

SODFAESTRA SAWLA

SODFÆ STRA SAWLA:

A STUDY OF GUTHLAC A, JULIANA,
AND GUTHLAC B

by

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: This thesis is an exploration of the Old English poets' imaginative shaping of the raw material of three saints' legends in the eighth century. Whereas Chapter One broadly defines the scope and importance of saints' lives in Old English literature, Chapters Two to Four individually evaluate the poems. Although consideration is given to the patristic, scriptural, and legendary sources, the emphasis falls upon the hagiographers' poetic transmutation of various source material into enduring accounts of otherworldly aspiration during a heroic age.

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CHAPTER I

HALIGRA HYHT

SAINTS' LEGENDS IN OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE

Of the hagiographer's, as well as of the painter's impulse, Browning might well have written

art may tell a truth,
Suffice the eye and save the soul beside.¹

In this critical study of three Old English saints' lives, Guthlac A, Cynewulf's Juliana, and Guthlac B, I aim to evaluate the effectiveness of the poets' attempts to tell a truth that is the godspel, to suffice the eye and save the soul besides. I aim as well to explore the influence of the pagan past on the heroic literature of the infant Christian civilization in England and particularly to examine how these combine with Mediterranean hagiographic substance and heathen dryht conventions to produce a richly imaginative Christian literary aesthetic. For just as captive Greece took captive her fierce conqueror in the themes and style of literature, so the pagan Germanic concepts of heroism and adventure took captive the spirit of

¹Robert Browning, The Ring and the Book, ed. Edward Dowden (London, 1950), Book XII, (855, 63).

the newly-Christianized world of the Anglo-Saxons. The basic examination underlying the entire thesis is a critical exploration of "the way the Anglo-Saxon Christian poet writing romance transforms the pagan quest for dom 'glory' into the quest for salvation."²

In working from paradigmatic models in Biblical mythology and patristic tradition, the Old English poet customarily unites the resources of the word-hoard, a kind of racial memory richly stocked with associated poetic images, with his own particular wordcraft. More germane to our study, however, than the obvious appropriation of patristic dogma and homiletic purpose in the Old English saints' legends, is the imaginative shaping of such material and the investing of it with the particular ethos of an indigenous northern culture. The poet's own snyttrucraft, his shrewd eclectic style in his treatment of the constructs and conventions available to him, reveals how the body of saints' legends as a whole relates imagistically to the entire corpus of Old English literature. This relation in effect demands an examination of themes and the literary interplay among the heroic and elegiac poems. The thesis attempts as well a definition of the characteristics of

²Alvin A. Lee, The Guest-Hall of Eden: Four Essays on the Design of Old English Poetry, unpublished manuscript, (1968), p. 133.

hagiography: its focus on ideality not reality, its doctrinal nature, its eschatological focus, and its intended evangelistic effect in recording the further Acts of the Apostles. In examining how the Anglo-Saxon poet, working from Greek, Latin, and Syriac models, evolves for his own time an imaginative reconstruction of Biblical myths, it is a major conviction of this thesis that the Old English handling of saints' legends is often really a translation into poetic symbols of moralistic doctrinal texts, fully realizing "the beauty and effectiveness of the symbolic mode".³ I suggest that the symbolic mode with its extensive use of Biblical paradigms⁴ is a richly appropriate device for pointing up the exemplariness of the saints' earthly pilgrimages. The poets' cultivation of both Germanic and Christian ideas of heroic excellence deserves greater scholarly appreciation, as the existing editions of Guthlac A and B and of Juliana tend either to dwell upon philological and textual problems, or tend to enumerate the saint's particular store of legends without an integrative over-view of legend and culture.⁵ In the following text I attempt to

³Laurence K. Shook, "The Burial-Mound in Guthlac A", MP, LVIII (1960), 10.

⁴Biblical paradigm: i.e. the scriptural event elaborated by the poet to emphasize his homiletical purpose, particularly in saints' legends.

⁵Compare William Strunk, ed. Juliana (Boston, 1904), Introd.

correlate three legends with the Old English apprehension of the universe and explore each poem as an individual poetic experience that reveals some of the richest aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture.

A method of inquiry which evaluates the worth of the saints' lives must consider the wider context both of patristic literature and of other extant hagiographic writings. It will become evident in the comparison of Latin saints' lives with Anglo-Saxon legends that originality of substance barely exists; it is the particular poet's unique interpretation of common substance that gives the Old English poems their distinction. Central to that distinction is the conception of cosmological order as a three-tiered universe. The stringent opposition of Anglo-Saxon religious thought is apparent in its association of cosmos with the sibgedryht 'peace-loving dryht' of the heavenly order, and its identification of chaos with the infernal model, the Satanic dryht reigning in the wyrmsele, a travesty of the dryhtsele of heaven. Middangeard itself, suspended between these two warring societies, is a double-sided construct. As the sphere of the saints' pilgrimage, both heaven and hell, or their agents, constantly obtrude upon middleearth, which thus affords an ideal construct for the actions of heroic literature. Such architectonic concepts afforded by the polarity of religious thought offer, as well, an opportunity

for the didactic poet to emphasize his themes.⁶ Part of the Old English hagiographer's intention was undoubtedly that of Cædmon in his songs. As Bede relates,

Ond for his leopsongum monigra monna mod oft
to worulde forhogdnisse ond to gepeodnisse
þæs heofonlican lifes onbærnde wæron.⁷

'And by his songs many men's minds were often fired to disregard the world and attach themselves to the heavenly life.'

How the saints' legends as a genre differ from psychologically sophisticated literature is evident in the non-original character of their common sources. In the Anglo-Saxon period, particularly in Bede's time, "a contemporary term for hagiography was laus, and its material gesta, signa, and virtutes".⁸ The Old English scop had at his disposal a treasure-hoard of stock incidents which he united with his own epithetic style. Gregory of Tours' comment on the lives of the saints is relevant here,

⁶Compare B. J. Timmer, "The Elegiac Mood in Old English Poetry", English Studies, XXIV (1942), 44. "The religious propagandistic character of Old English literature should not be underrated."

⁷Bede, The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, ed. Thos. Miller (London: Oxford, 1891 (1959)), p. 343.

⁸C. W. Jones, Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England (Ithaca, 1947), p. 59.

Et quaeritur a quibusdam, utrum vita sanctorum
an vitas dicere debeamus.⁹

'Some ask whether we should say the life of the saint or the lives of the saints.' With reference to the lives of saints as well as of the Fathers, Gregory might have resolved,

Unde manifestum est, melius dici vitam patrum
quam vitas, quia, cum sit diversitas meritorum
virtutumque, una tamen omnes vita corporis alit
in mundo.¹⁰

'It is clear that it is better to talk about the life of the fathers than the lives, because, although there may be some difference in their merits and virtues, yet the life of one body nourished them all in the world.'

The Anglo-Saxon poet, concerned with abstract moral values, uses the gesta, signa, and virtutes of a saint's life to eulogize the total concept of areté, the sum of refined virtues or excellence. This Christian praise of moral virtue is a counterpart of the classical praise of idealized virtue, evident in the statuary and monumental art of the high classical period in Athens. The classical sculptor and the Christian poet work with artistic selectivity towards the realization of the sum total of areté, as in a statue or a composite figure, the heroic saint. In their portrayal of ideal humanity, both sculptor and poet invest the subject

⁹Gregory of Tours, Gregoricii Eps. Turonensis Liber Vitae Patrum, Monumenta Germaniae Historia, I, 662.

¹⁰Ibid., 663.

of their art with god-like attributes. The god-like saint is a fitting hero for tales of absolute moral values and stringently-defined epic convention in which the narrative sequence, though often discursive, has a predictable form, style, and resolution. In such stylized epic (romance) and stylized hero (a saint), all Christian heroic virtues are focussed on a single intrepid figure and are harmoniously realized in him. One such figure is Saint Andrew whom the poet of Andreas pictures (in his mission to convert the Mermedonians) as detained in prison, struggling in the context of fallen nature typified by winter storms and showers of hail. Emphasizing the integrity of the fearless earl, the poet writes,

Da se halga wæs under heolstorscuwan, eorl
ellenheard, ondlange niht searopancum
beseted. (1253-55)¹¹

Such portrayal of god-like humanity is typical of a "heroic" age -- the infant Christian civilization in England defending itself against northern raiders.

The saints under oppression by the Satanic dryht are theologically applied but not psychologically developed types. The melancholic tension between hope and despair typical of Everyman's quest is apparently absent here; the

¹¹All references to Old English poetry, excluding Beowulf, are from G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, eds., The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, Vols. I-III (New York, 1931-53).

saints, supremely confident, evince no penitential introversion, no confessional interplay of thought or feeling. Entirely lacking in Juliana and the poems on Guthlac is the tragic intensity that characterizes Samson's appeal,

Blind among enemies! O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!¹²

The formulaic rhetoric in Guthlac's stentorian utterances and in Juliana's manifestos denies the concept of motivation, as does the poet's use of dei ex machina. The poet fails to appropriate what does not directly apply to or elucidate his major thematic purpose, the praise of holy men and women. Art for him must tell the truth, the godspel, and suffice the eye in only a schematic or two-dimensional way, in order to save the soul besides. The saints' legends of the latter half of the eighth century are an early presentation in verse of what Wulfstan's homilies were to become to the folk centuries later.

Just as the purpose of saint's legends is praise and exhortation, their structure fulfils the "romance mode". In his appropriation of paradigmatic models and his own snytttrucraeft, the poet explores the possibilities of the "symbolic mode" in which the classical unities of time, place, and action are waived in favour of a looser, dis-

¹²John Milton, Paradise Lost and Other Poems, ed. Edward Le Comte (New York, 1961), 68-69.

continuous style which allows the poet to interject homily and gnostic observations as he wishes, and to order events as they best appear to his panegyric purpose. As an example, Guthlac A contains interpolated homily in the lines,

Swa sceal oretta a in his mode
gode compian (344-5a)

'Thus shall a warrior ever in his mind battle for God', and gnostic observation in the comprehensive statement,

Swa se ælmihtiga ealle gesceafte
lufad under lyfte in lichoman,
monna mægde geond middangeard. (760-2)

'So the Almighty loves all creaturely things under heaven, the nations of men throughout the world.' The poet's arbitrary ordering of events appears in his manipulation of natural phenomena, such as the 'bitter beer-feast' in Andreas, the earthquake at the death of Guthlac, and the avenging storm at the end of Juliana.

What constitutes the uniqueness of Old English saints' legends is the poet's own interpretation of the saint's dossier available to him by tradition, oral and written, and by antiquarian remains. Never a straightforward narrative, the saint's life is definitely shaped by the poet to convince his hearers or readers of the protagonist's excellence, the poem's own justification for being. Among the memorials in the saint's cult, the poem is a monument more lasting than bronze.

The rhetorical style and cumulative structure of an

Old English saint's life is justified in St. Augustine's De Doctrina Christiana, where a chapter is devoted to the lawfulness of a Christian teacher's use of the art of rhetoric in expounding spiritual truth. The intense artificiality of the "romance mode" lends itself well to the use of the wordhoard. The saint's life is often presented as remembered or passed along in legend: 'Lo, we have heard', or 'books tell us'.

Hwæt! We dæt hyrdon, (Juliana, 1)

or

Us secgad bec. (Guthlac B, 878)

Such stock openings point to the poet's recognition of a kind of memorial cult which gives the scop's figures an almost anonymous quality. An accompanying rejection of natural law in the spiritual world reveals the saints' legends in the early Christian period in England as sharing the same qualities as tales of gods and heroes in archaic and early classical periods in Greece. Regarding the work of a hagiographer, Clinton Albertson explains, "he is not interested in the historicity of the facts but in their 'myth' -- their meaning and significance. The deeds of all saints exemplify the same spiritual and universal values and may be freely interchanged at the hagiographer's wish".¹³

¹³Clinton Albertson, Anglo-Saxon Saints and Heroes (New York, 1967), p. 26n.

As suggested previously, the poet disciplines the raw materials of a saint's life to convince his audience of the saintly hero's excellence. The "mythical mode" ruling the Old English saints' lives involves a definite kind of poetic architectonics. Northrop Frye persuasively writes, "the central form of romance is dialectical: everything is focussed on a conflict between the hero and his enemy, and all the reader's values are bound up with the hero".¹⁴ In the saints' legends, the "romance" element is focussed on the heroism of the lord's þegn in his struggle toward the dryht of heaven. Encompassed by an epic framework embracing both the Germanic war-like spirit and militant Christianity, these accounts are spiritual journeys in which the saint is pictured as ever-becoming, ever-approaching the state of entelecheia. The skeletal shape of the saints' earthly pilgrimage involves the concepts of agon (frecne fore), pathos (violent struggle, open combat), sparagmos (mutilation, actual or threatened), anagnorisis or epiphany (recognition of the hero). These schemata apply to saints' lives as romance types. How the poems on Guthlac and Juliana conform to or differ from this framework, it will be a major purpose of the following essays to examine.

In the structural and thematic goal of entelecheia is inherent the polarity of Anglo-Saxon religious conceptions.

¹⁴Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), p. 187.

All movement upward in the poems leads to primordial cosmos, the perfectly-structured meadhall of pre-creation Heaven. All movement downward leads to chaos, the infernal anti-type, the wyrmsele of the fallen angels. Human life as a journey reveals man's alienation from God and his obligation to wend his way back, through penitential acts and prayer, to the heavenly gifstol, an action which fulfils the informing archetypal myth of withdrawal and return. In the thematic resolution of saints' legends, the poet generally takes care to return the righteous, the sodfæstra sawla, to the golden dryht; the evil-doers he consigns back to the Satanic dryht, the infernal model of heaven. Such poetic reward and retaliation will become evident in our study particularly of the conclusion of Juliana.

As St. Augustine does, the Old English saint views his birth as an exodus from the golden dryht; only by showing integrity under spiritual chastening during his sojourn as stranger and pilgrim¹⁵ in the life of middlearth, does he regain heavenly union,

¹⁵ Compare G. B. Ladner, "Homo Viator: Mediaeval Ideas on Alienation and Order", Speculum, XLII (1967), 233.

The concept of via, viator, the related ones of peregrinus, peregrinatio, and of alienus, alienatio on the one hand, and of ordo, ordinare, on the other, are quite essential ingredients of early Christian and mediaeval thought and life.

þær is hyht ond blis,
 gebungen þegnweorod. (Christ II, 750-1)

Although a 'stranger and pilgrim', each saint, like Christ himself, has a micle ærendu 'mighty task' to fulfil while dwelling in his flesh -- the perfection of his own soul through struggle with the devil, the extension of the dryht of heaven to heathen territories, and the ultimate establishment of a church or congregation to swell the ranks of the righteous in their journey towards the heavenly fortress Jerusuaem. The romance mode unites in a single purpose Andrew's perilous sea-voyage to convert the Mermedonians, Juliana's resolve to become a worthy bride of Christ, Elene's voyage to discover the true cross, and Guthlac's establishment of the beorg on bearwe. The praise of God, Prince of Angels, Giver of Life, and Warden of the Heavens, is implicit in all these 'mighty tasks'. Especially in the emergence of a new-born society symbolized by a church, basilica, monastery, or congregation, does the fruit of the saint's mission appear. Constantine's basilica and Guthlac's Crowland Abbey, founded long afterwards, embody in visible form the maxim, 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church'.

The Anglo-Saxon poet's apprehension of the world and his differentiation of himself from it seem to imply an indictment of the fallen world, a conviction indirectly

expressed at the beginning¹⁶ of each of the three saints' legends in the thesis. To the poet, only the convenient operation of grace functioning through a saint could redeem part of the enslaved world as a vision of the heofonrice. Such signal acts of redemption find expression in a neorxnawong 'paradisal plain', or a newly-founded dryht in pagan lands. The condition of the saint's special allotment of grace, however, is his dying to the 'old man', the unregenerate Adam. Informing the poet's thought here is the renunciatory theology of many of the Fathers,¹⁷ an asceticism which condemned the appetitive nature of man. The poet's theme revolves around the value of treasure stored up in heaven. Juliana despises the hordgestreon 'hoarded wealth' of the wicked prefect; Guthlac holds himself apart from the joys of mankind, rejecting 'sensual comforts and days of feasting, idle visual enticements and vainglorious dress' after he had denied the world, taking pleasure only in what foretokens the heofonrice. In the saints' rejection of wordly riches, wisdom, and honour, the

¹⁶Compare Guthlac A, (46b-7),

Forpon se mon ne pearf
to pisse worulde wyrpe gehycgan,

and Juliana (14-15),

Feondscype rærdon,
hofon hæþengield, halge cwelmdon.

¹⁷Compare particularly the theology of St. Gregory the Great and St. Benedict.

secular values of pagan heroic concepts are yielding to monastic ideals; the true worth of a warrior is no longer circumscribed by Germanic heroic ideals. A definite teleological orientation governs the saint's life -- his perfection of his own soul which allows his return to the peaceful dryht of heaven and his participation in the circulating treasure dealt out by a gift-dispensing Dryhten.

Free to honour monastic ideals by choosing the eternal good of the soul over the temporal goods of the body, the saint as hero displays unique spiritual insight in his awareness of the fragmentary nature of perception in this world. The poet takes care to set him apart from the ordinary folc by giving him the presence of divinity as a tutelary spirit within. To enlighten his perception the saint receives counsel from angels and also wyrmes larum (Guthlac B, 846) 'infernal counsel'. While caught in angelic and demonic dialectic, it is a condition of the saint's heroism to distinguish between the opposing forces. A voice from heaven directly instructs Juliana, "seize that proud one", while Guthlac

geearnade þæt him spræc an godes engel to
æghwelce æfenne on a eft on ærne mergen ond
him sæde heofonlico geryno.¹⁸

¹⁸An Old English Martyrology, ed. George Herzfeld (London, 1900), p. 57.

'deserved that an angel of God spoke to him every evening and again early in the morning and told him heavenly mysteries'. By revealing the saint's intimacy with divine beings, the poet emphasizes the heroic separation of his protagonist from the rest of humanity. In this context Ladner argues, "mediaeval thought had derived from its early Christian sources not one, but two ideas of alienation, and was to make them lastingly its own: estrangement from God and estrangement from the world".¹⁹ Such estrangement finds expression in Benedict's Rule, by which the preparation of souls for the "end-time" could be effected by observation of the divine injunction,

Saeculi actibus se facere alienum, nihil amore
Christi praeponere.²⁰

'to make yourself a stranger to the deed of this world' and 'to prefer nothing to the love of Christ'. This rule, in effect, provides the sole "motivation" of the saints' miclre ærendu in the following essays, for both Guthlac and Juliana struggle within the context of the deeds of this world, yet prefer nothing to the love of Christ. Guthlac battles actual fiends in the westen; Juliana conquers a devil and also an extension of him -- the human fiends who

¹⁹Ladner, p. 237.

²⁰St. Benedict, Regula, ed. Hanslik, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, LXXV, 30.

torture her. Impoverished and fallen nature surround Guthlac, while Cynewulf's *Commedia* is a type of the earthly city fallen into idolatry, the prototype of which is the society of Cain, "the city of this world", as Augustine condemns it, "which consists of impious men living not after God but after man, in the worship of the false deity and contempt of the true".²¹ Both these saints, therefore, struggle in the larger context of the archetypal Christ-and-Satan myth, and both return in triumph to the heavenly dryht. As I have suggested previously, the fallen world offers a testing ground for the saints' virtues. His earthly life is not an aberration from celestial order, but part of a divinely-sanctioned scheme in which the saint's unswerving purpose is to overcome the fiend and to perfect his soul. As St. Cyprian so cogently expresses it,

si militibus saecularibus gloriosum est ut
hoste deuicto redeant in patriam triumphantes,
quanto potior et maior est gloria, uicto
diabolo ad paradisum triumphantem redire?²²

'If it is a glorious thing for the soldiers of the world to return home in triumph after having conquered the enemy, how much more important and greater a glory is it to return to

²¹St. Augustine, The City of God, tr. J. W. C. Wand (London, 1963), p: 229.

²²St. Cyprian, Ad Fortunatum, CSEL, XIII, 1, 346.

paradise in triumph after having overcome the devil?'

How skilfully the poets have presented the "quest for salvation", of Guthlac and Juliana, I attempt in the following essays to examine.

CHAPTER II

WIGENA WYN

A STUDY OF GUTHLAC A

The Old English Guthlac A draws on a vast and uncertain amount of tradition and antiquarian remains. Jane Roberts in an extended checklist¹ organizes the mass of Guthlac legends and traditions in her examination of such documents as the Old English Martyrology, the extant manuscripts containing references to the saint, both Latin and English, entries in saints' calendars and missals, chronicles, church dedications, and popular lore. The purpose of this inventory is to reveal the diversity of Guthlac memorabilia.

The text of Guthlac A, writes Claes Schaar, is allegedly unsimilar to the style of Cynewulf "on account of mannerisms and lack of discriminative talent which are as foreign as possible to the characteristics of Cynewulf's style".² In this essay I attempt to justify the "mannerisms" used by the poet in his shaping of Guthlac's life as an example of militant Christianity and to show that the

¹Jane Roberts, "An Inventory of Early Guthlac Materials", MS, XXXII (1970), 193-233.

²Claes Schaar, Critical Studies in the Cynewulf Group (Lund, 1949), p. 326.

"characteristics of Cynewulf's style" -- humaneness³ and refinement -- are at least partially present.

In Guthlac A the central organizing pattern governing the action or movement is the passion of Christ as reflected in the life and lesser passion of his þegn. Choosing those aspects of the life of Christ which allow him to evolve corresponding incidents in Guthlac's existence in the beorg, the poet consistently refers to the 'green plain' as a place of covenantal relationship between a faithful retainer and his lord. With reference to this central organizing pattern I must take exception to Rosemary Woolf's assessment of Guthlac A as "shapeless because there is no story to progress. The basic story which holds together the many long speeches of which Juliana chiefly consists is completely lacking in Guthlac. This lack of variety in content is reflected in monotony of tone, which is didactic and narrowly heroic, unvaried and unsubtle".⁴ Such a reading of Guthlac misses the point of the poet's rhetorical style and homiletic purpose which demand a discontinuous treatment ill-suited to a sustained narrative with a recognizable beginning, middle, and end. The reader, like the scop's audience, must remain receptive to the universal truths the

³Compare The Dream of the Road.

⁴R. Woolf, "Saints' Lives" in E. G. Stanley, ed., Continuations and Beginnings (London, 1966), p. 56.

poet is conveying in his handling of one particular saint or hero. If the reader responds with impatience to the alleged "monotony of tone", he misses the effect of the cumulative, repetitive style so ideally suited for oral delivery. The fabulous elements of the saint's life are not the poet's prime concern, which is instead the amplification of Christian doctrine. In this context I agree with Laurence Shook who asserts, "the heart of Guthlac A is to be found beating in the religious and theological notions which the protagonists debate and which the narrator dwells upon. It is not biography in the Antonian sense, nor heroic adventure in the Beowulfian sense, that inspired the poet to write, but the excitement of mind aroused by reflections upon the doctrines of the Christian church".⁵

Such amplification of Christian doctrine finds voice in the illumination in Guthlac A of the interior life of a warrior of God equipped with spiritual weapons. I suggest that the entire direction of the poems is towards the praise of a hermit-saint, the condition of whose heroism is his self-imposed exile from the monastery, his break with the joys of communal asceticism. A landscape both of nature and of the soul, his mournful Crowland wastes typify the true wilderness where man battles under the tutelage of

⁵Laurence K. Shook, "Prologue of the Old English Guthlac A", MS, XXIII (1961), 295.

angels against the powers of darkness and detraction. The energetic dialogue between Guthlac and the fiends, as well as the use of symbolic landscape, has a major thematic purpose in revealing the unassailability of the Christian hero girt about mid gaesta wæpnum, the whole armour of God. The strongest unifying theme of the story in Guthlac's integrity under spiritual chastening and his assurance that at death

min se eca dæl
in gefean fared, þær he fægran
botles bruced. (381-3)

'That part of me which is undying shall fare towards bliss and there enjoy a fair dwelling.'

By affirming the transcendent power of the Trinity, Guthlac counters the insidious beguilement of the fiends to return to communal life, to believe in his oferhygdu 'overwhelming pride' and consequent reprobation, and to succumb to orwennysse 'despair'. The greatest triumph of this son of the sacrament is his return, patterned on Christ's resurrection, from helldore to middangeard. Echoes of the cleansing of the mere in Beowulf and the harrowing of hell in Christ and Satan are implicit in Guthlac's purification of his soul, the condition necessary for establishing his beorg. Having both a retrospective and anticipative function, the beorg as a double-sided symbol both commemorates the vernal Eden and prefigures the redeemed creation.

After briefly outlining the drift of the legend, I shall go on to examine the purpose of the Prologue. If one accepts Shook's argument⁶ that the Prologue (1-29) is an integral part of the manuscript, the "religious and theological notions" in Guthlac A exemplify both a structural and thematic purpose throughout the poem. The imaginative confrontation between the angel and the blessed soul, wholly an invention of the Old English poet and completely absent from Felix's Life, dramatically foreshadows the relations of Guthlac with supernatural beings and emphasizes as well the spiritual aspects of the prolonged physical suffering which Guthlac, like all saints of heroic stature, must endure. One of the sodfæstra sawla, Guthlac is an archetypal tidfara to þam halgan ham 'wayfarer to the holy home' (9-10) who attains the salvation of eternal life and finally belongs among the lifgendra londes wynne 'joyful band of the living' (818) of the concluding time. In words of visual and emotive power the poet contrasts earthly with heavenly joys, the exigencies of temporal existence with the uncrumbling timbered roof of the eternal home, þa getimbru / þe no tydriad. The focus of life in heroic literature, no longer the joyous mead-hall of Heorot, has shifted to þa halgan burg, þære beorhtan byrig of the saints' legends, as now

⁶Shook, op. cit., 295.

for Guthlac as for every man

se mon ne þearf
to þisse worulde wyrpe gehycgan. (46-7)

'man need not anticipate recovery in this world'. Outside the confines of historical time, the restoration of the fallen world, or a significant portion of it, depends only upon the faithful ones of the covenant who, in the concluding lines,

swencad̄ hi sylfe, sawla frætwað
halgum gehygdum. (806-7)

'deny themselves and adorn their souls with sacred thoughts'.

"The world-picture in Guthlac A", asserts Cross, "is a clear presentation of the decline of the inanimate world as a prelude or reason for the moral injunction to the wise man to choose the via animae".⁷ Along with the enumeration of present tribulations, the ominous fulfilment of prophecy appears to justify the Augustinian view of history in which the phenomenal world declines and moves irrevocably down towards the Last Judgment. Lines (37-59) forcefully reveal the poet's indictment of the fallen world, the enslaved creation under the bonds of original sin, "starved ignoble nature" in which

bið seo sipre tid sæða gehwlcas
mætræ in mægne. (45-6)

⁷J. E. Cross, Latin Themes in Old English Poetry (Bristol, 1962), p. 15.

'in its end-time every seed is of poorer worth'. Underlying the sombre tone of this passage, and of the comparable opening of Juliana, are the apocalyptic writings of the Fathers, notably of Gregory the Great. The reign of anti-Christ just preceding the expected rapture of the Church is a fulfilment of the prophecy that at the latter end the anti-theological forces emanating from the Satanic dryht (i.e. the tribulations in Guthlac and persecution in Juliana) will disrupt even the natural cycle of seed-time and harvest. In elaborating this dark view of history at the beginning of his poem, the poet's dramatic purpose is to highlight the ultimate triumph of good, especially the saint's victory over the apparent sway of infernal forces in middle-earth.

The sombre line heavy with moral judgment,

He fela finded, fea beoð gecorene (59)

'many he finds, yet few are chosen', introduces both the themes of divine election and the idea of the ascetic life. For those who reject þas woruldgestreon in favour of þa mæran god, temporal existence must ever display a tarrying, provisional character underlined by the ephemerality of all earthly endeavour unblessed by the grace of God. Only the ascetic, renunciatory life could afford peace to those who await the heavenly home while tarrying in "dark places", specifically deserts or wastelands, and generically the larger context of middangeard itself as a ruined

dryhtsele. Of such, Guthlac is a type of the pilgrim soul whose citizenship is in the eternal Jerusalem to which the pilgrim dryht aspires. Most importantly, Guthlac belongs among the gecosten cempan, Criste leofe (797) who conquer the "twilight world of things" and resolutely turn towards the "realm of truth and reality".

Apocryphal writings, patristic doctrine, and a heroic Christian framework combine in the text of Guthlac A to form a stylized spiritual biography of an eadig oretta, fulfilling a predictable pattern and resolution, i.e. the saint's daily martyrdom and his final translation to glory. Although it is generally conceded that the first poem is a formulaic, almost impersonal manuscript while Guthlac B exhibits a more human preoccupation, both poems introduce Guthlac as an exemplar of the beatus vir. Influentially for the Old English poem, Felix writes of him,

sed unus idemque semper permanens,
laetitiam in vultu, gratiam in ore,
suavitatem in mente, prudentiam in
pectore, humilitatem in corde praefererat,
ita ut extra humanam naturam notis
ignotisque esse videtur.⁸

'but he was always the same, and showed joy in his face,
grace in his lips, sweetness in his mind, prudence in his
breast,⁵ humility in his heart, so that he seemed both to

⁸Felix, Felix's Life of St. Guthlac, tr. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1956), p. 162.

known and unknown to be more than human by nature'. The Anglo-Saxon Guthlac conforms to the concept of a saint as an ideal index of perfection.⁹

Whereas in Guthlac B

us secgað bec
hu Gudlac wearda þurh godes willan
eadig on Engle (B. 878-80),

the poet of Guthlac A establishes himself as a contemporary witness¹⁰ instead of the scholarly sources referred to above,

Magun we nu nemnan þæt us neah gewearð
þurh haligne had gecyþeð. (93-4)

Again, "Hwæt, we hyrdon oft . . ." (108).

Guthlac's name, Felix relates, specifically means belli munus, although gud and lac have further connotations of "war-play", "gift", and "offering". He was named prophetically at birth

quia ille cum vitiis bellando munera aeternae
beatitudinis . . .percepisset.¹¹

'because by warring against vices he was to receive the reward of eternal bliss'. Whereas Felix relates his renunciation at twenty-four years of the pomps of this life

⁹It is instructive to note that the term "saint" which in Catholic tradition has been reserved for a few exceptional examples of Christian living, was in the early Church the common word applied to all believers in Christ.

¹⁰Compare the contemporary Life of St. Martin by Sulpicius Severus.

¹¹Felix, p. 79.

symbolized in a military career, the Old English poet merely presents Guthlac as an exemplar of ideational ethics over sensate values, now sacrificing to God the wealth he had formerly squandered in synna lustas (113) and rejecting all evil, even eordlic æpelu. Guthlac embodies the hope for a heavenly home, even if it is to be awaited in a desert habitation, over temporal menniscum byrme and lænas lifwelan. Implicitly his life-style condemns the outlook deprecated also by Theophilus in the Middle Ages as humane laudis amore et temporalis premii cupiditate. Only the intensification of inner life, the cultivation of monastic ideals, and the renunciation of temporal joys to win eternal bliss, could afford contentment to the monk. For behind Guthlac's flight to the fens and indeed "motivating" the flight of all hermits and coenobites to the desert was the conviction so forcefully stated by Augustine, "that that City in which we are promised a kingdom is as far above this earthly city as heaven is above the earth, as life eternal is above temporal pleasure, real glory above empty flattery, the society of angels above that of men, the light of Him who made the sun and the moon above that of the sun and the moon themselves".¹²

In the larger meaning of the cosmic struggle of the Son of God for the souls of men, the individual struggle between the engel dryhtnes ond se atela gæst (116) for the

¹²St. Augustine, The City of God, p. 108.

youthful soul of Guthlac appears to symbolize the flesh warring against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, as the New Testament expresses it. In this contest for the hero's soul the poet uses the "central form of romance [which] is dialectical: everything is focussed on a conflict between the hero and his enemy, and all the reader's values are bound up with the hero".¹³ The two loves of comfort and despair embodied in the good angel and infernal spirit externalize a civil war in the mind of man.¹⁴ In the victory of the angel over the doomed spirit is evident a type of the universal regeneration of creatures at the last day. The Anglo-Saxon poet may have drawn from the Acta Sanctorum version in which a devil tempts the hermit for three days and a poisoned dart hits him just as Batholomew descends: pollicens ei in omnibus tribulationibus adiutorem suum venturum esse.¹⁵ By such a deus et machina device the poet

¹³Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 187.

¹⁴In this context it must be noted that the poet, true to the non-representational nature of Old English poetry, is not elaborating a psychological conflict; he does, however, draw from sources such as Gregory's Dialogues in which the figure Stephen, like Guthlac, receives counsels "no whit alike", causing the sins of the flesh to strive with his works of alms.

Dialogues of Gregory the Great, tr. P. W. (London, 1911), p. 226.

¹⁵Acta Sanctorum, ed. J. Bollandus et al., Aprilis XI (1695), 38-50.

emphasizes the saint's heroic stature, his separateness from the rest of humanity.

As well as the theme of supernatural warfare, the soul-and-body theme so familiar in the Old English canon enters the poem in Guthlac's repudiation of synna lustas and his near-Manichean attitude toward the body, the 'fated flesh-home', as betrayed in his ponderings.

hu þisse worulde wynna þorfte
mid his lichoman læsast brucan. (337-8)

'how his body might have least to do with the joys of this world'. In his study of the evolution of monastic ideals, Workman explains, "to the monk man is ever a duality rather than a unity, the soul chained to the flesh as a prisoner to a corpse",¹⁶ and suggests, ". . . as a result of this half-veiled Gnosticism, throughout the vast literature of monasticism, with rare exceptions, there runs one constant refrain, the apostrophe of the dying Pachomius to his body: 'Alas, why was I ever attached to thee, and why should I suffer because of thee an eternal condemnation!'"¹⁷

Guthlac's deprecatory references to his body remind the reader of Soul and Body II in which the soul

Firenab þus þæt flæschord, sceal þonne
feran on weg,
secan helle grund, nales heofondreamas
dædum gedrefed. (97-9)

¹⁶H. B. Workman, The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal (Boston, 1962), p. 64.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 63.

'reviles thus the body; then it must depart, afflicted by crimes, to seek the depths of hell, by no means the joys of heaven'. Consistently emphasizing the tenuous character of earthly existence as þas lænan tid, the terms used for the body, such as 'doomed house', denote the frailty and decay of fallen man, the creature in the servitude of corruption. Yet Guthlac A reveals implicitly the assurance expressed by St. Paul to the Corinthians:

Scimus enim quoniam si terrestris domus nostra
hujus habitationis dissolvatur, quod aedificationem
ex Deo habemus, domum non manufactum, aeternam
in coelis. Nam et in hoc ingemiscimus,
habitationem nostram, quae de coelo est, superindui
cupientes.¹⁸

'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' Guthlac, longing for the 'house from heaven', expresses in a spiritual dimension the ancient Latin theme of Horace 'non omnis moriar',

min se eca dæl
in gefean fareð. (381-2)

'that part of me which is immortal shall fare towards bliss'.

After examining Guthlac's "motivation", I shall now

¹⁸ Biblia Sacra, Vulgatae Editionis (London, n.d.),
Ad Corinthios Secunda V, 1, 2.

consider the poet's appropriation of heroic anchoritic convention. Guthlac throughout the legend is identified as belonging to a tradition of retreat stretching back to the Old Testament prophets Elijah and Elisha who "were later to be looked back upon by the Christian Fathers of the desert as proto-monks".¹⁹ In the vast patristic writings on the subject of retreat, it is St. Basil who most cogently presents the many-sided aspects of desert life as a prelude to entrance to the heavenly Kingdom: ". . .here is the desert in which the people, having been purified, were given the laws, and, thus entering the land of promise, saw God. . .here is the narrow and close way that leads to life. Here are the teachers and prophets, 'wandering in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the earth'. Here are apostles and evangelists, and monks living as citizens of the desert".²⁰ To the people of Anglo-Saxon England, the account of Guthlac's flight to the westen must have had a dramatic immediacy, for he was among the first of English saints and martyrs to be celebrated in verse. The authorial comments and interjections (such as halig cempa) recognize Guthlac as belonging to the tradition of retreat for the

¹⁹George Williams, Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought (New York, 1962), p. 17.

²⁰St. Basil, Letters, tr. Sister Clare Agnes Way (New York, 1965), p. 110.

elect to sanctify the soul while awaiting the millenium. In the legend of Guthlac the ambiguous concept of the desert is centred in the word westen, the same term used in the Anglo-Saxon gospel to indicate the site of Christ's temptation. Here the poet appears to draw a parallel between the New Testament model and his own saint's temptation. The Anglo-Saxon Gospel of Luke records,

Soplice se Hælena wæs full Haligum Gaste and
ferde fram Jordane, and he wæs fram Haligum
Gaste gelæd on sumum westene.²¹

The concept of the westen, archetypally associated in liturgy and iconography with temptation, testing of the soul and refining of its virtues, here unites Christ and Guthlac, Dryhten and faithful þegn. Examples of such association are the "days of temptation in the wilderness" referred to in Psalm 95:8, the sending of the scapegoat into the desert in Leviticus 16:21, and the "covenant of peace" attained by the desert wanderers in Ezekiel 34:25.

The Old English poet's words for fen, westen, mearclond, and anad, resemble in their symbolic function the Hebraic words for desert. Williams asserts, "although in their tribal sense they designated different kinds of terrain -- sandy and rocky desert, steppe and forest -- there appears to have been no significant difference among them in their

²¹Gospels Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, Wycliffe, and Tyndale Versions, arr. Bosworth and Waring (London, 1907).

successive non-literal or theological applications. Generally speaking, the wilderness was the Unsown as distinguished from the Sown".²² After reviewing the historic, cultic, and mythic connotations of the wilderness, Williams sums up four concepts or motifs which recur throughout post-biblical history: (a) the wilderness as a moral waste but a potential paradise, (b) the wilderness as a place of testing or even punishment, (c) the wilderness as the experience or occasion of nuptial (covenantal) bliss, and (d) the wilderness as a place of refuge (protection) or contemplation (renewal).²³ It is part of the purpose of this chapter on Guthlac to examine how the poem fulfils and expands the symbolic possibilities afforded by the fens.

In patristic and heroic literature the desert was conceived as a haunt of evil spirits that prey on humanity. Explaining the death and darkness link in Hebrew thought, Williams writes, "the trackless wastes of the desert . . . were thought of as frequented by evil spirits akin to the (later) Arabic ghouls and jinn. For the indigenous Canaanites the desert was peopled with dragons, demons, and monsters of the night".²⁴ The Hebrews assimilated the

²²Williams, p. 12. Bosworth and Toller define 'mearclond' as 'wasteland lying outside the cultivated'.

²³Ibid., p. 18.

²⁴Ibid., p. 13.

wilderness lore of "the hairy satyr (sair), the storm devil (shed), the howling dragon and monster (tan, tannin), the winged female night monster (lilith), which entered Hebrew demonology during the Babylonian exile, and the collective figure for all the desert spirits, Azazel".²⁵ Anglo-Saxon gnomic poetry and saints' legends adopted the desert conventions in the maxim, "the demon shall dwell in the fen, solitary in the land". In Beowulf,²⁶ too, a particular evil spirit infests the moors and strongholds,

Wæs se grimme gæst Grendel haten,
mære mearcstapa, se þe moras heold,
fen ond fæsten. (102-4)

'The fateful spirit was called Grendel, an infamous marsh-stepper who held the moors, the fen and the fastness.'
Bede relates that Cuthberht's retreat on the island of Farne during his ancerlifes 'hermit's life' was, in effect "werigra gasta weorod ond eardungstow", 'a gathering and haunt of accursed spirits'.²⁷

A formidable Christian warrior like Cuthberht himself, Guthlac well displays one of the gifts of men as in

²⁵Williams, p. 13.

²⁶Beowulf, ed. Fr. Klaeber (Boston, 1960).

²⁷Bede, The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, ed. Thomas Miller (London, 1891), p. 366.

Sum bið deormod deofles gewinnes,
 bið a wið firenum in gefeoht gearo. (The Gifts of Men,
 89-90)

'One is fearless in battling the devil and is always alert in the fight against sins.' True to the nature of wilderness citizens, in the desolate fen country of Crowland, the 'lonely places' infested with deadly hordes of demons, Guthlac recognizes with sharpened spiritual sight a visible type of the battle-ground of his soul. 'Wið is þes westen', he meditates,

 wræsetla fela,
 eardas onhæle earmre gæsta.
 Sind wærlogan þe þa wic bugað. (296-8)

'Broad is this wasteland, many the haunts of exile, secret nests of hapless spirits; faithless are they who hold these dwellings.' The Old English poet skilfully reveals hell's encroachment on middle-earth as with the fens he associates images typical of the fallen world or indeed of the nether-world in mythology. The mood of forlorn exile and hapless wandering reveals itself in Felix's description of Crowland, an account which the Old English poet has selectively adopted. "There is in the midland district of Britain", Felix writes, "a most immense fen of immense size which begins at the banks of the river Granta not far from the camp which is called Cambridge, and stretches from the south as far north as the sea. It is a very long tract, now consisting of marshes, now of bogs, sometimes studded with wooded islands and trans-

versed by the windings of torturous streams".²⁸

It is in this well-established context of unregenerate nature, however, that Guthlac, eadig oretta, ondwiges heard, strategically reclaims for his Dryhten a parcel of the westen formerly given over to the haunts of devils. In the desolate fen country of Crowland Guthlac inhabits his orlege and through purgatorial suffering establishes his beorg as a microcosm of the redeemed order of creation. Analogous to the establishment of a congregation or the building of a monastery or church as the climax of the saint's martyrdom, the establishment of Guthlac's beorg is a type of the extension of the Christian dryht to pagan lands. Like the desert itself, as we have seen, the beorg is an ambiguous poetic construct. The term can mean mountain, hill, or tumulus; it can also mean, as Shook points out,²⁹ burial or burial-mound. If, as seems appropriate, this last translation would apply, then the beorg on bearwe becomes a displaced poetic symbol of the place of dying to the 'Old Man', the unregenerate Adam.

A sense of neutral potentiality for either good or evil characterizes the description of Guthlac's retreat,

stod seo dygle stow dryhtne in gemyndum
idel ond æmen eþelriehte feor,
ban bisæce betran hyrdes. (215-7)

²⁸Felix, p. 87.

²⁹Laurence Shook, "The Burial-Mound in Guthlac A", MP, LVIII (1960), 4.

'The hidden spot, empty and deserted, uninhabited, stood in God's mind; it awaited the advent of a better guardian', which insistently recalls the evocation of chaos in Genesis,

þes wida grund
stod deop and dim dryhtne fremde,
idel and unnyt. On þone eagum wlat
stid friþ cining, and þa stowe beheold,
dreaama lease. (104-8)

'this broad land stood, sunkend and shadowed, far from God, empty and useless. The powerful King looked thereon with his eyes and beheld the place of reft of joys'. The divine potential of Guthlac's secret abode is evident nevertheless in the phrase dryhtne in gemyndum. Shook points out³⁰ that the grene wong is initially the saint's orlege 'battle-plain' and ultimately his sigewong 'plain of victory'. Not only does Guthlac, with divine aid, vanquish the fiends from the beorg, but also establishes a tradition of charity and brotherly love in a societal context, for

þær he mongum weard[†]
bysen on Brytene, sippan beorg gestah. (174-5)

'to many in Britain, he became a model, after he had ascended the mountain'. Thus the poet adheres to the conventions of saints' legends in which the saint, through penitential acts, exerts the divine influence of Christ himself.

In treating the further acts of Guthlac, the poet

³⁰ Shook, "The Burial Mound", 5.

takes care to invest them with spiritual significance. One such example is Guthlac's raising of the rood in the face of frecnesse fela (181) 'massive perils', recalling the scriptural paradigms underlying all saints' legends and giving them the evils of symbolic meaning which inform their acts. In the Old Testament, Moses' lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness is a covenantal act towards his Dryhten, an act which Christ as Saviour recalls in declaring of his crucifixion,

And gif ic beo upanafan fram eorþan,
ic teo ealle þing to me sylfum.³¹

'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' Both the Old and New Testament actions, therefore, are scriptural paradigms which give the cross on Guthlac's beorg-site its meaning. As the victory standard of Christ, the supreme wuldres cempa, the treatment of the cross in Guthlac A bears comparison to its handling in other Old English literature. In the Dream of the Rood, the cross as a þegn of the Lord, emphasizes the humanity of Christ in such a manner that with the cross henceforth in a mutable world we associate the constant and inviolable energies which

hælan maeg
æghwylcne anra þara þe him bid egesa
to me. (85-6)

³¹Gospels, John XII, 32.

'may restore every one of those who fear me'.

Old English Christian literature in general attaches a kind of fetichistic awe to the cross. Certainly this reverence, together with a crusading euphoria, is the informing spirit of the legend of Inventio Crucis realized in St. Helena's voyage to discover the true cross and her subsequent struggle with the pagans. Guthlac's erection of the cross to ætstalle, like St. Helene's voyage, is both a belligerent and missionary action springing from strongly militant heroic Christianity which sought to extend the Christian dryht to pagan lands or to lands infested by the dryht-of-hell. His action against the fiends bears relevance to Bede's account of King Oswald's setting up a wooden cross before engaging the heathen in battle on the plain of Hefenfelth. Bede relates,

Is seo stow gen to dæge æteawed
 ond is in micelre arwyrdnesse hæfd,
 þær se Oswald to þissum gefeohte
 cwom, ond þær þæt halige tacn
 Cristes rode arærde ond his cneo begde
 ond God wæs biddende, þæt He in swa
 micelre nedþearfnisse his bigengum mid
 heofonlice fultome gehuple.³²

In theological terms the concept of original sin has heretofore held the green plain in thrall; as usurper of the fiends Guthlac transforms the orlege from profane to sacred ground. The setting up of the cross is a structural device foreshadowing Guthlac's ultimate victory; as a con-

³² Bede, The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiast-

sequence of that victory Guthlac fulfils the archetypal heroic theme in Old English literature. Beowulf as hero wrests gold and jewels from Grendel and by inference from the loathly seed of Cain. In contrast, Christ wrests treasure in the spirits of men from the fallen Satanic dryht. As a þegn of Christ, Guthlac wrests a part of fallen nature from the usurping foes. Just as Christ redeems creatures in the larger archetypal pattern of the Christ-and-Satan struggle, so Guthlac redeems part of creation, the grene wong, itself becoming a type of the heofonrice. As with all visionary heroes, the respective feats of Beowulf, Christ, and Guthlac are achieved only through heroic suffering and purification. Each of the heroes leaves an enduring symbol. Beowulf leaves a tower for the Geat sailors. Christ leaves his rood to be worshipped as a spiritual tacn to all succeeding generations. After ascending to heaven in the embrace of Angels, Guthlac leaves his sigewong as a reminder to sinful men that man's life, although blighted by original sin, is not ultimately destined to decay.

After having established Guthlac in a larger

tical History, p. 154.

heroic context, I shall proceed to examine the nature of his struggle to attain the joys of heaven. The apocryphal theme³³ which asserts that even the sorrowing creatures of hell enjoyed the Sabbath rest motivates the struggle between Guthlac and the fiends for the green plain. Once again, true to the conventions of saints' legends, the Biblical myth is the prototype of the demons' attempt to usurp the grene wong. Their struggle is typologically the attempt of proud fallen man (allegedly Nimrod and his dryht) to scale the heavens from the green plain of Shinar for wlenca and for won hygdum (Genesis, 1673) 'for pride and wrongful thoughts'. In both the Biblical paradigm (the Tower of Babel story) and the Guthlac account, the results of demonic forces trying to usurp the sacred place are confusion and banishment -- in the first case linguistic confusion and scattering over middangeard into warring dryhts, and in the second, the total vanquishing of the fiends by God's grace operating through his chosen warrior. As Guthlac tells the fiends,

Ge sind forscadene, on eow scyld sited. (478)

'Ye are scattered; guilt rests upon you.' The poet there-

³³Laurence Shook, "Prologue of the O.E. Guthlac A", MS, XXIII (1961), 303.

fore works from Biblical models, adhering to their substance yet adding his own interpretations of them, emphasizing the rôle of retributive eschatology in the fiends' discomfiture and the rôle of prevenient grace, miltsa, geofu, ar, and treow in Guthlac's covenantal victory. "Geofu wæs mid Gudlac" (530), asserts the poet, emphasizing his hero's absolute separateness from mankind's sins.³⁴

In treating Guthlac's struggle with the fiends, the poet once again dips into the wordhoard, for the elements of the fallen angels in Genesis have a verbal resonance with the grievous recrimination of the fiends in Guthlac A. Their treacherous words and sorrowful speeches echo the slander, railing, and Pharaisical dissimulation in the facnum wordum of the detracting fiends in Christ and Satan. In both Guthlac A and Genesis B the hetesprace and glypwordum of the firenfulle spirits spring from the Satanic attribute of overweening pride. Their volleys of verbal seduction and iconoclasm identify them instantly as agents of the hellish dryht. As Rosemary Woolf asserts, "the Anglo-Saxons were, of course, familiar with the Augustinian doctrine that the devil had fallen through pride, the engles oferhygd, and yet

³⁴ Compare Klaus Faiss, "Gnade" Bei Cynewulf und und Seiner Schule (Tübingen, 1967), p. 100. "Die göttliche Gnade tritt in der göttent sprungenen Kraft zutrage, mit deren Hilfe Gudlac seine Kämpfe gegen die Dämonen besteht."

pride was a predominant characteristic of Germanic heroes: not the pride of Guthlac, over which the fiends taunt him, which depends upon a complete reliance upon God".³⁵

Motivated by invidia, the fiends ironically offer Guthlac sellen ræd and freonda larum just as the serpent in Eden had offered 'wiser counsel' to Eve, the weaker vessel. They accuse him of folly, nis þæt onginw wiht (277), just as Juliana's fiendish tormentors accuse her of unrædes and dolwillen.

A significant part of Guthlac's agon or protracted struggle is the threat of sparagmos, bodily mutilation and abduction, leaving tracks of blood, or death by fire on the beorg. The poet's mention of such possible terrors allows him to narrow down the field of battle, focussing on the saint's own body.³⁶ Threatened by starvation³⁷ and destitution in the wasteland, Guthlac is not seduced. Next accused of præce modigra, Guthlac recognizes the term as more befitting the accusers themselves. When the revilers declare,

³⁵R. Woolf, "The Devil in Old English Poetry", RES, N.S. IV, (1953), 6.

³⁶Such a narrowing-down device gives Guthlac B its thematic unity.

³⁷It is instructive to compare the devil's tempting of Eve and the fiends' tempting of Guthlac with reference to food, which in the seducers' terms, literally means creature-comfort, not spiritual sustenance.

No we oferhygdu anes monnes
geond middangeard maran fundon (269-70),

they ironically describe themselves; when they taunt the
saint,

ðe eart godes yrming (272),

'you are God's foundling', they present their own deprived
and impoverished condition, bereft of God's grace.

Perhaps most compelling of all, the temptation to
far þær du freonda wene, gif du þines feores recce, (291)
'flee away where you will find comrades, if you have any
concern for your life', implies the deliberate seeking of
natural human relationships, the brotherhood of the monastery
instead of the loneliness of the eremitical life. Yet
Guthlac, aware that

sind wærlogan þe þa wic gugað (298),

'faithless are they who inhabit these dwellings', remains
obstinate in his condemnation of those covenant-breakers.³⁸

One remembers that the heroic oath of the þegn to his liege-
lord was binding, both in a personal and tribal way, until
death.

His own covenant with the Dryhten unshaken, Guthlac
courageously rejects the faithless ones,

³⁸The idea of the wærlogan 'faithless ones' recalls
insistently the godes andsaca of Genesis who hæfde faecne
hyge.

Gewitað nu, awyrgde, werigmode,
 from þissum earde þage her on stondað,
 fleoda on feorweg. (255-7)

'Go now, accursed, grieved in mind, from this place whereon
 ye stand; flee far away.' The clamour evoked by this
 repudiation of evil embodies the fluctuating wills of the
 fiends,

Da wearda breahtra hæfen. Beorg ymbstodon
 hwearfum wræcmegas. Woda astag,
 cearylra cirm. (262-4)

'Then clamour was raised. The outcasts encircled the beorg
 in hosts; shouting arose, the wail of the woeful.' In the
 onomatopoeia of this passage we are reminded of actual battle-
 scenes in Exodus and of the confrontation of Christian
 warrior and pagan Hun in Elene. Whereas in these poems the
 clash of lances and battering of shield-walls, the cry of
 the raven and wail of the wolf dominate the struggle, an
 intensely verbal and abstract warfare characterizes Guthlac's
 contest with the fiends. The struggle is not muscular but
 cerebral, for Guthlac, as all saints, recognizes with
 St. Paul,

quoniam non est nobis collucatio adversus
 carnem et sanguinem: sed adversus principes,
 et potestas, adversus mundi rectores
 tenebrarum harum, contra spiritualia
 nequitiae, in coelestibus.³⁹

³⁹ Biblia Sacra, Ad Ephesios VI, 12.

'for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places'. In his recognition of the true battlefield, Guthlac reveals himself as the exemplary warrior, often consoled in his temptations by an angel just as Christ received supernatural comfort in the desert.

The poet's continued use of paradigmatic models is evident in Guthlac's first major temptation. Just as Satan raised Christ to the pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem to view the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, so the fiends raise Guthlac aloft to experience a vision of monastic corruption and worldliness in circumstances

bær þæs ealdres egsa ne styred. (420)

'where the fear of the Lord is not felt'. In a structural sense, this first temptation unites Guthlac's personal agon with the actual beginning of the poem where the poet relates

woruld is onhrered,
colad Cristes lufu, sindan costinga
geond middangeard monge arisene. (37-9)

'the world is troubled, the love of Christ slackens, many miseries have arisen throughout the world'. The Biblical paradigm used here reveals the poet working towards the concentration of the events of Christ's earthly life as reflected in Guthlac's passion. Here is evident the poet's

technique of abstract alignment of Christ's life with his þegn's for the poem is by no means a true spiritual biography. As well as the scriptural model, the poet may have had in mind a similar account by Severus⁴⁰ of the devils' quibbling about St. Martin's acceptance into his monastery of formerly sinful men. As a convention of saints' legends, the detractors in both cases are utterly routed while acknowledging the saint's integrity,

Bonan gnornedon,
mændon murnende þæt hy monnes bearn
þream oferþunge, ond swa þearfendlic
him to earfedum ana cwom. (429-32)

Triumphant over the fiends, this 'child of man', because he sette hyht in heofonas, returns to þam leofestan earde on eorðan⁴¹ (427-8). As a type of Christ himself seeking the earth to redeem the souls of men, Guthlac finds honour with God because

he martyrhad mode gelufade. (472)

'he loved martyrdom in his heart'. The poet's interjected homily,

Forþon is nu arlic þæt we la æfæstra
dæde demen, secgan dryhtne lof (526-7).

⁴⁰ Sulpicius Severus, The Life of St. Martin in His Writings, tr. Bernard Peebles (New York, 1949), pp. 101-140.

⁴¹ Compare (655-6) where a similar term refers to the celestial Jerusalem: þam leofestan ecan earde.

echoes Cædmon's exhortation,

Nu sculon herigean heofonrices Weard,

and reinforces the persistent theme of heavenly praise.

An anti-theological principle governs Guthlac's second temptation as well as the first, for the same fiends who subvert rational order in heaven now tempt Guthlac to orwennysse⁴² which, in the mediaeval period, was tantamount to spiritual suicide. The poet draws upon the well-established convention of classical literature and patristic writings in which man's soul is spiritually carried off to experience a comprehensive view of the other world. Such a frecne fore⁴³ 'perilous journey' reveals the extremes of reward and punishment. In treating Guthlac's tormentors, the Old English poet may have drawn upon Felix's Life in which the fiends at helldore taunt the saint,

En ignis, quem accendisti in delictis tuis,
te consumere paratus est; en tibi patulis
hiatibus igniflua Herebi hostia patescunt.⁴⁴

⁴² Compare the 'ancient foe of the human race' who shoots a poisoned arrow of despair in Felix, p. 94.

⁴³ Compare the myth of Er in Plato, Republic, tr. F. M. Cornford (New York, 1965), pp. 348-59, and Bede's History, ed. Bertram Colgrave, pp. 488-99, in which visions are recounted of the rewards of the damned.

⁴⁴ Felix, p. 106.

'Behold, the fire which you have kindled by your lusts has been prepared to consume you. Behold, the fiery entrances of Erebus gape for you with yawning mouths.' The Old English passage describing Guthlac's journey to hell contains verbal similarities with the Beowulf poet's hellscapes and those of Christ and Satan. In Beowulf, the demons

dygel lond
warigeaþ wulfhleoþu, windige næssas,
frecne fengelad, ðær fyrgen stream
under næssa genipu niþer gewited,
flod under foldan. (1357-61)

In Christ and Satan,

hellescealas,
gnornende cynn grundas mænan,
niþer under næssum. (132-4)

In Guthlac A, a similar eerie and infernal landscape springs to view, for the fiends, wraðe wræcmægga, carry the hero to hell's mouth,

þær firenfulra fæge gæstas
æfter swyltwale secan onginnad
ingong ærest in þæt atule hus,
niþer under næssas neole grundas. (560-3)

'where the doomed souls of sinful men after death's agony first seek entrance to that dread dwelling, the profound depths under cliffs'. Undaunted by his frecne fore, the perilous journey of classical legend and Christian epic, Guthlac avows as Bunyan's pilgrim does, having ventured through the valley of the shadow of death,

Fordon ic getrywe in þone torhtestan
þrynesse þrym. (645-6)

As a conclusion to the vision, the advent of Bartholomew, dryhtnes ar, halig of heofonum, reinforces the heroic theme, for as one of the twelve most faithful retainers, he introduces to Guthlac the reward of the saint's renunciatory posture. Because Guthlac abjures human intimacy in the world, even a brother-sister relationship, God rewards him with supernatural intimacy; as Bartholomew declares of Guthlac, is þæt min broþor.

The poet deliberately echoes scriptural prototypes in Bartholomew's injunction to the fiends to incur neither

banes bryce ne blodig wund. (698)

Such a command recalls historically the prophetic dictum on the body of the crucified Christ,

þas þing wæron geworden, ðæt ðæt
gewrit wære gefylled, ne forbræce ge
han ban on him.⁴⁵

'these things were written, that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'a bone of him shall not be broken'.' Thus by these obvious biblical parallels or reapplications of myth, the poet establishes scriptural links and reinforces the parallel with Christ's passion. Indeed, the poem is now shaped like a miniature passion, for as a type of

⁴⁵Gospels, John XIX, 36.

redeemed man, Guthlac shares St. Paul's conviction,

Ad cognoscendum illum, et virtutem resurrectionis
ejus, et societatem passionum alius.⁴⁶

'that I may know him in the power of his resurrection, and
the fellowship of his sufferings'.

As a consequence of his integrity under spiritual chastening, Guthlac's redeemed body displays humanity's potential in Christ. His entelecheia is realized, for all harmonious Christian virtues find embodiment in him. His anagnorisis is complete, after overcoming the fiends and journeying in triumph to the beorg. The archetypal theme of exile and homecoming seems to obtain, for Guthlac's return to the green plain is part of the larger typological pattern of entry into the eternal stronghold Jerusalem, the heavenly mead-city. Referring to the barrow as the unifying focus of Guthlac A, Shook asserts, "[the poet] displays a competence in structural artistry beyond anything called for in sacred biography; he has discovered the beauty and effectiveness of what is termed the symbolic mode".⁴⁷

A type of treasure wrested from the dryht-of-hell, Guthlac's redeemed beorg is comparable to the new dispensation of the regenerated world after the Deluge. In lines

⁴⁶Biblia Sacra, Ad Philippenses III, 10.

⁴⁷Shook, "The Burial-Mound in Guthlac A", 10.

reminiscent of the earthly paradise of Lactantius,⁴⁸ the scop presents the harmony and beauty of the redeemed earthly order as both reflecting and pointing towards heavenly order. The beorg is both a commemoration of Eden and a vision of the heofonrice. The blossoming groves and green fields instinctually alive with supernatural sentience, and the harmonious jargoning of birds, recall the pastoral vision in Isaias, where

Lupus et agnus pascentur simul, leo et bos
comendent paleas . . . non nocebunt, neque
occident in omni monti sancto meo, dicit
Dominus.

'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock . . . they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.'⁴⁹

In presenting the new creature and new creation, the poet forsakes his typical images of the fallen world as a westen or as wræcsetla 'places of exile and deprivation', portraying instead nature renewed and purified as he comments,

Smolt wæs se sigewong ond sele niewe. (742)

With the concentration of images of perfection, this passage appears to be "the point at which the undisplaced

⁴⁸Lactantius, Divine Institutes, tr. Sister M. F. McDonald (Washington, 1964), p. 531. "The earth, in truth, will disclose its fecundity and will produce the richest crops of its own accord."

⁴⁹Biblia Sacra, Isaias LXV, 25.

apocalyptic world and the cyclical world of nature come into alignment, and which we propose to call the point of epiphany".⁵⁰ True to the "marvellous" element of romance convention,⁵¹ the beorg on bearwe is an innocent artifice, like the vernal Eden, or the neorxnawong 'paradisal plain' commemorating in visible form the heroic saint's achievement. The poet's strategy resembles that of the carver of the Ruthwell Cross which exhibits the early Christian pre-occupation with the desert. One of the panel carvings shows the wild beasts honouring Christ in the wilderness of his temptation. Guthlac's similar harmonious relationship with many kinds of creatures reflects the former Edenic peace of the animal world and exemplifies Guthlac's covenantal alliance with the Dryhten. Just as the various desert concepts change in the progress of the poem, as Guthlac's identity expands after his epiphany. He becomes a kind of tutelary genius over the green plain, or a man of God of whom Isaiah again writes,

Qui autem fiduciam habet mei; hereditabit terram,
et possidebit montem sanctum meum.

⁵⁰Northrop Frye, p. 203.

⁵¹Compare in Bede's History, ed. Colgrave, p. 436. Cuthberht's island retreat on Farne, relates Bede, had formerly lacked water, corn, and trees. The "marvellous" element of romance finds expression in the bishop's sowing of barley and the production of an abundant crop. Like Guthlac's dwelling, formerly the mearclond or wasteland, Cuthberht's retreat, once again like Guthlac's redeemed beorg, is now the "Sown".

Just as Blake particularizes his redemptive vision on the green mountains and pleasant pastures of rural England, and as Vaughan locates his "city of palme trees" within view of the paradisal plain of childhood, so the scop of Guthlac A presents his redeemed beorg almost within view of þa beorhtan gesceaft, the heavenly regions.

As I have examined the content of the poem, its imaginative structure deserves comment. The direction of the poem starts from a generic view of enslaved creation awaiting the judgment, progresses through an ⁿecomiastic treatment of the saint's struggle, and finally focusses on the heavenly stronghold prepared for the elect, of which Guthlac is a prototype. The poetic tone evolves from sombre moral judgment at the beginning to confidence and anticipation of celestial joy at the end. The poem travels in the direction of a spiral curve, in which Guthlac's successive victories over the fiends assure the reward of the children of the sacrament. Such a reward finds satisfying expression in the concluding conception of death as release into the joyous band of the living,

Him þæt ne hreowed æfter hingonge,
 donne hy hweorfad in þa halgan burg,
 gongad gegunga to Hierusalem. (811-13)

'They grieve not after death, when they enter the holy city, and pass straight on to Jerusalem.'

CHAPTER III

WIFES WILLAN

A STUDY OF CYNEWULF'S JULIANA

The early style of Cynewulf expressed in Juliana¹ lacks the narrative exuberance and vividly pictorial poetic environment of his later masterpiece, Elene. Stylistic weakness is evident in much of the laboured repetition which threatens at times to usurp the narrative. The poem lacks as well the incidents, for example, extended treatment of sea-voyages, actual physical combat, and the elaborate council-scenes that give Andreas and Elene, as communal guests, their structural variety, imaginative richness, and pictorial effect. The reader, however, must not mistake the conventions of oral formulaic poetry for stylistic faults; the Old English scop was in no hurry to get his story told. Although this saint's life does not exhibit the special mercurial energy which characterizes Elene, it displays a different kind of crusading spirit. How the poet expresses this fervour will become evident both in the critique of the poem and especially of the runic eplilogue. I propose to prove the value of Cynewulf's poem in its amplification of

¹Compare the Latin source, Acta Sanctorum II (16 February), 875-879.

the Latin source, and especially in its revelation of the author's artistic development.

The life and death of St. Juliana fulfil the "virgin martyr" type of Latin hagiographic convention. Like the scop of Guthlac A, Cynewulf takes the theme of laus, and its material gesta, signa, and virtutes, embellishing with his own wordcraft the models he found in Mediterranean hagiography.² The common themes of the preservation of virginity to become a bride of Christ, and of making oneself a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake, inform all of the saints' lives. Virginity in both men and women was viewed by the Fathers as more desirable than even the married state. To emphasize the value of celibacy, St. Cyprian characterizes the worth of virgins as

flos est ille ecclesiastici germinis, decus
adque ornamentum gratiae spiritalis, laeta
indoles, laudis et honoris opus integrum
adque incorruptum, Dei imago respondens
ad sanctimoniam Domini, inlustrior portio
gregis Christi.³

A classic example of the virgin martyr theme is found in Palladius' history⁴ of the virgin Potamiaena, like

² Compare William Strunk, ed. Juliana, whose introduction clarifies the abundant legends of this saint.

³ St. Cyprian, De Habitu Virginum, CSEL, ed. Hartel, p. 189.

⁴ Athanasius et. al., The Paradise or Garden of the Holy Fathers, tr. E. A. Budge (London, 1907), I, 93.

Juliana herself, a 'flower on the tree of the Church'. Her lord, an agent of the dryht-of-hell in Old English terms, delivers Potamiaena to the prefect in Alexandria upon her rejection of fornication with him. The prefect Basilides, like Eleusius, accuses the saint of worshipping a strange god; she fails to recant and finds herself immersed in boiling lead. Crowned upon her death with a good martyrdom, the saint's integrity is evident in the perfection of the congregation at Alexandria.

Juliana, like Potamiaena, consistently rejects an unsanctified lover in her passion to preserve her fleshly and spiritual integrity. She, too, struggles in a domestic and familial context in which her father and suitor are simply agents of the hellish dryht. Their machinations direct the pattern of her pathos, agon, and anagnorisis (at the point of her miraculous deliverance from the boiling lead) which parallel Potamiaena's. Again, the same kind of thematic resolution is apparent in Juliana as a congregation at Commedia is established, bearing her body after the soul's translation to a grave within the city. Her ascension is accompanied by chants of praise as she, too, is borne to the heavenly dryht.

After outlining the structure of the legend, it becomes apparent that the informing spirit of Juliana is the poet's emphasis on the saint's invincibility as Christ's

warrior. She is a living symbol of St. Basil's exhortations to the ascetical life. "When you are summoned to court", he admonishes, "and must stand, perforce, before the magistrates or be a victim of popular attack; when you are forced to behold the dread visage of the executioner and hear his harsh voice, or endure the cruel sight of instruments of torture, or be tried by torture -- fight even to the death. Be not faint-hearted in the face of all these sufferings".⁵

The conventional opening of Juliana places it in the heroic tradition of Andreas, Daniel and Exodus,

Hwæt! We dæt hyrdon hæled¹ eahtian,
deman dædhwate (1-2)

Thus establishing the heroic theme, the poet takes care to sustain the romance mode with such diction as æþelinga wyn 'delight of warriors', beorna hleo 'protector of heroes', and heofona Helm 'helm of the heavens'.

In comparison with the Acta Sanctorum version on which Cynewulf relied fairly closely for his substance, the opening scene of Juliana reveals the poet's skill in establishing a convincing point of view. Following the opening invocation to Benignitas Salvatoris nostri in the

⁵St. Basil, Ascetical Works, tr. Sister M. Monica Wagner (New York, 1950), p. 11.

Latin version, only brief mention is made of the persecutions, succeeded by a bald introduction of the principals with no moral condemnation by the author. Cynewulf, however, immediately establishes a hostile point of view against the persecutors, identifying them with the dryht-of-hell that lays seige to the Christian dryht. As hæpen hildfruma 'heathen war-chief', Eleusius is 'stained with sins', 'brutal', and 'spiritually blinded'. His hordgestreon 'hoarded wealth' embodies an anti-societal principle to the Old English conception of a fraternal unit held together by circulating treasure in the mead-hall.

In the openings of both Juliana and Guthlac A is evident a sombre view of the declining world and the poets' care to impress the hearer of the story of the enormity of heathen or fiendish outrage. Ruling this poem are the identical infernal powers which make the saint share the fate of Bartholomew, that is, decollation, in the Fates of the Apostles. The poet allows Juliana herself to identify her accusers as agents of hell. Taking his model from the Acta Sanctorum version where Juliana says to Eleusius, "Satan, your sire", the Old English words are awyrged womsceada (211) 'accursed foul foe'. Cynewulf's picture of father and prospective son-in-law leaning their spears together like Germanic chieftains,

Hæpne wæron begen
synnum seoce (64-5)

'the pagans were both stained with sins', establishes them as types in barely human form of demons from hell. They are the idol-worshippers; Juliana herself is the iconoclast in this context of the anarchic reign of anti-Christ just preceding the millenium. We have Bede's "historical" validation of Cynewulf's account of Maximian's cruelty:

Wæs seo ehtnysse þyssa arleasre cyninga
unmetra ond singalre eallum þam ærgedonum
on middanearde, fordon durh tyn winter full
godes cyricena hynnyse on unsceaddiendra
fordemednesse ond slege haligra martyra
unblinnendlice don wæs.⁶

'The persecution of these impious kings was more violent and continuous than any before in the world, for with burning of God's churches and condemnation of the innocent and slaughter of holy martyrs it went on incessantly for ten year's time.' With the assaults of Diocletian in the East and Maximian in the West, the Old English scop viewed the infant Christian dryht in middle-earth as under universal threat and siege. The theme of the Church persecuted, solidly established at the beginning, thematically unites with the theme of the Church (or a newly-founded portion of it) victorious, at the conclusion.

⁶Bede, The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History, p. 34.

A consideration of Cynewulf's heroine will realize that Juliana embodies an example of Christian warfare fought not in Guthlac's desert retreat, but in a domestic, familial context. The poet points up the militant quality of her gewindagas 'days of struggle' by drawing from the wordhoard such terms as beadu, cumbolhete, flanpracu, geflit, gewin, gub, hondgewinn, sacu, pracu, and wig. He further emphasizes her heroic stature by associating her with imagery of light. The theological disparity between the darkness of idol-worshippers and the radiance of Christian revelation is especially displayed in the manifest beauty of Juliana, beauty which signifies the latent divinity within. As 'heaven's candle' she exhibits in her self-possession the harmony and integration of the redeemed creature, humanity's potential in God. As the poet presents her, the virtues she displays are rather typically associated with masculine strength. For example, her manifesto against idol-worshippers is as adamant and abrupt as in the Acta Sanctorum Vita. The unequivocal Latin text,

si credideris Deo meo, et adoraveris Patrem
et Filium et Spiritum sanctum, accipiam te
maritum. Quod si nolueris, quaere tibi aliam
uxorem,

might well have influenced Cynewulf's version,

He þa brydlufan
sceal to oþerre æhtgestealdum
idese secan; nafad he ænige her. (114-16)

'he with his wealth must look for bridal love from another woman; he shall have non here'.

In the first confrontations between Juliana and the persecutors, the poet graphically allows Affricanus and Eleusius to betray their diabolical lineage. Through firencræft they accuse the saint of unrædes (120) and offer her witena dom 'wiser judgment', just as the demons had attacked Guthlac with hostile recrimination. As "human" fiends they threaten Juliana with sparagmos, death purh deora gripe (125) 'rending by wild beasts'. In the same tradition, Guthlac had been threatened by trampling and tearing by troops of horses, symbols of inflamed passion. The theme of sparagmos in the hero's struggle is therefore foreshadowed here and fulfilled later in the poem.

Cynewulf's use of the wordhoard displays verbal similarities with Genesis B, particularly in his treatment of the hospwordum (189) and teorne teoncwide (205) of the perfect and the noble. In a cumulative series he presents a sustained rhetorical pattern of accusations and defence. When Juliana, humanly speaking, should be cowed, she actually bewilders and confounds her accusers. The poet's handling of her own self-defence and accusations is a forerunner of the more vigorous and varied style of the council-scenes in Elene, in which the accusing Queen condemns the murmuring Jewish sages as werge wræcmæcggas (Elene, 387),

an opprobrious term heavy with overtones from Genesis. The same rhetorical device of reversed accusation occurs later in Juliana when a devil disguised as an angel tempts her, whereupon she exposes him and forces a confession of his infernal lineage. To the glory of God and of his heroine, Cynewulf allows the saint to manipulate the devil, making him finally contemptible. Juliana accompanies such victories over the devil with repeated manifestos against demonry and assertions of her confidence in the heavenly Dryhten:

ac ic weordige wuldres ealdor
 middangeardes ond mægenbrymmes,
 ond him anum to eal biþence,
 þæt he mundbora min geweorþe,
 helpend ond hælend wid hellsceapum. (153-7)

'but I honour the Lord of heaven, of the earth, and of the glorious host, and put all my confidence only in him, that he will become my protector, my helper and saviour against hellish foes'.

Structurally, the account of Juliana's agon is followed by her pathos, her torture and near-death as she, like Christ, is stretched out and scourged. Cynewulf emphasizes her endurance by making her praise the sodcyning and declare in gross litotes that no man finds duguþe mid deoflum (221) 'virtue among devils'. Cynewulf intensifies her pathos as the humiliated governor hangs her up by the hair where she, 'resembling the sun in radiance', endures anguish for six hours. With the image of Christ's love

fastened like a treasure in her breast, Juliana betrays no inner struggle, no tormenting self-doubt. The Old English life lacks even the one note of true pathos in the Latin Vita when Juliana after surviving the flames pleads,

Deprecor etiam te, Domine, ne deseras me,
quia pater meus et mater mea dereliquerunt
me.

'I pray thee, Lord, forsake me not, whom father and mother have forsaken.' It is to the glory of God that Juliana does not repine; she manages, rather, to put the governor, hell's agent, to shame.

With reference to the larger framework of the fallen world, Cynewulf skilfully uses the cloistered architectural image of the nydclafan 'dungeon' to symbolize the confinement and bondage of the enslaved creation. In such a prison, however, 'the saint dwelt steadfast', in contrast to the enslavement by the 'dryht-of-hell evident in Affricanus and Eleusius. She enjoys the liberty of angels while physically confined by hamara geweorc 'the labour of hammers'. Her spiritual temptation in confinement by a devil disguised as an angel recalls the angel of light in Genesis B. Tempted by hell's captive, the diabolical counterpart of the heavenly comforter, Juliana is a second Eve made of stronger clay.

Just as the fiends in Guthlac A fly in the upper air, so the devil in Juliana exposes his lineage as that of

"the prince of the power of the air".⁶ Juliana prays her Dryhten to reveal

hwæt þes þegn sy,
lyftlacende, þe mec læred from þe
on stearcne weg. (280-2)

'who this servant is who flies in the air, and who urges me in thy name to an evil way'. The poet employs the "marvelous" element of romance in revealing a glorious voice from the clouds,

Forfoh þone frætgan ond fæste geheald. (284)

'Seize that proud one and bind him fast.' Juliana lays hold on the devil and turns judge herself. Up to the manuscript lacuna at (288) the verbal pattern is clear: first Juliana is accused and judged by "human" tormentors, whereupon she turns judge, upheld by the Dryhten, and totally subjects the devil. Her single victory in prison over the devil foreshadows in Cynewulf's theology the ultimate triumph of the Christian over the pagan dryht. The poet reveals Juliana's victory on two levels -- that of middangeard and that of the heofonrice.

As the devil confesses the felonies of the fallen dryht in an extended sequence, Cynewulf evidently wishes to impress

⁶Ephesians 2:2.

his readers with the enormity of hell's outrages. With reference to grornhufe, the 'sad house' of hell, and to hellwarena cyning 'king of hell-dwellers', the devil confesses the tricks and craftiness of sin, the contrived malice and envy-motivated evil of hell which finally has Juliana decapitated. For example, it was the imponderable heardra hetepoeca (315) 'profound thoughts of hatred' that motivated the Roman soldier to spear Christ's side at the Crucifixion, and that hanged St. Andrew on a gallows. The poet enumerates such evils to reveal the apparent sway of hell's dryht over middle-earth under temporal conditions. The certainty of its downfall is implicit, however, in the devil's subjugation in historical time by Juliana. Such a victory foreshadows the overcoming of the dragon at the end of time, as the apocalyptic aspect characterizes each Act of a saint's life.

Referring to the hard mastery of the egesful ealdor, the 'dread prince', the devil reveals Satan to be a faithless dryhten who orders his own þegnas, if unfruitful on their errands, to be scourged in fire. To emphasize the despicable nature of the devil, Cynewulf makes him deliver an apology for himself, avowing that he was compelled to his "boldness" and was tormented so that he finally sought the saint. In his cowardice and excuses the devil is not self-motivated any more than is the saint.

In the first sections of the legend, Juliana herself had endured interrogation by Affricanus and Eleusius; the poet now turns the tables and makes her interrogator. Cynewulf seems to have adopted from the Latin Vita the crisp, almost legalistic interplay of question and defence:

S. Juliana dixit: Et qui repulsus fuerit
a Christiano, quid patitur?
Daemon respondit: Mala est pessima
patitur tormenta.

When Juliana compels the devil to enumerate the tactics of temptation, the union of the sin-principle with the death-principle comes logically into play, "for by sin come death". Just as the devil had disguised himself as an angel of light, he makes sin itself attractive,

Ðus ic soðfæstrum
þurh mislic bleo mod oncyrrre. (362-3)

'Thus I deceive the righteous by my altered countenance.'

Quoting from Job, "His sweetness be worms", the fiend who cares more for the soul's destruction than the body's, actually 'grudges life' while sweetening the pleasures of sin,

Ic him geswete synna lustas. (369)

By making the devil evoke images of the Christian warrior equipped with the whole armour of God, Cynewulf reveals the fiend's awareness of the soul's spiritual welfare. He exposes a subtle diabolical intelligence insidiously working against the soul, exploring all its inward thought and

ferreting out the means by which resistance to sin is contrived. Cynewulf takes from Gregory his martial imagery of the soul as a beleaguered fortress with tower and portal gate. The Old English poet well explores the possibilities of such imagery and assimilates it into his own wordhoard. The cumulative battle imagery of assaulted gate, pierced tower, and flight of arrows, flanþræce, displays imaginative similarity with Gregory's Pastoral Care⁷ where he employs martial imagery; the mind, to avoid the snare of sin, should

symle ondraede ða diglan gescotn ðæs sweocolan
feondas, ond hine wærlice healde on ðære byrig
his modes wid nihtlicum gefeohtum, forðamde hi
willað simle on dīstrum feohtan.

'Always dread the unseen missiles of the treacherous foe, and cautiously protect himself within the fortress of his mind against nocturnal assaults, because they will always fight in darkness.'

When Juliana demands to know how he forced his way among the faithful and assaulted the Christian dryht, the devil counters by asking,

hu þu gedyrstig þurh deop gehygd
wurde þus wigprist ofer eall wifa cyn,
þæt þu mec þus fæste fetrum gebunde,
æghwæs orwigne. (431-4)

⁷ King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care, Part II, ed. Henry Sweet (London, 1871), p. 430.

'how thou, daring in thy wisdom, became so bold in combat above all the race of women, so that thou hast bound me thus firmly, wholly helpless with fetters?' Cynewulf seizes his opportunity to turn the tables once again; he makes the fiend an unwitting testimony to Juliana's intrepidity in moral combat. In words used of the Virgin Mary in the Dream of the Rood, where the cross compares its exalted state to Mary, exalted ofer eall wifa cynn (Dream of the Rood, 94), the fiend acknowledges the sovereignty of members of the heavenly dryht. His moral defeat is complete as he begs for miltsige 'mercy' and admits his own foolhardiness. His further disclosure of evil deeds forms a telescopic perspective of the achievements of the dryht-of-hell stretching back to the remote antiquity of the human race and indeed to pre-Creation.

The specific evocation of strife and sword-hate among þegnas in the meadhall focusses on the symbol of the goblet, containing the archetypal bitter drink infected with enmity, that Eve offered Adam in the winehall of Eden.

Ic him byrlade
wroht of wege, þæt hi in winsele
þurh sweordgripe sawle forletan
of flæschoman. (486-9)

'I offered them enmity from the goblet, so that in the winehall by the sword-stroke they let their souls hasten from their bodies.' Here the poet evokes two antithetical concepts of the meadhall, as a place of brotherhood among a harmonious society of þegnas and dryhten, and as a place of

enmity among grudge-bearing warriors. Thus the typically Germanic scene is skilfully welded into concepts of Christian doctrine in order to emphasize the evil of hell's dryht in disrupting rational order in a convivial social context.

Recounting the evils befalling the children of men, the devil concludes that neither patriarchs nor prophets had been brave enough to lay hold on him and to withstand his assaults, as Juliana herself does now. Cynewulf draws upon the Latin passage,

nemo Apostolorum . . . nemo Martyrum me cecidit,
nemo mihi Prophetarum injurias fecit, quas a
te sustineo: nemo Patriarcharum in me manum
misit.

In comparable heroic litotes the devil acknowledges the saint's terribilitā as judge and accuser, (510-15) At this point the poet has reversed the whole structure of the poem; neither Affricanus nor Eleusius, but Juliana is now in the ascendant.

When Juliana is taken from nydclafan to domsetle 'from prison to the judgment', the direction of the poem borrows from the shaping events of Christ's passion. A dangerously comic event occurs, however, as she hales along the lamenting and wholly subjugated devil to the judgment-seat, halig hæþenne (536), 'the holy one and the heathen' in dramatic juxtaposition. Again, the poet makes him acknowledge her sovereignty, avowing that he had dealt with no woman of bolder thought or greater perversity.

If Cynewulf followed the Acta version, a second manuscript lacuna possibly related Juliana's torture on a sword-studded wheel, her burning, and miraculous escape. If the manuscript gap contained as well the repentance and conversion of the executioners, then it follows that (559-63a) may be the conclusion of the testimony of the converted pagans to the sovereignty of Juliana's Dryhten. Artistically effective here would have been the account of their conversion as they

sægdon soðlice þæt he sigora gehwæs
ofer ealle gesceaft ana weolde. (561-2)

'declared truly that he alone over all creation ruled every victory'.

The episode of the cauldron of boiling lead has its models in the Old English and Biblical Daniel in which the flames intended for the holy children in the fiery furnace, actually swallow the heathen,

Da se lig gewand on lade men,
hæðne of halgum. (Daniel, 250-1)

In the Old English poem, drawn partially from the Acta Sanctorum, seventy-five pagans die while Juliana stands in the fire onsund, wholly 'unscathed'. The poet's use of irony here to glorify God develops as Juliana praises the dryhtna dryhtne while the governor blasphemes his gods,

þæs þe hy ne mehtun mægne.
wifstondan
wifes willan. (589-600)

'because they could not in their own power withstand a woman's will'. The prefect here reacts in the same manner as the fiends in Guthlac B, swa wilde deor, (907) 'like wild beasts', finally ordering Juliana to die by a sword-blow.

As their gewindagas 'days of struggle' draw to a close, both Juliana and Guthlac rejoice; hope is renewed. Juliana experiences release and freedom as she, like Antigone in a comparable context, now goes to be the bride of Death. The Acta Sanctorum version on which Cynewulf heavily relied, expresses the saint's anticipation of her release,

Audiens autem haec S. Juliana gaudio magno
repleta est, eo quod appropinquasset finis
certaminis ejus.

The source of that joy is well expressed by Bede in his comment on Cuthberht's dying, "the day of his death was approaching or rather the day of his entrance into that life which alone can be called life".⁸

Cynewulf skillfully allows the wretched spirit of hell to reappear just prior to Juliana's beheading, undoubtedly to contrast the contemptible wailing of the demon,

Hen me miserum!
Wa me forworhtum (632)

⁸Bede, History of the English People, ed. Bertram Colgrave, pp. 439-41.

with the saint's equanimity as she welcomes death. Cynewulf's strategy makes the devil both a testimony to Juliana's faith and a foil to her. As he laments his fate, Juliana offers songs of praise while hearing

hearm galan helle deofol. (629)

The devil here, like the fiends in Guthlac A, betrays himself as finally contemptible.

Just as Guthlac in the B-poem does, Juliana preaches with apostolic fervour immediately preceding her death. She exhorts the newly-converted Christian dryht in Old English heroic terms,

Gemunad[†] wigena wyn ond wuldres þrym,
haligra hyht, heofonengle god. (641-2)

'Remember the bliss of warriors and heavenly splendour, the joy of the saints, the God of celestial angels!' She urges establishing the soul's house on the living rock and counsels against wiperfeohtend 'adversaries' barring the way to the heavenly city. Her death by a sword-stroke is an exemplary one by which Cynewulf undoubtedly wished to "tell a truth" and "save the soul besides".

The concluding poetic treatment of Eleusius and his evil dryht draws upon the vengeance motif in Old English literature. Whereas the matter-of-fact Latin version reads only

venit tempestas valida, et mersit
havem ipsius, et mortui sunt viri

Cynewulf with his maritime images embellishes this account of Eleusius' damnation. Concluding the legend itself is a brief yet vivid pictorial evocation of Eleusius and his þegnas getting tossed about on the 'swan's way' and finally being pitched into hell. With more than a hint of malign triumph the scop declares,

ne þorfta þa þegnas in þam þystran ham,
 seo geneatscolu in þam neolan
scræfe,
 to þam frungare feohgestealda
 witedra wenan, þæt hy in winsele
 ofer beorsetle beagas þegan,
 æpplede gold. (683-8)

'Nor needed the þegnas in that dark abode, the troop of retainers in that low haunt, look to the leader for treasures to be dispensed, that in the winehall or on the mead-bench they should receive rings, appled gold.' The radiant assurance attending Juliana's death and burial, celebrated with lofsongum 'songs of praise', throws into darker relief the wretched state of the treasureless þegnas in the windy halls of hell. Within the poet's conception of retaliatory eschatology, the poem has come full circle. Cynewulf dispatches the bad þegnas back to the hellish dryht while Eleusius, by the demands of both theological and poetic justice, returns to þa þrystran ham. Both evil and good in the poem have travelled full circle. The idol-worshippers, initially triumphant, seek their own kin in the halls of hell. The Church, persecuted at first, is militantly

victorious at the poem's conclusion, where a new congregation symbolizes the extension of the Christian dryht. Juliana, after enduring agon and sparagmos, returns, her miclre ærendu completed, to the heavenly dryht. The legend therefore fulfils the romance convention with its final triumph of cosmos over chaos, for the saint by the hatred of hell's captives, is translated to dream among angels after establishing an infant dryht which itself foreshadows the concord of the heavenly city. The structure of such a romance-type produces an almost "encapsulated" effect, as in concluding the legend the scop directs the hearer's attention to the company of saints who extol God's glory among the people op þisne dæg 'unto this day'.⁹

⁹Note: the runic epilogue will be treated in conjunction with the conclusion of Guthlac B.

CHAPTER IV

WULDRES ÐRYM

A STUDY OF GUTHLAC B

By general scholarly agreement, Guthlac B is an adaption of Felix' Vita Sancti Guthlaci. Both earlier scholars such as Gerould¹ and more recent ones such as Bertram Colgrave agree that "there can be no doubt that the poet who wrote Guthlac B . . . was familiar at any rate with the later part of the Life, the part which would normally be used as lections during the octave of the saint".² Whereas Guthlac A is a poem about the Christian warrior's earthly struggle to rejoin the heavenly dryht, Guthlac B, in a more subjective and human context, is a "poem about holy dying".³ In evaluating its more human direction, P. B. Kurtz assesses the poem as the first saint's life in the West "truly commensurate with the Antonius,

¹G. H. Gerould, "The Old English Poems on St. Guthlac and their Latin Source", MLN, XXXII (1917), 85.

²Felix, Life of St. Guthlac, ed. Colgrave, p. 20.

³A. A. Lee, The Guest-Hall of Eden (1968), p. 140.

however widely that model was known in previous hagiography and copied in practical eremitism".⁴ Kurtz' criticism reveals a valid awareness of the more humane treatment of Saints Anthony and Guthlac in the accounts of the former by Athanasius and St. Gregory the Great, and of the latter in the Old English poem. In defining the Antonian tradition, the major element is perhaps the subjectivism which characterizes the treatment of the legends referred to above. I suggest that the worth of Guthlac B lies in its presentation in poetic symbols of the eternal truths to which the saint has devoted his lifetime of daily martyrdom in the visible, fallen world of coming to be and passing away.

The Old English poem displays unity of mood through a sustained heroic perspective and a devotional tone well suited to the theme of the ideational hero. The scop's purpose in adapting the Latin Vita is to glorify a native saint as an exemplar of noble þegnscipe with the heavenly Dryhten. Interpreted in the heroic vocabulary so familiar in Beowulf, the character of Guthlac reveals Old English Christian epic virtues at their best. In its intensely encomiastic treatment, the substance and total effect of

⁴P. B. Kurtz, From St. Anthony to St. Guthlac (Berkeley, 1926), p. 142.

the poem differ markedly from the A-poem, for Guthlac B in its greater focus on the act of dying reveals that the practise and love of wisdom during the saint's life time has indeed been the rehearsal of death. The scop effects the tonal unity of the poem by emphasizing both heroism and humanity in the saint's dying. Spiritually unimpaired throughout his struggle with the demons, Guthlac welcomes death. For him,

long is þis onbid
worulde lifes (1046-7)

'long is this tarrying in the life of the world', while thinking of his suffering body

nearwum genæged nydcostingum,
awrecen wælpilum, (1153-4)

'closely assailed by afflictions, pierced by the arrows of death', as the prison-house of the soul, a prime conception in neo-Hellenic thought. Unlike the atmosphere of Beowulf, where death is once associated with the raven's croaking and the relinquishing of the convivial mirth of the mead-hall, the informing spirit of Guthlac B centres in a longing for release, accompanied by an engelweord, into the reality of the heavenly dryht.

As I have commented on the poet's panegyric purpose, the actual opening of the legend must be examined. Corresponding in style with the A-poem's actual introduction, the generic opening of Guthlac B establishes the cosmic frame-

work of the poem, the larger context to which the symbolism of the legend consistently refers. Resembling a passage in the Phoenix (393-423), an introductory section of Guthlac B sets forth in a poetically nostalgic way the story of man's paradisaical beginning and his fall, effected by the draught of sin proffered by the serpent. Such a generic opening is an established heroic convention in Old English epic, providing a definite larger context for the specific achievement of Guthlac. In the A-poem, the barrow is the unifying symbol of the legend, as a place of dying to the "old man", the unregenerate Adam. In the B-poem, the "bitter drink" of death mentioned in the introduction and skilfully elaborated in the description of the saint's illness, forms the unifying symbol of his elaborate ritualistic death.

Since the death is the focus of the poem, the scop mentions only briefly Guthlac's miracles, his concord with nature, and his battling demons. Just as St. Martin, St. Anthony, Paul the Hermit, and Bishop Cuthberht all fulfil the apostolic commission within the limited context of the anchoritic life, so Guthlac, as an agent of special grace, cures the souls and bodies of those who seek him out.⁵ The

⁵ Compare Athanasius' evaluation of St. Anthony: "He was unto Egypt like a good physician".

"marvellous" element of romance convention is here given free rein, for the poet draws on apocryphal legends and miracles recorded in saints' calendars. In recording the life and miracles of St. Benedict, St. Gregory refers to the saints' prelatival function, "when, by reason of age, the heat of temptation is past, they become keepers of holy vessels, because they are then made the doctors of men's souls".⁶ Guthlac's prototype as doctor of men's souls is Christ who divinely sanctions him, for

Symle frofre þær
æt þam godes cempan gearwe fundon,
helpe ond hælo. (888-90)

'Ever they found comfort, help, and healing ready there from God's warrior.' A profound irony working in the poem is the fact that although the saint heals others of their distresses, he cannot heal himself. The poet, however, uses this inability to reveal the miraculous intervention of the Dryhten during the saint's illness.

It may be suggested that Felix' Guthlac and Bede's Cuthberht act in a more social context, the human community, while Juliana acts at least in a domestic context, although controlled by demonic forces. Guthlac in the B-poem, however, is a lonely, intrepid figure definitely outside the

⁶Gregory the Great, Dialogues, p. 56.

human community. Although he comforts their souls and heals their bodies, Guthlac's followers are anonymous, merely 'human messengers'. Even the stock figure of the ombehtþegn, named Beccel in Felix and Hereberht in Bede, remains anonymous in the Old English account. Pega, the sister whose fellowship Guthlac abjures in this life, remains unnamed as well; Guthlac refers to her simply as sweostor minre, þære leofestan (ll79-80) 'my dearest sister', while the poet calls her seo fæmne 'the maiden' and wuldres wynmæg 'the glorious saint'. Specifically Batholomew in the Latin Vita, even the comforter from heaven is unnamed; the poet's purpose in such anonymity is probably to focus his account more directly on the saint himself.

Following an account of his miracles, the poet evokes a picture of Guthlac dwelling steadfast in his desert abode amid the ravaging of the fiends swa wilde deor (907). In such Satanic confusion the saint endures the onslaughts of the faithless ones further to perfect his soul. Adapting directly from Felix the bestial imagery which relates sins to beasts, the poet only briefly mentions Guthlac's war with the fiends. Whereas Guthlac A is unspecific as to the shape of the fiends, the greater skill of the B-poet is evident in his adaptation from Felix of the central iconographic image of "that old Serpent, the Devil". The poet wishes to reveal life on middangeard as a death-infected condition.

Felix relates,

coluber quoque, squamea colla porrigens,
indicia atri veneni monstrabat.⁷

'A serpent, too rearing its scaly neck, disclosed the threat of its black poison.' The Genesis poet, recognizing Satan's ability to transform his appearance, writes,

Wearp hine þa on wyrmes lic and wand him ymbutan
þone deades beam þurh deofles cræft. (Genesis A, 491-2)

'He transformed himself into the shape of a serpent and wound himself around the tree of death by fiendish skill.'

The poet of Guthlac B, dipping into the same wordhoard, relates,

hwilum brugdon eft
awyrgde wærlogan on wyrmes bleo
earme adolman attre spowdon. (910-12)

'at times the accursed faithless ones, wretched creatures crippled by fire, changing again to the shape of a serpent, spewed out venom'. The mention of wyrmes bleo recalls the crucial concept in Old English poetry of the wyrmsele or deadsele (1075), the infernal model of the dryhtsele or mead-hall; the poet mentions the wyrm specifically to betray the encroachment of the diabolical dryht on middangeard. Deliberately as well he juxtaposes the ravening serpent-like fiends and the peaceful sigewong 'plain of victory' in order, perhaps, to emphasize the sanctity of Guthlac's dwelling. Again, as in Guthlac A, the poet presents the

⁷Felix, p. 114.

'blessed man' to whom the wild beasts and birds give homage, in the context of responsive nature. At this point he appears to have been influenced by Felix who relates,

Erga enim omnia eximiae caritatis ipsius gratia abundabat, in tantum ut incultae solitudinis volucres et vagabundi coenosae paludis pisces ad vocem ipsius veluti ad pastorem ocius natantes volentesque subvenirent.⁸

'For the grace of his excellent charity abounded to all creatures, so that even the birds of the untamed wilderness and the wandering fishes of the muddy marshes would come flying or swimming swiftly to his call as if to a shepherd.' The mention of the creatures honoring Guthlac emphasizes his supernatural qualities, for even dumb nature responds to the divinity operating through the saint.

The structure of the B-poem moves swiftly towards the saint's agon, his struggle with the deadly dryht-of-hell as it manifests itself in racking his body, the 'fated flesh-home'. A close concentration of stock epithets in the "mythical mode" characterizes the poet's handling of Guthlac's pre-death struggle. From Felix he adopts the facts, yet he imposes on them his own style. The poet bypasses the sententious moralizing that mars Guthlac A, and where Felix preaches by way of wise saws and homiletic

⁸Felix, p. 120.

convention,⁹ the Old English poet imaginatively embodies the onset of death in a sinister stalker of prey, 'the lone one who brings sorrow' and the wiga wælgifre (999) 'foeman thirsting for slaughter'. Such designations are vivid symbols of the abstract principles of death and departure. The scop has woven the spare Latin text into atmosphere-creating poetic symbols which both present pictorially (although schematically) the onset of death, and establish a mood of brooding and incipient struggle so familiar in the Old English canon.

After exploring the Old English poet's adaptations of Felix, I shall examine the concept of death in Guthlac B. After fifteen years in the wilderness, the poet relates, sickness falls upon Guthlac while his heart burned within him, eager to set forth'. Just as Juliana rejoices when her days of struggle are about to end, Guthlac rejoices when his days of struggle are about to begin. In each case, hyht wæs geniwad (953), for the poet works with the ambiguous concept of death as both stalker of prey and the soul's agent of liberation from the "world of thrall" into "true

⁹ Compare Felix, p. 150, "Nam sicut mors in Adam data est, ita et in omnes dominabitur," 'for just as death was prescribed in Adam, so it is to have dominion over all'.

liberty".¹⁰ The informing scriptural paradigm underlying this double-sided concept is the suffering of Christ to redeem the souls of men. Guthlac's body shares the passion of his Dryhten, as St. Paul expresses it,

semper mortificationem Jesu in corpore nostro
circumferentes, ut et vita Jesu manifestetur
in corporibus nostris.¹¹

'Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.' In Old English religious conceptions, the poet convincingly establishes Guthlac's identity as a suffering þegn to his lord, a faithful retainer in the heroic mode. Evident here is the skilful transferring of New Testament models to the Old English dryhten-þegn relationship.

The theology supporting the onset of death in Guthlac and the temptation scenes in Juliana is rooted in the logical union of the sin-and-death principle. The common images of assault and battery by se lytega feond¹² apply both to the soul besieged by the arrows of temptation and to the body besieged by the arrows of death. The Old English poets elaborate common patristic textual sources to form images of 'cunning keys' unlocking the body's treasure-

¹⁰ Henry Vaughan, "They are all gone into the world of light".

¹¹ Biblia Sacra, Ad Corinthios Secunda IV, 10.

¹² King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's

hoard, of the battle-wolf sniffing for slaughter and
 approaching the dying saint,

Wiga nealæced,
 unlæt laces, (1033-4)

to deliver the deadgedal (963), the 'wrench of death'. The
 sustained conceptions of the body as a fortress beleaguered
 by the wolf of Teutonic legend, as a sawelhus, a banfæt,
 and a fæge flæschoma, all emphasize or convey the tenuous
 character of earthly existence in contrast to the ever-
 lasting quality of dwellings in heaven.

The major informing myth in Guthlac's death, the
bittor bædeweg (985), the bleatan drync (990) prepared by
 Eve for Adam in the mead-hall of Eden, is invoked here to
 unite the saint's death in a thematic and structural link
 with the introductory passage on the fall of man. The
 poet's mentality places his saint in the context of the
 universal infection of death over middle-earth to all the
 sons of Adam.

Dead in geþrong
 fira cynne, feond rixade
 geond middangeard. Nænig monna wæs
 of þam sigetudre sibban æfre
 godes willan þæs georn, ne gynnwised,
 þæt he bibugan mæge þone bitran drync
 þone Eue fyrn Adame geaf,
 byrelade bryd geong; þæt him bam gescod
 in þam deoran ham. (863-71)

The effect of the poisoned mead of Eden on a specific son of Adam fulfils and amplifies the merely generic statement set forth in the introduction. The bitter beer is a travesty of the goblet of fraternal fellowship exchanged in a harmonious and festal mead-hall.

Poetically consorting with such imagery of death is the idea of sparagmos effected, not by fiends dragging the saint through the brambly thickets of the fens as in Felix' account, but by the unseen foeman greedy for carnage, who consumes Guthlac's body by disease, binds him with inward fetters, wrenches apart his frame and afflicts his limbs. Sparagmos previously threatened in the poem,

He geþyldum bad,
þeah him feonda hlod feorncwealm buðe, (914-5)

'he suffered in resignation, although hordes of fiends threatened him with slaughter', is now actualized in the progress of the fevered disease. The appalling effects of the bitter mead suggest that after a lifetime of bloodless martyrdom, this present struggle on the battleground of his soul is the ultimate flight with the fallen dryht that the blessed saint must sustain fully to refine his virtues. Definite infernal references in the poem reveal Guthlac's struggle to be against hell's agents. Rush argues in support of this view, "the sufferings which the martyrs endured were inflicted upon them not by man, but by the devil who strove to conquer and devour them. Hence the

death of the martyr was a struggle with Satan".¹³ The ponderous mortality which retards the spirit's birth into the eternal world vividly betrays itself in Guthlac's words which convey a sense of the soul, the body's choicest treasure, being flesh-ensnared and struggling forth to its long home, convulsively trying to escape the imprisoning clay,

Nu of hreþerlocan
to þam soþan gefean sawul fundad. (1263-4)

A complicated and mysterious ritual, Guthlac's death resembles the 'release' and 'departure' of Cuthberht as related by Bede,

seo tid minre tolysnesse ond minre fordfore.¹⁴

Guthlac, his soul fus on fordweg (945) rejoices as Cuthberht and Juliana do, upon their imminent release into true joy.

The inexorability of death's hour, both a pagan and Christian tradition, is implicit in the concept of wyrd as Dryhten fixing a time to be born and a time to die. The poet's interjection,

Wyrd ne meahte
in fægum leng feorg gehealdan,
deore frætwe, þonne him gedemed wæs. (1057-9)

¹³A. Rush, "An Echo of Christian Antiquity in St. Gregory the Great: Death a Struggle with the Devil", Traditio, III (1945), 373.

¹⁴Bede, The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History, ed. Sweet, p. 370.

'Wyrd could keep life, the precious treasure, in the fated one no longer than had been decreed for him', relates in this context to the Beowulf poet's observation on the hero's body,

ne meahte he on eorðan . . .
 on ðam frumgara feorh gehealdan,
 ne ðæs Wealdendes wiht oncirran. (2855-7)

'nor might he hold life longer in the chieftan on earth, nor turn aside the Ruler's will'. Finally, the Seafarer's dictum reveals the imponderable character of the Dryhten's will in words that display a verbal resonance with the passages quoted above,

Wyrd biþ swiþre,
 Meotod meahtigra, þonne ænges monnes gehygd. (114-5)

'wyrd is stronger, fate is mightier, than any man's pondering'. Such passages emphasize the frailty and uncertainty of this fleeting existence.

The heroic Christian emphasis of the Guthlac poet's handling of the liege-lord and þegn relationship between the saint and his servant parallels in spirit the comitatus ideal between Wiglaf and Beowulf. The presentation of the Christian warrior's loyalty to his Dryhten resembles the diction of Cynewulf's Christ, in which the poet reinforces the idea of the covenant-keeping Christ with heroic references such as sigebearn, gudþlega, wigend, sodcyning, and sigaslean. The poet of Guthlac B, transposing heroic framework onto the account of the saint's death, and

sharing the resources of the same wordhoard, offers complementary diction in eorla wynn, winedryhten min, Dryhtnes cempa, from folctoga, sincgiefan, beorna bealdor, and folca feorhgiefa. With the cumulative effect of such heroic diction, Guthlac schematically becomes to the audience of the scop a Christ-figure in experiencing the wonnan niht, the 'dark night' of the soul. The saint's description as mede for ðam miclan bysgum (1110) strongly recalls the picture of the heroic Christ in the Dream of the Rood as mede æfter ðam miclan gewinn (65), thus reinforcing the idea of the wordhoard's stock epithets extolling heroic action whether of gods or heroes.

As Guthlac nears death, the poet employs the saints' lives convention, evidence in Juliana as well, in which the saint is endued with prophetic powers and begins to teach, preach, or instruct with apostolic enthusiasm, the surrounding members of the Christian dryht. Such counsel towards eternal salvation is a convention used not only in saints' legends but also otherwise, as in the dryhten-þegn relationship in Beowulf. As a liege-lord, Guthlac promises his þegn,

A ic sibbe wip þe
healdan wille, (1262-3)

'Always I will hold friendship with thee', a covenant which parallels the tribal-oath in Beowulf,

Ic þe sceal mine gelæstan
freode, swa wit furdum spræcon. (1707-8)

The type of tribal-oath in Guthlac B, however, refers to God's elect and transcends death in its assumption of a more excellent way.

Fulfilling the prelatical function as þone leofestan
lareow gecorene (1004), Guthlac exhorts his þegn,

Læst ealle well
wære ond winescype, word þa wit spræcon,
leofast monna. (1171-3)

'Be faithful to all the covenant and fellowship, the words we two spoke, dearest of men.' The spiritual winescype that plays such an informing rôle in Guthlac's death, reflects in the same heroic Christian aesthetic the gæstlices freondscipe between Cuthberht, bishop and man of God, and Hereberht the priest who

in were . . . gæstlices freondscipes

'in a union of spiritual fellowship' exhibit a comparable dryhten-þegn relationship. In a passage of the Ecclesiastical History filled with phraseological and imaginative correspondence with Guthlac B, Bede writes of the fellowship between Cuthberht and of Hereberht, his most faithful retainer,

iamdudum uiro Dei spiritalis amicitiae foedere
copulatus¹⁵

¹⁵Bede's Ecclesiastical History, ed. Bertram Colgrave, p. 370.

'who had long been bound to Cuthberht, the man of God, by the bonds of spiritual fellowship'. As Guthlac and his þegn discuss the goal of the saint's pilgrimage, so Cuthberht and Hereberht discuss the lives of the Holy Fathers and pass between them the 'cup of heavenly life',

bædeweg þæs heofenlican lifes,

the true type of the goblet of spiritual fellowship.

The Old English poet adopts directly from Felix and possibly from Bede the human response of Beccel (so named in Felix) and of Hereberht, on hearing of the imminent death of their lords. The natural lamentation of the loyal retainer in Guthlac B fulfils the Antonian tradition of human awareness of life's ephemerality. The strategy, therefore, of Felix, Bede, and the Old English scop, is to reveal by directly-reported conversation the intimacy and solidarity of the dryhten-þegn unit in the wider containing framework of Christ and his disciples.

As Juliana instructs her newly-converted dryht, Guthlac counsels his þegn, emphasizing the fleeting quality of life and expounding the mysteries of God with, as it seemed, the tongue of a holy angel from the joys of heaven. Typifying his desire to inhabit heavenly tabernacles, Guthlac goes to the temple where

his þegne ongon, swa þam þeodne geras,
 þurh gæstes giefte godspel bodian,
 secgan sigortacnum, (1114-6)

'he began to preach the gospel to his retainer, by spiritual grace, as befitting a master, to speak with signs of victory . . .'. Endowed with keener snyttrucræft (1128), the saint is made a partaker of holy mysteries in revealing the daily advent of the angel, þegn æt geþeahte (1216) 'a þegn in council'. The poet, therefore, works towards the actual death of the hero by evoking such images as the bittor drync, the war-wolf, the pestilential shower of arrows, and their opposing images, heavenly signs and celestial counsel.

Further memorializing Guthlac's dying, the poet employs the covention of saints' legends in which portents of nature coincide with the saints' prophetic powers. As if in confirmation of the oath of friendship, for example, sweet odours as of summer flowers issue from the saint's mouth as he waits upon death. Such a phenomenon recalls the proverb on the discourse of holy men 'as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and health to the bones',

Favus mellis, composita verba: dulcedo animae,
 sanitas ossium.¹⁶

¹⁶Biblia Sacra, Proverbiorum XVI, 24.

The poet then weaves into the legend one of his most skilful manipulations of natural phenomena:

Wuldres scima,
 æpele ymb æpelne, ondlonge niht
 scan scirwered. Scadu sweþredon,
 tolysed under lyfte. Wæs se leohta glæm
 ymb þæt halge hus heofonlic condel,
 from æfenglome oppæt eastan cwom
 ofer deop gelad dægredwoma,
 wedertacen wearm. (1286-93)

'A surpassing, excellent light shone brightly about the noble earl in the entire night; the shadows withdrew, dispersed through the air. The shining splendour, the heavenly candle, remained around that sacred dwelling from the dusk of evening until dawn; the glowing sun came from the east over the deep sea-path.' Here appears to be a superb translation into poetic symbols of a text of St. Gregory the Great, an apocalyptic thinker whose thesis can be applied not only to the universal end-time in middle-earth (as Gregory conceived of it), but also to the end-time of one particular saint. "The end of this world", decrees Gregory,

is, as it were, mingled together with the beginning of the next, and with the darkness of this, some light of such spiritual things as be in that doth appear: and so we see many things which belong to that world, yet for all this, perfect knowledge we have not any, but as it were in the twilight of our soul behold them before the rising of that sun of knowledge, which then abundantly will cast his beams over all.¹⁷

¹⁷ St. Gregory the Great, Dialogues, p. 236.

In contrasting the fragmentary nature of perception in this world with heavenly knowledge given to Guthlac, the scop invests the legend with a numinous quality. Absent here is moral doctrine as such; rather, the poet translates into enduring images of light -- leohta glæn, heofonlic condel, and wedertacen wearm -- the abstract statements of the Fathers. Taking a theological text, the poet illuminates it in mythic symbols, much as a monk or scribe illuminated early precious manuscripts or as a craftsman in metal overlaid wooden crosses with jewels. The poetic chiaroscuro, although schematic, is intensely pictorial, as the shadows of the phenomenal world flee away before the dawn of 'heaven's candle', the sun of knowledge which abundantly casts his beams over all. Such investment of natural phenomena with metaphorical significance is a major attribute of the Old English poets' art.

As Guthlac completes his "quest for salvation", the scop sums up the exemplary qualities of the saint's last acts. His final ritualistic drink, the Holy Eucharist, foreshadows the heavenly mead; his soul, weorcum wlitigne (1304) 'adorned with good deeds' anticipates the 'reward of grace', the 'holy jewels of his head', endowed with spiritual sight, envision the celestial stronghold Jerusalem, the ultimate goal of all saints' legends. As symbols¹⁸

¹⁸ Compare Felix' cum tunc sol with the Old English poet's swylce fyren tor.

borrowed from Felix, the fiery tower that shines over Guthlac's earthly dwelling prefigures the inheritance of the children of light; the supernatural glow throws into darker relief the city-dwellings where unregenerate men are lost in materialism.

The quaking of the island at Guthlac's death,

Beofode þæt ealond,
foldwong onþrong, (1325-6)

exhibits another poetic device based on scriptural tradition. Not only during the saint's lifetime do the hagiographers take pains to draw a parallel between Guthlac's passion and Christ's, but more particularly so at his death. The poet's choice of words seemingly echoes St. Matthew's account of portents in nature at the death of Christ,

And seo eorþe bifode, and stanas toburston;
And byrgena wurdon geopenode, and maniga
halige lichaman de ær slepon, aryson.¹⁹

'And the earth shook, and rocks burst apart, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose.'

From Felix²⁰ the Old English poet takes the note of jubilation in

hecfonlic hleoþor ond se halga song (1323)

¹⁹ Gospels, Matthew XXVII, 51-2.

²⁰ Felix, p. 158. "Cantantibus quoque angelis spatium totius aeris detonari audiebatur."

as an echo of the harmony that is in immortal souls. As always in Anglo-Saxon poetry, music signifies the "common chord" motif, the harmonious integration of society, particularly in the mead-hall among gift-dispensing lords and treasure-receiving þegnas.

In concluding the legend, the Old English poet expands what Felix merely relates, that is, the confrontation of Beccel and Pega, Guthlac's þegn and sister. Whereas Felix only recounts the reaction of Pega, the scop focusses on the þegn alone, dramatically evoking a picture of the archetypal sea-voyager. Here the sea is an agent of separation between lord and þegn; the departure of the 'water-horse' over the waves under the glaring sun, symbolizes the þegn's departure from the intimacy of the dryht-relationship. The jubilant celebration of angels' song contrasts with the elegiac burden of the bereaved þegn,

Ellen biþ selast þam þe ofost sceal
 dreogan dryhtenbealn, deope behycgan
 þroht þeodengedal, þonne seo þrag cymed,
 wefen wyrdstafum. (1348-51)

'Courage is best for him who most often must endure great sorrows, seriously ponder on grievous parting from a master, when the hour comes decreed by fate.' Cleverly, by use of the dirge, the scop portrays directly the poignancy of parting from a master by the imponderable will of the eternal Dryhten. Such solemn lamentation with its almost

anomalous suggestion of pagan stoicism '...when the time comes destined by fate . . .' provides a far more memorable conclusion, perhaps, than the intact poem might have displayed.

Cynewulf's runic signature in Juliana and the þegn's lament in Guthlac B offer a comparable elegiac statement. In mournful uncertainty, Cynewulf writes,

min sceal of lice
sawul on sid^fæt, nat ic sylfa hwider,
eardes uncydgu . . . (699-701)

'my soul must pass from the body on its journey, not knowing its goal, myself I know not whither'. Guthlac's þegn rejoins,

Ic sceal sarigferd,
heanmod hweorfan, hyge drusende . . . (1378-9)

'I must fare forth, grieved in heart, downcast, with mournful mind.' In both of these passages is implicit the sense of man's soul as reft of dream, of dryht loyalty, of any certain salvation in the context of this fleeting middangeard.

CONCLUSION

In the course of this thesis I have attempted to show how a particular heroic civilization conceived of its heroes, and by extension, of its God. The poets' shaping in the symbolic mode of legendary material on Saint Guthlac and Saint Juliana definitely reveals God's grace as the informing spirit of a redeemed and harmonious society. The pagan Germanic past, with its primitive, almost elemental universe, has been both incorporated into the saints' legends and transcended by the Christian consolations offered as the goal of the saints' spiritual peregrinatio through the profane world. Such a pilgrimage we have seen to be an escape from the mutability of the city of man, a revolt against confinement in the fallen world. I have suggested that the Old English poems show an almost "encapsulated" poetic structure, as the saints endure an exodus from the golden dryht, fulfil the divine mandate to battle with the dryht-of-hell, and return to the heavenly mead-city in celebration of eternal joy. I hope to have pointed out the poetic worth of Guthlac A, Juliana, and Guthlac B, poems in which the Old English idea of the holy includes both an acknowledgement of the beoden engla and an affirmation of the human spirit. With reference

to both Guthlac and Juliana, Saint Jerome might well have written,

non solum effusio sanguinis in confessione
reputatur,

'it is not only the shedding of blood that is reputed to be
a confession',

sed deuotae quoque mentis seruitus cotidianum
martyrium est,

'but the consecrated life of a devout soul is indeed a daily
martyrdom'.¹

¹Saint Jerome, Presbyteri Opera, ed. Turnholt
(1958), p. 108.

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