structure of Beowulf", p. 194, and by Lee, The Guest-Hall of Eden, p. 195.

lord's achievements even after his death:

> Geworhton ðā Wedra leode
> hlaew on hliðe, se waes heah ond brad,
> waegliðendum wide gesyne,
> ond betimbredon on tyn dagum
> beadurofes becn, bronda lafe
> wealle beworhton, swa hit weorðlicost
> foresnotre men findan mihton. (3156-62)

> Then the people of the Weders prepared a mound on the headland; it was high and broad, widely visible to seafarers, and in ten days they constructed the beacon of the one bold in battle, surrounded the remnant of the flames with a wall, as very wise men could most splendidly devise it.

These lines suggest that it was a magnificent structure.[40]

If we accept the view that Beowulf's barrow is to offer guidance to those who navigate the sea of this life, the following possible analogue is of interest:

> Et aedificavit Simon super sepulcrum patris sui et fratrum suorum aedificium altum visu, lapide polito retro et ante, et statuit septem pyramidas unam contra unam, patri et matri et quattuor fratribus, et his circumposuit columnas magnas et super columnas arma ad memoriam aeternam et iuxta arma naves sculptas, quae viderentur ab omnibus navigantibus mare. (I Maccabees 13:27-29)

> And Simon built over the sepulchre of his father, and of his brethren, a building, lofty to the sight, of polished stone, behind and before: And he set up seven pyramids, one against another, for his father, and his mother, and his four brethren: And round about these he set great pillars: and upon the pillars arms for a perpetual memory: and by the arms, ships carved, which might be seen by all that sailed the sea.

A building of some kind here serves as beacon to seafarers. Rabanus Maurus explains that the arms are a reminder of the faith in which the dead Maccabees had fought the spiritual battle against enemies ("in ipsa

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[40] It is not quite clear what kind of monument is built. Since it is said to be a "becn" (3160), F.G. Cassidy proposes that "covert allusion" is made to the beacon as a reference to Christ or the cross. See "A Symbolic Word-Group in Beowulf", p. 33.

fide quomodo armis spiritalibus contra hostes pugnaverint"). The carved ships recall the fact that they crossed the sea of this life in the ship of the cross of Christ ("navigio crucis Christi"), in which they reached the shore of peace ("littus quietis"). In the same way those who believe in the passion of Christ and the redemption ("passionis Christi et nostrae redemptionis") can reach the haven of eternal salvation ("portus salutis aeternae").[41] Although the memorial building and its appurtenances in I Maccabees are more lavish than anything we find in Beowulf, the typological meaning is the same in both texts. As a beacon to redemption Beowulf's memorial is evidently not unique.

Since of necessity the monument in Beowulf is only a "becn", or sign, it does not represent redemptive fulfilment. Thus it can be explained that the gold is placed within it, as unprofitable to men as it was before (3163-68). Beowulf is not Christ. Therefore the Geats must still await the ultimate deliverance which is to follow a time of great tribulation. There is every indication that they can expect a season of storm and darkness in which they will have Beowulf's barrow to inspire them to perseverance. It is a symbol of hope. For a time Beowulf's people will suffer the misery of the latter days, but the forces of fratricide and social chaos will not triumph forever. The final destruction of the spirit of Cain, in the eschatological fulfilment of the Flood, will render possible the true peace and kinship of the new earth, where youthful heroes such as Beowulf in Part One will not be subject to the curse of human mortality and where everlasting

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[41] See Commentaria in Libros Machabaeorum, PL 109, col. 1201AB.

spring never yields to winter.

The poem offers ample evidence that Beowulf does not succumb to avarice or pride. Like the construction and restoration of Heorot, the plundering of the dragon's hoard is a redemptive activity. As doomsday motif it forms an extension of the Flood and baptism typology to which the poet repeatedly alludes in his presentation of Beowulf's conflict with the Grendel kin. To the day of his death Beowulf remains a Christ-like hero worthy of his people's praise, and even afterwards he guides them in the direction of the paradise to come.

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