

## ABSTRACT

### Divine and Supernatural Power in Old English and Old Saxon Literature

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This project addresses the differences in the way Old English and Old Saxon poets represent the power of Jesus, the Saints, and Satan in their poetic adaptations of biblical and apocryphal materials. I build upon prior work by scholars such as Robert Boenig and G. Ronald Murphy, who respectively place the Old English and Old Saxon poems into conversation with their sources and textual analogues. I also prominently expand upon Peter Dendle's scholarship on the representation of Satan in Old English literature and Catherine A.M. Clarke's writings on power dynamics in Old English religious poetry. While these works are an important foundation for understanding these cultures' perception of divine and diabolical might, each study is limited to only one Germanic literary tradition, and no scholarship explores why these linguistically and socially similar cultures diverged when writing about these figures. My project examines

both Old English and Old Saxon writings side by side in order to better understand not only how these cultures understood otherworldly power, but also how their understandings differed.

Using these individual views, I posit that, due to their conversion through military conquest, the Continental Saxons were more likely than the Anglo-Saxons to downplay Satan's power in favor of representing Jesus' might in opposition to familiar Germanic natural and supernatural forces. In contrast, Old English writings, composed against the backdrop of a missionary conversion, allowed power to shift between the divine and the nefarious in order to illustrate theological ideas. By considering the ways these poems deviate from their source materials, this project brings the core values of the Anglo-Saxons and Continental Saxons into sharper focus. Moreover, examining the *Heliand* through the lens of the conquest that brought about its composition helps scholars to better understand how the trauma of conquest and forced cultural transformation can affect cultural identity.

Divine and Supernatural Power in Old English and Old Saxon Literature

by

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A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of English

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## DEDICATION

To Ashley, *min leof und bliss*

## CHAPTER ONE

### Christianity, Power, and the West Germanic World

Displays of power permeate the literature of the Germanic world. To see proof of this fascination, one needs look no further than what is certainly the most famous work of Old Germanic literature in the English-speaking world – *Beowulf*. Among the epic's most memorable scenes are feats of heroic skill and might, and readers and scholars often interpret the poem's structure to be centered around the warrior's conflict against dangerous foes.<sup>1</sup> Yet, of these displays of strength and skill, few sources of power seem to have captured the imaginations of Old English and Old Saxon poets as much supernatural might. In Anglo-Saxon England, the miraculous deeds of Christian saints occupied a significant place in the culture's poetry and prose, and an extended poetic retelling of the life of Jesus is the most significant record of the Continental Saxons' linguistic and poetic tradition. Though their prevalence in West Germanic literature cannot be overstated, Jesus and the saints who acted in his name are not the only figures who prominently displayed power that stemmed

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<sup>1</sup> For undoubtedly the most influential discussion of *Beowulf's* feat-based structure, see Tolkien 14-44.

from beyond the mortal realm; Satan and his diabolical strength make significant appearances in both Anglo-Saxon and Old Saxon writings.

While Christian narratives, themes, and imagery were the dominant literary subject for both the Anglo-Saxons and the Old Saxons, the cultures did not convert to Christianity without tension, nor did they abandon their indigenous Germanic traditions and worldviews in favor of a completely Romanized Christianity. It would be an understatement to say that the Saxons experienced a tumultuous introduction to Christianity. In the wake of the Saxon Wars (772 CE–804 CE), the Franks endeavored to enforce the conversion of the Saxons to Christianity. The most notable effort was the *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* of 782, a law code which “[made] pagan practices and resistance to Christianity capital offences” (Pelle 64). Despite these efforts, “continuing rebellions against Charlemagne and the new faith convinced Carolingian churchmen that forced baptism and mandatory church attendance were not enough to ensure the obedience and compliance of the Saxon converts” (64). In order to ease tensions, the Franks shifted their efforts to presenting the Gospel message to the Saxons through more amicable methods.<sup>2</sup> A part of their revised effort to bring the Saxons to Christianity are poetic narratives of both Old

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<sup>2</sup> For more information, see Fulton 19-27.

Testament scripture and the Gospel that refigure biblical characters to possess Germanic traits and to emphasize Saxon values.

In contrast to their continental cousins, it is certain that the Anglo-Saxons experienced a much more amicable turn to the Christian faith. The coming of Christianity to the British Isles as a part of Gregory the Great's missionary efforts is one of the seminal parts of the story of Anglo-Saxon England (Mayr-Harting 57-59). While Gregory's desire to convert the British Isles due to, among other things, the similarities between the words "Angles" and "Angels" makes for an entertaining anecdote for introductory courses, the reality of the Christian conversion is not as tidy or as timely as the traditional narrative suggests (58-66). Bringing Christianity to the seven main Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and the outlying minor powers required significant, gradual political maneuvering that would last the greater part of the seventh and eighth centuries (Nicholas Brooks 5-8).<sup>3</sup> As a part of this prolonged effort, missionaries and clergy often sought out ways to present Christianity in a way that both theologically appealed to the Anglo-Saxons and underscored the aspects of scriptural and apocryphal stories that were most likely to resonate with the audience's cultural values. Moreover, the presence of both Roman and Irish missionaries, independent of each other, on the island raised questions regarding which form of Christianity would reach the

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<sup>3</sup> See Mayr-Harting 117-120.

Anglo-Saxons. This tension infamously came to a point at the Synod of Whitby in 664, which made Roman Christianity the dominant Christian force in Northumbria and, ultimately, the island (Mayr-Harting 103-13). Though the Church in Rome would officially direct the religious lives of the Anglo-Saxons, Irish customs and teachings, particularly those regarding personal and monastic devotion, would remain a significant influence on the inhabitants of the islands' day-to-day beliefs (181-4).

By the seventh century the efforts of Roman and Irish missionaries had born its fruits and the faith had its taken roots in Anglo-Saxon England (51-104). Nevertheless, recent research has expanded and complicated this conversion narrative. Like with their continental counterparts, the coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England came at the cost of the suppression of their indigenous beliefs. Regarding the difficulty in uncovering the religious tradition prior to the arrival of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England, Marilyn Dunn posits, "any view of the process of Christianization is going to be written predominantly from the Christian side," therefore obscuring the pre-Christian beliefs (Dunn 1). Surviving Old English literature clearly shows a fascinating blending of both Christian beliefs and Germanic paganism, but the influence and meaning of the pre-Christian elements are often frustratingly difficult to uncover.

*Conversion and Accommodation in the West Germanic World*

For Christian missionaries to both the Continental Saxons and Anglo-Saxons, presenting their message in a way that also took into account indigenous Germanic beliefs was an essential element of Christianization efforts.

Admittedly, the Old English poets did not face the *Heliand* poet's political task of quelling rebellions and unrest, and the Anglo-Saxons' gradual conversion gave the Old English poets greater freedom to present Christian doctrine to their audiences.<sup>4</sup> However, despite the difference in their poetry's political and religious context, the overwhelming majority of the surviving Christian poetry still interweaves the language of Germanic epics with biblical and apocryphal narratives. Specifically, scholars have long discussed the tendency for Anglo-Saxon poets to present Jesus as meeting the Germanic standards of kingship and heroism (Marsden 243-4). The saints of Old English hagiography follow a similar pattern, with poets emphasizing the traits that these figures share with the familiar responsibilities of a king's retainer. The ubiquitous presence of these traits in Old English literature testifies that, while they did not share the Old Saxon poet's overarching political motivations, writers of Old English verse were

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<sup>4</sup> This is not to say that the Anglo-Saxon mission was devoid of political dimensions. Notably, missionaries struggled to convert kings who wielded significant power, both in their sway over their subjects and their own political influence. Certainly, these evangelists needed to also be continually wary of alienating the mortal power of the kingdoms' rulers. For more about the role of the political elements of the Christianization of Anglo-Saxon England, see Higham.

still expected to accommodate cultural expectations of the heroic and the divine in order to teach and to appeal to their own audience.

Scholars have produced no comprehensive study of either culture's view of divine power, despite the clear importance of otherworldly might both in the literature and the missionary efforts of the Continental Saxons and the Anglo-Saxons. With this gap in mind, my goal for this project is twofold. First, I intend to demonstrate that, even though they share obvious linguistic and thematic traits, the cultures portray divine and supernatural power in sharply different ways. For example, numerous scholars have noted the thematic similarities between the Old English *Dream of the Rood* and the Old Saxon *Heliand*. Yet, the *Dream* allocates a great deal of attention to Christ's death and mortal suffering, while the *Heliand* places a stronger emphasis on Jesus' acts and teachings and minimizes the narrative significance of Jesus' Passion. Second, I examine the cultural and socio-historical elements that influenced these different portrayals. The poetic works of the Anglo-Saxons were produced against the background of complex and lengthy interactions with Christianity. In contrast, the surviving poetic works in Old Saxon sought to convert the Continental Saxons while also quelling political unrest. These two factors will illuminate the way otherworldly power is portrayed in the cultures, as well as how each language and literary tradition understood divine power through the lens of their cultural experiences.

## *Military Conquest and the Power of Christ*

The arrival of the Christian faith in the Germanic world between the sixth and ninth centuries marked a stark shift in the power dynamics of these newly converted peoples. For both the Anglo-Saxons and Continental Saxons, Christianity displaced the pre-Christian belief systems as the prominent “discourse of power.” In particular, the language, literature, and social structures of both the Continental Saxons and the Anglo-Saxons underwent tremendous changes as these peoples adapted to accommodate Christianity. Places that were once sacred in indigenous religious practices were repurposed for Christian worship, and, as this study will discuss at greater length during chapter two, the vocabulary of each culture stretched to accommodate Christian theological concepts. Yet, it would be naïve to believe that two cultures that experienced their conversions in such drastically different ways would represent their new power dynamics the same way in their literature. To better understand the differences these different conversion experiences wrought, this study examines Old Saxon and Old English texts that contain significant displays of divine power.

The most prominent surviving work of Old Saxon literature, the 6,000 line alliterative poem conventionally named the *Heliand* (the Old Saxon word for “savior” or “healer”) was a gospel harmony composed during the ninth century



in direct response to the need for a more approachable representation of Christianity.<sup>5</sup> While gospel harmonies were commonplace during the early Middle Ages, this particular telling of the life of Christ is notable for the way both Jesus and his apostles are represented. Far from simply paraphrasing the gospel, the *Heliand* refigures Jesus as a Germanic chieftain, with his apostles as his warrior attendants. The poet undertook these changes as a way to adapt the gospel message to be more palatable for the Saxon audience.

Though the poet and region of the work's composition are unknown, the poem was almost certainly commissioned by Louis the Pious (778-840).<sup>6</sup> In order to present his gospel message, the poet drew heavily upon the *Diatessaron*, Tatian's gospel harmony (Pelle 66).<sup>7</sup> While this source shapes the overall message of the *Heliand*, the poet was by no means hesitant to alter Tatian's writing in order to appeal to the Saxons. The poet excludes a number of events from the source harmony's narrative, removes political and religious groups that would have held no meaning to a Germanic audience, and expands and highlights

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<sup>5</sup> The word "*Heliand*" or one of its variants is commonly used as a name for Christ in many Anglo-Saxon poetic works, as well. For example, in line 25 of the Old English poem *Dream of the Rood*, the cross is referred to as "*Hælendes treow*," the "Healer's tree."

<sup>6</sup> While some scholars, including Dennis H. Green, argue that the poem was written during Louis the German's reign, this study follows Irmengard Rauch's assertion that the poem was composed during the reign of Louis the Pious. See Rauch, "Newly Found" 1.

<sup>7</sup> In addition to these two proven sources, it is also highly likely that the poet drew upon Irish biblical exegesis. For more information about these sources, see Huber 22-25 and 90-102.

portions of the narrative that either appealed to the Saxons or helped to clarify elements of Christian doctrine or behavior. It cannot be certain how large a part the *Heliand* played in the Saxons' eventual Christianization, but manuscript evidence shows that the text was widely distributed, both in and beyond. While the *Heliand* represents one of only two literary works in the Old Saxon language, six manuscripts containing either the whole or fragments of the harmony remain (Cathey, "Historical Setting" 26-8). Moreover, the *Heliand's* audience was not limited to the Continental Saxons; the whole of the Old Saxon text of the *Heliand* is included alongside the Old English Metrical Charm known as the *Æcerbot* in *MS Cotton Caligula, British Library A. VII, fol. 176a-178a*.<sup>8</sup> The presence of this text on the island alongside Old English charms naturally raises interesting questions regarding bilingual readership and the exchange of ideas between the cultures; these inquiries, however, are outside the boundaries of this study. Nonetheless, this manuscript does indicate the *Heliand's* popularity was significant enough to reach nearby Germanic populations.<sup>9</sup>

The ninth-century *Genesis* is the only other surviving work of Old Saxon poetry. Like the *Heliand*, *Genesis* (often called the *Vatican Genesis*) also represents an effort to introduce Germanic ideas into the biblical narrative. Unlike the

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of why the *Heliand* is included alongside these charms, see Arthur 1-17

<sup>9</sup> For larger discussion of the multilingual audience of Old Saxon texts, see Rauch, "Old English" 163-84.

*Heliand*, little is certain about the circumstances of *Genesis*' composition, though an unverified Latin *Praefatio et Versus* to the *Heliand* that mentions an Old Saxon adaptation of the Old Testament gives credence to the idea that *Genesis* stems from the same missionary effort as the Gospel harmony.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the very existence of this work was only speculative until the close of the nineteenth century. Constructing his argument on metrical and lexical features, Eduard Sievers first suggested that the Old English *Genesis B* was based upon an Old Saxon *Genesis*.<sup>11</sup> The 1894 discovery of a 337-line fragment of the Old Saxon poem, a section of which overlaps with the Old English text, confirmed Sievers' theory. This shared text allows for a much greater degree of direct comparison between the two language traditions.

Jesus' miracles in the *Heliand* provide a significant number of displays of godly power, and these miracles serve as the core of my study's investigation into the Continental Saxon perception of divine might. While the remaining fragments of the Old Saxon *Genesis* do not contain representations of divine power that fit within the scope of this study, the text provides a useful bridge to Old English literature; the Old English *Genesis B*, a poem adapted from the Old Saxon *Genesis*, contains a prolonged representation of Satan, as well as references

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<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the Old Saxon *Genesis*, its discovery, and its context, see Derolez 409-23. For more information about the Latin *Heliand* preface, see Andersson 278-84.

<sup>11</sup> For more information about the theorization of the Old Saxon *Genesis* and its discovery, see Doane 3-8.

to the scope of his influence. When paired with Satan's appearances in the *Heliand* and other works of Old English literature, *Genesis B* helps scholars to understand how each culture viewed Satan's power.

### *Divine Power, Politics, and Anglo-Saxon Literature*

Though its textual corpus is markedly larger, the historical context during which Old English religious poetry was composed is, in many ways, even more uncertain than that of the Continental Saxons. None of the four major books of Old English poetry has a strongly defined provenance, and the reason why the works they contain were written and why they were grouped together in these manuscripts is a topic of ongoing scholarly debate.<sup>12</sup> While scholarship that explores the Anglo-Saxons' pre-Christian beliefs has grown remarkably over the last decade, the lack of textual records from this period make examining how Anglo-Saxon Christianity interacts with the island's indigenous beliefs tremendously difficult. Scholars feel this uncertainty most keenly when examining works such as *The Dream of the Rood*, which presents Jesus in the

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<sup>12</sup> Speculation regarding the thematic unity of *Cotton Vitellius A.xv*, commonly called the "Beowulf Manuscript," is commonplace, with the claim that the works share a theme of "monstrosity" being the most common suggestion. For a discussion of this view, see Orchard. Of these four manuscripts, only the *Junius Manuscript* has a clear thematic unity; the manuscripts' poems (*Genesis A* and *B*, *Exodus*, *Daniel*, *Christ and Satan*) are all either a poetic adaptation or retelling of a book or books of the Bible. Regarding the more specific reasons these poems were placed together in the *Junius Manuscript*, Catherine E. Karkov contends, "the majority of scholars today would agree that the manuscript was deliberately compiled according to a predetermined plan in order to create a narrative centred on the theme of Fall and Redemption" (2).

trappings of a Germanic hero, and *Andreas*, a poem that, as chapters three, four, and five of this study will demonstrate, holds an uncertain relationship with the other versions of the same narrative. Furthermore, none of the poems included in these books are as firmly rooted in their historical context as the *Heliand*. Without a date of composition or a reason for the poems' creations, it is often difficult for scholars to bring the wealth of information on Anglo-Saxon Christian history or the growing pool of knowledge about the Anglo-Saxons' pre-Christian beliefs into meaningful conversation with the culture's poetry. This uncertain context complicates any attempts to gain a larger-scale understanding of how the Anglo-Saxons viewed the power of the divine and the supernatural, both before and following the arrival of Christianity to England.

It would be impractical to incorporate all 30,000 lines of the Old English poetic corpus into this study. Instead, I limit my investigation to writings that present significant instances of divine or supernatural power, poems that share thematic traits with surviving Old Saxon works, and works that build upon current discussions of power in Old English. With these criteria in mind, I have chosen to center my discussion of Anglo-Saxon literature on *Andreas*. This verse adaptation of the Legend of Saint Andrew has, until very recently, received little scholarly attention, with many researchers deriding the poem as inferior to or derivative of the Old English heroic epic *Beowulf* (Kenneth Brooks *xiii-xxvii*). Yet,

*Andreas'* comparative lack of scholarly attention, its numerous miraculous displays, and the significant roles Jesus, Satan, and Saint Andrew play in the poem make the saint's legend a useful work on which to center my discussion of divine and nefarious power in Old English literature. Moreover, the similar views the early critics of both *Andreas* and the *Heliand* shared paves the way for a greater dialogue across the literary traditions. Mid-twentieth century critics, led by early editor of the poem Kenneth R. Brooks, argue that the Jesus shown in *Andreas* is a "Saxon king" (xxi). Similarly, and as I will discuss at greater length later in this chapter, many early scholars of the *Heliand* saw the work as representing "*ein deutscher Christus*" ("a German Christ") (Vilmar 1). The scholars' shared perceptions present the opportunity to open a scholarly dialogue that spans across both literary traditions.

While *Andreas* serves as the centerpiece for my discussion of divine power in Old English literature, I also expand and buttress this exploration with the poems *Christ and Satan*, *Dream of the Rood*, and *Genesis B*. Due to the texts' significant representations of either Jesus or Satan, these works allow for a richer discussion regarding how poets represent these figures' powers in different poetic contexts. As it shares overt thematic similarities with the *Heliand*, the *Dream of the Rood* is another work that is of vital help when placing the literature of the Anglo-Saxons into conversation with their continental relatives. As a

translation of an Old Saxon poem, *Genesis B* is perhaps the most obvious poem to include in this study. While Christ is not present in this poem, this work contains numerous narrative and lexical references to Satan's power, many of which complement and inform his appearance in the *Heliand* and provide a contrast to the portrayal of his power in *Andreas* and *Christ and Satan*.

### *Literature Review*

Recent scholarship on both continental Germany and the Anglo-Saxons alike displays an interest in the cultures' power dynamics and structures.<sup>13</sup> Scholars of medieval Germany, in particular, have shown a marked interest in the way these peoples understood and perceived power structures and the individuals who wielded political power. Warren Brown examines the cultural perception of the imperial power wielded by Charlemagne and his son Louis the Pious. More distantly, Eric J. Goldberg examines the political power wielded by the Saxon nobility before Charlemagne's conquest. Similarly, studies on power in Old English literature and culture have recently gained tremendous scholarly traction. Scholars of Old English poetry have focused their gaze upon the structures that facilitated the dissemination and transfer of power. In particular, Rory Naismith explores the development and growth of financial systems of

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<sup>13</sup> While the word "Germany" is, in many ways, anachronistic, this study will follow Simon MacLean's and Björn Weiler's examples by referring to the collective continental Germanic cultures as "Germany." See MacLean and Weiler 1-14.

power in southern England, and Stephen Baxter considers perceptions of political and royal power near the end of the Anglo-Saxon period.

While the topic of power has gained popularity, only a handful of studies directly address divine and supernatural power. Of the four major extant manuscripts containing Old English poetry, two are devoted solely to religious works, while the remaining two contain significant works of religious literature. Moreover, as previously established, the whole of the remaining Old Saxon corpus is directly based on biblical material. In spite of the number of texts containing major narrative displays of divine power, no one has undertaken a systematic study of these acts, and no discussion of the ways these cultures differ in their treatment of divine and supernatural displays exists.

Undoubtedly, the scholarship of G. Ronald Murphy has had the largest impact on the English-language study of the Old Saxon *Heliand*. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Murphy provides the most significant, albeit incomplete, discussion of divine power in the poem. In a 1989 monograph, Murphy explores the interplay between the Saxons' indigenous pagan religion and the Christian mission to the peoples. Murphy devotes the bulk of his efforts to uncovering what the *Heliand* reveals about the missionary effort's broad techniques, though he does provide a brief analysis of Jesus' miracles, particularly his ability to walk on water (Murphy, *Saxon Savior* 69-73).



Subsequent English-language scholarship follows Murphy's emphasis upon the religious culture at the time of the *Heliand*, with studies by Stephen Pelle and Valentine Pakis examining the poem's adherence to Carolingian orthodoxy and the extent of the poem's apocryphal influences, respectively. While this scholarship is vital to understanding the ways that missionaries drew upon biblical material and commentaries while appealing to and educating the Saxons, this study seeks to explain why the poet selects specific miracles to present to the Saxon audience.

While approaches based upon religious context still dominate English language Old Saxon scholarship, recent articles expand upon the theological implications of the poem's material itself. In a 2013 article, Ciaran Arthur analyzes the ways in which the poet presents miracles in relationship with the other works included in *MS Cotton Caligula, British Library A. VII, fol. 176a-178a* – the largely Old English manuscript containing one of two near-complete versions of the *Heliand*. Using this manuscript context, Arthur contends that the *Heliand*'s Jesus favors speech acts as his method of performing miracles. Though his description of Jesus' speech acts is incomplete, Arthur's observation provides an invaluable context through which this study can approach the miracles themselves and the significance of their adaptation.

Even though the scholarly understanding of Old English power structures has vastly grown, researchers have paid little attention to the ways the culture's literature portray displays of supernatural power and render these otherworldly acts in its language. Catherine A.M. Clarke's 2013 study *Writing Power in Anglo-Saxon England* constructs the most complete framework through which to analyze the divine power of saints in Old English literature. In this study, Clarke discusses the transfer of power between patrons and those under their patronage. Power, Clarke argues, comes through "complex economies between authors, patrons, and audiences [that draws] individuals into processes of exchange, reciprocity, and mutual dependence" (Clarke 1). In exchange for meeting the demands of their patrons, followers benefit from their supporters' authority, creating a symbiotic transfer of devotion and authority.

While the majority of Clarke's work focuses on earthly power structures, she addresses the exchange of power between the Christian God and his followers through the lens of the eighth-century Anglo-Saxon saint Guthlac and the *Guthlac* poems of the *Exeter Book*. According to Clarke, Guthlac receives his saintly powers as a direct result of the patron/lord relationship that permeates Anglo-Saxon culture, an "interlace" between God and his followers that intertwines the power of the divine and the identity of the saints (12). By virtue of Guthlac's devotion to the apostle Bartholomew and the Christian God, the

saint receives miraculous rewards, including heavenly protection from demonic oppressors and the direct intervention of Bartholomew himself to rescue Guthlac from danger. Using these miracles, Clarke places God, Bartholomew, and Guthlac into a “chain of authority” through which God provides his faithful servants with supernatural rewards and the ability to call upon his divine authority (28). Clarke’s framework is certainly valuable, as it lays the foundation to explore how saints receive their miraculous abilities, and the patron/recipient relationship and is useful vocabulary to discuss these power dynamics.

Nonetheless, the scope of Clarke’s analysis is limited to the events of *Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B*, leaving the numerous hagiographical, scriptural, and apocryphal narratives that feature saints and their miracles unaddressed. Moreover, Guthlac’s place in the hierarchy is largely static throughout the poem. By expanding these limitations, this study hopes to achieve a more complete understanding of the chain that links the power of God to his earthly servants.

Old English contains a number of words that indicate power, the most common of which include *cræft*, *rice*, and *miht*.<sup>14</sup> The *Dictionary of Old English* broadly associates *cræft* with a number of semantic senses, each sharing a broad

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<sup>14</sup> In addition to Old English, cognates of these words are also common in Old Saxon. Samuel Berr’s *Etymological Glossary of the Old Saxon Heliand* broadly gives the two nouns, *kraft* and *maht* an identical definition: “power” or “strength.” However, it also observes that *kraft* has a semantic and etymological link to “the flexing together of the muscles” to give “strength” (226). *Maht*, in contrast, has the connotation of the ability to perform a task (262). Regarding *maht*’s place in the *Heliand*, Murphy further observes that “the word *mahtig* is the word most often used for ‘magic’ as well as ‘power’” (“From Germanic Warrior” 21).

meaning of “power” or “skill.” While the Dictionary project has not, at the time of this project’s writing, defined *rice* and *miht*, J.R. Clark Hall links *rice* to concepts of political station and authority, defining the term as “I. strong, powerful...of high rank” (242). Clark Hall identifies *miht* as related to corporeal power and physical capabilities, preferring to define the word as “might, bodily strength...power, authority, ability” (204). To date, only Nicole Guenther Discenza has engaged in an in-depth study of how Anglo-Saxon writers used this vocabulary in their works, and even this study is narrowly focused upon one semantic sense of an individual word (*cræft*) used in a single text (Alfred’s *Boethius*). This gap in scholarship is particularly evident when considering the ways that poets employ their diverse vocabulary to discuss displays of divine power.

Much like Arthur’s study of the *Heliand*, Angela Abdou posits a correlation between the authority of saints in Old English poetry and their speech acts. Citing the number of poetic works that feature themes of conversion and self-evaluation, such as *Andreas* and *Guthlac*, Abdou argues that these conversion narratives show speech acts as ways to bring pagan peoples and imperfect disciples into a better “unity with God” (Abdou 195). However, rather than focusing her attention on speech acts that precede miraculous displays, Abdou instead devotes her attention to the ways in which saints identify

themselves as servants of Christ. Abdou describes the saints' speech acts not as a method of channeling divine might, but rather as a way for a converter to associate himself or herself with the divine. Through this association, Abdou argues that, in Anglo-Saxon poetry, the saints' words "as Christian words, have absolute power" (197). To further define the power of the saints' words, Abdou argues that "any language which supports the Christian way of life constitutes a speech act, a performative; any which does not is impotent" (196). In Old English poetry, the words of saints are portrayed as the unequivocal truth and, as a result, contain transformative power, a feature all other sources of speech lack. While this approach is certainly useful when coupled with Clarke's "system of patronage" framework, it still remains necessary to explore how the saints receive and wield the divine might with which they are associated.

While none have directly tied their studies to systems of patronage, several scholars of the Old English heroic poem *Andreas* have explored the methods through which Andrew regains his divine favor and, by extension, his supernatural abilities, after he loses the favor of God. In their 2015 edition of the poem, Richard North and Michael D.J. Bintley note that the events of the poem narrate the gradual restoration of Andrew's ability to channel the might of the Christian God (North and Bintley 66). A number of scholars, most notably Peter Dendle, Frederick Biggs, and Christopher Fee, posit a link between Andrew's

saintly development with his ability to endure physical pain on his mission.

Though these scholars make great strides in explaining the development of Andrew's faith and miracles, none have yet linked the apostle's sufferings and the return of his faith with his restored access to his miraculous capabilities.

As the sole monograph on the work, Robert Boenig's 1991 *Saint and Hero: Andreas and Medieval Doctrine* is the loudest voice in *Andreas* scholarship. Boenig's book aims to place the work into the context of its composition by placing the poem into conversation with its textual analogues. Saint Andrew and his apocryphal journey among the Mermedonian cannibals was quite popular in Anglo-Saxon England. Surviving records show numerous Anglo-Saxon churches were dedicated to Saint Andrew, and the saint's popularity is further evidenced in the culture's calendars and liturgy. Included among the surviving Anglo-Saxon homilies are two prose versions of the same apocryphal Saint Andrew legend detailed in *Andreas*, and several homiletic works also retell the story's events. However, none of these analogues match the *Andreas* narrative, and it is likely that the poem, instead, finds its source in a lost Latin version of the narrative (North and Bintley 4).

Challenging the previously-held position that the lack of a direct source for the poem makes understanding the poet's own additions impossible, Boenig uses *Andreas'* Greek, Latin, and Old English prose analogues to "triangulate" the

sections of the poem that are most likely to be inventions of the *Andreas* poet (Boenig 28-9). This approach provides an invaluable lens through which to view the poem, as it allows scholars, for the first time, to discuss the poet's adaptation decisions with a degree of confidence. Yet, even though Boenig's methodological stance is invaluable for this study, he focuses his analysis almost wholly on exploring the poem's religious message in the context of Anglo-Saxon understandings of orthodoxy, theology, and heroism. Thus, Boenig speaks of the miracles depicted in the poem in passing, but he does not analyze these acts or their implications at length.

Bret A. Wightman follows Boenig's methodological framework in order to broaden the discussion of miraculous power in *Andreas*. In a 2005 article, Wightman uses the surviving versions of the Saint Andrew legend in order to argue that the *Andreas* poet elaborates upon his sources when he includes a significant number of words emphasizing Andrew's divine protection. This emphasis provides an implicit reference to Andrew's system of patronage and helps illuminate the extent of the saint's protection, one of the Christian God's most significant boons. More importantly, Wightman's study shows that Boenig's method for uncovering the *Andreas* poet's contributions to the narrative are effective for examining topics outside of Boenig's interest in tenth-century theology.

Not all otherworldly powers in West Germanic literature are benevolent, and Peter Dendle's 2001 book, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Literature*, is the most prominent sustained analysis of the literary depiction of Satan in the Germanic world. In this study, Dendle explores the narrative and theological role Satan plays in Old English poetry by identifying the two central roles Satan plays in Old English saints' lives – to either create or to test a saint (Dendle, *Satan Unbound* 42). Nonetheless, Dendle seldom addresses Satan's supernatural acts, and the work largely glosses over the devil's significant appearance in *Andreas* entirely.

Despite granting *Genesis B* a prominent place in his monograph, Dendle also provides only a passing mention to Satan's appearances in *Genesis'* companion in the Old Saxon literary corpus, the *Heliand*. Studies on the powers the devil displays in the *Heliand* are limited to minor references in the commentary and notes to Murphy's 1992 translation of the *Heliand* (Murphy, *Saxon Gospel* 36n4). These notes pose compelling questions as to Satan's nature in the poem, but they do not explore the evil one's role in any significant depth, and Murphy does not consider how the Saxons would have understood the devil's power in the context of their indigenous beliefs.

These studies provide a significant and vital foundation on which I can build this project. Drawing upon explorations of power dynamics and structures,



understandings of eighth and ninth century theology, historical context, and knowledge of the Saxons' and Anglo-Saxons' pre-Christian indigenous beliefs, this study will examine how these cultures wrote about and understood the supernatural acts of Jesus, the saints, and Satan.

### *Methodology*

In its broadest terms, this study seeks to use newly available methodologies and digital tools in order to place Old English and Old Saxon works into a wider conversation. Studies into the surviving works of West Germanic poetry are often performed in a vacuum. Aside from rare and often cursory references to the outside literary tradition, scholars of Old English and Old Saxon often eschew their counterparts, even when themes and textual history make this comparison seem necessary. Similarly, limitations on scholars' ability to gather and interpret lexical and semantic information have presented an obstacle to conducting large-scale analysis that takes into account poetic works, their sources, and their analogues. This study will examine the known historical context surrounding the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons and the Continental Saxons while taking into account the ways the cultures' poets interact with their works' sources and analogues and considering of the words the poets use to convey their messages to their audiences. Through this approach

this study will uncover the ways the Anglo-Saxons and Continental Saxons understood the power of the divine and supernatural.

The *Heliand*, in particular, has a rich interaction with its historical context. Yet, it is always necessary to approach the *Heliand*, especially its representations of Christ and Christianity, with a degree of caution. As previously discussed, during the earliest days of *Heliand* scholarship, scholars (with A.F.C. Vilmar as possibly the most notable voice) argued for the presence of “a German Christ” (Vilmar 1). This thesis, spurred on by the German nationalist movements of the period, viewed the poem largely as a “Germanization of Christianity,” a way “to define and affirm, through cultural reconstruction, the values of his fellow countrymen” (Pakis, (Un)desirable 222). Yet, as Murphy notes, “this controversial fundamental thesis has been largely rejected by the scholarship of the present day” (*Saxon Savior* 3). While it ended a particularly damaging line of scholarly inquiry, this consensus rejection effectively halted the examination of the *Heliand*’s Jesus for nearly a century until Murphy again picked up the topic in 1989 with the publication of *The Saxon Savior*.

Though Murphy’s monograph has experienced backlash for overstating the Germanic elements in the text, in the years following his study a steady trickle of predominantly English-language scholarship has sought to examine

Christ's nature in the *Heliand*.<sup>15</sup> In particular, these articles seek to situate the poem within its ninth-century religious context. This scholarship views the poem's Germanic elements as an extension of the need to accommodate the Saxons during their conversion, especially following the previous failure to regulate the Saxons' behavior through more restrictive and authoritative law codes (Hines 307-8). In keeping with this movement, rather than viewing the events and figures in the *Heliand* as "Germanized," this study will continue this methodology by approaching the "Germanic" elements of the *Heliand* as deliberate decisions undertaken on the part of the poet in order to adapt the Christian message to instruct and appeal to an audience unfamiliar with its basic tenants.

While the historical context of Germanic texts provides a wealth of information about the Anglo-Saxons' and Continental Saxons' perception of divine power, these observations are incomplete without examining the poetry's textual analogues. German scholars have compared the events of the *Heliand* to Tatian's *Diatessaron* since the nineteenth century, and this approach has gained popularity among English-language scholars since Murphy's study. Nonetheless, though scholars recognize that examining how the *Heliand* poet adapts Tatian's material for the Saxons is significant, none have thus far written about the

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<sup>15</sup> Dennis H. Green has been particularly critical of Murphy's renewed emphasis on the *Heliand*'s Germanic elements. See Green 247-69.

material that the poet chooses to exclude from his adaptation. Notably, the *Heliand* poet does not include a number of Jesus' miracles that are detailed in *Diatessaron*. By considering the evangelical purpose for the poet's deviations from Tatian's harmony, this study seeks to place the Old Saxon poem's miracles into conversation with their Saxon audience.

Like the *Heliand*, several other works directly interlock with *Andreas*' textual history. Though scholars are certain that the *Heliand* poet primarily adapts the *Diatessaron*, they have found no such exemplar for *Andreas*. Even though the *Andreas* poet would have undoubtedly been familiar a story that so thoroughly permeated the culture of Anglo-Saxon England, the version of the legend found in the poem does not directly mirror any of the surviving Anglo-Saxon homilies or prose adaptations. Nonetheless, Boenig's and Wightman's efforts to use other surviving versions of the Saint Andrew legend as a way to identify the passages the Anglo-Saxon poet elaborates upon proves that there is significant room for exploring the poet's adaptation choices. With this in mind, in order to discuss which portions of the narrative are the invention of the *Andreas* poet, I will directly compare the Old English poem to other surviving versions of the legend, most notably the two Old English prose versions of the Saint Andrew narrative. Though scholars of *Andreas* recognize the existence of these vernacular prose texts, few have placed these narratives into conversation with the poem.

Those writers who have chosen to acknowledge the prose adaptations instead often opt to dismiss them entirely on the grounds that they come from a different source than the poem (North and Bintley 1-8). Though these versions of the narrative do not share a common source, they are still valuable for discovering the ways the *Andreas* poet adapts and frames the narrative to his audience. By examining multiple versions of the narrative, this study follows Boenig's tactic of "triangulating" which elements of the account the *Andreas* poet privileges in order to better understand the ways the poet preferred to convey Andrew's power. By finding which miracles the *Andreas* poet privileges or expands, I will then place these events into conversation with the historical and religious environment at the time of the poem's writing. Additionally, Boenig's approach opens the door to discuss how the poet's presentation of the narrative's events differs from the other Old English versions of the Saint Andrew story.

In addition to examining ideas of adaptation, historical context, and cultural perspective, this project looks closely at lexical data in order to determine the specific ways poets describe displays of divine power. While scholars have previously taken on philological and semantic studies using the entirety of the Old Saxon and Old English poetic corpus, new tools allow for a more thorough and complete understanding of the ways poets use language to produce their message. In order to gather this information, this study uses the

*TITUS Database* textual corpus, Toronto's *Dictionary of Old English Electronic Corpus*, and the *Dictionary of Old English* to mine and better understand, respectively, the Old Saxon and Old English poetic corpuses.<sup>16</sup> Using these tools allows me to determine how frequently, in what contexts, and in what semantic senses the poets employ words that describe miraculous acts and the agents that perform these feats. Subsequently, I examine this lexical data within its semantic context in order to discuss what information these terms reveal about the Anglo-Saxons' and the Continental Saxons' perception of both divine and infernal might.

Finally, this study considers Old English and Old Saxon writings not only within the context of their own historical, cultural, and linguistic traditions, but also in conversation with each other. The Old English and Old Saxon languages share a close genetic relationship, historical link, and geographical proximity. With a portion of their population's migration to England in the mid fifth century, the Saxons' language and culture became key contributors to the Anglo-Saxons' own developing identity. While the language of the Anglo-Saxons and their continental cousins would diverge to develop its own distinct linguistic

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<sup>16</sup> Frankfurt University's *TITUS Database* contains a complete, searchable electronic corpus of, among other things, all extant writings in Old Saxon. The University of Toronto's *Dictionary of Old English* project provides definitions of all known Old English words and each of their semantic senses spanning the letters A-H, as well as an index of where these senses appear. Toronto's *Dictionary of Old English Electronic Corpus* allows users to search the language's surviving prose and poetic corpus for individual words, as well as words that appear in a term's immediate proximity.

features, the presence of Old English speaking Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Saxony suggests that the two languages remained, at least to a degree, mutually intelligible. Moreover, the presence of the Old Saxon *Genesis* and the complete Old Saxon manuscript of the *Heliand* indicate that the written works of the Continental Saxons were both in literary circulation among the Anglo-Saxons and were comprehensible to the insular audience. Despite these similarities, scholarship that places the writings of the two cultures into conversation is only recently gaining momentum.<sup>17</sup> This project builds upon this trend by contrasting the ways these cultures thematically and linguistically approach similar events, characters, and themes.

### *Chapter Summaries*

Of all of the figures that underwent adaptation at the hands of Germanic poets, the one that was most often altered in both Anglo-Saxon and Continental Saxon culture was Jesus Christ himself. Alongside Satan and the apostles, Jesus is one of the few figures to span the literature of both societies; Jesus himself appears in seven Old English poetic works, and, of course, the only complete surviving Old Saxon literary work is a lengthy retelling of the gospel narrative.

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<sup>17</sup> For recent scholarship that utilizes both Old English and Old Saxon texts, see Arthur; Cavell.

Though the image of Jesus these two literary traditions employs is often strikingly Germanic, they are not identical, and the vastly divergent ways the cultures came to Christianity led to considerably different portrayals. My second chapter “Jesus’ Mortal Will and Divine Power in the Old Saxon *Heliand*” considers how the *Heliand* poet employs indigenous Germanic religious and cultural beliefs to better convey Jesus’ divinity and power to his Saxon audience. As a gospel harmony, the *Heliand* provides a plethora of material to examine in regard to Jesus’ divine might. For this section of the study, I demonstrate that, while the text affords Jesus’ teachings significant attention, the poet places a greater emphasis upon Jesus’ divinity in order to convey the divine capabilities of the Christian God to the Saxons. To do this, I look at sections of the poem where the poet either underscores the relevance of Jesus’ power to Saxon culture or presents his miracles in direct juxtaposition with more familiar Germanic forces.

The study’s third chapter, “Power and Christophany in the Old English *Andreas*,” examines the unique role that Jesus plays in the narrative of *Andreas*. Specifically, *Andreas* contains a rare poetic Christophany – an appearance of Jesus on Earth following the Ascension. Of the surviving Old English poetic corpus, *Andreas* is the only poem to feature a Christophany that is not a part of the Final



Judgment narrative.<sup>18</sup> Taking on the guise of the captain of a vessel, *Andreas'* Jesus provides a prolonged interrogation of Andrew while demonstrating his supernatural seafaring prowess to the apostle. Examining this event alongside the Anglo-Saxons' maritime cultural experiences and their origin as a seafaring culture, I argue that the *Andreas* poet accentuates the Christophanic elements of the work in order to show Jesus as both a suitable benefactor and as capable of overcoming the nautical dangers familiar to the insular society.

While Jesus is undoubtedly the most important literary figure across both the Old English and Old Saxon literary traditions, there are other figures who appear prominently in the poetic works of both languages – most notably the apostles and Satan. This study's fourth and fifth chapters look at displays of otherworldly might that are undertaken by other agents. These include the miraculous works of the saints and the apostles, as well as the nefarious actions of Satan.

Chapter four, "Divine Patron: Miracles and Apostolic Power in Old English and Old Saxon Literature" builds upon Clarke's perception of saints as the recipients of a system of patronage. To discuss this system, I argue that, while

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<sup>18</sup> While Christophanies that depict Jesus as physically on Earth just as he was in during his incarnation, such as *Andreas*, are nearly unheard of in Old English literature, the surviving writings show a fascination with the Final Judgment. Of the culture's limited surviving poetic corpus, five distinct works spread across three of the four great books of Anglo-Saxon poetry contain this image, including *Christ and Satan*, the two *Judgment Day* poems, *the Dream of the Rood*, and *Christ III*.

the disciples in the *Heliand* and the apostles in other Old English writings follow Clarke's model of patronage, the poets present these systems in markedly Germanic terms. In the *Heliand*, the poet uses the Sermon on the Mount to carefully put forth the requirements that Jesus' disciples must meet in order to receive their miraculous powers. Similarly, Peter's failure to walk on water later in the poem shows the audience the consequences of the falling short of Jesus' instructions. To explore the patronage dynamic, the *Andreas* poet draws upon the Germanic understanding of the scriptural covenant in order to explore Andrew's relationship with Jesus. Early in the poem, Andrew expresses doubts in Jesus' abilities, which causes the covenant to erode and the apostle's miraculous powers to weaken. As a result, a large portion of the poem details Andrew's gradual return to his patron's favor and, as a result of this mended relationship, the restoration of his miraculous power. While sharing an understanding of the relationship between Jesus and his disciples that is built around an exchange of obedience and power, I argue that Old English and Old Saxon poets used markedly different language to express this dynamic, a difference that led the poets to emphasize different elements of the system of patronage.

The final chapter of this study, "Satan and Diabolical Power in the West Germanic World," looks beyond the Christian God and the beneficiaries of his patronage to examine the might that poets assign to Satan in both the *Heliand* and

*Andreas*. Here, I argue that the *Heliand*'s devil, who is both distinctly otherworldly and ultimately incapable of threatening Jesus, is placed at the margins of the poem in favor of threats that are more relevant to the newly-converted Saxons. In contrast, I posit that the *Andreas* poet depicts Satan's interaction with the Mermedonians in a way that darkly mirrors Jesus' own relationship with his disciples. Through this approach, the *Andreas* poet marks Satan as inherently dangerous, but ultimately powerless in the face of a figure that wields the full favor of God.

To conclude this project, I will briefly speak to the significance of the two cultures' starkly similar, yet still divergent, concepts of divine and supernatural power. Finally, I will suggest ways for scholars to use and expand upon this study and the ideas it presents.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Jesus' Mortal Will and Divine Power in the Old Saxon *Heliand*

In order for the Franks to successfully convert the Saxons, adapting the Christian message was essential. Yet, for the *Heliand* poet, convincing the Saxons to accept the religion of their conquerors was no easy task. This chapter seeks to demonstrate that, in order to better accommodate the Saxons following their sudden conversion to Christianity through military conquest, the *Heliand* poet placed his emphasis on Jesus' divine will. By doing this, the poet demonstrates Jesus' divine powers as surpassing the supernatural Germanic forces familiar to the audience. Moreover, this miracle-centric representation allowed the poet to overcome many of the difficulties inherent in presenting Jesus' death to a society unfamiliar with its theological significance.

### *The Power of Jesus in Old Saxon Literature*

Because of the poem's dual purpose as a tool for Christian evangelism and a method of political control, the task the poet faced was a monumental one. In order to prevent further revolts, the poet needed to present the gospel in a way that provided a common religious core between the Saxons and their invaders. Complicating this task is the fact that, as Dennis H. Green notes, "the *Heliand*

[was] a work intended for a society only freshly and imperfectly won from paganism" (256). To succeed in his task, the poet needed to represent the life and words of Jesus to an audience who found both his teachings and his person almost entirely foreign. To meet this challenge, the poet was required to balance directly adapting the events of the gospel story, paraphrasing Jesus' teachings, and explaining central Christian doctrine. As a simple glance at the *Heliand's* text reveals, Jesus' person and actions are the elements that are most heavily adjusted in order to best teach and appeal to the Saxons.

Several elements of the *Heliand's* Jesus have presented a longstanding challenge to scholars of the biblical epic, including the poet's representation of Jesus' power and the question as to whether the text provides an orthodox and equal portrayal of his divine and human natures. However, the recent upswing in English-language *Heliand* scholarship has exposed several key elements about the *Heliand's* representation of Jesus' miracles. Ciaran Arthur's 2013 article "Ploughing Through Cotton Caligula A. VII: Reading the Sacred Words of the *Heliand* and the *Æcerbot*" convincingly links Jesus' speech acts with the *Heliand's* displays of divine power. Regarding the way Jesus' divine might is exhibited in the text, he observes, "Christ's miracles are nearly always performed through his words and his speech is often described as a divine formula" (Arthur 3). Words,

Arthur asserts, are the ways in which Jesus “channels” his divinity and “signifies” his power to the audience (3-4).

This claim is largely indisputable, as speech acts come before ten of the poem’s thirteen miracles. Arthur, however, does not investigate what kind of speech acts accompany these miracles. In the *Heliand*, Jesus’ speech acts not only signify the presence of miracles, but they are also an integral part of the performance of a great number of his supernatural actions. Preceding eight of the poem’s miracles, Jesus employs performative speech acts - direct statements that not only proclaim the intent to perform an action, but through their speaking actually bring about the described action, as well (Austin 5-6). In these statements, Jesus indicates his intent to perform a supernatural action, and through this speech the miracle takes place.<sup>1</sup> For instance, when healing the commander’s son in lines 2149b-2152 of fitt 25, Jesus intones,

“Nu maht thu thi an thinan uuilleon forð  
siðon te selðun; than findis thugesundat hus  
magoiungan man; mod is imu an luston,  
that barn is gehelid, so thu bedi te mi:  
it uuirðid al so gelestid, so thu bedi te mi:”

[“Now you are able to go forth on your way, if you wish, to your house; then at the house you will find the young man healthy; he is joyous in his spirit, and that boy is healed, as you asked of me.”]

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<sup>1</sup> The only miracles that are not preceded by Jesus’ performative speech are the feeding of the multitudes in fitt 34, the Transfiguration in fitt 38, the healing of the blind man in fitt 43, the healing of Jesus’ sword-wounded captor in fitt 58, and Jesus’ Resurrection in fitt 68. Of these, the feeding of the multitude and the healing of the sword wound both come immediately after one of Jesus’ non-performative speech acts (a directive and an assertive, respectively).

Through his words, Jesus not only indicates his will to heal this boy, but during his response to the commander, the healing actually takes place. Linking Jesus' miracles to the speaking of words rather than any context or audience defies one of the core concepts associated with performative speech acts. In order for a speech act to be performative, it is not enough for a sentence to simply proclaim a change. Instead, the utterance must meet necessary "felicity conditions": "different types of conditions that need to be fulfilled for an act to 'work' to succeed (Jaworski and Coupland 14). For instance, while anyone can proclaim the utterance "I sentence you to prison," only a licensed judge in the context of a courtroom meets the conditions to make this utterance performative. These conditions are broken into a number of sub-categories that further define the nature of the performative. Of particular importance for the *Heliand's* miraculous speech acts is the "preparatory condition," the condition that the person speaking the utterance has the authority to bring about change that the speech act describes (Searle and Vanderveken 16-18). For example, if one wanted to order dinner at a restaurant, he or she would need to direct the request toward a waiter or waitress in order to meet the necessary felicity conditions. In contrast, while the words themselves might be the same, a customer could not expect the same response if he or she directed the same speech act to another customer.

The *Heliand*'s treatment of Jesus' speech acts and their felicity conditions, however, emphasizes his divine authority and power. By including speech acts that declare his intent to bring about a change before each of his miracles, the poet draws the audience's attention to the requirements that must be met in order to make these actions take place. During Jesus' brief conversation with the commander, Christ does not focus on the factors that inhibit his miraculous powers, but rather on his powers' lack of limitations. Twice in line 2150, Jesus reiterates that the commander's son is not physically present, but rather away at the man's home. Framing the miracle in this way emphasizes that a close proximity or location is not a necessary felicity condition for Jesus' miraculous words to take effect. While this statement expands upon the extent of Jesus' powers, it is his final statement in this conversation, found on line 2152b, that is most important: "*so thu bedi te mi*" ("Just as you asked of me"). In this statement, Jesus indicates that his miraculous abilities are not dependent upon any external conditions, but instead are located internally and are accessible upon the request of those who believe in him. In this miracle, Jesus declares its purpose, implies that the conditions for performing the miracle are not dependent upon in any outside factors, and affirms that the healing has taken place. Through these statements, the poet also conveys that Jesus, by virtue of his divinity, is capable of performing his miracles. Rather than clarifying the felicity conditions that



Jesus must meet in order to draw upon his miraculous powers, the *Heliand* poet instead emphasizes that Jesus' divine will itself is all that is necessary to heal those who request his assistance. With his performative words, the *Heliand's* Jesus declares an outcome, then alters the physical world to match the conditions of his speech, rather than abiding by any external set of felicity conditions.

G. Ronald Murphy further comments on the importance of Jesus' speech acts to his performance of miracles. Discussing the carefully hidden words Jesus uses to turn water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana, Murphy asserts, "the author [of the *Heliand*] gives great weight to the words and actions of Christ by making it important in the text that no one learn these secret magic words" (Murphy, 1992, 68, note 102). The poem provides additional commentary on the divine power of Jesus' words when he heals a lame man who has been lowered through the roof. Before the miracle, Jesus proclaims in line 2329, "*so ik ina hrinan ni tharf*" ("and I do not even need to touch him"), a sentiment not present in the poem's source material.<sup>2</sup> Regarding this claim, Murphy comments, "This inserted remark confirms the probable importance of touching for Germanic magic. In this passage the *Heliand* shows Christ's superior magical powers to that of Germanic wizards" (*Saxon Gospel*, 78n115). While viewing these miracles as "Christian magic" is disputable, it is at least clear that Jesus uses words, rather

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<sup>2</sup> All Old Saxon *Heliand* text from Behaghel.

than physical touch or (as this chapter will later discuss) written runes during his displays of supernatural might, and that this method of channeling divine power was not commonly known to the Saxon people.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, for the Saxons, this reinforces that the felicity conditions that are necessary for Jesus' words to bring about a miraculous change did not include a physical element; rather, his words themselves were enough to make his proclamations a reality.

In addition to clarifying the way Jesus channeled his divine might, recent scholarship has also settled a longstanding debate regarding the poet's treatment of Jesus' mortal and divine wills. Stephen Pelle's 2010 article "The *Heliand* and Christological Orthodoxy" argues convincingly that the *Heliand* poet possessed a strong grasp of Carolingian Christology (65). Pelle points to the poet's use of Hrabanus Maurus (c. 780 – 856), a proponent of Carolingian orthodoxy, as a major source in order to argue for the "apparent approval of the poem by the Frankish ecclesiastical establishment" (66-67). Since the poet drew upon the strongly orthodox Maurus and received at least the tacit sanction of the Frankish Church, it is reasonable to assume that the poet was also aware of the Church's orthodox stance regarding Christology – that Jesus' will was both completely human and wholly divine.

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<sup>3</sup> For the most recent voice in this dispute, see Arthur 15-17.

### *The Power of Christ and the Heliand*

These scholarly advances have opened the door for this study to revisit one of the oldest, and most fiercely contested, topics in *Heliand* scholarship. Certainly, Pelle's research demonstrates that the poet possessed a clear understanding of orthodox Christology and a knowledge of Jesus' dual will. Regardless, *Heliand* scholars have long debated whether Christ's human or divine will holds greater importance in the *Heliand's* narrative. This debate finds its origins in nineteenth-century German scholarship. In an 1845 study, Vilmar argues that the poet largely privileges Jesus' humanity. He bases this argument upon the numerous times that the poet ascribes to Jesus the worldly title of "king" and, more specifically, the title of "*manno kuning*" ("king of men") (51-58). More than seventy years later, Hulda Göhler dissents from Vilmar's statement by arguing instead that the poet prefers to accentuate Jesus' divine will. Göhler compensates for Vilmar's nationalistic approach to the *Heliand* by instead dismissing nearly all of Germanic influence upon the poem's portrayal of Jesus. Yet, Göhler's argument is seriously weakened by denying Jesus any human will at all (46).

Though his nationalistic stance has largely disappeared, Vilmar's assertion that the poet emphasizes Jesus' human nature has experienced a small degree of support since its initial publication. As early as 1910, James Walter Rankin

noticed that the poem's kennings place "far more ... emphasis on the human nature of Christ" than kennings applied to Jesus in Anglo-Saxon literature (81). While the conversation went largely silent for quite some time, Martin Freidrich revisits this discussion nearly a century later. In a 2002 article, Friedrich argues that the *Heliand* privileges Jesus' humanity on more than a lexical level; instead, he argues that the poem "tends to emphasize Christ's teaching over his performance of miracles" ("Jesus Christ" 267-68). This claim is based largely upon the length of the *Heliand*'s version of the Sermon on the Mount and the poet's decision to adapt a significant number of Jesus' parables.

Freidrich's belief has received support since his initial assertion, and his claim has spread into English-language *Heliand* scholarship after his study was translated into English and anthologized in the 2010 collection *Perspectives on the Old Saxon Heliand*. However, new scholarly understandings of both Jesus' miraculous abilities and the audience's cultural understanding of his actions necessitates another visit to this inquiry. In contrast to Freidrich's belief, this study argues that, in order to better educate the Saxon audience, which held a vastly different cultural view of divinity, the poet accentuates Jesus' divine power and places this power into direct conversation with existing Germanic views of otherworldly might. Certainly, a portion of Freidrich's assertion, that the poet devotes a great deal of attention to Jesus' words, cannot be disputed.

After all, the poet allots nearly 400 lines of the poem, more than any other single event, to the Sermon on the Mount. Yet, the claim that Jesus' teachings are the primary method through which the idea of the Christ-savior is presented to the Saxons is, ultimately, not sustainable. Following the Sermon on the Mount, the *Heliand* devotes a substantial portion of the middle of the poem, more than six hundred lines in total, to Jesus' miracles. These miracles serve a much different purpose than the prolonged view of Jesus' words; while the Sermon was adapted and transformed to convey Jesus' teachings more easily to a Germanic audience, these miracles were carefully selected from the poet's source materials in order to convey Jesus' divine power to the Saxons.

*Miracles, Wonders, and Signs: Jesus' Power and Miracles in the Heliand*

Miraculous narratives, in many ways, were the most effective way for missionaries to convey the power of the Christian god to an unfamiliar audience. As Rachel Fulton observes, "It is often remarked in studies of the conversion of Europe that the miracle was one of the most potent weapons in the Christian arsenal against the magic of the old gods." The *Heliand* reflects these evangelical trends by making liberal use of Jesus' miracles in order to convert and instruct the Saxon people (Fulton 39). Though the poet structures the middle of the poem's narrative as a veritable "greatest hits" of Jesus' miracles, he did not adapt all of the *Diatessaron's* miraculous acts. Of the thirty-one miracles represented in

his source text, the *Heliand* poet adapts only thirteen. The *Diatessaron* contains a wide range of miraculous feats, ranging from the feeding of multitudes, the expelling of demons, the healing of the sick, and the raising of the dead. The *Heliand* poet, in contrast, conveys far less versatility in Jesus' miracles. For instance, he entirely omits any instance of demonic exorcism. Instead, the poet focuses his attention on Jesus' ability to both heal the body and resurrect the dead. Of the *Heliand's* thirteen miracles, seven present some kind of healing or resurrection of the body.<sup>4</sup>

Why, then, did the *Heliand* poet focus so much attention on Jesus' healing power? Answering this question requires consideration of how Germanic societies viewed the disabled. Few sources aside from the *Heliand* remain that mention this segment of the Saxon populace. Even when turning to surrounding Germanic societies with larger surviving written records, understanding the social station of the physically impaired is no straightforward task. When discussing disability in ninth-century Anglo-Saxon England, Fay Skevington laments the "difficulties of making generalisations to the meanings that Anglo-Saxon culture ascribes to physical impairment" ("*Unhal*" 8).<sup>5</sup> While overall

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<sup>4</sup> These miracles include Jesus' healing of the commander's retainer in fitt 24, the raising of the widow's son in fitt 25, the healing of the crippled man in fitt 28, the healing of the foreign woman in fitt 36, the curing of a blind man in fitt 43, the raising of Lazarus in fitt 49, and his healing of the victim of Peter's sword attack in fitt 58.

<sup>5</sup> See Lee, "Body and Soul" 307-8.

Germanic perceptions of the physically disabled are muddled, there are a few vital certainties regarding the Church's perception of the disabled during this time. Though the care of the sick is a central Christian tenet, and the healing of the infirm is a common display during hagiographical narratives, the Church's view of the disabled was often a multivalent one (Lee, "Body Talks" 157).

Christina Lee notes, "Anglo-Saxon writers tended to see causality between lifestyle and disease. Based on the assumption that body and soul are related, some theologians saw the source of disease as a malfunction of the soul ... Others saw physical impairment as an extension of martyrdom" ("Body and Soul" 308).

Despite Christianity's conflicted view of disability's theological implications, the Carolingian Church did not completely ignore the physically impaired. By the ninth century, a certain level of charity was encouraged for those who were unable to make their own living. Historical records during Louis the Pious' reign point to an emphasis on almsgiving and better understanding the cause for poverty, but like most early medieval societies, there is no evidence of any other means of institutional support (Mollat 42; Metzler, *Social History* 155). This absence, in effect, trapped the disabled at the bottom of the social order. Additionally, despite recognizing the need for providing charity to the disabled, the societies were intensely suspicious of beggars. For instance,

A Carolingian capitulary issued at Nimwegen in 806 had ... forbidden almsgiving to those beggars who refused to work with their hands, i.e. who were able-bodied, and around the year 820 Louis the Pious ... ordered that supervisors were to be instated for beggars and paupers so that simulators might not hide among them (Mollat 169).

Thus, while Christians and the crown might have recognized the needs of the disabled, charity and alms did little to improve their social standing. Financially, those who were born with disability were at a disadvantage, as they could not be compensated by legal systems such as *wergild* ("Body Talks" 156). Thus, while the infirmity did not result in direct discrimination, a disability that prevented the capacity to work guaranteed social powerlessness.

In addition to their complex legal and social positions, the West Germanic languages developed a specific vocabulary surrounding the disabled's physical status. In particular, the Old English word *hal* or the Old Saxon word *hel* are often used to lexically describe disability. The *Dictionary of Old English* identifies a number of semantic senses associated with *hal*. Perhaps most obvious is the "A" grouping of definitions: A.1 "whole, undivided, all in one piece"; A.2 "whole, entire, lacking no part" ("*Hal*"). For the purpose of this study, it is the "B" classification that is most interesting and illuminating: B "of physical well-being"; B.1 "whole, hale, sound"; B.3 "where health is gained: free from sickness, injury or death." When considered in the context of Jesus' healing powers, this final semantic sense is, perhaps, most intriguing. In addition to signifying a



person's health and lack of injury, *hal* can also indicate a return to a state of wholeness.

The word *hal* and its Germanic cognates have a lengthy relationship with the Christian savior. Damian Fleming notes a longstanding philological connection between the name "Jesus" and the Hebrew word for "save" (28). Noting this connection, Fleming goes on to observe, "The word Jesus hardly appears in the corpus of Old English writings" (26). Instead, the Anglo-Saxons and the Continental Saxons near-universally replaced the name "Jesus" with the Germanic word *hælend* or *Heliand*, words typically defined as "savior" ("*Hælend*"). Fleming contends that the connection between the name Jesus and the idea of salvation is the primary reason Germanic peoples avoided the scriptural name: this connection would have been lost to the Anglo-Saxons, who had little exposure to both the Hebrew language and its long tradition of assigning allegorical values to names (Fleming 33-34). In order to convey a similar semantic idea to the Hebrew "Jesus," Anglo-Saxon writers drew upon the word "*hal*." As Fleming notices, Ælfric comments upon this connection in one of his homilies. Here, Ælfric preaches: "*He is hælend gehaten for ðan ðe he hælð ægðer ge manna lichaman ge heora sawle*" ("He is named *hælend* because he heals both the

body of men and their souls”).<sup>6</sup> For the Germanic peoples, the very name of Jesus links him with his power to heal.

Like the Old English language, Old Saxon writers also largely excluded the name Jesus in favor of the word *heliand* (Harrison “Joseph”). It is also notable that, by preferring the word *heliand* to carry the semantic link between the name Jesus and the concept of salvation, the Old Saxon poet also forgoes other West Germanic terms meaning “to save.” In particular, Old Saxon also contains the word *nerian*, a word Irmengard Rauch defines as “to save, free” (*Old Saxon Language* 301). Samuel Berr’s *Etymological Glossary to the Old Saxon Heliand* gives a more robust definition of the word and its usage, noting *nerian* as meaning “heal, save, feed” (296). These definitions, when viewed together, indicate that *nerian* applies to the healing, nurturing, and “saving” of the body and a rescue from physical distress. The contexts in which the *Heliand* poet uses *nerian* reflect this understanding of the word. For instance, when Peter begins to sink under the waves after his faulty effort to walk on water in fitt 35, Peter calls for Jesus to “*ine tho [generidi, tho] he an [nodiun] uuas / thegan an gethuinge*” (“rescue him, because he, his thane, was in distress and in danger”).<sup>7</sup> In this situation, Peter is explicitly

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<sup>6</sup> Old English Text from Ælfric’s homilies drawn from Matthew Godden, *Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*. For an analysis of this sermon and its relationship with the Hebrew names and etymology, see Fleming 43-44.

<sup>7</sup> Lines 2955-2956a, my emphasis. For a lengthier discussion of this scene, see pages 145-54 of this study.

calling upon Jesus to rescue him from immediate physical peril. While *nerian* finds a place in the language and the narrative of the *Heliand*, the poet still prefers to use *heliand* to translate the link between the name of “Jesus” and the Christian concept of “salvation.” By using *hælend* or *heliand* to present the concept of Christian salvation to their cultures, West Germanic writers also indicate that the idea of salvation that they wish to convey is semantically different from the idea of physical rescue or nourishment.

The understanding of salvation that these writers made efforts to convey might be rooted deeply in the *hælend* word itself. While Old English writers used *hal* to indicate either a state of health or a restoration to this state, Skevington also notes that, conversely, several Old English law codes and religious texts use *unhal* to refer to the injured or the disabled (10-12). Bosworth and Toller define *unhal* as “in bad health, sick, weak, infirm, unhealthy, unsound.” Skevington further notes *unhal*’s use in the Old English *Life of St. Margaret*, which describes some of the disabilities associated with the term: “*pæt innan heora husam nan unham cild sy geboren, ne crypol, ne dumb, ne deaf, ne blind, ne ungewittes*” (“that in their house no infirm child be born, nor cripple, nor dumb, nor blind, nor mad”) (qtd. in Skevington 10). This description, Skevington observes, “suggests the cultural undesirability of the *unhal*, in that it is to be avoided through St. Margaret’s intercession.” (10). This perception marks *unhal* as a lexical signifier

for the separation of disabled peoples from their social body. Ælfric draws upon the cultural connotations for *unhal* in his homily shortly after he explains the significance of the name *hælend*. He states: “*Se ðe wendð þæt he hal sy, se is unhal*” (“he who thinks that he is whole, he is infirm”) (Godden 274). While Ælfric speaks here about spiritual wholeness, his use of *unhal* so soon after his observations regarding the name *hælend* is clearly intentional. Thus, as the “Savior” or “whole-maker,” Jesus is able to restore his followers, either in their body or their spirit, from a state of *unhal*.

Much like Anglo-Saxon writers’ preference for *hal*, the *Heliand* poet uses the word *hel* to describe a body that is free of impairment. During the seven healings and resurrections in the *Heliand*, the poet three times uses the word *hel* to describe the subject of Jesus’ miracles after they have been restored to health. These miracles are Jesus’ healing of the Commander’s servant, the healing of the paralytic man, and the raising of Lazarus. Of these three, it is the second miracle – Jesus’ healing of the paralytic man in fitt 28 – that best demonstrates the poet’s awareness of the potential for Jesus’ healing power to appeal to the Saxons’ social situation. In this miraculous tale, four men carry a paralyzed man to see Jesus. However, when the man arrives, the home in which Jesus is teaching is too crowded for the men to find entry, and in a bout of ingenuity, the four men

burrow through the roof and lower the paralyzed man to Jesus, who heals the man of his malady.<sup>8</sup>

The poet's reason for adapting this miracle is first hinted at during the initial description of the paralytic man in lines 2301-2. Here, the poet notes, "*ni mahte is lichamon uuiht geuualdan*" ("he was not able to control his body at all"). The poet again emphasizes the man's lack of physical power six lines later through the description, "*lefna lamon*" ("the weak lame one"). These extended descriptions of the man's weakness are unique to the *Heliand's* narrative, and are not present in either the Gospel account or the *Diatessaron*. These added descriptors complement the material that the poet adapts directly from the Gospels. Just as in the source material, the man depends upon others to carry both his physical body and his sickbed for his continued existence, and must be lowered into the home through the roof for him to even have a chance to meet Jesus. Due to the man's physical infirmity and his inability to survive without the support of others, this man easily fits into the Germanic category of *unhal*.

The poet contrasts his emphasis on the *unhal* man's physical and social weakness with repeated claims of Jesus' miraculous healing powers. In line 2306, the poet highlights Jesus' miraculous ability by using the phrase "*heleando Crist*" or "healing Christ." While this exact phrase is used two additional times in the

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<sup>8</sup> For the scriptural version of these events, see Matthew 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12, and Luke 5:17-26.

poem, this instance is particularly important because of its location in this fitt. Placed directly between the poet's two descriptions of the man's physical weakness, here "*heleando Crist*" juxtaposes Jesus' healing ability with the man's physical weakness. Yet, used in the context of a disabled person, describing Jesus with the term *heleando* would have carried an additional level of significance for the Saxons. By using a form of the word *hel* to describe Jesus' powers, the poet conveys that the foreign deity is not only capable of healing, but also "*hel-making*." More than simply being able to save his followers from immediate danger, Jesus is able to restore the paralytic man to the Saxons' social understanding of *hel*.

By emphasizing Jesus' divine might as a healer in the face of the man's physical impairment, the poet extends Jesus' divine capabilities to social situations that would have resonated with the Saxons. Perhaps most obviously, this scene conveys that Jesus is able to use his own might to remedy the weakness of those who express their belief in him. Following the paralytic's healing, the poet's wording in lines 2334-5 draws attention to the man's renewed physical strength: "*endi geng imu eft gesund thanan, / hel fan themu huse*" ("and he then went from there, healthy and whole from the house"). The poet's use of the word *hel* in this selection is noteworthy because of its rhetorical significance; following Jesus' healing, the man is not only rendered sound of body, but also

capable of moving without the aid of his caretakers. Thus, using *hel* in this context echoes the poet's earlier description of Jesus as *heleando*; through the efforts of the "*hel*-making" Jesus, the man is rendered physically *hel* and capable of leaving the house through his own volition.

In light of the religious perceptions and social realities facing the disabled, the image of this healed man, whole in body and no longer dependent on the benevolence of others, would have certainly resonated with the Saxon audience. By presenting this final image, the poet not only informs the audience of the "wholeness" of the man's physical self, but also signifies his transition from the state of *unhal*, a status marked by exclusion and weakness, into the main social structure. For the audience, this miracle represented Jesus not as a foreign deity, unable to meet the needs of Saxon culture, but rather as a being with divine power capable of correcting problems in their own society.

#### *Light and Power: The Transfiguration in the Heliand*

Certainly, the healing of the lame man was a useful way for the *Heliand* poet to help the Saxons to recognize the relevance of Jesus' divine capabilities in their culture. Yet, the Transfiguration is the event that best draws attention to Jesus' divinity through both its structure and content. In his 1992 article "The Symmetrical Structure of the *Heliand*," Murphy observes that, in both its theme and the structure of the poem, the Transfiguration is "the center point of the

epic" ("Symmetrical Structure" 153). Mathematically, the fitt and the verses describing the Transfiguration occur at the exact center of the *Heliand*. In addition to placing the Transfiguration at the center of the poem as a whole, the poet also situates the event directly between two other scenes that feature heavenly light as a way to emphasize Jesus' divinity. The birth of Jesus and the Resurrection occur "equidistant from the Transfiguration at the center, each being 30 songs from the center" (155). Regarding this structure, James Cathey notes, "the tripartite parallelism can only be a deliberate poetic construction to reinforce the author's religious purpose" (*Text and Commentary* 205).

What concept, however, was the poet laboring to convey by placing the Transfiguration at the center of such a carefully crafted structure? The deviations the poet makes from his source material indicate that situating this event, the Gospel story's most overt manifestation of Jesus' divinity, at the center of the poem underscores that it is Jesus' divine nature, rather than his human will, that the poet wishes to convey. In the *Diatessaron*, Tatian describes Jesus thusly:

Et factum est, dum oraret, transfiguratus est ante eos, et resplenduit facies eius sicut sol, vestimenta autem eius facta sunt alba sicut nix splendentia candida nimis, qualia fullo super terram non potest candida facere. (Tatian 131)

[And it happened while he was praying that he was transformed in front of them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes



became as white as snow, radiant with such extreme whiteness that no launderer on earth can whiten like that.]<sup>9</sup>

While Jesus' countenance is mentioned as shining, the bulk of Tatian's attention lingers upon his clothing. In contrast, in lines 3122- 28, the *Heliand* poet renders these events:

“Tho imu thar te bedu gihneg,  
tho warð imu uppe oðarlicora  
uuiliti endi giuuadi: uuðun imu is uuangun liohte,  
blicandi so thiu berhte sunne: so sken that barn godes,  
liuhte is lichamo: liomon stodun  
uuanamo fan themu uualdandes barne: uuarð is giuuadi so huit  
so sneu te sehanne.

[When He [Jesus] bowed to pray up there, His form and clothes became otherlike; His cheeks were shining light, shining like the bright sun: the Son of God shone, His body was light: beams stood brightly around the Son of the Ruler. His clothes were as white to see as snow.]

Here, the *Heliand* poet seems to invert the *Diatessaron's* focus, downplaying Jesus' clothing in favor of his physical form. Regarding the *Heliand's* significant divergence from the events depicted in the *Diatessaron's* Transfiguration, Murphy notes:

The obvious difference is the fascination in Tatian with the shining of the incredibly white clothes, and in the *Heliand* with the shining of the person. While Tatian (here using Matthew) describes only Christ's face as shining like the sun ... the *Heliand* poet says only the minimum about the clothing being, “white as snow,” and points rather to the shining cheeks of the face and to a physical human body that is radiating otherworldly light and emitting brilliant rays in the process. (“Light Worlds” 8)

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<sup>9</sup> Modern English translation from Murphy, “Light Worlds” 7-8.

Here, the *Heliand* poet bypasses a chance to present Jesus in gleaming clothing in favor of an expanded description of his shining body. Certainly, describing a warrior in terms of their shining garments is a literary technique that is well attested in the surviving corpus of Germanic literature. On numerous occasions, the *Beowulf* poet describes his poem's heroic figures in terms of shining armor and stout weapons rather than their physical features.<sup>10</sup> For instance, as George Clark notes, upon the Geats' arrival to Heorot, "the poet concentrates at first on the vivid clash and gleam of arms and armor," trappings he argues are "a symbol for the heroic life" and a "delineation of the heroic ideal" (418; 409).

Though Germanic literature presents heroes surrounded by gleaming accouterments, the *Heliand* is one of the few surviving works containing a shining physical body. The language that the poet uses to convey Jesus' transformation reflects the uncommon nature of this image; on line 3123, the poet describes Jesus' form as *oðarlicora*, a compound that translates literally as "otherlike" and that Berr defines as meaning "changed/alterd" (306). Through this word, the poet highlights that Jesus not only transforms himself into a different form, but also into an appearance that is fundamentally different. By his changes to the narrative and his lexical decisions, the *Heliand* poet avoids borrowing Tatian's image of a Jesus clad in shining garments, an image that the

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<sup>10</sup> See *Beowulf* lines 327b-331a. All *Beowulf* quotations from Klaeber.

Germanic audience would have associated with mortal heroes. Instead the poet instead presents a *body* that radiates light, a scene just as foreign and “otherlike” to the Saxons as it is different from the poem’s sources.

Shining bodies, such as the one the *Heliand*’s Jesus demonstrates, are almost unattested in other West Germanic literature. In one notable instance, the *Beowulf* poet relates that Grendel’s eyes shine with “*leoht unfægere*,” an “ugly light.”<sup>11</sup> In his study on light in Old English poetry, Hugh Magennis notes that, in *Elene*, Cynewulf describes the cross as “shining with faith” and the nails to “shine brightly from the pit”; Cynewulf also represents Elene herself as “*leohte geleafan*” (“shining with faith”) in line 1136 (188). Additionally, line 14 of *Judith* describes the heroine as *ælfscinu*, a term the *Dictionary of Old English* defines as “radiant or as fair as an elf, beautiful” (“*Ælfscinu*”). While Judith’s body is not literally to be understood as “shining,” the use of this term to describe her beauty is clearly meant to bring to mind the supernatural. Finally, as chapter four of this study will explore further, the apostle Andrew is described as *swegeltorht* (“the radiant one”) in line 1246 of *Andreas*. Here, nothing in the surrounding narrative indicates that Andrew’s body is literally shining; instead, the term seems to emphasize Andrew’s holiness and connection to God. When viewed together, each instance of a “shining” body in Old English poetry, in some way associates

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<sup>11</sup> *Beowulf*, line 727.

the figure with the otherworldly, either nefarious (as it is with Grendel) or heavenly (as with Elene and the True Cross).

While the image of a body radiating light is not prominent in its writings, light imagery was a common trope in West Germanic literature. In Old English literature, Magennis argues that poets associate light with both divine (god, heaven, and the righteousness of saints) as well as the earthly (armor, chalices, and fires) (188-204). *Guthlac B*, for instance, speaks of “light from heaven,” and, as Magennis observes, the “light infused” Saint Andrew in *Andreas* “promises the Mermedonians the light of glory” (187). “Heavenly” light imagery is also present in continental works composed at roughly the same time as the *Heliand*. Line 14 of the ninth-century Old High German *Muspilli* describes heaven as a place containing “*lip ano tod, lioht ano finstri*” or “life without death, light without darkness.”<sup>12</sup> In both Old English and Old High German, the poets use light as a way to gesture towards the presence of the divine and signify to the audience its arrival into the narrative.

The use of illumination as an “indicator” of the divine in surrounding literary traditions mirrors the way the *Heliand* poet uses light in other parts of the biblical epic. As Murphy observes, when the skies open and shine with divine light during both the Nativity and the Transfiguration, the “fearful awe” of both

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<sup>12</sup> All Old High German text from Braune and Ebbinghaus. Translations from Old High German into Modern English are provided by the author.

the disciples and the horse guards is directed not at the voice that comes from the light, but at the light itself, an occurrence that also differs from Tatian's account of the events ("Light Worlds" 9). Much like the Anglo-Saxon and Old High German poets, the *Heliand* poet uses the presence of the light, not anything that comes forth from it, to signify the arrival of the divine both to the poem's characters and to the Saxons.

The *Heliand* poet's choice to subsume Jesus' body with light – a feature that Germanic literature uses to overtly announce the arrival of the divine – would have clearly conveyed Jesus' divinity to the Saxons. The *Diatessaron's* representation of Jesus clad in glimmering garments would have indicated to the Saxons that he is *associated* with the divine. Conversely, a poetic portrayal of Jesus radiating heavenly light from his own body would have signified to the audience that he *is* divine. Through this divergence from his source, the poet effectively emphasizes Jesus' divinity while downplaying his human will for the duration of the fitt. Moreover, placing the image of the shining, divine Jesus at the center of the poem ensures that it is Jesus' divine power that draws the bulk of the audience's attention. Thus, the very imagery and structure of the poem is fashioned, not around Jesus' human will and his teachings, but around signs that signify and reinforce to the Saxons Jesus' divine will and powers.

### *Jesus' Miracles and Thor's Thunder*

The miracles that the *Heliand* poet chose to include in the gospel harmony were undoubtedly designed to signify Jesus' divinity to the Saxons. Though this was certainly an important function, the poem's miracles also met a need that was specific to the Germanic audience. The Saxons revered forces whose powers and limitations were already strongly rooted in the culture's psyche. In order to demonstrate the Christian God does not share these limitations, the *Heliand* poet needed to display miraculous events that differed from or altogether surpassed the Saxons' ideas of supernatural power. To meet this need, the *Heliand* poet selected miracles that specifically show Jesus as surpassing a succession of familiar Germanic perceptions of otherworldly power.

Though the Franks' recent military conquest of the Saxons would have made it easy to do so, it was not in the *Heliand* poet's best interest to simply portray Jesus as a god of war (Fulton 31). Yet, it is precisely because of this conquest that the poet could not portray Jesus in overtly militaristic terms. Charlemagne's conquest during the Saxon Wars was notable for its brutal methodology, and records of the event attest to the mass execution of Saxons in response to their rebellions (Davis 157). Associating Jesus with imagery that could easily be linked with these still fresh memories would have been a poor rhetorical strategy on the part of the poet.

The poet's need to present Jesus as a mighty savior, but not an exclusively warlike deity, could have contributed to his decision to accentuate Jesus' miraculous displays to such a degree. Jesus' miracles were an effective way to place his divine might into juxtaposition with the Saxons' indigenous understanding of the supernatural without resorting to portraying an actively "conquering" Jesus. Moreover, the *Heliand* poet also avoids openly naming any members of the Northern pantheon. This decision likely comes, in part, to avoid overtly evoking the image of Jesus "conquering" their native beliefs.

Nonetheless, though deific names are not found in the work, traces of the Saxons' views of the supernatural still remain. Regarding the Germanic pantheon's place in the harmony, Murphy contends, "Woden and Thor are nowhere explicitly cited in the *Heliand*, yet they are present" (*Saxon Savior* 75). Rather than invoking the names of the Germanic gods, Murphy instead argues that the *Heliand* poet, "does not hesitate to incorporate the most profoundly pagan beliefs into his gospel epic"; in this way, the supernatural powers associated with the Germanic gods fill the poem (33). By presenting Jesus' miraculous abilities as capable of matching and exceeding the supernatural powers of these gods and powers, the *Heliand* poet is able to convey Jesus' divine might in terms that would not aggravate the still fresh wounds of the conquered Saxons.

Situating the surviving Germanic myths into a conversation with the *Heliand* is, admittedly, a difficult task; there is very little recorded information regarding pre-Christian Saxon religious practices, and the majority of the texts that detail the stories of the Northern deities were recorded centuries after the *Heliand*'s composition. This study recognizes Terry Gunnell's assertion that "the *Prose Edda* should never be viewed as a Nordic Bible, reflecting a pan-Nordic or even Germanic pre-Christian worldview" (55). Because of this uncertainty, examining any Germanic text in the context of its pre-Christian beliefs is rendered extremely difficult.<sup>13</sup>

For all that is unclear about the Saxons' pre-Christian practices, it is at least known that the Germanic deities attested in later writings were actively worshipped in Saxony. Regarding the worship of these Germanic deities among the Saxons, Cathey observes:

The Saxons practiced some form of religion common to Germanic groups. There was no uniform ritual but various forms were tolerated, that is, there was no one specific way to worship but rather many ways to (attempt to) gain the favor of the gods. Sacred springs and trees were worshiped, and there were cult sites. There was a store of treasure at the temple, where gods called Saxnot (perhaps another name for Wodan), Thor, and others were honored. ("Historical Setting" 14-15)

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<sup>13</sup> For a discussion regarding the difficulty this dilemma causes Anglo-Saxon scholars, see Dunn 58-59.



Vatican Codex pal. 577's Old Saxon Baptismal Vow (detailed below) provides a clearer picture of these deities and their place in Saxon society. This vow mentions by name Thor, Woden, and Saxnot, who the Franks, at least, understood to be a separate deity from Woden: "*ec forsacho allum dioboles uuercum and uuordum, Thunær ende uuoden ende saxnote ende allum them unholdum the hira genotas sint*" ("I forsake all the works and words of the devil, Thor, Woden and Saxnot and all of those fiends who are their companions") (Wadstein 3).<sup>14</sup> This vow, composed at roughly the same time as the *Heliand*, demonstrates that the Germanic gods were widespread enough at the time of the poem's composition to warrant specific attention from the Carolingian Church, though the particulars of the divine pantheon remain unclear.

Perhaps at no greater point in the poem is the presence of the Northern gods felt more openly than during Jesus' calming of the storm in fitt 27. As he does several times in the poem, "the author of the *Heliand* here again shows intimate knowledge of maritime conditions," a fact that is reflected by the poet's vivid description of a nautical storm and its dangers ("Text and Commentary" 191). Beyond the all-too familiar imagery this description would have conveyed to the audience, another more important message is imbedded in the sea's turmoil. In many Germanic and Nordic cultures, storms were under the divine

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<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the Saxons' view of the devil and his powers, see pages 207-28 of this study.

command of Thor, and in Icelandic societies, ninth-century seafarers continued to call upon Thor for protection from maritime storms even after the island's Christianization (Jones and Pennick 161). Thor's place of reverence among seafarers who risked encountering inclement weather extended beyond Iceland. Given the dangers of the North Sea's weather, it should come as no surprise that archeological evidence indicates that seafarers in these waters held Thor in high esteem (Fee, *Gods* 28). Though the lack of surviving materials makes it impossible to know for sure if the Saxons also related the danger of sea travel with a specific deity, the sheer number of scenes in the *Heliand* that place maritime storms at their center indicates that these forces held places of reverence and fear in Saxon society, even if these forces were not directly linked with the divine.

While initially describing the storm, the poet goes to great lengths to establish its size and magnitude:

Thuo bigan thes uuedares  
ust up stigan, uđiun uuahsan; craft,  
suang gisuerc an gimang: thie seu uuarđ an hruoru,  
uuan uuind endi uuater; uueros sorogodun,  
thiu meri uuarđ so muodag; ni uuanda thero manno  
lengron libes. (Lines 2241b-2246a)

[“Then the power of the weather, the gusts and waves, began to climb and grow up, the darkness rushed in thickly; the sea was in motion, wind and water battled; the men were worried, the sea was so wrathful, none of the men hoped of a longer life.”]

The representation of a boat in the midst of a storm would have conjured up generations of Germanic fears regarding storms and seafaring. To better understand how the poet used the sea in the *Heliand* to speak to the Saxon audience, it is necessary to turn to the poem's first representation of the sea. During Jesus' initial gathering of his twelve disciples in lines 1121-1202, the poet utilizes language that renders the biblical seas and waterways into a form that is more recognizable to his Germanic audience. Murphy argues that, during this scene, the poet frequently repeats the phrase "there by the water" in an effort to "slowly [blend] the Sea of Galilee with the North Sea" (*Saxon Savior* 59). The boats the fishermen employ further reinforce the amalgamation of the two seas; the poet refers to the boats in line 1186 as *neglitskipu* "nailed ships," a feature of ship construction familiar to mariners of the North Sea (60). By "blending" these seas, the poet is able to transform the alien waters described by Tatian into nautical imagery that would have carried a number of cultural signifiers. Furthermore, by equating these seas in the biblical epic with the waters of the Saxons' home early on in the poem, the poet also links all of the waters that he describes later in the poem with the North Sea. In short, due to the strategies employed by the poet in the early depictions of seafaring, the audience would have perceived the waters in Jesus' calming of the seas and winds as being overtly Germanic. Rather than simply demonstrating Jesus' powers in the face an

unfamiliar, perhaps less perilous, seascape, the *Heliand* poet situates Jesus, his actions, and his miracles within the context of the North Sea.

It should go without saying that the North Sea held a special place of prominence in Continental Saxon society. To outside cultures, the Saxons and their mastery of the sea was a thing to be feared, and a significant portion of the Saxons' martial power, including their migration to England, came as a direct result of their skill in navigating the seaways (Van de Noort 170). Henry Mayr-Harting, drawing upon Sinonius Apollinaris' fifth-century letters, provides a useful, though romanticized, view of the relationship between the Saxons and their maritime surroundings:

The Saxons, entirely without fear in their boats, were a source of peculiar terror and wonderment to [the Romans]. Every oarsman in the Saxon crew, said a fifth-century Gallo-Roman aristocrat, looked like a pirate captain. They were masters of the surprise attack, but if anticipated they slipped away; shipwreck was to them a form of training rather than a source of terror; they were entirely at home amidst the hazards of rough seas and jagged coasts, gladly enduring such things in the hope of taking their prey unawares.  
(13)

Though Apollinaris' words are certainly exaggerated for dramatic effect, the importance of the sea to the Saxons' identity is profoundly clear. Moreover, though the Romans' might have insisted that the Saxons were completely fearless in the face of their aquatic environment, traversing the waves carried

with its very real dangers. In reality, the North Sea, in particular, presented a great deal of hardship to maritime travel due to its frequent, heavy storms.

The Saxon audience of the *Heliand* would have approached the poem with thoughts of the tumultuous sea's dangers, as well as the religious and social elements the waters represent. In lines 2256b-2258a, after he rebukes his disciples for their fear, Jesus "[speaks] to the wind and also the sea itself and commanded them both to behave more gently. They fulfilled the commandment, the words of the ruler" (*"tho hi te them uuinde sprac / get e themu seuua so self endi sie smultro het. Sie gibod lestun / uualdandes uuord"*). Through a display of direct control over the sea and storm, Jesus immediately establishes himself possessing authority over the natural forces that the Saxons found to be a fearsome aspect of their day-to-day lives. It is the weather's compliance with Jesus' command that would have most directly served the poet's agenda. With his command, Jesus expresses dominion over the power of the weather, a force that is often linked to the supernatural in Germanic cultures. With this action, Jesus proves that the weather, and perhaps even Thor himself, is subject to the divine will of the Christian deity.

The response of Jesus' disciples in lines 2286-2288 to the calming of the storm drives home the importance of their master's victory:

heliðos quamun,  
liudi te lande, sagdun lof gode,  
maridun is meginraft

[“The heroes, the people, came to the land, said praise to God,  
[and] announced his great power.”]

For a people who, until recently, viewed North Sea storms as a terrifying force, this open praise of Jesus’ *meginraft* or “great power” would certainly have carried a powerful religious message.<sup>15</sup> Jesus, through his demonstration of divine power in the face of the storm, wielded authority over the very thing that they feared.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, if Saxon sailors truly called upon Thor for protection from storm waters, then this scene showed Jesus to be more capable of answering the Saxons’ requests for protection than their own indigenous god.

### *Raising the Dead: Woden’s Runes and Jesus’ Divine Power*

While calming a storm would have doubtlessly been impressive for the Saxons, the feat might not have been altogether unfamiliar; stanza 153 of the Icelandic *Hávamál* attests that the chief god Woden was also able to calm storms through a runic spell that he was taught in reward for his hanging on a gallows-

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<sup>15</sup> Christopher M. Stevens identifies *megin* as a prefixoid that functions as an “intensifier” for the words to which it is affixed (“More Prefixes” 313). Thus, by placing *megin* before the common word for power, *raft*, the poet identifies Jesus as possessing a greater power. Stevens defines an affixoid as “a linguistic item that is neither a root nor a derivational morph” (“Prefixes and Prefixoids” 151). See also “More Prefixes” 311.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus’ dominion over storms and the sea is also present in Old English poetry. For a discussion of Jesus’ miraculous seafaring abilities in *Andreas*, see pages 119-130 of this study.

tree.<sup>17</sup> Thus, in order to depict Jesus as wielding power both distinct from and greater than Woden, the poet needed to present a miracle that the Germanic deity did not replicate in the culture's myths. The poet meets this need by presenting vivid descriptions of Jesus' ability to raise humans, bodily and permanently, from the dead.

Among Woden's divine powers is "the ability to make to make the dead rise and tell their stories" (Tripp Jr. 59). In particular, he was able to address and speak to hanged men through another of his runic charms. This ability is described in stanza 157 of the *Hávamál*:

Pat kann ec iþ tólpta ef ec sé á tré uppi  
váfa virgilíná:  
svá ec ríst oc í rúnom fác,  
at sá gengr gumi  
oc maelir við mic.<sup>18</sup>

["I know a twelfth charm: if I see up in a tree a dead man hanging and I cut and darken runes, then the man comes and talks with me."] <sup>19</sup>

However, while the dead may have been able to walk and speak for a time, they had not truly returned to life. Instead, they were required to again return to their

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<sup>17</sup> See McKinnell 102. This study predominantly uses the Old Saxon spelling of the god's name "Woden" derived from the Old Saxon Baptismal Vow. The Norse spellings of "Odin" and "Oððin" will be retained in direct quotations and in discussions of the Norse myths.

<sup>18</sup> Old Norse cited from: Kuhn 43.

<sup>19</sup> Translation cited from: Tripp Jr., 58.

graves once they had completed their story. An example of Woden's ability to briefly raise the deceased from their graves is found in stanzas four and five of

*Baldrs Draumar*:

4. Þá reið Óðinn fyrir austan dyrr,  
þar er hann vissi völu leiði;  
nam han vittugri valgaldr qveða,  
unz nauðig reis, nás ord um qvað:

5. "Hvat er manna þat, mér ökunnra,  
er mér hefir aukit erfit sinni?  
var ec snivin sniövi oc slegin regni  
oc drifin doggo, dauð var ec lengi."<sup>20</sup>

[“Then Odin rode on up to the eastern door where he knew a witch slept in her grave: skilled in magic he took to speaking charms until she was forced to rise and speak: ‘What man is this, unknown to me, who has made me come this terrible way? I was buried in snow and beaten by rain, overdrifted with dew: dead have I long been.’”]<sup>21</sup>

Woden's reason for communing with the witch makes it quite clear that this form of resurrection is not permanent. Prior to Woden's visit to the witch, the god Baldr prophetically dreams of his own demise. In his journey and his conversation to the deceased, Woden seeks to prevent Baldr's death. Were Woden able to do more than simply call forth a dead spirit for conversation, it would not be necessary to raise the witch in order to inquire about the nature of Baldr's death. Woden's limitation is underscored again by the events that take

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<sup>20</sup> Old Norse cited from: Kuhn 277.

<sup>21</sup> Translation cited from: Tripp Jr. 58.



place after Baldr is slain. In order to return Baldr to the world of the living, Woden must convince every being in *Miðgarðr* to weep for the fallen god, a task which Woden is unable to complete. Overall, while temporarily communicating with the corporeal dead is common in surviving Germanic myth, no account of a permanent resurrection from the dead exists.

While two resurrections are present in the *Heliand*'s narrative, this discussion will first focus upon the raising of Lazarus in fitt 49. In lines 4096b-4106a, Jesus calls upon Lazarus to rise from the dead:

Tho hie te Lazaruse hriop  
starkaru stemniu endi het ina standen up  
ia fan themu grabe gangan. Tho uuarð the gest kumen  
an thene lichamon: he began is liði hrorien,  
antuuarp undar themu giuuadie: uuas imo so beuunden thon oh,  
an hreobeddion bihelid. Het imu helpen tho  
uualdandeo Krist. Uueros gengun to,  
antuundun that geuuadi. Uuanum up ares  
Lazarus te thesumu liohte: uuas imu is lif fargeþen,  
that he is aldarlagu egan mosti,  
friðu forðuuardes.

[Then He [Jesus] called to Lazarus with a strong voice and commanded him to stand up and to go from the grave. The spirit came into the body: he began to stir his limbs, move under the cloths, but he was still wound about, held in the shroud. Then the ruling Christ commanded them to help him. Men went to him and unwound the cloth. Brilliant, Lazarus rose up to this light: his life was granted to him so that he was permitted to continue his life in peace after.]

With the limits of Woden's runes in mind, the way the *Heliand* poet describes Lazarus' resurrection would have stood out powerfully to the Saxon audience.

Most prominently, Jesus' method of calling Lazarus out of the tomb differs greatly from the Odinic method described above. Woden's temporary reprieve from death depended heavily upon secret, written words, as evidenced by his need to "cut" and "darken the runes." In contrast, Jesus' power of resurrection, like most of his miracles, is channeled vocally. Most striking for the Saxons, however, would have been the poet's description of the resurrected Lazarus; the poet expands both Tatian's writings and the biblical gospel story to make it absolutely clear that Lazarus' spirit and body had been reunited, stating "*Thuo uuarth thie gest cuman an thena likhamon*" ("spirit came into the body"). The poet then elaborates further in order to assure the audience that Lazarus continued to go about living, not for a brief time in order to aid a god, but "in peace after" just as he had before his demise.

#### *Fate and the Power of Christ*

While Jesus' ability to surpass the Saxons' native perceptions of divine power would have certainly been impressive, it is his victory over a separate, greater power that the Saxons would have viewed as most important. The *Heliand* also shows Jesus as coming into conflict with the Germanic idea of *uurd*, a term traditionally glossed as meaning "fate." Closely related to this notion of *uurd* is the word *metod*, which translators often render as "Measurer," and Sehrt

defines as “*Geschick/Gott*” (“Fate” / “God”) (378).<sup>22</sup> A great deal of English-language *Heliand* scholarship has been devoted to understanding the role of these words in the epic. Numerous scholars note that fate is “the highest power in the Germanic world view,” and in surviving Germanic myths even the gods themselves were subject to its designs (Augustyn, *Semiotics* 61). Moreover, unlike Woden and Thor, who are not named openly in the text, the *Heliand* poet readily uses the term *uurd* on seven occasions, and in five instances he employs a variation of *metod*.<sup>23</sup> This term’s frequency and its explicit use are unique among gospel harmony genre, as “the *Heliand* [is] the only gospel harmony that refers profusely to fate” (Augustyn, “Wurd” 270).

Nonetheless, the exact nature of *uurd* and its influence in the *Heliand*’s narrative is hotly disputed. While describing the terms’ function in Old Saxon, Prisca Augustyn posits that *uurd* “represents the continuous cycle of birth and death, the waxing and waning of life, by a cyclical motion as a symbol of eternity” (“Wurd” 271). Regarding the relationship between the Christian God and *uurd*, Murphy suggests, “[fate is] given charge of the ‘accidentals’ of creation (what type of skin one will have, how tall one will be, which month – or whose sword – will carry one away, etc)” (*Saxon Savior* 35). It is true that *uurd* is shown,

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<sup>22</sup> Berr shares Sehrt’s “Fate/God” definition, while James Cathey’s glossary only glosses the term as “fate.”

<sup>23</sup> The poet uses “*metod*” twice, while he employs the compound “*metodgescapu*” or “*metodigisceftie*” three times.

at times, to complement God in this manner, such as Zacharias' birth through "*metod...endi maht godes*" (the Measurer...and the might of God").<sup>24</sup> However, this is not the only interaction between the two supernatural forces – there are several instances where the poet explicitly places Jesus into direct opposition with *uurd*. Additionally, *metod* has a far more complex relationship with the Christian God than Sehrt's conflated definition suggestions. While Old English works such as *Cædmon's Hymn* use *Metod* as another name for God, Augustyn notes that, in each of the word's non-compound uses, the *Heliand* poet portrays *metod* as having "an antagonistic relationship with God" (*Semiotics* 92). Based upon comparisons with cognates in other Germanic languages and the prevalence of concrete nominal compounds to describe "fate," Augustyn further argues that, at times, *uurd* is implied to be more than a mere abstract supernatural force, but instead a concrete, deific entity ("Wurd" 270-78). For instance, when speaking to Judas in line 4581 regarding his betrayal, Jesus specifically remarks that Judas will "*uurdi sihit*," or "see Wurd" (Augustyn, "Wurd" 272). This lends credence to claims that *uurd* in the *Heliand* is not an abstract representation of Germanic ideals, but rather a figure with direct influence upon the world and its happenings.

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<sup>24</sup> Line 128.

Jesus and “fate” come into direct confrontation during Jesus’ raising of the widow’s son in Nain. While introducing this scene in lines 2187-2190a, the poet writes:

siu uuas iru uuidouua, ne habda uunnea than mēr,  
biûten te themu ênagun sunie al gelâten  
uunnea endi uuillea, anttat ina iru uurd benam,  
mâri metodogescapu.

[“She was a widow, she had no more joy except for this one son, everything that was left in happiness and delight, until fate took him from her, the famous works of the Measurer.”]

Fate is portrayed here as being directly responsible for bringing about the death of the widow’s son. This fact is particularly important; as mentioned previously, the decision of life and death was one that, in the Old Saxon literary tradition, belonged to “fate.” The *Heliand* reflects this idea by the contexts in which the poet chose to directly evoke the term *uurd*. Augustyn argues, “death (or birth) is the primary context for fate” in the epic (*Semiotics* 61). Thus, through his description of the child’s death, the poet reasserts the extent of fate’s power. With *uurd*’s domain over life and death certainly in the audience’s mind, Jesus’ subsequent decision to raise the widow’s son from the dead takes on a new meaning. Jesus is confronting fate, and he is doing so in a way that overtly challenges its earlier, established power over life and death.

Jesus himself acknowledges the nature of his task through a statement in lines 2195b-2196a that is highly reminiscent of a traditional boast found in heroic

Germanic literature. Before raising the widow's son, Jesus claims: "*thu scalt hir craft sehan, / uualdanes giuuerc*" ("you shall see power here, the work of the Ruler"). Scholars of Old Germanic literature have given heroic boasts only a sporadic degree of attention since H. Munro Chadwick, in his 1912 monograph *The Heroic Age*, identified boasting as an integral aspect of heroic Germanic poetry (326-27). Of these scholars, Marie Nelson provides the most useful insight into Jesus' claim by identifying ten different forms of boasting in *Beowulf*.<sup>25</sup> Of these forms, Jesus' statement best reflects Nelson's second kind of boast: a "promising boast" (302). To describe this form of boast, Nelson points to Beowulf's introduction to Hrothgar and his promise to battle Grendel in lines 415-26a of the poem. Among the promises made in this boast, Beowulf indicates that he "[knows] his strength and [has] confidence that will enable him to help Hrothgar in his present need" (301). Jesus' words to the widow and, implicitly, *uurd*, share a number of features with Beowulf's boast. Like the Geatish hero, the *Heliand*'s Jesus indicates a familiarity with his own strength, specifically through the identifying formula "*uualdanes giuuerc*." He implies his confidence in this power by urging the woman to witness his *craft* while he wields it against Fate. This boast and its "promise" situate Jesus and *uurd* as foes, with Jesus as the self-assured hero.

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<sup>25</sup> For a discussion boasting and its performance in the Old English heroic ideal, see Conquergood 24-35.

Following this boast, the poet describes the widow's reaction to her son's resurrection, making up lines 2208-2210a, in order to reinforce the conflict between Jesus and Fate one final time:

Fell siu thô te fuotun Cristes endi thena folco drohtin  
loboda for thero liudeo menigi, huand hie iroat sô liobes  
ferahe mundoda uuiðer metodigisceftie

[“She then fell at the feet of Christ and praised the lord of the people before the many people, because He had protected a life-spirit so beloved to her against the works of the Measurer.”]

This final proclamation not only directly acknowledges the struggle that had taken place, but it also reaffirms Jesus' victory in the contest. However, it is not enough to recognize that this scene “represents an act of victory over *uurd*” (Augustyn, *Semiotics* 65). Instead, because of his boast before the miracle, Jesus also alerts his audience, both the people witnessing the miracle in the poem's narrative and the listeners among the Saxons, that he intends to openly *challenge* fate. Through this boast, the *Heliand* poet renders Jesus' subsequent victory all the more impressive and recognizable.

The implications that Jesus' triumph over *uurd* would have held to a Germanic audience cannot be overstated. In the surviving Germanic myths, even the gods themselves, while powerful, are depicted as unable to overcome a death that fate has ordained. This is demonstrated numerous times in the texts of Germanic mythology. As previously mentioned, Baldr is unable to return to life,

despite the wishes of the other Germanic deities, and, in many surviving versions of the myths, the whole of the pantheon is doomed to die at Ragnarök.<sup>26</sup> Thus, Jesus' victory over *uurd*, by extension, demonstrates his superiority to the Germanic perception of the divine and the supernatural. By constructing Jesus' divine power so that he is explicitly shown as triumphing over the most powerful force in the Germanic world, the *Heliand* poet is able to portray Jesus as exceeding their expectations of godly power, and therefore as being worthy of the society's admiration.

### The Crucifixion Across Cultures

If the *Heliand* poet explicitly framed Jesus' miracles in a way that presents his teachings in terms of his divinity and shows his power as superior to supernatural Germanic forces, how then did the poet approach the event that, on its surface, depicts Jesus as powerless? Answering this question requires examining the *Heliand*'s representation of the Crucifixion alongside the thematically similar, though ultimately fundamentally divergent, Old English representation of Jesus' death seen in *The Dream of the Rood*. Despite both works' use of similar Germanic imagery and themes, the *Heliand* draws attention away

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<sup>26</sup> While the *Heliand* poet shows Jesus to be above the powers of Fate, the same cannot be said for other figures in the biblical narrative. For a discussion of Satan's relationship with Fate, see pages 221-24 of this project.



from Jesus' humanity and directs the audience to his divine might by accentuating the miraculous events that take place at the moment of his death.

The *Heliand's* Crucifixion narrative, which spans lines 5532-5712 of the poem, approaches the moment of Jesus' death in a way that draws attention not to his mortal death, but his divine will. As Fulton notes, "the moment of Jesus' death is figured not as a defeat of his enemies but, rather, as an escape of his spirit from his flesh" (31). She draws this analysis largely from the description of Jesus' death in lines 5657-8: "*helagon ađom / liet fan themo likhamen*" ("the holy breath escaped from the body"). Though Fulton considers the difficulties the Saxon audience would have undoubtedly faced while comprehending Jesus' willful death and his forgiveness of those responsible, she does not offer an answer for why the poet chose to immediately move the Saxons' focus away from Jesus' death.

The *Heliand* poet's choice to draw attention away from Jesus' physical suffering on the cross is strikingly different from contemporary ninth-century Carolingian representations of the Crucifixion, which tended to focus extensively upon Jesus' body (Rubin 103). Why, then, did the *Heliand* poet, who was clearly aware of Carolingian traditions and beliefs, choose to deviate so markedly from the established artistic trend? The answer to this query is found in the way the Saxons would have, undoubtedly, received the image of Jesus' death. As

previously noted, the Saxons might not have been wholly unfamiliar with the idea of a dying deity. What is certain, however, is that the culture would have been unacquainted with a god whose divinity allowed him to pick up his life again after death. Because of this, it would have been a particularly challenging task for the poet to present the Crucifixion in a way that did not undermine the poem's missionary purpose.

*The Dream of the Rood* (hereafter referred to as the *Dream*) is, without a doubt, the Old English work that shares the largest number of images and thematic parallels with the *Heliand*. Prominently, both the *Heliand* and the *Dream* "are well known for their depictions of Christ as *dryhten* 'lord'" (Bredehoft 93). Perhaps most obviously, in line 25 of *Dream*, the narrator refers to the cross as the "*Hælandes treow*" ("the tree of the healer").<sup>27</sup> Additionally, Bredehoft observes a number of lexical and metrical similarities shared between the two works (87-90).<sup>28</sup> Yet, though the works share a number of similarities, the ways they represent Jesus' divine strength are markedly different. Compared to the events of the *Heliand*, the *Dream* presents Jesus' death during the Crucifixion in much more vivid terms. It is true that, like the *Heliand*, the *Dream* avoids lengthy descriptions of Jesus' physical suffering in favor of the *Christus victor* motif

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<sup>27</sup> *Dream of the Rood* text from Krapp, 1932.

<sup>28</sup> Based on this data, Bredehoft makes the claim for Old Saxon influence on the composition of *The Dream of the Rood*. While this argument is compelling and holds significant implications for the poetic traditions of both cultures, it is beyond the scope of this argument.

(Marsden 243). Nonetheless, the Old English poem presents Jesus as vulnerable in a way that the *Heliand* does not. In the *Dream*, Jesus “[accepts] his fate willingly and proactively,” stripping himself and climbing atop the cross by his own volition (243). The *Dream* poet makes it clear that, in this moment of agency, Jesus also chooses to surrender a great deal of power.

Regarding the *Dream*’s emphasis upon Jesus’ loss of power, Emma B. Hawkins argues, “in order to secure spiritual victory, Jesus submissively allows himself to be physically defeated on the cross and to be mastered, an indication of powerlessness and weakness to the Anglo-Saxon audience” (33-34). Rather than providing a direct avenue to a larger scale, divine victory, “the cross and Christ demonstrate the traffic back and forth between power and powerlessness” (34). In order for Jesus to gain the power that he demonstrates during his triumphant display at the end of the poem, he must first surrender power.

In contrast to the pains the poet takes to downplay Jesus’ physical death on the cross, Jesus’ divine might is on full display in the *Heliand*’s representation of the Crucifixion. While, as Cathey observes, “Christ as an exemplar of Germanic leadership ... is brought to a new low in this passage” (*Text and Commentary* 247), the poet greatly expands the description of the miraculous events that take place immediately following Jesus’ death in order to quickly reassure the audience of his divine power:

So thuo thie lands uuard  
 sualt an them simon, so uuarð san after thiu  
 uundartecan giuuarah, that thar uualdandes doð  
 unqueðandes so filo antkennian scolda,  
 gifuolian is endagon: erða biðoda,  
 hrisidun thia hohun bergos, harda stenes cluðun,  
 felisos after them felde [.....]  
 – graðu uuurðun giopanod  
 dodero manno, endi sia thuru drohtines craft  
 an iro lichamon libbiandi astuodun  
 up fan erðu endi uurðun giogida thar  
 mannon te marðu. That uuas so mahtig thing,  
 that thar Cristes doð antkennian scoldun,  
 so filo thes gifuolian, thie gio mid firihon ne sprac  
 uuord an thesaro uueroldi.<sup>29</sup>

[As the Ward of the Land died on the rope, immediately after miraculous signs were worked so that the death of the Ruler, his end of days, would be observed by many unspeaking things. The Earth quaked, the high mountains trembled, hard stones, rocks in the fields, boulders in the fields, cleaved open ... Graves of dead men were opened, and by the power of the Lord, they stood up out of the earth living in their bodies, and were seen there, to the marvel of men. That was so mighty a thing, that the death of Christ should be recognized and noticed by so many of the beings which had never before spoken a word to people in this world.”]

This scene reminds the audience of Jesus’ divine might immediately after his death, leaving the Saxons no time to consider Jesus as weak for allowing himself to die. Instead of viewing the Crucifixion as a scene depicting the failure of Jesus’ mortal strength, this list of miraculous signs urges the audience to view the Crucifixion as a reminder of Jesus’ divinity and power.

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<sup>29</sup> 5658b-5664a; 5670b-5677a.

The *Dream* poet's handling of the events that immediately follow Jesus' death reflects the ebbing of the Christian savior's mortal power. While the *Heliand* poet avoids portraying Jesus as weak through an extended display of otherworldly events, the only remnant of the miraculous signs that accompany Jesus' passing in the *Dream* is an eclipse described in lines 52b-55a: "*Þystro hæfdon / bewrigen mid wolcnum wealdendes hræw, / scirne sciman, sceadu forð eode / wann under wolcnum*" ("Darkness had covered the bright radiance of the corpse of the ruler with clouds, a shadow went forth, dark under the sky"). Following this event, the poet then conveys a melancholy scene that features Jesus' thanes removing him from the cross and taking him for burial. This section, spanning lines 57-73a, lingers heavily upon the aftermath of Jesus' surrendering of his mortal power. In addition to representing the mourning of those who took him from the cross, these lines also show Jesus' deceased body; the poet notes in lines 62-64 that the warriors who took Jesus from the cross "*Aledon hie thær limwerigne, / gestodon him æt his lices heafðum, / beheoldon hie thær heofenes dryhten, / ond he hine thær hwile reste*" ("they laid him limb-weary there, stood themselves at the head of his body, and they beheld there the lord of heaven, and he rested himself there for awhile").

The idea that Jesus, weary from his experience on the cross, needed to "rest himself" before he could return again lends credence to Hawkins' claim

that Jesus' Crucifixion demonstrates a "trafficking" of his power, in this case away from himself. Jesus is "limb-weary" and his body "cools" precisely because he has allowed his power to ebb in this moment, and the poet reflects this concept through the lengthy narration of the events between his Crucifixion and the Resurrection. This contrasts the *Heliand's* portrayal of these events; while the Old Saxon poem presents Jesus' removal from the cross in fitt 68, it does not linger upon his body:

Hie giuuet im thip forð thanan  
 gangan te them galgon, thar hie uuissa that godes barn,  
 hreo hangondi herren sines,  
 nam ina thuo an thereo niuuun ruodun endi ina fan naglon  
 atumda,  
 antfeng ina mid is faðmon, so man is frohon scal,  
 liobes lichamon, endi ina an line biuund,  
 druog ina diurlico – so uuas thie drohtin uuerð – ,  
 thar sia thia stedi haðdun an enon stene innan  
 handon gihauuan, that gio heliðo barn  
 gumon ne bugruoþon.<sup>30</sup>

["He [Joseph] went forth to go to the gallows, where he knew that the Son of God, the corpse of his Lord, was hanging, then he took it from the new gallows Rood and pulled the nails from it, received it, the body of his beloved, in his arms, just as one ought to with his lord, and wrapped it in linen, preciousy carried it out – as was worthy of the Lord – to the place where they had carved out the inside of a stone with their hands, where no son of a hero, no human, had been buried."]

Here, the emphasis is not upon Jesus' body, but rather on Joseph and his conduct. Twice, the poet notes that Joseph handled the body in a manner fitting

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<sup>30</sup> Lines 5729b-5738a.

of a lord or chieftain.<sup>31</sup> In fact, the continued insistence that Jesus' body deserves reverence, even in death, emphasizes his own authority as a ruler. Instead of describing the corpse, Jesus' body itself is removed from the cross, transported, and placed into the grave very quickly over the course of nine lines. The poet clearly wishes for the audience to contemplate the role of the thane upon the loss of a ruler, rather than the deceased image of Jesus' powerless mortal body.

By accentuating the supernatural events that took place immediately following Jesus' death and by drawing attention to his thane's conduct in the wake of his passing, the *Heliand* poet consistently draws the audience's attention away from Jesus' physical suffering and the death of his mortal body. Through this intentional focus, the poet avoids contradicting or negating the message he had worked to present through both the poem's structure and miracles. In this way, the poet both adapts the events of the gospel story while maintaining a narrative focus on Jesus' divine power.

### *Conclusion*

In contrast to Freidrich's belief that the *Heliand* poet privileges Jesus' humanity, each of the instances detailed in this chapter suggest that the poet instead places the bulk of his emphasis upon Jesus' divine power. The very

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<sup>31</sup> In his presentation at the 51st Annual International Congress on Medieval Studies, G. Ronald Murphy presented the idea of conduct in this scene and linked it with the imagery in of the Crucifixion relief at Externsteine. See Murphy, "The Deposition from the Cross."

structure of the poem supports this emphasis; the Transfiguration's placement at the center of the work draws the audience's attention to Jesus' divine will and places it as the driving force of the poem. Having reinforced Jesus' divine nature through the epic's very structure, the *Heliand* poet then uses Jesus' miracles to teach the Saxons. Through his choice to adapt a large number of the *Diatessaron's* healing miracles, such as his healing of the lame man in Galilee, the poet underscores Jesus' relevance to a Germanic society. Perhaps more importantly, the lengthy series of miracles that make up much of the middle portion of the work are designed to demonstrate Jesus' ability to surpass or overcome supernatural forces familiar to the Saxons. In these sections, the poet uses these events to convey Jesus' overt superiority to forces associated the Germanic world, specifically the treacherous waters of the North Sea and Woden's ability to communicate with the dead. These displays culminate with a final, overt confrontation with *uurd*, the governing supernatural force in the Germanic world. Finally, the poet maintains a continual focus upon miraculous events in the aftermath of the Crucifixion, thus maintaining a focus on Jesus' divine power and alleviating any doubts that the Saxons might hold regarding Jesus' power. When viewed together, the *Heliand* poet's adaptation decisions reveal a concentrated effort to both accentuate Jesus' divine will and present his power in a way that would be both more accessible and palpable to his audience.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Power and Christophany in the Old English *Andreas*

Jesus' central role in West Germanic literature is not limited to the writings of Continental Saxony. In the surviving corpus of Old English poetry, Jesus appears in eight works, and he is directly referenced in several other writings.<sup>1</sup> In these works, Jesus' representation is often a multivalent one. As this study's previous chapter discussed, Jesus is portrayed as proactive and warrior-like in *The Dream of the Rood*, a similarity to the *Heliand* that has not escaped scholars. Other Anglo-Saxon works, such as *Julianna* and *Guthlac*, accentuate Jesus' devotion to his faithful in order to appeal to the Anglo-Saxons' cultural appreciation of *comitatus*. These "Germanic" elements played a significant part in the way the Anglo-Saxons understood Jesus, as well as the theological and cultural ideas that poets conveyed in their writings. Regarding the religious themes that Anglo-Saxon poets chose to highlight in their works, John Godfrey notes that the Cynewulfian school of poetry paid specific attention to doctrines such as the Trinity and the Incarnation, as well as images such as the Second

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<sup>1</sup> Jesus appears as a central figure in the poems *Christ and Satan*, *The Dream of the Rood*, *Andreas*, the three *Christ* poems of the *Exeter Book*, and the two Old English *Judgment Day* poems. Jesus is also allegorically alluded to or directly referenced in several other poems. These works are sometimes anachronistic, such as Judith's calling upon of Jesus in lines 83-84 of the Old English poetic adaptation of her story.

Coming (190-91). The poets' interest in these diverse and often difficult doctrinal concepts speaks to a literary presentation of a Jesus who, while often presented in Germanic imagery and framed by Northern European values, was also deeply rooted in the Anglo-Saxons' growing understanding of theological ideas. While Anglo-Saxon poets did not shy away from approaching challenging theological concepts, scholarship has not fully addressed the methods through which poets chose to represent these ideas.

One such work that has yet to be fully explored is *Andreas*, a verse adaptation of the apocryphal legend of the apostle Andrew. This 1722-line poem survives in one manuscript preserved in the tenth-century *Vercelli Book*. Among the avenues of this work that scholars have not yet explored is the work's representation of a Christophany – an appearance of Jesus that either antedates the Incarnation or postdates the Ascension. Examining Jesus' representation in *Andreas*, the most prolonged and prominent Christophany in Old English literature, clarifies a number of the Anglo-Saxons' views pertaining to both Jesus and his divinity. In particular, the *Andreas* poet draws upon early Christian and medieval understandings of Christophanies and pairs these perceptions with Anglo-Saxon heroic literary elements.

### *Popularity in Anglo-Saxon England*

Andrew's legend, more widely known as "The Acts of Andrew and Matthew among the Cannibals," survives in several language traditions, including Greek, Latin, and Old English. While there are notable differences between the narratives in each language—distinctions that will be addressed as part of this study—the core events remain roughly consistent between all surviving versions of the legend. It should be first noted, however, that two major "strands" of the Saint Andrew narrative exist: in some versions of the legend, Andrew broadly ventures into the land of Achaia, while in others (such as *Andreas*) the saint's destination in Achaia is specifically named as Mermedonia. In *Andreas*, the apostle Matthew is captured by the Mermedonians, a cannibalistic culture that plans to execute the saint in three nights' time. In response to his disciple's captivity, God commissions Andrew to travel to Mermedonia and rescue his fellow apostle, a task Andrew considers to be impossible. In response, Jesus disguises himself as a ship's helmsman and offers to ferry Andrew to Mermedonia. While on the ship, Jesus questions Andrew regarding the tenets of his faith in a secret test of the apostle's devotion. In response, Andrew relates several of Jesus' scriptural and apocryphal miracles. At the climax of the conversation, Jesus commands his angels to deliver a sleeping Andrew into Mermedonia. Finally, Jesus reveals his identity to Andrew and

explains that the apostle's earlier doubt is a sign of a critical lack of faith; he also tells the saint that, as a result of his doubt, he will suffer greatly. Jesus gives no indication that Andrew will be able to overcome the hostile Mermedonians through his apostolic power, and the only promise Jesus gives is that Andrew will survive his ordeals. While rescuing Matthew, Andrew is captured and, at the direction of Satan himself, the Mermedonians torture the apostle. By faithfully enduring this torture and verbally rebuffing Satan, Andrew gradually begins to regain Jesus' approval. The narrative culminates in a grand display of miraculous might – Andrew summons a flood that first slays, then resurrects the Mermedonians, an experience that convinces the cannibals to convert to Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

Saint Andrew and the apocryphal story of his actions amongst the Mermedonians were, by all indications, well known in Anglo-Saxon England. Regarding Saint Andrew's ubiquitous reverence on the island, Marie N. Walsh notes, "The apostle's popularity is evidenced in calendars and martyrologies, in churches dedicated to him, in hymns and homilies, and in the poetic *Andreas*. Of the nineteen pre-1100 English calendars edited by Francis Wormald, all have the feast of St. Andrew on November 30, all have a vigil, and all but two have an octave" (101). Walsh, drawing upon a study by Francis Bond, further explores

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<sup>2</sup> For more about the *Andreas* poet's use of Baptismal imagery in this scene, see Reading 14.

the influence of Saint Andrew's cult in Anglo-Saxon England, noting that the number of English churches named after Andrew before the Reformation numbered at 637 (103).<sup>3</sup>

Andrew's influence on the Anglo-Saxons was not limited to churches and holy days; the saint is well-evidenced in writing, as well. Notably, the popularity of Andrew and his legend extended even to Bede, who not only spoke of Andrew's scriptural appearances, "but also elements of the apocryphal primary acts" (105). In addition to this verse adaptation, two prose versions of the tale exist. One prose rendering of the narrative, a fragment roughly corresponding to lines 51-976 of the poetic version, is preserved as the final entry of *Princeton, Scheide Library, MS 71*, a volume more commonly called the *Blickling Homilies*. *MS Corp. Chr. Coll. Calb. 198* also includes a different prose telling of the legend; this manuscript conveys a complete (though greatly abbreviated in comparison to the poem) account of Andrew's journey. Ælfric, likewise, addresses the events of Andrew's life, including elements of the "Acts Among the Cannibals," in his *Catholic Homilies*. Finally, Andrew's apocryphal journey and his subsequent martyrdom are summarized in lines 16-21 of the poem that directly follows *Andreas* in the *Vercelli Book*, a work by Cynewulf conventionally titled *The Fate of the Apostles*.

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<sup>3</sup> See Bond 17-25.

Though uncovering the audience for *Andreas* will require a lengthier discussion, scholars have already devoted significant attention to the context in which the Anglo-Saxons would have encountered the prose versions of the narrative. Noting numerous similarities between the language of the *Corpus Christi College 198* homily and the traditional wording of the Mass of Saint Andrew's liturgy, Bill Friesen argues that the vernacular tale was certainly incorporated into the saint's service (209-29). As the preceding works in the manuscript are centered around the celebrations and feast days of other saints and apostles, it seems certain that the *Blickling Homilies* version of the narrative was also intended for use during the Feast of Saint Andrew (Kelly 195). The inclusion of the full Saint Andrew legend in two such homiletic manuscripts is striking, as "these *vitae* narratives were not generally a part of the homiliary" (xxv.) Richard Kelly argues that the reason for including these materials in these services was to aid in the preaching to and instruction of the laity (xlv-xlvi). Kelly further contends that, while the narratives were adapted into the vernacular for easier reception, these homiletic materials were often not chosen specifically with audience in mind or adapted to suit the tastes of the laity (xlvi).

The Saint Andrew narrative, however, does not completely fit these trends. For instance, all known Anglo-Saxon versions of the story show signs that the narrative was deliberately altered or adapted in some way to better suit its

intended audience. Despite the narrative's popularity and its use in liturgical services, Friesen perceives "there is evidence that 'Saint Andrew amongst the Cannibals' excited more anxiety among some Anglo-Saxon clergy than usual" (Friesen 228). Frederick Biggs expands upon the clergy's apprehension by noting that Ælfric's homiletic retelling of the Saint Andrew story veered more closely to the "Achaia" version of the story than the less orthodox "Mermedonia" account of the legend (475-96). Friesen further observes that, even the verse *Andreas*, which prefers the "Mermedonia" narrative, "makes numerous and significant changes to the Greek and Latin accounts to correct a wide array of their less orthodox aspects" (228). The *Andreas* poet's decision to modify the legend to better adhere to theological orthodoxy and the legend's inclusion in liturgy in spite of the clergy's apparent alarm at its contents gives insight into the legend's popularity in Anglo-Saxon England. Despite its objectionable material, poets and clergy alike still adapted the narrative freely, and the legend nonetheless reached a wide audience.

Why, then, did the Saint Andrew legend, particularly its depiction of Jesus, resonate so well with the Anglo-Saxons? This popularity occurred despite the overall absence of post-Ascension manifestations of Christ in the culture's literature. Truly, something about the nature of this particular legend and its Christophany must have resonated with the Anglo-Saxons in a way that caused

the Saint Andrew legend to take root and proliferate. By examining the elements that the *Andreas* poet expands upon and privileges in the narrative, this chapter will argue that the way Jesus is depicted in the legend appeals directly to ideas and values already held in high esteem by a Germanic audience, such as seafaring skill and the model of leadership. Through this representation, the poet depicts Jesus as being well suited to instruct both Andrew and the Anglo-Saxons alike.

### *Conversion and Cannibalism*

The context of the manuscript that contains *Andreas*, the *Vercelli Book*, provides a great deal of information regarding the poem's thematic framework. Viewed in relation to the other works of in the *Vercelli Book*, *Andreas* and its Christophany align with the document's larger thematic unity. Writing about the common thread that runs throughout the manuscript, Amity Reading notes, "the compiler [of the *Vercelli Book*] seems to have taken a particular interest in soul-and-body-themed materials" (2). Yet, Reading also observes that the *Vercelli Book's* emphasis on the soul and the body does not follow this theme in order to castigate the body in order to elevate the soul, as do some Old English works such as *Soul and Body*.<sup>4</sup> Instead, the *Vercelli* compiler seems to have preferred an

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<sup>4</sup> S.A.J. Bradley argues that "Soul and Body" represents "a hysterical revulsion against the bodily frame" (358).



understanding of “soul-and-body as completion fantasy rather than antagonistic dichotomy” (Reading 2). With the compiler’s desire to highlight works that show the body and soul in concord recognized, it seems fitting that the book’s lengthiest poetic work would contain a prolonged Christophany – a view of the Logos-made-flesh who interacts with the world, directly instructs a markedly imperfect disciple, and overcomes a force that is starkly familiar to the Anglo-Saxon audience.

While *Andreas’* Christophany might fit neatly into the *Vercelli Book’s* thematic organization, the way the Anglo-Saxons received the poem and its Christophany is less transparent. As the events of the narrative dictate and as Shannon N. Godlove rightly argues, “*Andreas* is a poem about conversion,” though just *whose* conversion is not quite clear (“Bodies as Borders” 128). Most recently, scholars have begun to interpret *Andreas* in the context of ninth-century Anglo-Saxon England, a time that places the poem “squarely in the midst of the Viking incursions” (139). Godlove speculates that, as a narrative that details the defeat and conversion of a hostile people, *Andreas* resonated with an audience who already “fear[ed] that their land was being enveloped and consumed by the Vikings” (159). Though this speculation is an important step toward a better understanding of why the Saint Andrew legend rose to popularity in ninth-century Anglo-Saxon England, hostile and external forces are not the only figures

in *Andreas* to undergo conversion. In addition to the Mermedonians, Reading argues that, “the ‘conversion effected by Andrew’s trip to Mermedonia is not only the Mermedonians’ but also his own” (16).

*“A Tale of Wonder with no Doctrinal Purpose” – Andreas’ Scholarly Reception*

At the core of *Andreas* is the Christophanic Jesus, who guides Andrew toward his eventual conversion of the Mermedonians and, perhaps, his own spiritual transformation. Nonetheless, understanding how this Christophany interacts with the Anglo-Saxons’ understanding of divine power requires the untangling of the complex history of *Andreas* scholarship. Though *Andreas* introduces a perspective on Jesus that is unique in the Germanic literary corpus, early scholars of *Andreas* dismissed the work. In particular, these scholars focused on the legend’s perceived lack of adherence to Christian principles. Speaking about both the popularity of the Saint Andrew narrative in Anglo-Saxon England and its theological message, M.R. James notes the “unwonted celebrity” with which the poet treats the legend before dismissing the tale as “a tale of wonder with no doctrinal purpose” (qtd. in James 453).<sup>5</sup>

Another common criticism levied against *Andreas* is that the poem’s heroic register does not suit its religious content. In the introduction to his 1961 edition of the poem, Kenneth R. Brooks asserts, “to the *Andreas* poet God is not the

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<sup>5</sup> For more of the discussion surrounding the poem’s portrayal of Andrew’s suffering, see pages 164-76 of this study and Fee, “Productive Destruction” 51-60.

Christian deity ... but a proud chieftain striving to make his cause successful, just like a Saxon king," a claim that is remarkably similar in language to the "Jesus in German clothes" image championed by early scholars of the *Heliand* (xxi). Through this proclamation, Brooks judges the work as unworthy of further scholars' appraisal on grounds of a fundamental weakness in its poetic style and disjunctions between its Christian subject matter and heroic form. Kenneth Sisam, likewise, dismisses the poem's content, musing that the *Andreas* poet is "only half weaned from the heathen epic forms" (16).

Other scholars have been hesitant to make claims regarding the purpose and audience of *Andreas* for a more practical reason – while several other versions of the narrative exist in Old English and other languages, no surviving account of the legend matches *Andreas'* events and structure. Of the surviving versions of the legend, the Greek rendition of the narrative, conventionally known as the *Praxeis*, is the version that most closely matches the Old English poem's content. Nonetheless, even this work is clearly not the source for *Andreas*, as the *Praxeis* differs from the Old English work in numerous narrative and structural points, including the length of Andrew's maritime journey to Mermidonia and the extent of the suffering he endures at the hands of his

captors.<sup>6</sup> Because of these differences, scholars speculate that the source for *Andreas* is a lost Latin adaptation of the Greek text (4). Because of this source's absence, scholars have also been hesitant to attribute any of *Andreas'* differences from other versions of the legend to the poet's attempts to adapt the story for his Anglo-Saxon audience.

Finally, *Andreas* is often detrimentally compared to other works of Old English poetry, and the limited scholarship that was written before the late 1980s often centers around the work's similarities to more canonical works of Anglo-Saxon literature. In particular, scholars have repeatedly noted the parallels between *Andreas* and *Beowulf*, particularly their shared structural features and the numerous instances where the two poems share common phrases and wording (Brooks *xiii-xxvii*) That the *Andreas* poet drew from *Beowulf* is largely indisputable; as R.M. Liuzza contends,

the parallels between these two poems are so close, so numerous, and so striking that a dependence of *Andreas* on *Beowulf* itself seems the only satisfying explanation (the pattern of borrowing makes the opposite possibility, that *Beowulf* borrowed from *Andreas*, far less likely.) And so the poem can be thought of as a kind of Christianized version of *Beowulf* with an apostle for its hero and pagan cannibals for its monsters. (*Old English Poetry* 171)

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<sup>6</sup> Regarding the source for the poem, Richard North and Michael D.J. Bintley speculate that "*Andreas* derives from an ancestor of the extant *Praxeis*, from a text of it written before the eighth or ninth century. The source-text was probably in Latin, for the knowledge of Greek was rare in England" (5).

Historically, these common elements led critics to unfavorably label *Andreas* as derivative of its more famous counterpart. S.K. Das argues, based on the poet's fusion of heroic tropes and religious themes, that the *Andreas* poet must have been "of very low order" (230). Brooks supports this sentiment in his edition of the work, remarking that the assertion that "[the *Andreas* poet] was 'of a very low order' is true enough if his work is assessed by the standard of *Beowulf*" (xxvi). While this "low" view of *Andreas*, especially in relation to *Beowulf*, has been largely abandoned today, *Beowulf* still looms large in any discussion of *Andreas*; though it avoids the judgmental language present in previous treatments of the work, Andrew North and Michael Bintley's 2015 edition of the text allots a substantial portion of its discussion of *Andreas'* genre and critical history to its similarities to *Beowulf*.<sup>7</sup> Though scholars recognize the *Andreas* poet's reliance upon *Beowulf*, few scholars have considered why the poet chose to transplant the popular Saint Andrew legend into this format.

While *Andreas'* structural relationship to *Beowulf* still shapes much of the poem's critical conversation, some scholarship has begun to explore *Andreas* in light of its textual analogues. The leading voice in this movement is certainly Robert Boenig, who compares multiple versions of the narrative in order to "triangulate" the sections that are most likely to be the *Andreas* poet's own

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the complex scholarly connection between *Beowulf* and *Andreas*, see Riedinger 283-312.

invention. Since Boenig's study, other scholars have employed the "triangulation" method to discuss which elements the poet choose to amend. Regarding the poem's seemingly excessive violence and brutality, Frederick M. Biggs, posits that textual evidence indicates that the *Andreas* poet expands upon his unknown source in order to include additional images of Andrew's suffering and to draw parallels between the saint's misery and Christ's passion (Biggs 413-27). Peter Dendle further builds upon this idea, arguing that this expanded depiction of Andrew's pain and loneliness provides a unique voice among the depictions of suffering saints in Anglo-Saxon prose and poetry ("Pain and Saint-Making" 39-52).<sup>8</sup>

While Biggs and Dendle each convincingly argue for *Andreas'* elaboration upon its unknown source, each scholar situates the whole of his analysis upon the parts of the narrative that depict the apostle's torture. However, the techniques Boenig puts forth to pinpoint the elements of that are unique to the *Andreas* poem also allow this study to revisit some of the early assertions in the poem's scholarly history. Particularly, discerning which parts of the poem are likely to be the poet's own invention can help to uncover the poem's "doctrinal purpose," as well as why Jesus is rendered in such strongly Germanic language.

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<sup>8</sup> For another discussion of Andrew's torture in relation to Jesus' Passion, see pages 174-76 of this study.

With the *Andreas* poet's original contributions to the narrative more easily knowable, these questions are now well worth revisiting.

### *Christophany in Andreas*

Despite Old English scholars' often-unflattering opinion of the poem, Jesus' appearance in *Andreas* provides a view that is markedly different from his representation in other works of Old English literature. In particular, a look at the surviving Old English textual corpus shows that, aside from the Last Judgment, the Anglo-Saxons did not linger on scriptural images of Christophany. While the Damascus Christophany – Jesus' appearance to Saul on the road to Damascus in the *Acts of the Apostles* – is certainly the most famous Christophany in biblical scripture, there are two additional Christophanies in the New Testament. In the first, found in Acts 7:55, Jesus speaks to the dying Saint Stephen. In the second, lengthier Christophany, spanning Acts 9:10-18, sees Jesus appears to Ananias of Damascus in a vision in order to command Ananias to heal the newly-blind Paul. Moreover, early Christian exegesis was rife with Christophanies, and theologians often read the presence of the Logos-incarnate into Old Testament events.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In addition to Jesus' appearances following the Ascension, a number of Christian traditions read Christophanic elements in the Old Testament, a practice Bogdan G. Bucur calls "Christophanic Exegesis." Particularly, several of these traditions hold that the "Angel of the Lord" often depicted in the Old Testament is synonymous with a pre-incarnational Jesus.

While Christophanies were a regular part of biblical interpretations and literature, the question remains as to how early medieval audiences viewed these events. Current scholarship into this subject identifies two dominant “types” of Christophanies – signs of “the end” and signs of revelation. Carey C. Newman explains the first view by examining Paul’s Christophany on the road to Damascus. To discuss this event, Newman writes, “The Christophany empowered Paul to narrate his life story because Christophany forms an end, the eschatological end....He can narrate his own life story because his life had already reached an end, or death/resurrection” (8). Though Paul’s experience is certainly a revelation, this understanding of Christophany is quite specific: Paul’s power as both an apostle and a speaker come as a result of his Christophanic revelation. Through his Christophanic experience, Paul’s life as Saul of Tarsus had already reached an “end;” thus the Christophany is significant in part because it marks an “end” to Saul’s story. Though Newman’s study devotes the bulk of its attention to the impact Paul’s Christophany had on his ability to narrate his own life, Newman also recognizes Jesus’ return at the Biblical Judgement Day as another critical manifestation of this belief (8).

In Old English poetry, with the notable exception of images of the Second Coming, Christophanies are largely absent. While Paul himself is a common

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However, as no surviving Old English religious texts represent this angelic being, this question will not be addressed. See: Bucur 227-244.



topic in the surviving Old English vernacular homilies, the Damascus Christophany has only a minimal presence in these writings. Even in his homily on “The Nativity of St. Paul the Apostle,” Ælfric speaks only briefly of this event; while he does provide the narrative of Paul and Ananias’ Christophanies, this description comes as a matter of course. Instead, Ælfric’s lesson centers on the symbolic importance of Paul’s conversion.<sup>10</sup> The Damascus Christophany’s absence extends to verse, as well. Paul, and by extension the events described in the *Acts of the Apostles*, does not appear in Anglo-Saxon poetry aside from the description of his martyrdom in line fourteen of the *Vercelli Book’s Fates of the Apostles*. Understandably, since the narrative is linked to Paul’s conversion, Ananias of Damascus’ vision is not present at all in Old English poetry. The Anglo-Saxon audience, it seems, was simply not interested in these events.

Nonetheless, while Anglo-Saxon poets did not give their attention to Paul’s “end,” they were fascinated by another, larger scale, end – the Second Coming, an event that prominently appears in four works of Old English poetry. While biblical scholars classify the Second Coming as a Christophany, the manner in which it appears, both in scripture and Old English poetry, makes it difficult to examine alongside the Saint Andrew narrative. The most obvious difference is in the poems’ literary genres: Second Coming Christophanies often

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<sup>10</sup> All quotes Ælfric’s homilies from Thorpe.

come as visions and rely upon figurative and allegorical language. The visionary mode of these poems is especially pronounced when considering the *Dream of the Rood*, the portrayal of the Second Coming in Old English literature that has afforded the most scholarly attention. While the poet shows Jesus in the early portion of the dream vision to be noticeably human both in his actions and, as chapter two of this study observes, his suffering, the final fifty-six lines of the poem turn away from the Crucified Jesus toward displaying the triumphant *Christus Victor*. In fact, lines 100-105 of the poem treat the moment of Jesus' death as an opportunity to transition from his mortal life to his imminent return:

Deað he þær byrigde hwæðere eft dryhten aras  
mid his miclan mihte mannum to helpe.  
He ða on heofenas astag. Hider eft fundað  
on þysne middangeard mancynn secan  
on domdæge...

[He tasted death there; however, the Lord rose again through his great might to help men. He then ascended into heaven. Again he sets out here into this Middle Earth to seek mankind on doomsday...]

With the change of narrative focus from the Incarnation to the Second Coming, the poem shifts from its emphasis on Jesus mortal form to images of heaven itself. Though this shift maintains the overarching emphasis upon both body and soul that pervades the *Vercelli Book*, this focus is a sharp contrast to *Andreas'* literary mode and genre. Traditionally, scholars have categorized *Andreas* as

either a romance or a heroic epic in a style akin to *Beowulf*.<sup>11</sup> These narrative structures better accommodate the version of Jesus depicted in the Saint Andrew legend, who has quite obviously manifested into the present world and interacts with his surroundings in a physical form.

While Newman's understanding of Christophany is a useful lens through which to view the many Old English representations of the Second Coming, it is the second definition of Christophany – that Christophany is a signifier of revelation – with which this study is more thoroughly concerned. L.W. Hurtado defines the early Christian view of Christophany broadly as “revelatory” (476). For instance, Hurtado argues that, through his Christophany experience, “Paul felt compelled (by God) to accept personally a high view of Jesus,” an idea that, while not new, was certainly (as Hurtado says) “revolutionary for Paul” (476). Bogdan G. Bucur expands upon the nature of this revelation, contending that late antique and medieval exegetes understood Christophany to be epiphanic, an understanding where “one reality *manifests* and *communicates* another, but...only to the degree to which the symbol itself is a participant in the spiritual reality and is able or called upon to embody it” (240). In its medieval epiphanic understanding, a Christophany is not a simple allegorical event, but rather a

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Boenig identifies *Andreas* as a romance, a literary mode he believes the Old English poem shares with its Latin and Greek analogues (*Saint and Hero* 1). Other scholars, such as North and Bintley, categorize *Andreas* as a heroic epic, and devote marked attention to the poem's interplay with other works of Anglo-Saxon heroic literature.

manifestation that models a future reality. To turn again to the Damascus Christophany, through viewing the manifested Jesus, Paul learned about Jesus' divinity and was compelled to emulate the Christophanic vision. It is this the relationship between the manifestation and the reality it communicated, more than the miraculous event itself, that most resonated with the medieval audience.

These observations point to two common, core elements that "revelatory" Christophanies share. First, a revelatory Christophany brings about a change in the perception of Jesus for the one who experiences it. Second, the Christophany manifests an image of Jesus that helps his followers to model their own future actions based on this revelation. These two elements, when viewed in context of Andrew's experiences and actions among the Mermedonians, help to illuminate why the Saint Andrew narrative resonated with the Anglo-Saxons.

### *The Master of the Sea*

While the legend is largely about the development of Andrew's apostolic behavior and powers, all three surviving Old English versions of the tale prominently feature Jesus. The poetic rendition, in particular, dedicates roughly half of its length to two direct conversations between Andrew and Jesus. Lines 230-980 of *Andreas* depict a Christophanic Jesus, disguised as a ship's captain, as he secretly tests Andrew. This lengthy scene contains a depiction of Jesus' divine

might that is both impressive to the Anglo-Saxon audience and an effective tool through which he can instruct the saint.

Much like the *Heliand* poet, the writer of *Andreas* demonstrates Jesus' power by highlighting his mastery over a tumultuous seascape.<sup>12</sup> Unlike the *Heliand*, which lingers upon Jesus' scriptural acts of calming the storm and walking on the waves, *Andreas* shows Jesus undertaking a task that the Anglo-Saxons would have found familiar. Upon receiving his mission from God, Andrew doubts his ability to make the sea voyage to Mermedonia before Matthew is slain. In response to this sentiment, "in nearly half the poem that follows (230-980), Andrew is repaid for his initial doubts with a tough journey at sea" (North and Bintley 1). In addition to the distance of the journey, the difficulty of the sea voyage is among Andrew's stated reasons for second-guessing God's command:

Ðæt mæg engel þin eað geferan  
<heah> of heofenum, con him holma begang,  
sealte sæstreamas ond swanrade,  
waroðfaruða gewinn ond wæterbrogan,  
wegas ofer widland. (lines 194-198a)

[Your angel is able to achieve that more easily from high in heaven, he knows the path of the waters, the salty sea-streams and the swan-road, the tumult of the surf and the terror of the water, the paths over the extensive country.]

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<sup>12</sup> See pages 67-77 of this project.

Shannon Godlove notices, “In the *Praexeis* version [of *Andreas*], the sea journey is presented as a matter of course; God simply tells Andrew to go to the sea, where he will find a boat. Andrew himself says nothing at all about the sea in his response to God’s request for travel” (“The Reluctant Apostle” 187). Likewise, Andrew does not cite the dangers of the sea as one of the obstacles for his journey in either of the Old English prose versions of the story. Instead, in each narrative Andrew simply believes the journey to be impossible because “*se siþfæt is þyder to lang ond þone weg ic ne con*” (“the journey there is too long and I do not know the way”).<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, neither prose text contains the lengthy description of the tumultuous sea during the journey itself; the *Blickling Homilies* text merely provides two statements by Jesus that acknowledge the “*hreonesse*” (“roughness”) and “*ofergytende*” (“terror”) of the seascape.<sup>14</sup> The only description of the sea is a short statement when Andrew recounts the Gospel story of Jesus’ calming of the storm: “*Onð dyde swiþe hreonesse ðære sæwe fram þæm winde wæs geworden, swa þæt þa sylfan yþa wæron ahafene ofer þæt scip*” (“and [Jesus] caused the sea to become rough from the wind, so that the waves grew up over the ship”).

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<sup>13</sup> The prose version of the legend found in *MS Corp. Chr. Coll. Calb. 198* contains a similar statement: “*forþon se siðfæt is þyder to lang, and ic þone weg ne can*” (“because the journey there is too long, and I do not know the way”).

<sup>14</sup> *Hreonesse* appears in line 62 of the homily, while *ofergytende* appears in line 70.

The *Corpus Christi* manuscript's version of the tale contains no mention of the dangerous voyage at all.

In contrast to the sea's relative absence in the Greek text and the two Old English prose versions of the legend, "the [*Andreas*] poet takes every opportunity to elaborate on the perils of the sea journey," and the difficulties that Andrew anticipates when he is first asked to travel become a reality during the vessel's journey to Mermedonia ("The Reluctant Apostle" 187). Twice, the poet provides an extended description of the harshness of the weather and the violence of the waters, and "the presentation of Andreas's and his comrades' past struggles on a stormy sea contains all the commotion of an attack by a personified relentless aggressor upon the defenseless, terrified sailors" (Olsen 387). The second of these descriptions, spanning lines 440a-445a of the poem, best demonstrates the harsh realities of Anglo-Saxon seafaring:

Frecne þuhton  
egle ealada; eagorstreamas  
beoton bordstæðu, brun oft oncwæð  
yð oðerre; hwilum upp astod  
of brimes bosme on bates fæðm  
egesa ofer yðlid.

[They seemed perilous, the terrible watery way; the sea streams  
beat the ship's walls, a dark [wave] often answered another;  
sometimes from the bosom of the sea a dread reared up over the  
crew in the hold of the boat.]

As chapter two of this study touched upon, in the Germanic world, the sea was to be both feared and viewed as a force that could neither be fully conquered nor entirely comprehended. These perceptions were, of course, not without precedence in reality. For the Germanic peoples, the sea represented the unknown, and, as Charles O. Frake observes, the “northern European seafaring tradition was not a literate, scholarly one until well into Renaissance times” (257). Instead of drawing upon written knowledge, such as maps and charts, even the simplest maritime navigation required the Germanic sailor to directly face the unknown waters in what Antonina Harbus describes as a “demonstration . . . of human endurance and skill” (22). While all sailors employed a number of cognitive devices and a wealth of culturally transmitted knowledge in order to perform maritime tasks with a surprising level of efficiency, even seafaring tasks as seemingly routine and mundane as fishing represented a tremendous degree of uncertainty and risk. As the previous chapter of this study discussed, the North Sea was an especially dangerous seascape, with perils that often mirror those that Jesus and Andrew face in their journey, such as sudden maritime storms, thick fog, and biting cold. With these dangers in mind, it is easy to see why Germanic cultures would have perceived the sea and sailing as a representation of not only tremendous physical skill, but also an act of bravery in



the face of one of the most frightening and omnipresent forces they encountered in their day-to-day lives.

For the Anglo-Saxon audience, the maritime storm in *Andreas*, undoubtedly, evoked thoughts of these seafaring difficulties. Yet, despite the ferocity of the storm and the fear of the crew, the poet takes great pains to demonstrate that Jesus himself is undaunted by both his difficult seafaring task or the dangerous climate. From the outset of the sea voyages, the poet draws the audience's attention to Jesus' miraculous powers. During his conversation with the disguised Jesus-as-sailor, "Andrew tells the Helmsman of the miracles Christ performed during his ministry on earth, focusing on one in particular: the resurrection of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their appearance before the Jews in the synagogue" (Reading 10-11). As he describes the miracle and Jesus' ministry, Andrew laments at length of the Jewish people's failure to recognize Jesus as the Messiah; the irony of this sentiment – criticizing a group for failing to recognize Christ while speaking to the disguised Jesus himself – has not escaped scholars of the poem (Reading 17). Yet, another irony also helps to shape both the scene and its social and pastoral message. At the same time that Andrew describes the miraculous actions Jesus performed during his Incarnation, another miracle – Jesus' peerless traversing of the perilous sea – takes place all around him.

The events transpiring around him do not evade Andrew's attention for long, and soon his attention shifts from relating the events of the past to narrating the miracles of the present. As he watches Jesus' fearless handling of the ship in the face of the storm, Andrew observes:

Streamwelm hwileð,  
beataþ brimæðo; is þes bat ful scrid,  
færeð famigheals fugole gelicost,  
glideð on geofone (ic georne wat  
þæt ic æfre ne geseah ofer yðlade  
on sæleodan syllicran cræft),  
is þon geliccost, swa he on lan<d>sceare  
stille stande, þær hine storm ne mæg,  
wind awecgan, ne wæterflodas  
brecan brondstæfne, hwæðere on brim snoweð  
snel under segle. (495b-505a)

[The whirlpool wells, waves beat; this boat, with sails foamy-necked like a bird, slides very quickly, glides across the deep (I know for sure that I have never seen among seafarers over the waver road a more impressive skill), it is as if it were on land standing still, where neither storm nor wind is able to shake it, nor floods of water break the shining prow, yet on the sea she coasts quickly under the sail.]

One of the most fascinating elements of this passage is the narrator's admission in lines 498b-500 of Jesus' unparalleled seafaring skill: "*ic georne wat þæt ic æfre ne geseah ofer yðlade on sæleodan syllicran cræft.*" This acknowledgement of skill echoes one of the statements Andrew makes earlier in his monologue:

Næfre ic sælidan selran mette,  
macræftigran þæs þe me þynceð  
rowend rofran, rædsnotteran,  
words wisran. (Lines 471-74)

[I have never met a better or more skillful seafarer, from what I understand, a braver sailor, wiser in counsel, or wiser with words.]

Between these two statements, Andrew lauds a number of Jesus' attributes. On two occasions (lines 472-3 and 498-500), Andrew openly acknowledges that he has never seen a more skilled sailor. The language that the *Andreas* poet uses to describe Jesus further reflects his nautical skill; twice (lines 601 and 632), the poet identifies Jesus with a variant of the phrase "*wages weard*" ("guardian of the sea"), an expression that North and Bintley translate as "Wave-Warden" (151).<sup>15</sup> Beyond this skill at sea, Andrew also identifies Jesus as possessing superior bravery (line 473), wisdom in his speech (line 474), and knowledge of the seafaring skillset (line 473). The majority of these skills relate directly to the main values and responsibilities that Germanic poets assigned to leaders in heroic poetry. Writing about these traits, Edward B. Irving observes that leaders need to do more than be skillful and bold themselves, but they also must convey these attributes to others through word and deed and inspire their followers to emulate their behaviors (352-53). Through his sailing, Jesus not only exhibits a supernatural mastery of word and skill, he also displays these attributes in a way that Andrew is able to easily recognize.

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<sup>15</sup> The poet writes the occurrence on line 601 as "*weges weard*," while he uses the variant "*wæges weard*" in line 632.

Of course, associating a skill at seafaring with Germanic heroism is an image that is not limited to *Andreas*. To view the link between heroes and the waves, one need turn no further than *Beowulf*. Fascinated with the overlapping elements of *Beowulf* and *Andreas*, scholars of the poem have noted the similarities between poet's description of Jesus' boat in line 497 ("færeð famigheals fugole gelicost") and the ship in line 218 of *Beowulf* ("flota famiheals fuggle gelicost / "a ship foamy-necked like a bird").<sup>16</sup> Speaking of this similarity, North and Bintley observe,

not only the words but also the situations [between *Andreas* and *Beowulf*] have much in common: a hero setting out to rescue a foreign land from cannibals. It is reasonable to suppose that the poet of *Andreas* borrows from *Beowulf* at this, the least expected moment, in order to invite a comparison between Andrew and Beowulf. (236)

While the larger-scale link between *Beowulf* and *Andreas* is beyond the scope of this study, two of North and Bintley's assertions – that this echo is "unexpected" and that Andrew is the heroic figure who traverses the waves – warrant further investigation.

On the surface, the *Andreas* poet's choice to echo Beowulf's journey across the sea is, indeed, unexpected. Yet, when viewed in light of the Anglo-Saxons' relationship with their surrounding seascape, this decision makes a great deal more sense. For the inhabitants of the island, the sea represented a source of

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<sup>16</sup> All *Beowulf* quotations from Klaeber.

origin. As Nicholas Howe explains, “after their conquest of the island, the Anglo-Saxons developed a myth that captured the interplay between their geography and history,” a kind of “remembered history” that served as a common, binding force throughout the culture (Howe 34).<sup>17</sup> Just as the Anglo-Saxons linked their origins with their traversing of the sea, it seems fitting that the culture’s heroes would also venture the waves in order to engage in their acts of valor. Thus, constructing the narratives of the two poems upon the foundation of this shared seafaring image would have also placed the heroes within a larger cultural memory, one that would be neither unexpected nor unwelcome for the Anglo-Saxons.

Moreover, North and Bintley’s assertion that it is Andrew himself who should be viewed as the hero who traverses the waves deserves at least a brief appraisal. Certainly, audiences would have recognized Andrew as the central hero of the poem; it is, after all, his suffering, growth, and miracles that lead to Matthew’s rescue and the conversion of the Mermedonians. However, at this point in the narrative Andrew is hardly heroic.<sup>18</sup> The apostle has drawn Jesus’ disapproval by refusing his mission, and the seafaring scene is tinged with the irony that Andrew describes Jesus while all the while being unable to recognize

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<sup>17</sup> For more regarding the interplay of the sea and Anglo-Saxon identity in Old English poetry, see: Harrison, “Seascape” 83-91.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of Andrew’s initial lack of heroic qualities and the development of his apostolic role and powers, see pages 154-64 of this study.

him. Instead, the heroic figure in this sequence is none other than Jesus himself. By appearing as an ideal seafarer, capable of navigating the waves, all the while still instructing Saint Andrew of his responsibilities and shortcomings, the Christophanic Jesus depicted in *Andreas* communicates to Andrew the heroic standard to which he is being held, a manifested ideal that Andrew, as a result of this encounter, will feel called to embody.

### *The Ascension and Christophany in Anglo-Saxon Thought*

While Jesus' return to Earth through Christophany is largely limited in Old English literature to adaptations of the Saint Andrew legend, the same cannot be said for representations, both literary and homiletic, of the Ascension. The image of Christ, returning to Heaven after the Resurrection, is well attested in Old English poetic works, including *Dream of the Rood* and Cynewulf's *Christ II*. Moreover, the Ascension holds a central place in the Old English homiletic tradition. Thus, to understand why the Anglo-Saxons gravitated toward this particular instance of Christophany, it is necessary to discuss why the culture also privileged the Ascended Christ in their writings.

While the Ascended Christ, at first glance, seems to emphasize Jesus' divine presence in heaven rather than his physical place on earth, a great many of the Old English texts that speak about the Ascension focus their attention upon tangible remnants of Jesus' incarnation. For an example of this emphasis,

one needs look further than the *Blickling Homilies*, the very same manuscript that contains a prose version of the Saint Andrew legend. Included in *Blickling Homily 11* is a prolonged discussion of the miraculous footprints that, according to tradition, Jesus leaves behind on the Mount of Olives after the Ascension. Writing about this scene, Johanna Kramer notes that the footprints “belong fully to the human realm, left on earth for everyone to see – and even touch. Their concreteness speaks to the importance of a tangible place or object that can both teach important Christian doctrines and incite faith” (73).

Old English poetry and sermons contain no shortage of theological discussion regarding the Ascension and its implications, and the physical evidence of the event also plays an important role in Anglo-Saxon writings. Kramer contends that, while “the Ascension is itself liminal at its very core as an event that takes place *between* earth and heaven,” it was the concrete evidence of this liminal event that the Anglo-Saxons often focused upon (6). Quite simply, to help with their understanding of theological concepts, the Anglo-Saxons gravitated towards the tangible, just as many cultures both ancient and modern have also done. Therefore, the Ascension held an important place in the Anglo-Saxons’ writings because it linked the faith-centric and often difficult concept of Jesus’ dual nature as both human and God to a concrete reality that could be perceived by the senses.

The emphasis upon the tangible elements of Jesus' Ascension coincides with the growing prevalence of the cults of the saints and the increased interest in religious relics in Anglo-Saxon England. Certainly, the extant Old English literature attests to a cultural interest in Christian artifacts. For instance, Cynewulf's *Elena* is a narrative depicting Saint Helena's retrieval of the True Cross, perhaps the most important relic of the Middle Ages. A number of Anglo-Saxon churches housed relics, and their presence played a key role in the consecration rite of the churches where they were held by linking the identities of the church and its parishioners to the saint (Mayr-Harting 180-81). Moreover, the relics provided a useful instructional tool for recently converted Anglo-Saxons. Speaking of Bede's description of relics, Henry Mayr-Harting writes,

[T]he pagan gods had been officially abolished and it was up to Christianity to show that this could be done without loss of the old benefits, that Christian medicine could work as well as pagan magic, that the earth where King Oswald had shed his blood or the chips of wood from the post against which Aidan had leaned were just as efficacious in drinking water as all the things which pagans dropped into it. (81)

For Anglo-Saxon audiences, relics were a powerful link to the displays and traditions of their past, and for Christian missionaries and priests, these artifacts were a way to demonstrate the Christian God's ability to fulfill the roles that the audience had come to associate with divinity. Perhaps most importantly, the relics provided a tangible link to the Christian faith is not rooted in the past of



another culture, but rather that the Anglo-Saxons could view with their senses in the present.

The importance of the tangible – whether it is an interest in the footprints left behind in the wake of Jesus’ Ascension or a fascination with Christian relics – shares much in common with the culture’s fixation on the Saint Andrew legend’s Christophany. In each of these instances, the Anglo-Saxons gravitate towards elements of the Christian message, and in particular Jesus himself, that tangibly linked the human world and the divine. In the case of the Ascension and its prevalence in Old English writings, both the event and the references to its physical evidence assure the reader not only of Jesus’ divinity, but also that this divine power came into interpersonal contact with humans.

The Anglo-Saxons’ preference for viewing the tangible aspects of Jesus’ ministry and life reflects Reading’s contention that the *Andreas* poet sought to eschew any semblance of a divided body and soul in favor of presenting these two elements in a state of “completion.” In the case of the Christophanic Jesus-as-Helmsman, his superhuman seafaring ability links Jesus’ divine power to a task that the Anglo-Saxons knew to be both difficult and extraordinarily dangerous. Moreover, the Helmsman image was no-doubt appealing partially because sailing was a tactile act in which the Anglo-Saxons could also take part; through

their mutual act of sailing, the Anglo-Saxons were able to share in the same physical sensations and challenges as the Jesus shown in *Andreas*.

Thus, the *Andreas* poet does not merely prolong his depiction of Jesus and his apostle's maritime travels for the sake of drawing upon established heroic tropes. Rather, the poet shows a clear understanding of his culture's preference for interpreting the Christian message through events that they could either experience with their senses or relate to by their experiences. By showing Jesus in the act of seafaring, an act with which the audience would have been closely familiar, the poet more thoroughly places Jesus in the realm of the tangible and understandable.

### *The Epiphany of the Christophany*

If, as Bucur suggests, the purpose of a "revelatory" Christophany is to demonstrate a future reality that the viewer can experience with their senses and attempt to replicate in their lives, the poet's purpose for extending Jesus' tangible presence in *Andreas'* seafaring narrative becomes quite clear. Because of his doubts early in the narrative, Andrew effectively unseats himself as the legend's "heroic" presence. In light of Andrew's demotion, the poet's representation of Jesus, rather than Andrew, functions as the heroic figure during the sailing sequence. This Jesus-as-hero, who interacts with the imperfect Andrew, dovetails with Bucur's definition of the early medieval understanding of Christophany. By

its very nature, the Christophany would need to manifest a truth to Andrew that the apostle is able to later emulate himself. Jesus' miraculous skill at sea is a vital part of this model of perfection, largely because it shows Jesus to perform the very task that Andrew rejects at the outset of the poem. Moreover, Jesus' sailing ability comes at the expense of a more scripturally conventional miracle. Writing about this decision, Robert Boenig observes, "Christ, significantly, guides the boat instead of stilling the waves with a miracle" (52). Because of their familiarity with the Gospels and their events, the Anglo-Saxon audience would have been well aware of Jesus' abilities to quiet storms and calm tumultuous waves. It would have surely been more unexpected that Jesus chooses to face the waves as a sailor than if he were to have overcome the waters with a more spectacular miracle. The *Andreas* poet's choice to linger upon this scene would have only compounded the audience's surprise.

Yet, it is through Jesus' expert seafaring skill that Andrew is able to overcome his fear of the waves and take his first steps to repairing his damaged relationship with his master (52). Because of this, the seafaring section of the narrative is not only an otherworldly display of maritime skill, but it is also a vital portion of the poem's instruction. As this study discussed previously, the role of the "leader" or "king" in Old English literature was to both possess heroic attributes and to model these attributes for their followers. Yet, as Irving

observes, the need to model correct behavior extends beyond simple duty: rather, the leader “[chooses his followers] because he really [wants] them to imitate him” (365). Beowulf desires for his thanes to assist him against the dragon after he fails his initial challenge, and in the *Battle of Maldon* Byrhtnoth performs his boasts and deeds partially to inspire his men to do the same. Thus, when Andrew fails at the poem’s outset to meet the standard that God expects, it becomes necessary for Jesus to demonstrate his expectations through his own actions.

With this need in mind, it is clear why Jesus performs his miraculous acts of seafaring valor in the place of the more scripturally familiar act of calming the storm and waves – Jesus was not required to prove the scope of his powers, but rather he needed to model for Andrew that his lord is capable of performing the task that Andrew, at first, considered insurmountable. The lengthy seafaring scene, in essence, shows Andrew a vivid image of the fearless, heroic figure that he is expected to strive to become. This model accentuates the gap between where Andrew currently is and where God wishes him to be, thus priming both the apostle and the audience for the growth that follows.

The instructive nature of Jesus’ appearance is cemented by his brief reappearance at the end of Andrew’s captivity. Suffering from the wounds

sustained from four days of torture, Andrew calls out to God in sorrow. In response, Jesus again appears in human form:

þa com dryhten god  
in þæt hlinræced, hæleða wuldor,  
ond þa wine synne wordum grette  
ond frofre gecwæð, fæder manncynnes,  
lifes lareow, heht his lichoman  
hales brucan: "Ne scealt ðu in henðum a leng  
searohæbbendra sar þrowian." (Lines 1462b-68)

[Then Lord God, the glory of heroes, came into the prison and then greeted His friend with words of comfort, the father of mankind, the teacher of life, and He [Jesus] bid him [Andrew] to enjoy health of his body: 'Nor shall you suffer in oppression any longer the bodily pain of warriors.']

In a stark shift from his earlier disappointment, here Jesus indicates his satisfaction with Andrew's conduct amongst the cannibals. Also of note is that, with his promise that Andrew will no longer suffer harm at the hands of his captors, Jesus signifies Andrew's completion of the trial that he foreshadowed when he departed from the apostle. While the implications of this approval will be explored at greater length in chapter four of this study, here Jesus appears a final time in order to inform his disciple that the terms of his reeducation have been met, and the gap that separated the apostle from the "heroic" ideal had, at long last, been closed.

### *Andreas and the Anglo-Saxon Ideal*

Though the reason the *Andreas* poet drew upon the expectations of his Germanic audience while writing his version of the legend's Christophany and miracles is clear, the question still remains as to why this particular narrative and its Christophany took a firm hold in the Anglo-Saxon imagination. The answer to this question lies at the intersection of several scholarly views – that the poet inexpertly combines Germanic elements with Christian themes, that the poem does not depict Christ, but rather a “Saxon king,” that *Andreas* is a retelling of *Beowulf*, and that the narrative is concerned with both the redemption of the Mermedonians and Andrew himself. To address the first two critiques, I turn to Anita Riedinger, who contends, “the fact that the characters in *Andreas* happen to resemble Germanic secular warriors like Beowulf and his *comitatus* is not in itself so remarkable: so do most Old English poetic saints” (284). But, there is a key difference between *Andreas* and other “Germanicized” works of Old English, such as *Dream of the Rood* or *Guthlac*. At its core, all versions of the Saint Andrew legend are embedded with the messages of loyalty and correction; these themes are, of course, also at the heart of Old English heroic writings. The inclusion of heroic language and structure simply accentuates the elements of the poem that the Anglo-Saxon audience would have already found appealing.

With solidly “Germanic” and “heroic” elements already embedded in the Saint Andrew narrative, it seems natural that the *Andreas* poet transplants the events of the work into the framework of *Beowulf*. Moreover, recognizing that Jesus serves as a lordly model of proper conduct also brings Amity Reading’s belief – that *Andreas* is just as much about Andrew’s conversion as it is about the Mermedonians’ salvation – into sharper view. As Andrew receives his instruction, the Anglo-Saxon audience, likewise, hears Jesus’ direction and witnesses Andrew’s response to these refinements. Reading expands upon the poem’s interactive relationship with the audience, stating, “the audience is meant to *recognize* themselves (not just typological resonances) in the events that they are experiencing, Andrew through action, the audience through reaction” (22). By hearing about Andrew’s actions in the poem, the audience also views their own shortcomings and, in turn, sees these struggles addressed in the narrative. Thus, devoting a significant portion of his narrative to the Christophanic Jesus and his superhuman skill at navigating the waves, the *Andreas* poet draws upon a previously established cultural ethos in order to model for the audience the same lessons of obedience and devotion that Saint Andrew himself learns. The Anglo-Saxon homilists and the *Andreas* poet did not adjust the Saint Andrew narrative to appeal to the Germanic heroic mind, but rather these writers turned to this narrative because the image of Jesus, effortlessly traversing the waves

while modeling right behavior and wisdom to his follower, was already a part, albeit in a briefer form, of the “The Acts of Andrew and Matthew among the Cannibals” narrative. The poet needed to only expand upon an image that is already remarkably close to the Anglo-Saxons’ cultural ideals.

### *Conclusion*

While traditionally disregarding by scholars as a work that is derivative of the “true” Old English masterpiece *Beowulf* and devoid of complex theological meaning, *Andreas* is, when viewed alongside its religious context and textual analogues, a poetic work that strongly reflects the Anglo-Saxon cultural and spiritual mindsets. The extended Christophany that makes up the poem’s core and the miracles that Jesus performs in this scene frame the theological concepts of faith and endurance in the face of difficulty in a way that the Anglo-Saxon audience would have found relatable and appealing.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Divine Patron: Miracles and Apostolic Power in Old English and Old Saxon Literature

While Jesus' divine power is often the most dynamic and impressive force in both Old English and Old Saxon literature, he is not the only figure to wield supernatural might in these cultures' writings. In Old English literature, Jesus' disciples and their miraculous actions are also a common narrative subject. Though as an adaptation of the life of Jesus the *Heliand* limits the actions that his disciples themselves can undertake, the Old Saxon poem does provide ample discussion of the relationship with Jesus that allows his followers to gain miraculous powers. This chapter argues that the apostles depicted in both Old English and Old Saxon literature are connected to God's divine might through Germanic understandings of covenants and relationships. Through their adherence to these systems, the disciples receive miraculous power and the authority to speak for their lord, though they also run a great risk of losing their access to God's divine power.

Catherine A. M. Clarke expands upon the transfer of power and authority between a divine patron and a recipient of patronage in her book, *Writing Power in Anglo-Saxon England*. To discuss these power dynamics, she "identifies and

examines the ways in which late Anglo-Saxon texts present structures of hierarchical or vertical relationship alongside patterns of reciprocity and economics of interaction and obligation between groups and individuals” (Clarke 1). In order to fulfill their own promises to their servants, patrons distribute their favor to those who meet their standards of obligation. In this way, power flows from patron to recipient in a hierarchical pattern, with power resting with the patron and flowing forth to those who act in accordance to his stipulations.

While Clarke gives the majority of her emphasis to real-world patronage relationships, such as the interplay between a poet and a sponsoring lord, she also devotes a section of her study to understanding how power flows between the Christian God and his disciples. In particular, Clarke examines the Old English hagiography *Guthlac*, the story of a former warrior who retires to a wasteland in order to devote himself to a peaceful life in the service of God. Speaking of Guthlac’s movement from an Anglo-Saxon social community to an isolated landscape, Clarke notes that the poem shows the saint to take part in “a new spiritual community – and strictly ordered hierarchy – under God” (23).

The *Exeter Book*'s Guthlac legend contains a prolonged confrontation between Guthlac and his heavenly supporters and a host of demons.<sup>1</sup> Upon arriving in his newfound desert home, Guthlac is repeatedly tempted by demonic forces, who are intent on causing him to turn away from God. In response, an angel appears to Guthlac and encourages the desert-dweller to rebuke the demons. In response, the demons drag Guthlac into hell, where he still refuses to turn from God. As a reward for his faith, the apostle Bartholomew comes to Guthlac's aid, ordering the demons to release Guthlac. Under this command, the demons personally carry Guthlac out of hell, finally freeing the desert-dwelling saint from the demonic onslaught.

Despite the care she takes in constructing the relationship between a divine patron and an earthly follower, Clarke does not address one of the most visible interactions between the Christian God and humankind – the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. This exclusion is keenly felt in Old English poetry, as the complex relationship that the apostle Andrew shares with Jesus in *Andreas* is left unmentioned. Finally, Clarke's study does not take into account the relational language that is already present in both the texts themselves and Christian tradition. This absence is also present in scholarship on the *Heliand*;

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<sup>1</sup> The Guthlac legend is depicted in two distinct poems, conventionally titled *Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B*, which come sequentially in the *Exeter Book*. However, as *Guthlac B* primarily narrates the events that transpire after the saint's confrontation with the demons and contains few miraculous acts, this study will focus exclusively on *Guthlac A*.

despite prominently featuring the apostle Peter and his attempt to walk across the waves, no extant Old Saxon scholarship closely examines the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. While demonstrating elements of Clarke's patronage/recipient dynamic, both the *Heliand* and *Andreas* contain specific language that helps the poet define the nature of Jesus' relationship with his disciples to the audience. Through the use of this language, the poets outline the stipulations the disciples must meet in order to receive and maintain their supernatural powers.

*The Perilous Sea: Apostleship in the Old Saxon Heliand*

On the surface, the *Heliand* seems like a poor place to find examples of miracles performed by any source other than Jesus himself. According to Christian tradition, Jesus' twelve disciples do not gain access to miraculous abilities until they receive the Holy Spirit fifty days after their lord's death, an event known as Pentecost. Indeed, the events of both the *Heliand* and the Vatican *Genesis* both take place before the disciples receive their apostolic commission and their miraculous powers on Pentecost; as a result, Old Saxon literature does not contain lengthy displays of apostolic might. However, though its content may limit the number and magnitude of the disciples' miracles, the *Heliand* both reflects and builds upon Clarke's proposed system of patronage by clearly stating the requirements that Peter must meet in order to take part in a patronage

system. Moreover, the language that the poet uses to describe the single miracle attributed to one of Jesus' followers – Peter's walk over the waves – helps to illustrate the nature of the relationship between Jesus and his followers to the Saxon audience

The *Heliand*, like the Gospels themselves, contains only one event that might be viewed as an "apostolic miracle" – Peter's attempt to walk on water. The scene's narrative, shown in fitt 35 of the poem, closely mirrors scriptural versions of the narrative:

"nu gi modes sculun  
fastes fahen; ne si iu forht hugi  
[gibariad] gi baldlico: ik bium that barn godes,  
is selbes sunu, the iu uuið thesumu see scal,  
mundon uuið thesan meristrom." Tho sprac imu en thero manno  
[angegin]  
oðar bord skipes, [baruuirðig] gumo,  
Petrus [the] godo, -ni uuelde pine tholon,  
uuateres uuiti -: "ef thu it uuldand sis", quað he,  
"herro the godo, so mi an minumu hugi thunkit,  
[het] mi than tharod gangan te thi oðar thesen geþenes strom,  
[drokno] oðar diap uuater, ef thu min drohtin sis,  
managoro mundboro." Tho het ine mahtig Crist  
gangan imu tegegnes. He uuarð garu sano,  
stop [af] themu stamne endi stridiun geng  
forð te is [froian]. [Thiu] flod anthabde  
thene man thurh maht godes, antat he [imu] an is mode bigan  
andraden diap uuater, tho he driþen gisah  
thene uueg mid uuindu: uundun ina [uðeon],  
[hoh] strong umbihring. Reht so he tho an is hugi tuehode,  
so uuek imu that uuater under, endi he an thene uuag innan,  
sank an thene seostrom, endi [he] hriop san after thiu  
[gahon] te themu godes sunie endi gerno bad,

that he ine tho [generidi, tho] he an [nodiun] uuas,  
thegan an gethuinge. (Lines 2927b-2950a)

[“Now you must to be firm of mind; do not be in fear in your mind; conduct yourself bravely: I am the Child of God, His own Son, who is obliged to protect you against this sea and from the sea current.” Then one of the men, the very worthy man Peter the good, spoke toward him over the boards of the ship - he did not wish to suffer pain, the punishment of the water -: “If you are the Ruler,” he said, “the good Lord, as I think in my mind, command me to go thither to you over this flood, dry over deep water, if you are my Lord, the patron of many people.” Then mighty Christ commanded him to come towards Him. He was prepared immediately, and he stepped out from the stern-post and strode forth, going toward his Lord. The water maintained the man through the might of God, until he began in his spirit to dread the deep water, when he saw the waves driven by the wind: the waves moved around him, the high seas surrounded [him]. Just as he began doubting in his spirit, the water under him became weak, and he sank into the waves, the seastream, and soon after he called out quickly to the Son of God and asked earnestly that he rescue him, because he, his thane, was in distress and in danger.]

While the events themselves mirror biblical events, the poet makes significant changes in the scene’s presentation that help to clarify both Jesus’ expectations for his disciples and the benefits of showing this devotion. As Murphy observes, the inclusion of Peter’s initial fear of the storm and waters is the *Heliand* poet’s invention; both the Latin and the Old High German versions of the *Diatessaron* mention fear only when Jesus enters the scene (*Saxon Savior* 70). The *Heliand* poet’s primary goal is to highlight the disciples’ peril and their desire to escape this danger. The poet’s reasons for accentuating the threat of the storm are threefold. First, by increasing the danger of the situation, the poet brings his

audience's attention to Jesus' ability to overcome this danger. In this way, the *Heliand* poet presents Jesus as the standard worthy of imitating for both Peter and the Saxons; this choice is reminiscent of the *Andreas* poet's decision to extend his poem's seafaring narrative in order to build Jesus as a proper heroic model for Andrew.<sup>2</sup> Second, the added emphasis on the storm's threat makes Jesus' offer to grant Peter the miraculous ability to master this danger all the more appealing. Finally, through his words, Jesus makes the conditions of their exchange clear: if Peter follows the previously established guidelines and maintains his faith in the system, then he will be able to perform the miraculous feat that Jesus displays. The subsequent narration surrounding Peter's physical actions and verbal response indicate that he understands these terms; despite recognizing the clear dangers the waters represent, Peter acknowledges Jesus' divinity and the miracle he wishes to perform.

Peter's understanding of the conditions of devotion reflects Jesus' earlier instructions during the Sermon on the Mount. Narrating Jesus' instructions to the disciples, the poet sets forth the conditions that Christ's followers must meet to perform miracles in his name:

He im tho beðiu befalh  
ge te seggennea sinom uuordun,  
huuo man himilriki gehalon scoldi,  
uuidbredan uuelan, gia he im geuuald fargaf,

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<sup>2</sup> See pages 119-130 of this study.

that sie mostin helean halte endi blinde,  
liudeo lefhedi, legarbed manag,  
suara suhti, (Lines 1837-1843a)

[He gave them two orders there. They were always to say his words on how one should get to the kingdom of heaven, the most extensive good, and also He gave them power so that they could heal the crippled and the blind – the frailties of people – many a malady, the severe sickness.]<sup>3</sup>

While the stipulations upon the disciples' conduct and the miraculous reward that they will receive as a result of their behavior differ between the Sermon and the Walking on Water events, the structure of the agreement remains consistent. In exchange for obedience (teaching the Christian message or obeying Jesus' direct commands) the disciples gain access to supernatural abilities (such as healing and the ability to walk on water). Through these two commands, the poet demonstrates clearly to the audience that the disciples receive their miraculous powers as a direct result of their relationship with Jesus, and in order for his followers to maintain this dynamic, they must also adhere to a clearly defined set of rules.

This scene is not built entirely around Jesus' role in the patron/disciple dynamic. The narrative that leads to and follows Peter's venture onto the waves highlights the disciples' role in the exchange of devotion and power. Though his

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<sup>3</sup> Jesus' second command to the disciples is that they should not receive payment in exchange for their miraculous healings. As this stipulation is not relevant to the present discussion, it has been excluded from the above quotation.



observation on the matter is incomplete, Murphy observes the presence of the patron/recipient relationship in this scene, remarking, "Peter calls on Christ's feudal bond as Chieftain to a thane . . . with its obligation on a lord to render help to his warrior-vassals. The thanes had done their part earlier in the scene when they showed loyalty by gathering at the shore and sailing according to orders" (*Saxon Gospel* 96n133). Peter's cry for help situates his peril within the context of the exchange of devotion and benefits that Jesus sets forth during the Sermon on the Mount.

However, Jesus' obligation to Peter is more complex than a simple reward for his follower's loyal sailing. Instead, Peter's plea draws upon the way that the *Heliand* poet previously constructs the relationship between the Christian God and his human followers. Speaking of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus, respectively, Murphy notes, "John was to be a warrior-companion (*gisid*) of the King of Heaven and Christ, and thus to be raised in the virtue of loyalty. Christ is to be the Chieftain of many such warriors and thus is brought up fittingly on the appropriate reciprocal virtue: love (*minnea*)" (*Saxon Gospel* 18n27). *Minnea* appears numerous times over the course of the poem, usually in the context of both the "love" Jesus displays for his followers and that he asks for his followers

to return.<sup>4</sup> Both Berr and Sehrt assign “love” as the primary meaning of *minnea* (390; 226). Kluge’s *Etymological Dictionary of the German Language*, likewise, cites a primary definition of “love”; however, Kluge provides further etymological information for *minnea*, noting that the word was originally associated with ideas of “recollection, memory” (“Minne” 237-38).<sup>5</sup> This semantic sense clarifies the nature of the “love” Jesus promises his faithful and, in return, asks from his followers; by associating Jesus with *minnea* shortly after his birth, the poet indicates that Jesus will perpetually keep his followers in his mind and honor his promise of patronage. Thus, by calling out to Jesus and citing the peril of his situation as he begins to sink, Peter shows a keen awareness of his lord’s promise of *minnea*, the assurance that Jesus will love his disciples and honor their covenant.

In response to Peter’s request for Jesus to honor his role as a patron, Christ clarifies the stipulations of the relationship:

Thiodo drohtin  
antfeng ine [mid] is faðmun endi fragode sana,  
te hui he [tho getuehodi:] “huat, thu [mahtes] getruoian uuel,  
uuiten that te uuaru, that [thi] uuateres [craft]  
an themu see innen thines siðes ni mahte,

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<sup>4</sup> Lines 4252-53 provide an example of Jesus’ use of *minnea* as a directive for his followers. Speaking to the Jews who have come to capture him, Jesus “*het sie liht godes / minnion an iro mode*” (“commanded them to love the light of God in their hearts”).

<sup>5</sup> Sehrt allocates a secondary definition of “memory,” and Berr notes that the “meaning of *minnea* was apparently [originally] ‘memory’” (226). Berr also notes that *minnea*’s cognates in Old Norse, Gothic, Greek, and Latin also share the “memory” semantic sense.

lagustrom [gilettien], so long so thu [habdes] geloþon te mi  
an thinumu [hugi] hardo. (Lines 2950b-2956a)

[The Lord received him with his outstretched arm and immediately asked him why he then doubted: "Verily, you are able to trust well and understand that the power of the water in the sea, the stream of the lake, was not able to prevent you as long as you had faith in Me firmly in your spirit."]

Absent from this rebuke is Jesus' comment to Peter from the Gospel of Matthew – "O ye of little faith" – a statement that is also present in Tatian's *Diatessaron* (Murphy, *Saxon Savior* 71). In the place of this reprimand, Jesus instead directly acknowledges the terms and benefits of the system of patronage. Having just proven his willingness to uphold the system, Jesus takes this opportunity to clarify what Peter must do to strengthen his bond with his patron. By changing Jesus' response to Peter's doubt, the *Heliand* poet transforms the scene into an instructional narrative. Rather than the Scripture's chastisement for a lack of faith, "[the *Heliand's*] instruction reemphasizes the importance of an *unwavering* faith in Christ" (71). Through this instruction, there is no mistake for either Peter or the Saxon audience as to what a disciple of Jesus must do in order to take part in the chain of authority; by giving faith to their patron, Jesus' disciples receive an active, protective *minnea*.

The expectation for Jesus to provide support and instruction in exchange for Peter's loyalty and proper behavior is reminiscent of the king/thane dynamic displayed in Germanic literature. Like the *Heliand's* Jesus, Byrhtnoth in the

opening lines of *Battle of Maldon* provides his followers with instruction as to how to properly prepare for battle.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the core of Wiglaf's rebuke to his fellow warriors at the conclusion of *Beowulf* is centered around the thane's failure to display proper devotion to their king despite his benevolence. With these works in mind, the faith that Jesus demands of his disciples – a dynamic built upon an exchange of devotion for instruction and reward – would not have been unfamiliar to a Germanic audience.

Through the changes in the “walking on water” narrative's presentation, the *Heliand* poet frames the relationship between Jesus and his disciples as a system of patronage. Murphy expands upon the poet's changes to the narrative's focus, asserting: “The *Heliand* author thus creates a clear and balanced form that shifts the emphasis from Christ's divine power and Peter's lack of faith to Christ's divine power and personal engagement for Peter and Peter's subsequent ability to walk on the water with Christ” (72). Peter, by virtue of his faith in Christ, is briefly able to emulate Jesus' miracle. When Peter's faith falters, his connection to this system of patronage is broken, and his ability to perform the miracle is, likewise, damaged. Yet, this loss of ability also provides the text with another opportunity to clarify what Jesus expects from his followers, both to Peter and the Saxon audience.

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<sup>6</sup> For a comparison between Byrhtnoth's role as a king and the depiction of Jesus shown in *Andreas*, see pages 136-37 of this study.

### *Covenants and Apostolic Patronage in Andreas*

While the surviving works of Old Saxon literature do not show Jesus' twelve disciples after they receive their apostolic gifts at Pentecost, Old English literature does not share this limitation. As the previous chapter of this study notes, the narrative of *Andreas* prominently features the apostles Andrew and Matthew, and this text also demonstrates the powers that Andrew wields by virtue of his position. Moreover, because of his full apostolic status, Andrew is able to wield his power with more freedom than the *Heliand's* Peter. However, this miraculous power is also contingent upon Andrew's full participation in a covenant between himself and God, and his failure to properly adhere to this covenant results in the loss of both his apostolic abilities and the protection he receives from God.

As this study discussed previously, after being called upon by God to rescue Matthew, Andrew questions whether he can reach Mermedonia before Matthew's impending execution.<sup>7</sup> This response effectively dismisses God's ability to deliver the apostle to his destination. With this refusal, the poet marks Andrew "as a model not of perfect sanctity, but of continuous, fallible conversion" (Reading 5). Andrew's continual refinement and reshaping extends to his ability to use his apostolic gifts. Following his initial refusal, "the rest of the

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<sup>7</sup> For this study's initial discussion of Andrew's refusal, see pages 120-21.

poem shows Andrew's moral recovery and access of superhuman powers" (North and Bintley 66). Andrew must restore his relationship with his lord over the course of the narrative before he can again benefit from his patron's miraculous boons.

As chapter three of this study explores, the *Andreas* poet uses Jesus' appearance during a lengthy sea voyage to Mermedonia as a way to reeducate Andrew. While this chapter will not reconsider this sequence at length, it is necessary to revisit elements from this scene in order to better understand Andrew's own development. During the journey, the disguised Jesus asks Andrew to recount his faith. As both Amity Reading and this study's previous observations point out, Andrew spends a great deal of time describing Jesus' miraculous acts during his maritime voyage (11-12). During his conversation with the disguised Jesus-as-helmsman, Andrew retells four of Christ's miraculous feats – his scriptural acts of calming of the storm, transmuting water into wine, and feeding the multitude, as well as an apocryphal story that shows Jesus animating stone statues and resurrecting the Old Testament patriarchs. This prolonged description of Jesus' miracles speaks to Andrew's fascination with miraculous signs and their physical effects upon the world. Andrew's fixation upon his patron's divine power, however, is also a symptom of the apostle's spiritual shortcoming – the apostle's speech does not mention his

commission as a disciple to convert others to his beliefs. Perhaps more notably, Andrew fails to discuss two central elements of his faith – Jesus’ Crucifixion and Resurrection. Certainly, the Anglo-Saxons saw the miraculous elements of the Gospel as fascinating; among the images included on the eighth-century Ruthwell Cross is Jesus’ healing of a blind man (Dunn 155). Though these miracles were important, the Anglo-Saxon Church also placed a tremendous emphasis on the “Great Commission” that concludes the Gospel of Matthew – to teach and baptize people of all nations. Regarding the Anglo-Saxons’ understanding of the Commission, Godlove contends,

the conclusion of Matthew’s Gospel takes on a kind of life of its own in Anglo-Saxon religious writings, often being cited or echoed in the correspondence of missionaries such as Boniface, and repeated in the words of apostles or Christ as they are depicted in Old English poetry, such as Cynewulf’s *Christ II: Ascension*. (*Apostolic* 21)

For a culture that placed such importance on the Great Commission, its absence from Andrew’s dialogue with Jesus is notable. This exclusion is all the more striking because this portion of the conversation is unique to the Old English poem. Andrew has been sent to both convert the Mermedonian people and bring them the Gospel message, but he does not view the command to convert to be worthy of mention. Instead, Andrew’s words indicate that he is more interested in the miraculous elements of Jesus’ ministry than its spiritual underpinnings. As such, while Jesus’ appearance on the boat might demonstrate proper heroic

behavior to the apostle, the events that take place upon the waves also indicate that the apostle's interests are critically misguided.

With his flaw properly highlighted, Andrew's experiences while in Mermedonia move the saint toward correcting his errors. Before this reeducation can properly begin, the saint must first arrive at his destination. In order to travel safely into Mermedonia, Andrew appears to receive a boon from God that is similar in magnitude to that experienced by Guthlac—each saint's respective patron relocates its charge through a supernatural flight. Like the hermit-saint's protectors, angelic carriers lift Andrew into the air:

Ða gelædan het lifes brytta  
ofer yða geþræc englas sine,  
fæðmun ferigean **on fæder wære**  
leofne mid lissum ofer lagufæsten,  
oððæt sæwerige slæp ofereode; (Lines 822- 26, my emphasis)<sup>8</sup>

[Then the author of life ordered his angels to travel over the rush of waves, to ferry the beloved man in their arms with mildness into **the covenant of the Father** over water-fastness, until sleep overcame the sea-weary one.]

The purpose of the saints' respective flights is, of course, different. Guthlac requires protection while Andrew is in dire need of transportation. Despite this difference, these miracles do share an important unifying feature; in both cases, the saint has no influence over the event. In the case of Andrew, the apostle is not

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<sup>8</sup> Old English text from *Andreas* is from North and Bintley. All translations into Modern English are my own.



even aware of the angels' presence. At this stage of the poem, Andrew is not an active wielder of godly might, but rather a passive recipient of his patron's divine power.

More important than Andrew's lack of involvement in this miracle is the way the *Andreas* poet describes the events. Of particular interest is the poet's use of *wære* in line 824. In their 2015 edition of *Andreas*, Richard North and Michael Bintley define this word as "covenant/compact" (364).<sup>9</sup> Writers of Old English prose and poetry often use *wær* to refer to the covenant between God and his human faithful. The poet of the Old English *Exodus* uses *wær* three times to indicate specifically the covenant between God and the Israelites.<sup>10</sup> This word further appears in this context in both *Daniel*, and "a recurrent motif in *Genesis A* is the *wær* 'covenant' . . . between God and the Israelites" (Lucas 123). In his etymological dictionary of Old English, Holthausen links *wær* to the verb *werian* and the noun *weard* (380). Clark Hall defines *werian* as "to guard, keep, protect, defend," and he defines *weard* to mean "watching, ward, protection, guardianship." (346; 342). For the Anglo-Saxons, the very language used to describe God's covenant with humankind was linked with ideas of protection and defense. Lucas further expands upon the idea of protection by detailing the

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<sup>9</sup> Clark Hall provides a more robust definition: "faith, fidelity: keeping, protection: agreement, treaty, compact, pledge, covenant: bond (of friendship)."

<sup>10</sup> See *Exodus* lines 304, 387, and 420.

conditions associated with this *wær*: “in return for heart-felt obedience in carrying out His laws God will grant Abraham and the Israelites protection” (124). He expands upon the nature of the protection this covenant provides, asserting, “God’s protection usually involves intervention” (127).<sup>11</sup>

The Anglo-Saxons’ view of a *wær* that is fundamentally built around devotion and protection differs greatly from other understandings of the Abrahamic covenant. To describe this relationship, Jerome’s Latin Vulgate prefers the word “testamentum,” a legal word that the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* defines as “will, testament” (“Testamentum” 1931). Similarly, the *Oxford English Dictionary* identifies the Modern English word “covenant” as meaning, “A compact, contract, bargain; sometimes, the undertaking, pledge, or promise of one of the parties” (“Covenant, n1”). These understandings of “covenant” frame it as a formal, binding arrangement rather than an agreement of protection and intervention. Thus, for an Anglo-Saxon audience, the presence of *wær* in the narrative would serve as a lexical indicator for a system of patronage and exchange between God and those under his aegis.

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<sup>11</sup> While the term is almost exclusively used in Christian poetry, *wær* also appears in line 26 of *Beowulf*. Here, the poet describes Scyld’s death as turning himself “*on frean wære*” (“into the covenant of the Lord”). While *Beowulf*’s uncertain relationship between its Christian and heroic subject matter make it difficult to further comment on the nature of Scyld’s covenant, *wær*’s appearance demonstrates that the word applies not only to covenants between God and groups of people, but also to relationships with individuals.

For the Anglo-Saxons, the concept of a covenant with the Christian God is closely intertwined with the exchange of devotion and safety. However, just as with any system that revolves around obedience, this covenant is built upon a series of implicit and explicit expectations. First, in order for humans to properly take part in the system, God must make the terms of devotion clear. In the case of *Exodus'* Israelites, the people are provided protection in return for their faith in God, and they are left infamously unprotected from other earthly forces when they run afoul of the covenant. Perhaps most importantly, in order for the human participants to properly show the devotion that is expected of them, they must also understand how to demonstrate this loyalty. Finally, the divine patron must inform the human participants in the covenant of their errors if they go astray. It is only through this final step that participants can correct their behavior and restore the covenant.

This arrangement, in many ways, reflects the changes that the *Heliand* poet makes to the Gospels in order to clarify the requirements for the disciples to receive their miraculous healing abilities and for Peter to walk on water. Jesus informs Peter that faith and obedience are necessary to perform these miracles, and the disciple verbally confirms his understanding. After Peter falls short of his goal, Jesus then instructs him as to the reasons for his failure so that the disciple can again take part in the fellowship. Just as the miraculous actions in

the Old Saxon poem are contingent upon proper behavior, the divine protection that the Anglo-Saxons' covenant provides is dependent upon obedience.

By including *wær* in this scene to describe the relationship between Andrew and God, *Andreas* becomes an outlier among the surviving Old English versions of the Saint Andrew legend. Neither of the Old English prose accounts use *wær* to describe the relationship between God and apostle. By including this word in his poem, the *Andreas* poet emphasizes a particular kind of relationship between Andrew and Jesus.<sup>12</sup> The nature of this covenant is further clarified by the context in which this word appears. The poet uses *wær* immediately before Andrew realizes his failure to uphold his covenant, and shortly before he learns of the suffering he will endure to repair his damaged relationship with his patron. The poet frames the agreement between Jesus and Andrew as one built on protection, and therefore the torment Andrew suffers when he loses his divine defense is not unexpected. Thus, through his lexical choices in this scene, the poet marks the relationship between Andrew and Jesus as the most serious of bonds, a covenant that can bring both great earthly torment and powerful divine protection for its human agent.

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<sup>12</sup> Because of the frequency that the cognate verb *wær* appears in Old English texts, it is difficult to determine the number of times *wær* is used to indicate a covenant. As a result, the contexts in which writers used *wær* to indicate a covenant and the extent to which the audience understood this relationship remains unclear.

Following the flight's conclusion, Jesus instructs Andrew about his shortcoming in upholding the covenant and affords him the opportunity to acknowledge his failure:

Him andswarode ealwalda god:  
'No ðu swa swiðe synne gefremedest  
swa ðu in Achaia ondsæc dydest,  
ðæt ðu on feowegas feran ne cuðe  
ne in þa ceastre becuman mehte,  
þing gehēgan þreora nihta  
fyrstgemearces swa ic þe feran het  
ofer wega gewinn; wast nu þe gearwor  
þæt ic eaðe mæg anra gehwylcne  
fremman ond fyrþran freonda minra  
on landa gehwylc, þær me leofost bið. (Lines 925-930)

[All-ruling God answered him: 'No, you committed as severe a sin as when you resisted me in Achaea, saying that you did not know how to go to remote lands, nor that you could come into the city, to make your appointment within the interval of three nights as I commanded when I told you to traverse the strife of the waves; now you know very well how easily I am able to support and to promote any friend of mine onto any shore where it most pleases me.']

Andrew's miraculous flight is, ultimately, Jesus' (the patron's) way of instructing Andrew (the recipient) about how he fell short of the established covenant. This instruction mirrors Jesus' advice to Peter at the ending of the *Heliand's* "walking on water" narrative; as in the Old Saxon poem, the purpose of Jesus' words to Andrew are to reiterate the importance of an unwavering faith, while also reminding the listener of the benefits of a constant faith. This instruction restores

the link between the two parties, though future events are required to strengthen the bond.

*The Broken Body and Apostolic Power*

While the way for Andrew to renew his covenant with Jesus and return to the fullness of his apostolic power is now clear, the price of fully repairing the covenant with his patron is dire indeed. After he deposits his charge on the Memedonian shore, Jesus informs Andrew that while Jesus will grant his wayward servant protection from death, the apostle will, nonetheless, suffer greatly. Following the system's restoration, Christ outlines the nature of the newly repaired covenant:

Nu ðu, Andreas, scealt edre geneðan  
in gramra gripe. Is þe guð weotod,  
heardum heoruswengum scel þin hra dæled  
wundum weorðan, wættre geliccost  
faran flōde blod. Hīe þīn feorh ne magon  
deaðe gedælan, þeh ðu drype ðolie,  
synnigra slege. Ðu þæt sar aber;  
ne læt þe ahweorfan hæðenra þrym,  
grim gārgewinn, þæt ðu gode swice,  
dryhtne þinum. (Lines 950-959)

[You now, Andrew, are must proceed at once into the grip of the enemy. War is appointed to you, with hard, fierce sword strokes your body is to be dealt injuries, like water the blood will flood out. They are not able to bring your life to death, though you may suffer strokes, the beatings of sinful men. You will bear that pain; do not let the multitude, the grim spear-thrusts of heathens, turn you away from God, your Lord]

In this speech, Jesus explains the disciple's responsibilities and the requirements that Andrew must meet in order to continue strengthening the covenant: Jesus will, indeed, intercede to provide Andrew with protection against death during his visit. However, the covenant is not restored completely, and the apostle will not be safeguarded against bodily injury, and he is expected to endure all other punishment without forsaking his patron.

As the third chapter of this study relates, no event in the modern history of *Andreas* scholarship has received more attention than the saint's subsequent torture at the hands of the Mermedonians. This torture is not meant as a surprise for the apostle; rather, it is the prescient certainty that he will experience adversity that allows Andrew to continue restoring the damaged covenant (Dendle, "Pain and Saint-Making" 39). What follows is a sequence of events that Frederick Biggs identifies as directly mirroring Christ's own suffering during the Crucifixion (414). Christopher Fee builds upon Biggs' observation by describing the saint's torture as "transformative"; as Andrew is brought into closer relation with his patron by undertaking an agony similar to Christ's Passion, he gradually shifts away from his earlier reluctances toward a more consistent devotion (Fee, "Productive Destruction" 51).

Other scholars have extended the similarities between Andrew and Jesus outside of the narrative of *Andreas*. Most notably, Megan Cavell examines the

extensive parallels between the language and imagery that the *Heliand* poet uses to describe Jesus' binding during the Passion and the terms that the *Andreas* poet employs when describing the way that the Mermedonians bind Andrew prior to his torture (508-24). While Cavell stops short of suggesting that the *Heliand*, a work known to have been in circulation in Anglo-Saxon England, is a direct source for the *Andreas* poet, she does broadly indicate that the binding motif is one that Old English and Old Saxon poets shared and found useful when constructing Christian "heroes" (520). With this common motif and its language's association with Jesus' Passion in mind, it seems safe to say that the Anglo-Saxon audience would have viewed Andrew's suffering not only as a scene of heroic suffering, but as a direct mirror of Jesus' Passion.

Of course, the physical suffering of saints is a common image in the Christian tradition, and Anglo-Saxon poetry is no exception. Critics have also noticed the similarities between Christ's Passion and the trials Juliana faces in her Old English hagiography. Juan Camilo Conde-Silvestre observes that, "like Christ, [Juliana] is stripped and scourged and, in a kind of Crucifixion, suspended from the hair on a high gallows" (257). Similarly, Juliana endures a conflict with Satan that mirrors Jesus' Temptation (258).<sup>13</sup> It is by participating in this *imitatio Christi* that Juliana is able to endure the majority of her trials

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<sup>13</sup> Chapter five of this study contains a lengthier discussion of Juliana's skirmish with Satan. See pages 213-14.



unscathed; despite the potential brutality of her torture, Juliana is left unharmed until her final beheading, and even this event is described only briefly over two lines, and the event is immediately followed by the assurance of her place in heaven. By framing Juliana's death in this manner, the poet symbolically "protects" her from the harm of her beheading and instead redirects the audience's attention to the reward the saint receives from her lord.

However, *Andreas* differs from *Juliana* and other images of hagiographical agony in the Old English literary corpus through the vividness and attention the poet grants Andrew's pain. For instance, while *Juliana* portrays the saint as undergoing torture, the suffering associated with this torture is downplayed almost entirely (Dendle, "Pain and Saint-Making" 40). Andrew, however, is not afforded this luxury. Whereas Andrew's satisfactory performance in answering Jesus' questions on the open sea worked to reestablish the link between the saint and his Lord, it is this sequence of suffering that strengthens the bond and, ultimately, leads to Andrew's receipt of greater apostolic might.

Andrew's suffering begins in fitt XI of the work, shortly after he rescues Matthew. This sequence opens in line 1168 with the arrival of Satan himself, who will both verbally torment Andrew and direct the apostle's torturers. What follows is an exchange that Fee compares to "a 'flyting' match between Andreas and Satan," a confrontation that will be repeated following each day of the

apostle's torture ("Torture, Text, and the Body" 56). Angela Abdou argues for the importance of words in the Old English poetic hagiographies. Like Jesus in the *Heliand*, the agents of the Christian God in Old English literature wield their divine power primarily through performative speech acts.<sup>14</sup> However, while Jesus' speech acts are classified as performative because of his own divinity, the saints and apostle's words are performative as a result of the speaker's link to the divine. The performative nature of these speakers' words, Abdou asserts, extends beyond miraculous actions to include preaching and conversion (195-96). In particular, Abdou contends that the narratives are written and presented in ways that privilege the words of Christian speakers and strip away the power and influence of non-Christian speakers. Because poets privilege Christian speakers, Abdou argues, "Christian language can change the world with words; non-Christian language, as it is constructed in poems such *Guthlac* and *Andreas*, cannot" (196).

Using the power of his words, Andrew successfully rebukes Satan on this first day, reminding the devil that, though he commands the Mermedonians, he is nonetheless "stained by God."<sup>15</sup> Andrew's willingness to engage Satan in a match of words demonstrates the apostle's awareness of the most powerful

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<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between Jesus' speech acts and his miracles, see pages 141-44 of this study.

<sup>15</sup> Line 1188: "*eart ðu fag wið god.*"

weapon at his disposal, his words as an agent of the Christian God. Despite this rebuke, the devil is able to command his servants to harm Andrew, a torture that spans lines 1219-1252. Though it is not necessary to reproduce this scene in full, the poet again draws attention to the relationship between Andrew and his patron at the end of this sequence:

Swa wæs ealne dæg oððæt æfen com  
sigeltorht swungen; sar eft gewod  
ymb þæs beornes breost, oðþæt beorht gewat  
sunne swegeltorht to sete glidan.  
Læddan þa leode laðne gewinnan  
to carcerne. **He wæs Criste swa þeah  
leof on mode;** him wæs leoht sefa  
halig heortan neh, **hige untyddre.** (Lines 1245-52, my emphasis)

[So all day until evening came the radiant one was flogged; again, pain permeated the breast of the hero, until the heaven-bright sun disappeared, glided to a setting. The people then led the hated opponent to prison. **In the heart of Christ, however, he was loved;** the holy spirit near the heart was light in him, his **mind firm.**]

After describing the extent and brutality of Andrew's suffering, the poet also reiterates Jesus' devotion and care for his disciple. This is followed by the poet's reassurance that, despite his peril, Andrew's *hyge* remains *unttyddre*. North and Bintley note that "OE *hyge* deonotes mental resolution, or courage which stems from that...; *tidre*, cognate with tender, is 'frail, weak, infirm.'" (280). This language signifies Andrew's transformation from his initial "infirm" courage to a state of unwavering resolve. Moreover, the lines that precede this reassurance highlight that, by overcoming the devil through his strength of words and

enduring his trial, Andrew's damaged relationship with his patron continues to be restored.

The suffering Andrew undergoes on his second day of trials largely mirrors his previous day's experiences, with the description of his torture spanning lines 1269b-95. Though the violence of these lines is consistent with his previous experience, Andrew's response to his pain differs from his silence on the first day. All throughout his suffering, Andrew continues to speak praises to his lord:

Ic gelyfe to ðe, min liffruma,  
þæt ðu mildheort me for þinum mægenspedum,  
nerigend fira, næfre wille,  
ece ælmihtig, anforlætan,  
swa ic þæt gefremme, þenden feorh leofað  
min on moldan, þæt ic, meotud, **þinum**  
**larum leofwendum lyt geswice.** (Lines 1284-1290, my emphasis)

[My Lord of Life, I believe in you, that You are kind-hearted;  
because of Your abundant strength, Saviour of the people, you will  
never, almighty everlasting one, forsake me, as long as I ensure,  
while my soul lives on earth, that I, Measurer, **fall little short of**  
**Your ardent instructions.**]

With his words in lines 1289b-1290, Andrew verbally acknowledges the covenantal conditions that Jesus previously outlined. These words sharply contrast Andrew's refusal of his patron's request at the poem's outset, and the apostle now seems to understand clearly his responsibilities. Satan himself seems to recognize the change these words represent. During his daily confrontation in

lines 1296-1301, the devil specifically orders his servants to try to silence the apostle, directing the Mermedonian warriors to "Strike this sinner, this opponent of the people, across the mouth. He now talks too much."<sup>16</sup> Though the narration does not describe the Mermedonians' subsequent attack, the *Andreas* poet leaves the audience with no reason to believe that the soldiers did not obey their master's command. Andrew still must continue to suffer on the second day, and the way in which the poem describes Andrew's torture shows clear signs of his renewed relationship with his patron.

After enduring two days of the Mermedonians' torture, Andrew is finally able to exhibit miraculous signs that demonstrate a strengthening of the protective covenant. When Satan arrives for a third time to taunt Andrew for his suffering, things play out far less smoothly for the devil than the preceding days' events. Like in the previous encounters, Satan engages in a duel of words with the apostle and calls for the Mermedonians to begin their assault. While, before, Andrew was only able to endure the assault that Satan directs his Mermedonians to execute, the saint is now protected from his foes' attacks:

Hie wæron reowe, ræsdon on sona  
gifrum grapum. Hine god forstod,  
staðulfæst steorend, þurh his strangan miht:  
syððan hie oncneowon Cristes rode  
on his mægwlite, mære tacen,

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<sup>16</sup> Lines 1300-1301: "*Sleað synnigne ofer seolfes muð, / folces gewinnan! Nu to feala reordap.*"

wurdon hie ða acle on þam onfenge,  
forhte, afærde ond on fleam numen. (Lines 1334-1340)

[They were cruel, rushed in immediately with ravenous grips. God stood up for him, steadfast Lord, through his strong might; once they recognized the rood of Christ on his face, the glorious token, they were afraid to make that attack, terrified, frightened, and were put to flight.]

Far from simply surviving his foes' attacks, Andrew is now protected by God from the onslaught. Unlike Guthlac, who relies on outside forces to protect him and who plays no direct part in the miraculous events that transpire around him, Andrew's body serves as the conduit for God's divine power in order to repel and defeat the Mermedonians. The strengthened bond between the apostle and Jesus leads to a more complete protection against Satan and the Mermedonians. While before Andrew was able only to endure his opponents' assault, he is, at least for a time, able to ward off his attackers.

Though this miracle protects Andrew's life from the Mermedonians, the apostle still must endure a third day of torture at the cannibals' hands. It is on this third day that the poet makes the parallel between Andrew's torture and Jesus' Passion the most overt. Following the final day of his torture, Andrew cries out to God:

Hwæt, ðu sigora weard,  
dryhten hælend, on dæges tide  
mid Iudeum geomor wurde  
ða ðu of gealgan, god lifigende,  
fyrnweorca frea, to fæder cleopodest,

cininga wuldor, ond cwæde ðus:  
'Ic ðe, fæder engla, frignan wille,  
lifes leohtfruma, hwæt forlætest ðu me?'  
Ond ic nu þry dagas þolian sceolde  
wælgrim witu. (Lines 1406b-1415a)

[Verily, you, Ward of victories, Lord Savior, became so sorrowful among the Jews in one day's time, that you, living God, master of creation, called from the cross to your Father, the glory of kings, and said thus: 'I wish to ask you, Father of Angels, source of the light of life – why have you forsaken me?' And now I have for three days had to suffer dire torture.]

With this lament, Andrew recognizes the similarities between the pains that he has endured and Jesus' Passion. It is this recognition that completes Andrew's education. During his sea journey, Andrew was willing only to discuss Jesus' miraculous displays; following his own trials, the apostle is keenly aware of the centrality of the Passion to the Gospel message. In response to this recognition, Jesus again speaks to his disciple: "Do not weep for your persecution, beloved friend; it is not that terrible. I will hold you in security, I stand by and keep the strength of my patronage."<sup>17</sup> By this statement, Jesus overtly informs both Andrew and the Anglo-Saxon audience that the disciple is under Jesus' divine patronage, and as a result his complete aegis. North and Bintley note that with "*Ic þe friðe heald*" on line 1432, "the Lord repeats the promise He made on line 915" that the apostle's adversaries will not be able to slay him (289). Recognizing

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<sup>17</sup> Lines 1431-33: "*Ne wep þone wræcsið, wine leofesta, / nis þe to frecne. Ic þe friðe healde, / minre mundbyrde mægene besette.*"

that Andrew has once again fulfilled his side of the patronage agreement, Jesus reassures his disciple that he, too, will uphold his end of the arrangement.

Jesus follows the reiteration of his promise by healing Andrew of his wounds. Jesus then proceeds to show the apostle that plants have grown from the ground onto which he bled. Godlove gestures towards two key roles Andrew's healing plays that help to move the narrative to its climax. First, and most obvious, "[Andrew's] healing resolves the crisis of faith" that had begun to take shape after the three days of torture; in effect, Jesus proves his loyalty to his disciple just as Andrew had, through his suffering, demonstrated his devotion to his patron ("Bodies as Borders" 156). More importantly, by showing the blooms that have sprouted forth from the apostle's blood, Jesus "symbolically demonstrate[s] to Andrew that his suffering will be productive" (154). In healing Andrew, Jesus shows not only that he will reward a servant who follows his directives, but he also makes it known that the apostle's trials have equipped him to accomplish the very task that he, at first, rejected. In short, because of his trials, Andrew has been returned to the state in which he began the poem – a fully equipped apostle who is in excellent standing with his divine patron.

*The Completed Apostle: Andrew's Conversion of the Mermedonians*

With his body and his covenant with God restored, Andrew is now prepared to exhibit divine powers that are greater than repelling his captors'



assaults. After walking forth from his prison, Andrew speaks to the stones of the city, saying:

"Geher ðu, marmanstan, meotudes rædum,  
fore þæs onsyne ealle gesceafte  
forhte geweorðað, þonne hie fæder geseoð  
heofonas ond eorðan herigea mæste  
on middangeard mancynn secan.  
Læt nu of þinum stapole streamas weallan,  
ea inflede, nu ðe ælmihtig  
hateð, heofona cyning, þæt ðu hrædlice  
on þis fræte folc forð onsende  
wæter widrynig to wera cwealme,  
geofon geotende (Lines 1495-1508b)

[‘Hear you, marble stone, the decrees of the Measurer, before whose face all creation will become fearful, when they see the father of heaven and the earth, seeking mankind in middle-earth with the greatest of hosts. Now let the streams well from your foundation, a river full of water; now the Almighty King of Heaven commands that you hastily send forth wide flowing waters, a gushing sea, onto this obstinate people, to the massacre of men.]

North and Bintley note that the flood at the narrative’s climax is the apostle’s greatest miraculous display (76). While this miracle’s magnitude is clearly spectacular, the way in which Andrew brings forth this marvel also differs from his prior repelling of the Mermedonians. When previously putting the Mermedonians to flight, Andrew does not directly call forth divine power. Instead, the miracle comes as an extension of Jesus’ covenantal promise to safeguard Andrew’s life. The flood that Andrew calls forth marks the pinnacle of the apostle’s earthly abilities; rather than passively “channeling” God’s power, in

lines 1495-1520, Andrew directly calls forth his patron's divine strength with his own words. While, previously, Andrew's Christian words served as a method through which to directly confront the devil, here his statements are truly performative; the stones and waters directly obey Andrew's commands, and the miracle takes place as a way to make the apostle's statements a reality.<sup>18</sup> The implications of this miracle are striking. By actively performing this feat, Andrew demonstrates that his relationship with his patron has been fully restored, and as a result he is able to perform his own miracles through the authority of his patron.

By performing this wonder, Andrew brings the poem's discussion of miracles full circle. At the poem's outset, Andrew is fascinated by Jesus' miraculous acts, but as a result of his doubts, he is unable to emulate these acts. However, after sharing in Jesus' Passion and achieving a deeper understanding of his apostolic calling, Andrew is able to call forth a miraculous feat of his own. Through this transformation, the *Andreas* poet accentuates the source of the apostles' miraculous power; their miracles come as a result of behaving in a way that is consistent with his patron's wishes, not through the desire to perform these wonders.

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<sup>18</sup> Andrew's ability to command the natural world to reflect his statements are reminiscent of the way the *Heliand* poet describes Jesus' miracles. For more about the performative nature of Jesus' miracles in the Old Saxon text, see pages 41-44 of this study.

While Andrew's torture at the Mermedonians' hands highlights the loss of his protective *wær*, his summoning of the floodwaters displays him at the height of his apostolic power. At one extreme, the patron is able to directly channel God's might. By detailing these two extremes, the poet vividly presents to his audience both the vulnerability that comes with a failure to uphold the covenant and the rewards for proper devotion. The *Andreas* poet draws upon the Anglo-Saxons' perception of the biblical covenant between the Christian God and his people in order to accentuate Andrew's achievements and failures. By virtue of the gift he receives at Pentecost, Andrew is able to wield miraculous power more freely than the *Heliand's* Peter. However, this power is contingent upon his proper participation in a distinctly Anglo-Saxon understanding of the biblical covenant, an understanding that is explicitly structured around the exchange of devotion and *divine protection*.

### *Conclusion*

In both Old English and Old Saxon writings, the Christian God and his saints are bound together through systems of patronage. These systems are constructed around ideas of loyalty and reward, particularly through the granting of miraculous powers to disciples who properly engage in the systems. By adhering to the systems and maintaining the stipulations set forth by their lords, disciples receive impressive miraculous benefits. Correspondingly, a

failure to meet these stipulations leads in the loss of these boons. However, failures do not mean the end of the patronage dynamic; for Peter, Jesus provides clear instructions regarding his disciple's shortcoming. In the case of Andrew, the apostle's willingness to suffer in the name of his patron helps him to repair his damaged relationship with his lord and, in turn, directly call upon the might of his divine benefactor. Drawing upon these dynamics, the Old English and Old Saxon poets are able to convey the disciple's responsibilities and the manner in which they receive their divine powers to their audiences.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Nefarious and Diabolical Power in Old English and Old Saxon Literature

Jesus is, without a doubt, the most common sources of otherworldly power in both Old English and Old Saxon writings. Yet, despite this prevalence, another force is consistently portrayed as wielding great supernatural power in both insular and continental texts – Satan. The devil and his hellish might, often placed into direct conflict with agents of the Christian God, are vital components in understanding how the West Germanic poets differed from each other in their understandings of nefarious supernatural forces. This section of this study will examine the powers Satan wields in his conflict with Jesus and his disciples. While each culture drew upon similar themes and images in order to portray God's adversary, ultimately the poets utilized these ideas in starkly different ways and, ultimately, used Satan to convey different theological concepts.

#### *The Power of Satan Beyond the Germanic World*

Contextualizing the ways Germanic poets presented Satan's power to their audiences requires an understanding of how other Christian cultures during the ninth century perceived the devil's might. Most notably, the Roman perception of Satan's scriptural role shaped much of Western Christianity's view

of the figure. Regarding Roman Christianity's conventional understanding of Satan, Jeffrey Burton Russell argues "the essential point of this tradition is that the Devil is a *satan*, an 'obstructor' of the will of the good Lord" (*Satan* 25). Russell goes on to further define Satan's function in Christian theology, describing him as "the prime adversary of Christ" (27). Nonetheless, these comments still leave the manner of the devil's obstruction and the details of his adversarial nature in question. While describing the manner of Satan's threat, Graydon F. Snyder notes that Rome viewed the New Testament "Satan [as] the source or power of disorder" (85). Snyder points to the demonic possessions described in New Testament scripture, arguing that these events are the primary means through which Satan causes disorder; through possession, Satan separates the possessed peoples from their social structures (85). Outside the Gospel narratives, Snyder further draws upon statements in Paul's epistles that describe the devil as using his abilities to mislead humanity and disguise himself as an angel in order to disrupt Christian bonds and unity (86). This understanding of Satan used duplicity to drive wedges between Christians and undermined the spread of Christianity. Thus, rather than serving as a dualistic force placed in direct conflict with Jesus, his followers, and the Christian faith, the devil of the Roman church is largely a force of complication, a deceiver who functions mainly to generate social divides between Christians.

The devil of Rome, however, was not the only perception of the infernal one that reached the British Isles; Irish missionaries also brought with them their own understanding of Satan. In contrast to the Roman deceiver, Irish depictions of Satan tended to show the devil in direct conflict with Jesus. For instance, Irish adaptations of the Harrowing of Hell gave special prominence to the event's "military aspect," with Satan situated as the martial force that stands against Jesus (Herren and Brown 156-57).

Though, as this chapter will demonstrate, Satan more than earns his reputation as a deceiver in Old English and Old Saxon literature, the Germanic devil also shares the Irish propensity for open conflict. In addition to subtly working to undermine the Christian faith, the Germanic Satan was also content to confront Jesus and the disciples directly, and often violently, thus providing a more tangible, socially relevant adversary. Yet, despite a shared willingness to confront Jesus and his agents, the devil's theological purpose in the surviving works of Continental Saxon literature differ from the Anglo-Saxons' devil. In particular, Old English writers depicted the devil as threatening in order to shape the spiritual development of saints, while the *Heliand's* Satan, though treated seriously, was ultimately pushed to the text's margins in order to show Jesus in opposition to forces more familiar to the newly converted Germanic audience.

### *Satan in Old English Literature*

The Anglo-Saxons were fascinated by Satan, and to see this fascination one need look no further than their works of literature. In the limited surviving corpus of Anglo-Saxon poetry, the devil appears in seven works, making him, as Peter Dendle notes, “the most frequently appearing character in Old English poetry, and possibly in all Old English literature” (*Satan Unbound* 3). Because of the character’s numerous appearances and the complexity of his representations, the Old English Satan has enjoyed a long scholarly lineage. In this tradition, Dendle’s 2001 study, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Literature*, is the most thorough treatment of the devil’s role in Old English poetry. Among his many observations about Satan’s characterization in Anglo-Saxon verse, Dendle identifies that Satan plays two main roles in Old English hagiography: he is directly involved “either in the forging of the saint, or in the testing of an already perfected saint” (42).

The Old English Satan also differs from many traditions through the seriousness in which they treat the devil and his danger. Dendle notes that the Anglo-Saxons did not view Satan as an abstract force, but rather as “present and active” (7). To demonstrate Anglo-Saxons’ belief in the devil’s presence in the world, Dendle points to a statement by Ælfric: “‘*nu on urum gagum on ende byssere worulde, / swicað se deofol digollice embe us*’ (‘now, in our days, at the end of this



world, the devil secretly deceives us')" (7).<sup>1</sup> Despite the gravity with which Ælfric speaks of Satan and his deception, it is not outside the realms of medieval literary and folk traditions to diminish the devil's threat by having him seem foolish or incompetent (*Lucifer* 74-77). In contrast to this practice, Dendle expands the Anglo-Saxons' treatment of the devil, contending that, though Satan is a common antagonist in their literature, "Old English authors often avoided degrading the devil..., sometimes departing significantly from their sources to do so" (41). He notes, for instance, that the Old English *Juliana* differs from its Latin source by "having Juliana send her demon to hell rather than a dungheap" (41). The devil, to the Anglo-Saxons, was a real, threatening force that should be approached with great seriousness.

While Dendle's study discusses at length the devil's role in *Genesis* (both A and B), as well as his appearance in *Christ and Satan*, he is largely silent regarding Satan's significant appearance in *Andreas*. Aside from identifying that the devil in *Andreas* fulfills both of the traditional saint-making roles, Dendle provides little further commentary (42). In particular, he does not speak about the significant influence that Satan exerts over the Mermedonians. Additionally, he does not discuss the clash between Andrew and the Mermedonians under Satan's direction, one of the more spectacular confrontations between divine and

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<sup>1</sup> Ælfric quote drawn from Skeat 219-20.

diabolical power in Old English literature. By placing Satan in a position of authority that mirrors the relationship that Jesus shares with his own disciples and that allows the devil to do bodily harm to the apostle, the poet presents Satan as a real, tangible threat to Andrew's life. This threat, in turn, allows the poet to better emphasize Andrew's apostolic might.

Satan's relationship with the Mermedonian people first enters the narrative near the opening of the poem. When describing the Mermedonian people's response to Matthew's intrusion into the city, the *Andreas* poet describes the response of the countrymen:

þær wæs cirm micel  
geond Mermedonia, manfulra hloð,  
fordenera gedræg, syþþan **deofles þegnas**  
geascodon æðelinges sið.  
...  
Hie þam halgan þær handa gebundon  
ond fæstnodon **feondes cræfte**,  
hæleð hellfuse, ond his heafdes segl  
abreoton mid billes ecge. (Lines 41b-44; 48-51, my emphasis)

[There was a great cry around Mermedonia, the troop of the wicked, the tumultuous multitude of the corrupt, when the **thanes of the devil** discovered the undertaking of the prince. . . There they bound the hands of the holy one and the hell-bound fighters fastened him with the **power of the fiend**, and destroyed the suns of his head with the edge of a sword.

From the earliest parts of the narrative, the poet establishes that the people of Mermedonia are directly in Satan's service. Moreover, the poet's use of "*feondes cræfte*" in line 49 clarifies that the Mermedonians' martial might is, at least in

part, based upon their association with the devil. These assertions mirror Andrew's own later words to the disguised Jesus; while identifying himself and his crew, Andrew states,

We **his þegnas** synd  
gecoren to cempum. He is cyning on riht,  
wealdend ond wyrhta wuldorþrymmes,  
an ece god eallra gesceafta,  
swa he ealle befehð anes cræfte,  
hefon ond eorðan, **halgum mihtum,**  
**sigora selost.** (Lines 323b-329a, my emphasis)

[We are **his {Jesus'} thanes**, chosen for his champions. He is king by right, Ruler and Worker of the Heavenly Glory, one eternal God of all creation, just as He surrounds all with the power of one, heaven and earth, **with the highest, holy divine might.**]

Faced with providing an account of himself, it is telling that Andrew identifies himself as a "thane of Jesus," empowered by his "holy might," an identification that counters to the Mermedonians' status as "thanes of the devil" gifted with the "power of the fiend." The literary identification of the apostles and saints as "thanes of God" extends beyond the narrative of *Andreas*; this descriptor appears in all five of the Old English verse hagiographies. For instance, in line 303 of *Juliana*, Cynewulf describes Peter and Paul as "*Cristes þegnas*" ("thanes of Christ"), and he again uses the word when describing the twelve disciples in line 487 of *Elene*.<sup>2</sup> This descriptor extends beyond the mortal supporters of God, as

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<sup>2</sup> "*ðeoden engla, ond his þegnum hine*" (the king of angels and his thanes").

well; the angelic messenger of God that appears to protect Guthlac from the demonic assault is, similarly, called the "*dyre dryhtnes þegn*" ("the dear thane of the Lord") in line 693 of *Guthlac A*. Throughout Old English religious verse, poets use this phrase to describe some of the most stalwart of God's servants. Given the widespread presence of the "thane of God" motif in Anglo-Saxon poetry, the *Andreas* poet's decision to invert this trope by describing the Mermedonians as the "*deofles þegnas*" would have certainly warranted the audience's attention. Through this lexical decision, the poet marks the Mermedonians not only as dangerous human adversaries, but also as dark mirrors of the servants of Jesus that are common in Anglo-Saxon literature.

Satan's influence upon the Mermedonians is also evidenced in the way that the devil interacts with and speaks about his followers. Satan's own words about himself and his place in Mermedonian society provide the greatest insight into the devil's role in *Andreas*. In lines 1316-1320, while confronting Andrew about the apostle's destroying of pagan altars, the devil taunts the saint:

Hwæt hogodeſt ðu, Andreas, hidercyme þinne  
on wraðra geweald? Hwæt is wuldor þin,  
þe ðu oferhigdum upp aræreſt,  
þa ðu goda uſſa gild gehnægdeſt?

["What do you think, Andrew, coming here into the power of fiends? Where is your glory, which you flaunted before with pride, when you overturned the idols of our gods?"]

The poet's words in line 1320 in this passage are of particular interest: "*goda ussa*." This phrase has presented a fair amount of difficulty to translators of the poem, leading to divergences in its representation in Modern English, though this disagreement has led to little scholarly discussion. In his prose translation, S.A.J Bradley renders the phrase as "us gods" (144). Conversely, both Robert Root and, most recently, Richard North and Michael D.J. Bintley prefer "our gods" (188). To date, an observation North and Bintley's edition of Andreas marks this phrase's sole scholarly observation; they contend, "'us gods' might be expected in the devil's words, but with 'our gods' it seems that he walks in the shape of their worshipers" (282-83).

While North and Bintley view the devil's appearance in the guise of one of the Mermedonians as unexpected, Satan's representation in *Andreas'* analogues and his characterization in other works of Old English literature reveal that this transformation is not as alarming as it might seem. Satan, in fact, assumes human form in several other versions of the Saint Andrew legend. While there are a number of analogues to the "Life of Saint Andrew" narrative, this study will concern itself with the three most prominent analogues of the legend: the Latin version of the story found in the *Casanatensis Codex*, a Greek rendition of the narrative commonly referred to as the *Praxeis*, and an Old English prose hagiography contained in *MS Corp. Chr. Coll. Camb. 198*. Although none of these

prose texts are the direct inspiration for the poetic *Andreas*, their divergences from and similarities to the Old English poem do help to reveal the Anglo-Saxon poet's intentions when making his choices of adaptation.

The versions of Satan's taunt found in these analogues help to clarify the nature of the devil's appearance. Versions of this taunt are found in all three of the versions of the previously described versions of the narrative. Of these three renditions of Satan's mockery, the version that most clearly reflects North and Bintley's interpretation of this line is the 12<sup>th</sup> century Latin version found in the *Casanatensis Codex*. In this version of the story, the poet explicitly describes Satan as "appear[ing] to [the Mermedonians] in the likeness of a grizzled man."<sup>3</sup>

Satan's appearance in the guise "an old man or woman" was common in medieval folk portrayals of the devil, and the devil's appearance here in this form would have been in line with this folkloric convention (Dendle, *Lucifer* 68). However, this telling of the tale, composed several centuries after *Andreas*, is also the one that deviates the most from the Old English poetic version of the story, making it of limited use for this study. The Greek *Praxeis* contains a version of events that is significantly closer to the Old English poem. In the corresponding proclamation, Satan asks Andrew:

"Now you have fallen into our hands; where is your glory and your loftiness? You lifted yourself up against us and did not honor us

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<sup>3</sup> Translation from Latin quoted from: Boenig 16.

and ignored our works among those in this place and country, and made our butcher shop and temple empty so they could not pour forth sacrifices among themselves.”<sup>4</sup>

While Satan is not explicitly named as appearing in human form while he says these words, he does take on human form twice during this story. These shapes include, much like the Latin version, the form of an old man.

His disguised appearances in the poem’s analogues, coupled with their representation in *Andreas*, provide the greatest evidence for the devil’s human appearance in the Old English poem. When addressing the Mermedonians in lines 1168-69, the poet describes Satan: “*Pa for þære dugoðe deoful ætywde, / wann ond wliteleas; hæfde weriges hiw.*” (“Then the devil appeared before this company, pale and lightless; he had the appearance of a wicked one”). The devil’s description in these lines as “*weriges*” is ultimately the most reliable indicator of the devil’s human guise. Clark Hall defines *werig* as “accursed, outlawed, vile, execrable, vicious, bad, malignant” (365). In the glossary to their recent edition, North and Bintley more narrowly contend that *werig* means “accursed” (366). This particular semantic sense of *werig* is copiously attested in the surviving Anglo-Saxon written corpus, and it appears a total of three times in *Andreas*. These two additional instances, found on lines 86 and 615, are vital in establishing the devil’s human form in this scene; in both of these lines, the poet

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<sup>4</sup> Translation from Greek quoted from: Boenig 105-31.

uses *werig* while talking about the Mermedonians. Thus, by the time the poet uses this word to describe the devil, the audience would have already twice associated the word with the wickedness of the city's people. *Werig*'s usage elsewhere in the poem, the devil's habit of assuming human forms in the poem's analogues, and his presence among a crowd of Mermedonian people make it safe to assume he is also in human guise here.<sup>5</sup>

It seems clear, then, that the devil poses among the Mermedonians as a fellow worshiper of their pagan gods, just as North and Bintley suggest. Yet, on the surface, the devil's self-identification as an adherent of the Mermedonian deities seems at odds with the image of Satan represented in other Old English poems. For instance, in *Genesis B*, the core reason for Satan's rebellion is his belief that "*Ic mæg wesan god swa he*" ("I am able to be God just as he").<sup>6</sup> Satan's divine aspirations are not limited to works derived from the Old Saxon literary tradition; this idea is also present in *Christ and Satan*. In response to their fall, in lines 53-57a Satan's demonic companions complain:

"Þu us gelærest ðurh lyge ðinne  
þæt we helende heran ne scealdon.  
Ðuhte þe anum þæt ðu ahtest alles gewald,  
heofnes and eorþan, wære halig god,

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<sup>5</sup> Christopher Fee shares this view, arguing that, like in the Greek text, Satan appears "in the guise of an old man." See Fee, "Productive Destruction" 54.

<sup>6</sup> Line 283. All quotes from *Genesis B* from Krapp, *Junius*.



scypend seolfa.<sup>7</sup>

[You persuaded us through your lying that we did not need to obey the Savior. You alone thought that you possessed control of all, of heaven and earth, and were holy God, the creator himself.]

If Germanic literary convention holds that Satan's highest aspiration is to ascend to the same level of reverence as the Christian God, why then, would the poet represent the prototypically prideful Satan as worshiping anything?

While Satan might support the Mermedonian gods while in human form, he does so to strengthen his own base of power and place himself as the directing force behind the country's actions. While Satan frames his complaint against Andrew around the saint's assault on the Mermedonians' temples, the narrative speaks very little about these deities. Though the outset of the poem describes the Mermedonians' cannibalistic culture, the poet does not depict this practice as a ritual sacrifice or form of worship. Instead, Satan references the "*goda ussa*" as a way to further unite the Mermedonians behind him and direct their ire against his enemies. By framing Andrew as an enemy of the Mermedonians' shared beliefs, Satan is better able to incite the peoples to his will. With this in mind, Satan undertakes his disguised actions specifically to increase his sway over the country.

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<sup>7</sup> Citations from *Christ and Satan* are from Krapp, *Junius*.

The devil's relationship with his followers and the purpose behind his actions in this scene differ from a similar taunt that appears in the Old English hagiography *Juliana*.<sup>8</sup> Here, a devil proclaims to Heliseus and his followers as they torture the saint: "Gylðað nu mid gyrne, þæt heo *goda ussa* / meaht forhogde, ond mec swiþpast / geminsade, þæt ic to meldan wearð" ("Now repay her with harm because she disregarded the might of our gods and sorely deminished me so that I became an informer").<sup>9</sup> While the devil does give a call to action, there is no indication that the devil shares a human form or has any relationship with Juliana's oppressors. Indeed, this speech marks the only point in the poem that the devil interacts with any humans aside from Juliana herself. Additionally, the text does not indicate that the devil appears in human form. The only mention of the devil's shape-shifting abilities in *Juliana* comes in line 244, when the devil attempts to deceive Juliana in an "*engles hiw*" ("form of an angel"). Finally, while Satan's appearance in *Andreas* serves to rally the Mermedonians behind him as a martial force, the devil of *Juliana* gains no such power after he gives his

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<sup>8</sup> There is an ongoing debate as to the nature of the evil being that appears to Juliana. David Johnson quibbles with the scholarly tendency to equate this entity with Satan himself, instead arguing that this entity is a lesser devil by noting that the tempter clearly references a demonic father in hell (44). Dendle, in contrast, is not wholly convinced by this argument, contending that "his simultaneous existence in several ontological as well as hermeneutical domains . . . makes him perfectly suited to challenge the adherence of a particular narrative scene or character to any of those domains" (*Satan Unbound* 103). This study agrees with Dendle that the demonic force in *Juliana* fulfills the narrative role of Satan, and its actions will be examined in contrast to other Satanic appearances.

<sup>9</sup> *Juliana* quotations from Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*.

command. Dendle notes that, following Satan's directive, "Heliseus conducts his evil affairs with perfect independence and confidence; the demon's brief appearance here is more an interruption of Juliana's tortures than a cause of them" (Dendle, *Satan Unbound* 32). Finally, after the devil speaks, he is described in language that emphasizes his forthcoming defeat:

Feond moncynnes ongon þa on fleam sceacan,  
wita neosan, ond þæt word acwæð:  
"Wa me forworhtum! Nu is wen micel  
þæt heo mec eft wille earmne gehynan  
yflum yrmþum, swa heo mec ær dyde." (Lines 630-34)

[Then the enemy of mankind hastened in flight, to acquaint himself with woe, and he spoke these words: 'Woe for me! I am undone! Now there is a great probability that she will again shame this miserable one with evil miseries, just as she did to me before.']

Though the scene shares a basic narrative similarity with *Andreas*, ultimately the devil of *Juliana* interacts very little with the saint's human oppressors. Moreover, *Juliana* contains no language that links Satan with the poem's human antagonists that is akin to "deofles þegnas" found in *Andreas*. Even when giving his single directive to these humans, the narrative goes to great lengths to indicate that Satan is not empowered through his action. Ultimately, though the devil's command does bear a strong similarity to the directive seen in another work of Old English poetry, thethane/retainer relationship that the devil shares with the Mermedonians remains unique to *Andreas*.

The *Andreas* poet's fascination with the disguised Satan mirrors the poet's decision to greatly expand Jesus' own veiled appearance as a helmsman. Much like Jesus uses his Christophanic appearance to repair and strengthen his bond with Andrew, Satan takes on a human shape in order to better direct the Mermedonians' actions and to reinforce his influence on the people. However, while Jesus uses his disguise to repair his relationship with his wayward servant, Satan instead appears as a human to manipulate the Mermedonians and incite them to violence against the outsider:

Her is gefered ofer feorne weg  
æðelinga sum innan ceastre,  
ellþeodigra, þone ic Andreas  
nemnan herde. (Lines 1173-76a)

[Here has faired over a far wave, a certain prince who I heard is  
named Andrew, belonging to a foreign nation, within this city.]

In this statement, Satan emphasizes Andrew's foreignness, and uses this difference to encourage the Mermedonians to act against him. Rather than serving as a method of restoration, the devil's human guise acts as a form of control and division.

Satan's goal to incite the Mermedonians to violence does not go unnoticed by the apostle. In lines 1185-1189a, Andrew directly responds to Satan's order to his followers:

'Hwæt, ðu þristlice þeode lærest,  
bældest to beadowe! Wæst þe bæles cwealm,

hatne in helle, ond þu here fysest,  
feðan to gefeohte. Eart ðu fag wið god,  
dugoða demend.

[Verily, you boldly instruct this people, embolden them to battle!  
You know the pain of fire, hot in hell, and you incite this army, this  
band of foot-soldiers, to fight. You are a criminal against God, the  
judge of hosts.]

Here, Andrew identifies Satan's method of control – the devil's goal is to fan the flames of the Mermedonians against his enemies. In this identification, Andrew acknowledges the link between Satan's nefarious power and his relationship with the Mermedonians, a link that he must sever in order to overcome his hellish opponent.

Yet, Satan's actions indicate more than a wish to garner greater influence. Instead, the poet's description of the Mermedonians as the "thanes of the devil" and Satan's propensity to direct these followers through a human guise in a way that mimics Jesus' own Christophany gesture towards a greater purpose. Through his methods of interacting with and controlling the Mermedonians, Satan directly imitates the way the Christian God interacts with his followers in Old English poetry. Darkly mirroring Jesus' relationship with his disciples, Satan draws around him a company of thanes, and much as Jesus uses a Christophany to direct his followers, Satan appears in disguise to deceive his supporters. Thus, by mimicking God's relationship with his followers, Satan situates himself as the supernatural force behind the Mermedonians' actions. Through this action, the

Satan in *Andreas*, like the Devil seen in *Genesis B* and *Christ and Satan*, commits his greatest transgression by fashioning himself as equal in stature to his creator.

Satan's relationship with Mermedonians has significant implications for its representation of the devil's diabolical power. While manipulating the Mermedonians gives Satan a powerful method through which to attack the apostles, it also creates a weakness that Andrew is able to exploit. In both of his verbal battles against Andrew, Satan relies upon the physical might of the Mermedonians to cause actual bodily harm to the apostle, essentially making the country's population into his weapon against the agents of God. To wield this weapon, the devil uses the power of his speech to bring the Mermedonians' might to bear upon Andrew. In his confrontation with the saint in lines 1182-3, Satan instigates the conflict through a direct command: "*Gað fromlice, / þæt ge wiðerfeohtend wiges gehnægan!*" ("Go quickly, and strike down the adversary of the temple!") As a result of this command, Andrew suffers a prolonged, brutal period of torture. By using his human form to further control his servants – followers who, through their earlier capture and torture of Matthew, had already proven their ability to threaten the divine power of the apostles – Satan is also able to physically harm Andrew.

Satan's approach to controlling the Mermedonians shares traits of both the Roman and the Irish perception of the devil. Like the Roman devil, the Satan of

*Andreas* exerts his influence through deception in order to create and exploit divisions in humankind. Though he does use manipulation as his way to gather and direct power, he also uses this influence to present a genuine martial threat to the apostle. Over the course of the narrative, the power Satan wields over the Mermedonians results in Andrew suffering grave injuries, and the narrative treats his triumph over the cannibals as an impressive victory. Thus, while duplicity and division might be among Satan's primary weapons in *Andreas*, they are ultimately wielded in a way that echoes the Irish's "militaristic" understanding of the devil.

Nonetheless, alongside the power Satan gains through his influence over the Mermedonians comes the necessity to maintain this influence. The Old English prose version of this scene best illustrates this dependence:

Ʒæt deofol Ʒa genam mid him oƷre seovon deoflo, Ʒa Ʒe [se] haliga Andreas Ʒanon afliemde, and ingangende on Ʒæt carcern hie gestodon on gesihƷe Ʒæs eadigan Andreas, and hine bismriende mid myclere bismre, and hie cwædon, 'Hwæt is Ʒæt Ʒu her gemetest? hwilc gefreolseð Ʒu nu of urum gewealde? Hwær is Ʒin gilp and Ʒin hiht?' Ʒæt deofol Ʒa cwæð to Ʒam oðrum deoflum, 'Mine bearn, acwellað hine forƷon he us gescende and ure weorc.'

[Then the devil took with him seven other devils, those which the holy Andrew had banished from that place, and entering into the prison, they stood in the sight of the blessed Andrew, insulting him with great scorn, and they said, "What is it that you have found here? Who now will free you from our power? Where is your boastful speech and your hope?" Then the devil said to the other devils, "My children, kill him because he has shamed us and our works."]

Although Satan still questions Andrew's power in a way that echoes his verse counterpart, the taunt itself has several marked differences. In particular, the prose Satan contextualizes his complaint in a far different way. Rather than expressing a specific anger at Andrew for his desecration of the altars of "our gods," here the devil is more generally angered by the saint's actions against him. The absence of a reference to Andrew's desecration of altars is a vital distinction in the way the *Andreas* poet approaches his representation of the devil. In the poetic rendition of the poem, the apostles do not simply bring the devil shame, but symbolically assault him. The altars help Satan unify the Mermedonians against the Christian God's agents, and as a result, destroying these shrines also threatens Satan's seat of power in the country. As the following actions demonstrate, the devil of *Andreas* depends upon these agents to carry out his physical will upon the world. Because of this relationship, weakening his hold upon the country by destroying the Mermedonians' altars also represents a threat to Satan's power as a whole.

While emphasizing the people of the country's role as his weapon widens Satan's diabolic power, it also provides Andrew a better chance to test his apostolic might. As chapters three and four of this study explore more fully, the overall narrative of *Andreas* is built largely around the apostle's growth and, relatedly, his increased access to miraculous abilities (North and Bintley 66).



Following each of his successes, Andrew increases his bond of patronage with his god, and the magnitude of the saint's miracles grows accordingly. Even if, as North and Bintley contend, the flood scene might be the greatest demonstration of Andrew's fully-formed apostolic power, his confrontation with Satan and his Mermedonian followers is certainly a worthy runner-up (76). Following the taunt detailed previously, Satan commands his thanes to attack Andrew in a way that overtly echoes the statement that earlier led to the apostle's torture: "*Gað fromlice, / þæt ge guðfreca gylp forbegan!*" ("Go quickly, and harshly subdue the pride of the warrior!") In both its syntax and lexicon, his second order is virtually identical to Satan's earlier command, save for the magnitude of the request; here, Satan implies that his followers should kill, rather than harm, his foe. While the Mermedonians' previous efforts to harm the apostle were perhaps unsettlingly successful, their attempt to slay Andrew unfolds much differently:

Hie wæron reowe, ræsdon on sona  
 gifrum grapum. Hine god forstod,  
 staðulfæst steorend, þurh his strangan miht:  
 syððan hie oncneowon Cristes rode  
 on his mægwlite, mære tacen,  
 wurdon hie ða acle on þam onfenge,  
 forhte, afærde ond on fleam numen.

[They were cruel, rushed in immediately with ravenous grips. God protected him, steadfast Lord, through his strong might; once they recognized the rood of Christ on his face, the glorious token, they were afraid to make that attack, terrified, frightened, and put to flight.]

Through a spectacular display of divine might and favor, Andrew repels the Mermedonians. While it is human agents that physically assault the saint and are subsequently turned away, the poet makes it quite clear that the real victory is over their master. Following his warriors' failure to harm the saint, Satan asks in lines 1343-1345, "*Hwæt wearð eow swa rofum, rincas mine, / lindgesteallan, þæt eow swa lyt gespeow?*" or "What became of you, my warriors so brave, that you succeeded so little?" In response, the warriors proclaim, "*Ne magan we him lungre, lað ætfæstan, / swilt þurh searew. Ga þe sylfa to; / þær þu gegninga guðe findest.*" ("Suddenly no injury can we inflict on him suddenly nor any death through work of war. Go to it yourself; you will find war there without delay.")

Immediately after Andrew's triumph, the narrative points out the damage this defeat does to Satan's sway over his human followers; as a result of the miracle, the Mermedonians no longer heedlessly follow Satan's orders. Given Satan's reliance upon his human followers to combat the apostles, this defeat weakens Satan's greatest weapon. Finally, Satan's reaction to these events underscores the magnitude of his defeat. After a brief exchange of threats with Andrew, lines 1386-7 relate, "*Ða wearð on fleame, se ðe ða fæhðu iu / wið god geara grimme gefremede.*" ("Then he was in flight, he who in years past carried out a grim feud against God"). The seat of his power now destabilized, Satan has no choice but to retreat from the conflict.

Overall, this confrontation highlights the failure of Satan's power to overcome Andrew's new level of divine favor. This scene is also notable because it marks a midway point in Andrew's development as an apostle. While his calling of the floodwaters near the conclusion of the poem marks a decisive victory that leads to the Mermedonians' conversion, here, Andrew's newly renewed faith affords him protection against Satan's agents and, by extension, the devil himself. Upon his arrival into Mermedonia, Andrew undergoes torture at the hands of the indigenous peoples that is quite similar to what Matthew previously suffered. Yet, for Andrew, this suffering is not a surprise; shortly after arriving on the Mermedonian shores, Jesus himself explicitly informs the saint that he will be tested through bodily suffering. Thus, repelling the Mermedonians demonstrates that Andrew has endured this foretold test and as a result obtains a level of divine favor and apostolic might.

With this result in mind, it now seems an appropriate time to return to Peter Dendle's assertion – that the *Andreas* poet's Satan fulfills the role of both the forging *and* the testing of a saint. By taunting Andrew and ordering his execution, Satan provides the apostle with a test of his newfound faith and the divine power that comes along with it. However, this attack also spurs Andrew towards attaining an even greater level of apostolic might, which is ultimately demonstrated at the end of the narrative. While Satan's relationship with the

Mermedonians is unique in Old English literature, ultimately his appearance in *Andreas* still fulfills familiar narrative roles.

The *Andreas* poet's choice to portray the devil's relationship with the Mermedonians as a dark reflection of the interaction between Jesus and his disciples amplifies Satan's diabolical power and increases the threat he poses to the apostles. Similarly, by facing this danger, Andrew is able to demonstrate his newly gained level of apostolic might in a more spectacular manner.

#### *Satan in Old Saxon Literature*

Not only is Satan the most common figure in Old English literature, but he is also well represented in Continental Saxon writings. He appears prominently in the *Heliand*, and he is famously the focal character of *Genesis B*. Notably, the poet of *Genesis B* transforms the narrative of the biblical *Genesis* to include a representation of Satan that is "distinctly Anglo-Saxon" (Pavlinich 88). Similarly, the *Heliand* poet expands upon Satan's role in the Gospels in order to better fulfill Germanic literary conventions. Though the poet affords Satan a greater role, the devil's overall place in the Gospel harmony is often, seemingly, contradictory. In his harmony, the poet moves Satan away from his Roman role as an instigator of discord towards a more direct opponent for Jesus. Yet, though he affords the devil a greater presence than his appearances in the Gospels, the *Heliand* poet downplays Satan's power and demonic influence. These changes work to

emphasize elements that would have been both familiar and appealing to the Saxon audience.

Satan has two distinct appearances in the *Heliand*, and the poet attributes a third action to the devil's power. Satan's first, and most prolonged, appearance is during the Temptation of Jesus, spanning lines 1020-1120 of the poem. This scene marks some of the poet's most obvious alterations to both the biblical text and Tatian's source material. Satan's portrayal in this scene establishes him, from his very introduction, as a force that is in conflict with Jesus and his mission. This confrontational imagery is first displayed as the poet describes Jesus' purpose for undertaking the Temptation:

ne habda liudeo than mer,  
seggeo te gisiðun, al so he im selbo gicos:  
uuelda is thar latan coston craftiga uuhti,  
selbon Satanasan, the gio an sundeo spenit,  
man an menuuerk (Lines 1028b-1032a, my emphasis)

[He did not have people, [no] men for companions, just as he wanted: he wanted to allow powerful beings to test Him, Satan himself, who always urged men into sinful deeds and malice.]

As Murphy argues, the poet "gradually [remakes] the scene of the temptations of Christ into a Germanic challenge to trial by single combat," though Murphy does not elaborate further upon his claim (*The Saxon Gospel* 36, note 54). Understanding this statement and its narrative significance requires an examination of other instances of single combat in Germanic poetry. Sadly, the

surviving corpus of Old Saxon poetry does not contain other examples of such a trial. However, the opening lines of the Old High German *Hildebrandslied* provides more than enough single combat to help with unpacking Murphy's meaning:

Ik gihorta dat seggen  
dat sih urhettun ænon muotin  
Hiltibrant enti Hadubrant unter heriun tuem  
sunufatarungo iro saro rihtun  
garutun se iro gudhamun gurtun sih iro suert ana,  
helidos ubar hringa, do sie to dero hiltiu ritun.<sup>10</sup>

[I have heard it said that lone warriors, Hildebrand and Hadubrand, a son and a father, met between two armies. They prepared their armor – the heroes made their war-shirts ready, girded their swords over rings as they rode into their battle.]

These lines illuminate two key features of this form of combat. First, from the outset of the narrative, the poet establishes the solitary nature of each combatant. Second, the poet reports each participant's prowess. In the *Hildebrandslied*, this information comes through a description of both the father's and the son's armor and weapons.

The same two elements are present in the opening lines of the *Heliand*. While the "solitary" nature of a confrontation in the wilderness is obvious, establishing the devil's level of threat requires the poet to deviate significantly from his sources. At the outset of the fitt that describes the Temptation, the poet

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<sup>10</sup> Old High German text from Barber. Modern English translation provided by the author.

almost immediately emphasizes and defines Satan's power. The first method he employs to communicate Satan's abilities is through a simple lexical decision; to convey Satan's power, in line 1030 the poet chooses to use "*craftiga*," the second most common word for "power" in the poem.<sup>11</sup> The poet uses this word while establishing Jesus' reason for undertaking the temptation: "he [Jesus] wanted to allow powerful beings to test Him." By employing this word here, the poet immediately puts forth Satan as a powerful opponent. Moreover, mentioning at the outset of the fitt that Satan is a mighty foe that Jesus wishes to test himself against establishes the magnitude of the devil's might. This usage helps set the stage for the "trial by combat" that Murphy describes.

Nonetheless, despite the poet's insistence that Satan is a threat worthy of facing Jesus in this trial, Satan ultimately poses no corporeal threat to his foe; in fact, at no point does the *Heliand* poet either show the devil to come into physical contact with Jesus. Satan's lack of bodily threat in the face of Jesus' divine strength differs sharply from the Anglo-Saxon poetic depiction of the Temptation of Christ related in the *Junius Manuscript's Christ and Satan*. The most evident structural difference between the two works is that, while the confrontation between Christ and Lucifer is the thematic crux of the poem, it is markedly shorter than the Temptation depicted in the *Heliand*; the scene found in *Christ and*

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<sup>11</sup> Murphy observes that, in the *Heliand*, "the word *mahtig* is the word most often used for 'magic' as well as 'power'" ("From Germanic Warrior" 21.)

*Satan* spans only the final sixty of the poem's 725 lines. This shorter depiction, in turn, leads to a condensing, and in some cases absence, of many of the themes seen in the *Heliand*. Most notably, the opening construction of the confrontation between the two powers is no longer rendered in language reminiscent of a trial by combat. Rather, this narrative account begins in a much more straightforward manner; following a short meditation on the sacrifice of Jesus, the poet opens the scene with the lines: "*Swylce he fæste feowertig daga, / metod mancynnes, þurh his mildsa sped.*" ("Also, He fasted for forty days, the measurer of mankind, through the power of his mercy.")<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the *Heliand*'s version of the Temptation, this opening section does not attribute to Jesus any intention to face Satan and his might.

While the focus in *Christ and Satan* is, like in the *Heliand*, still upon the conflict between the two forces, the Old English poem does not exclude physicality from the encounter. Following this opening proclamation, the poet links Jesus' power to his physical body while describing Satan's first temptation. This event spans lines 670a-672b of the poem:

Brohte him to bearme brade stanas,  
 bæd him for hungre hlafas wyrcan--  
 "gif þu swa micle mihte hæbbe."

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<sup>12</sup> Lines 665a-666b.



["[Satan] brought thick stones for him to hold, bade him to make loaves of bread because of his hunger – 'if you [Christ] have so much power.'"]

By wording the first temptation (and, indeed, the first words spoken by Satan during this scene) in this manner, the poet places the bodily power and the human will of Jesus into the poem; through Satan's statement that Jesus needs to eat because of his "hunger," the poet establishes this temptation as distinctly human. The poet again displays Jesus' corporeality during Satan's final act of temptation. In order to move Jesus to the mountaintop on which this temptation will take place, Satan's actions are depicted thusly: "*Pa he mid hondum genom / atol þurh edwit, and on esle ahof*" ("Then he [Satan], evil through his insolence, seized him [Christ] with his hands and heaved him upon his shoulder").<sup>13</sup> This description is jarring, as it represents the only time in either poem that the two foes come into direct physical contact. As a result, while *Christ and Satan* is not openly figured in a way that directly suggests a "trial by combat," the poet still feels the need to emphasize the corporeal elements of the challenge.

*Christ and Satan* is not the only work of Old English poetry to depict a martial confrontation involving Satan. *Juliana*, likewise, shows the saint to wrestle with and physically overwhelm the devil. Upon asking God for aid in

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<sup>13</sup> Lines 679a-680b.

responding to the devil's torments, the voice of God instructs the saint to retaliate:

"Forfoh þone frætgan ond fæste geheald,  
oþþæt he his siðfæt secge mid ryhte,  
ealne from orde, hwæt his æþelu syn." (Lines 284-86)

["Seize the obstinate one and hold fast until he speaks his journey  
with truth, all from the beginning, what his origins are."]

After grasping the devil, the narrative spends more than 200 lines detailing his confession. Interestingly, the devil seems to be both surprised and somewhat impressed by Juliana's display of physicality; in lines 510b-512, he notes "*Ne wæs ænig þara / þæt me þus þriste, swa þu nu þa, / halig mid hondum, hrinan*" ("There was not any of them [since the beginning of creation] that lay hold of me with hands on me as boldly as you, holy one, now do"). Dendle does not address Satan's grasping of Jesus in *Christ and Satan*, and while he does speak about the forced confession that the devil gives in *Juliana*, he is silent regarding the physical confrontation. However, the Anglo-Saxon poets' willingness to show Satan as coming into physical contact with both Jesus and his agents attests to the seriousness with which the culture approached the devil and his threat. Though the evil one can be defeated through martial means, he is also capable of retaliating in kind.

This manner of bodily threat is not present in the Old Saxon poem.

Without the danger of physical violence, the *Heliand* poet relies upon other

elements to establish Satan's power. Following the direct mention of Satan as being "powerful" on line 1030, the poet goes on to elaborate upon the nature of the evil one's threat: he is a tempter of men, and, if the context preceding the statement is to be believed, quite a successful one. Bearing in mind the manner of Jesus' forthcoming trial, that of temptation, this passage concisely constructs the most fitting opponent for Jesus' trial. This context aids greatly in establishing the nature of Satan's power in the *Heliand*. He is not a physical force akin to Jesus' adversary in *Christ and Satan*. Instead, his power lies in his power to sow deceit, to "spur men to sin and malicious deeds."

In addition to explicitly establishing nature of Satan's power, the poet also expands upon Satan's initial encounter with Jesus. As Stephen Pelle contends,

Satan at first hesitates to approach Christ because he believes him to be solely God ('god enfald'), a serious error in the assessment of the nature of Jesus. However, upon seeing Jesus hunger according to his human nature ('bi thero menniski'), Satan makes the opposite Christological error and deems Christ solely human ('man enfald') (71).

Though this scene's expansion draws upon a number of commentaries and sources, Satan's mistaken assessment of Jesus' nature is wholly the invention of the poet (68-71). By adding this failure, the poet changes the narrative in two key ways. First, the poet introduces a prominent flaw in Satan's abilities that is not overtly stated in the biblical Gospel. For all his power, Satan is unable to correctly assess Jesus and his dual nature as both man and God. Second, the poet

demonstrates the inefficiency of Satan's power against Jesus. As a being who relies on enticement rather than physical means to threaten Jesus, Satan's failure to correctly observe the situation renders him largely powerless during the forthcoming Temptation. Thus, while Satan is described as "powerful" at the outset of the trial, the only purpose this power serves is to solidify Jesus own capabilities to the audience.

While he is not physically present, Satan's power as a tempter is again referenced in lines 4620-4627. Here, the poet overtly attributes Judas' betrayal to Satan making his way "sorely around [Judas'] heart."<sup>14</sup> This success reaffirms the poet's observation during the Temptation that it is within Satan's power to lead "men to sin and malicious deeds." Indeed, this scene does demonstrate Satan's skill in temptation. After all, Judas is easily (and evidently instantly) led into betrayal.<sup>15</sup> This successful display of corruption, of course, retroactively makes Jesus' victory over the devil's temptations more impressive. Despite this apparent victory, when viewed within the larger context and Satan's next

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<sup>14</sup> Lines 4622b-4625a: "*gramon in geuuitun / an thene lichamon, leða uuhiiti, / uuarð imu Satanas sero bitengi, / hardo umbi is herte*" (devils, evil spirits, went into his body, and Satan sorely allied himself with him, hard around his heart").

<sup>15</sup> Dendle elaborates upon the methods and description of Satan's corruption of Judas, noting that "The Old Saxon *Heliand* . . . paints a vivid picture of the internal processes at work when Judas turns against Christ . . . In the Old Saxon version the demonic infiltration of the soul is primordially and biologically raw – the devil is virtually a heartworm" (*Satan Unbound* 28-29).

appearance, this triumph does not redeem the devil's earlier failure in his trial by combat.

The *Heliand* poet expands the biblical narrative to show that Satan recognizes that his success in tempting Judas actually threatens his power. Shortly after turning Judas to his will, Satan visits Pilate's wife in a dream in an attempt to prevent Jesus' crucifixion. Satan's appearance in this context is, of course, an invention of the poet. While Pilate's wife's dreams are present in the Gospel of Matthew, Satan is not explicitly mentioned as their source.<sup>16</sup> In addition to calling his victory over Judas into question, Satan's additional appearance in this scene helps to define and undermine his power. In particular, Satan's interaction with Pilate's wife identifies one of the methods through which he travels unnoticed throughout the mortal world. Though Satan's threat in Old Saxon literature is spiritual rather than physical, his menace in both the *Heliand* and *Genesis* is, nonetheless, a corporeal one. Dendle argues for a Saxon audience that prefers a devil whose coming and goings in the world are concretely defined, noting that "the . . . *Heliand* even gives Satan an invisibility helmet of some sort to allow him to appear among people, a most telling detail for deciding what sorts of narrative cues and logical coherence a continental

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<sup>16</sup> See Matthew 27:19. James Cathey identifies Satan's involvement as the poet's elaboration upon an idea Hranabus Maurus posits in his *Comment on Matthaëum* (*Text and Commentary* 241).

audience expected" (*Satan Unbound* 6).<sup>17</sup> Unlike Anglo-Saxon poetry, which seems comfortable allowing a degree of ambiguity in Satan's location and abilities, the *Heliand*-poet resolves Satan's coming and goings in lines 5427-5459 by employing a common Germanic trope<sup>18</sup> Here, Satan urges Pilate's wife to convince her husband to spare Jesus' life through dreams and whispering messages to her while he is under the aegis of a *heliðhelm* or "an invisibility helmet." During this portrayal, Satan's nature is described quite directly:

That uuif uuarð thuo an forah-ton,  
suiðo a sorogon, thuo iru thi-u gisiuni quamun  
thuru thes **dernien** dad an dages liohte,  
an heliðhelme bihelid. (Lines 5449b-5452a, my emphasis)

[That woman was in fear, horrified because of the visions that came to her in broad daylight through the deeds of the secret one, hidden in a magic helmet.]

The poet uses the word "*derni*" the adjectival form of the verb "*dernian*" or "to hide" in the place of a noun in this passage. Samuel Berr identifies both of these words as related to the adverb "*darnungo*" or "secret" (73).

By using *darnungo* to signify Satan, the poet conveys the idea that Satan himself is "hidden" or "secret" to the audience. This hiddenness manifests itself

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<sup>17</sup> Murphy, likewise, argues for the Saxons' preference for a more tangible form of evil; discussing the poet's decision to translate the traditional "deliver us from evil" line from the Lord's Prayer as "*uðilon dadiun*" ("evil deeds"), Murphy contends that "the author changes an abstract request, 'deliver us from evil,' into one that is concrete" (*Saxon Gospel* 56n92).

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion regarding Anglo-Saxon poets' difficulties representing Satan's spatiotemporal state, see: *Satan Unbound* 23-24.

in two ways. Most obviously, Satan is hidden from the woman's sight by the *heliðhelm*.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, as an adjective used to represent both itself and the noun, this word also comments on Satan's character: Satan is, by his very nature, "secretive," and his power lies in his ability to both hide himself and conceal the truth.<sup>20</sup> In context of Satan's earlier representation in the Temptation of Christ, the personification of Satan as "hidden" helps reinforce that Satan's threat is not a physical danger, but rather a spiritual peril.

The Old Saxon poets' decision to concretely explain the devil's presence among humans is also another way in which the continental poets limit Satan's powers. The preference for a devil that is firmly rooted in the spatiotemporal world and whose evil is rooted in deeds rather than abstract concepts is a far cry from the devil of many Anglo-Saxon poems. For instance, in *Andreas*, Satan and his fellow devils appear within Andrew's cell numerous times without explanation, and the devil of *Christ and Satan* seems to travel freely between hell and the mortal world. Perhaps most prominently, the infernal being that appears to torment Juliana appears without a narrative clue as to the method of his

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<sup>19</sup> While this passage makes it clear that the *heliðhelm* renders its wearer invisible, there is a large degree of uncertainty as to the item's appearance and specific traits. For a lengthy discussion about the etymology of the word *heliðhelm* and its appearance across Germanic poetry, see: Fox 137-57.

<sup>20</sup> In his translation, G. Ronald Murphy translates *dernien* as "deceiver." While this translation does not have a basis in context with the word's etymological information, it gestures quite well toward the nature of Satan that the poet certainly wishes to convey. See: *The Saxon Gospel* 180.

arrival, and at times he appears to dwell simultaneously both on Earth and in hell (Dendle, *Satan Unbound* 77). Through the decision to explain the devil's comings and goings in the mortal realm, the Old Saxon poets define Satan's powers to the newly converted audience in a way that is fundamentally more limited than his insular representation.<sup>21</sup>

While the poet initially presents Satan as a formidable adversary for Jesus, the devil achieves little in his appearances. In the Temptation, Satan is unable to cause Jesus to falter, and, in fact, he grossly misunderstands Christ's nature. Additionally, unlike his counterpart in *Christ and Satan*, the *Heliand's* devil does not physically threaten Jesus. He fairs little better during his attempts to prevent the Crucifixion. While he does successfully convince Pilate's wife to plead for Christ's life, the task is unsuccessful; line 5446 states that Christ "*uuas iu than te doðe alloted*" ("was already allotted to death"). Much like Jesus himself, the Old Saxon devil has a complex relationship with *uurd*.<sup>22</sup> While Satan does not directly address or confront fate as a tangible force as Jesus does in the *Heliand*,<sup>23</sup> both the gospel harmony and *Genesis B* present Satan as unable to alter the larger cosmic

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<sup>21</sup> The way the *Heliand* poet portrays the devil's spatiotemporal limitations reflects the ways the northern pantheon is depicted in Old Norse literature. Prisca Augustyn notes that "Germanic gods essentially behave like humans . . . they have human strengths and weaknesses" (*Semiotics* 39).

<sup>22</sup> For a lengthier discussion of the conflict between Jesus and "fate," see pages 81-87 of this project.

<sup>23</sup> See pages 84-87 of this study.



structure despite his best efforts. Elan Justice Pavlinich identifies the Satan of *Genesis B* as a being situated between free will and predestination. Regarding Satan's place in the cosmological structure, Pavlinich argues, "*Genesis B* presents an ontology that binds the Devil to the governance of God" (99). Despite his attempts to exercise his individuality, Satan is unable to subvert his fate because "[he] shares in the ontological structure that not only stems from God but *is* God at every metaphysical level" (Pavlinich 98). Ultimately, as he is part of the predestined structure himself, Satan is unable to change or subvert the structure.

While the governing force that Satan fails to subvert in the Gospel harmony is different, his inability to prevent Jesus' death in the *Heliand* mirrors the devil's failure in *Genesis B*. Just as God had established a larger ontological structure in which Satan played an ongoing part, fate had already decided upon Jesus' death in the *Heliand*, a predestined event that, through his corruption of Judas, Satan had already played his role. Satan's powerlessness to change events already ordained by fate is further highlighted by the poet's use of the verb "*giscerid*" in line 5446. Sehrt defines *giscerid* as "*Zuteilen*" ("allotted" or "assigned"), "*austeilen*" ("distributed"), or "*verleihen*" ("hired," "lent") (470). Berr, similarly, defines "*skerian*" as "share" or "distribute" and "*giskerian*" more narrowly as "allot," while also linking the word etymologically to the Old

English term “*scierian*” (353).<sup>24</sup> *Giscerid*’s semantic link to the idea of “measuring” or “allotting” echoes one of the *Heliand*’s names for “fate”: *metod* or “measurer.” As chapter two of this study discussed, while the Old English poetic corpus uses *meotud* as a synonym for the Christian God, the *Heliand* utilizes the term to represent fate as a force in “an antagonistic relationship with God” (*Semiotics* 92). By using *gescerid* here, the poet makes it clear that it was “fate” that had allotted Jesus his death (a death that he would eventually overcome), and because this superior force dictates Jesus’ death, Satan is unable to interfere with the Crucifixion.

By showing Satan fail to prevent Jesus’ death, the poet conveys two key points. First, Satan is, like humanity, unable to alter or escape *uurd*. Second, by showing Jesus as able to overcome Fate, the poet displays Jesus’ power as markedly superior to Satan’s own influence on the mortal world. If Jesus is able to triumph over an ontological force that Satan was unable to subvert, then the newly converted Saxons should hold no doubt as to Jesus’ power to overcome the evil one’s works.

Thus, while the *Heliand* poet does afford Satan an additional appearance that is not present in Tatian and the biblical narrative, this event serves specifically to demonstrate Satan’s lack of power over Gospel events. In all three

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<sup>24</sup> Clark Hall provides a similar definition for the Old English *scirian*: “to arrange, ordain, appoint, determine, allot, assign, grant” (259).

of the events attributed to him in the poem, Satan finds “success” only in converting Judas to his will, a victory he regrets almost immediately. This leads him fruitlessly to attempt to undermine his own previous action. Rather than presenting Satan as a great, motivating evil, the *Heliand*’s devil is instead relegated to events that drive home his powerlessness in the face of both Jesus and the fated events that surround him. In the end, Satan is completely unable to intervene in the plan that has already been put into motion.

The choices the *Heliand* poet makes while adapting the *Diatessaron* also reflect his decision to downplay Satan’s power. Tatian’s Gospel harmony contains a total of thirty-one of Jesus’ miracles. Of these, four miracles present Jesus casting demons out from their human hosts. While the *Heliand* poet carefully selects thirteen miracles to adapt for the Saxon audience, he includes none of these exorcisms in his own Gospel harmony. Rather, the poet largely focuses on adapting miracles that show Jesus as healing or raising people from the dead. The absence of demonic possessions is especially notable in light of Snyder’s belief that possession is the devil’s primary method of introducing discord between Christians. By removing these miracles, the poet transitions Satan away from a Roman “source of discord” to a more common, direct threat to Jesus.

Aside from Satan's appearances, only one "demonic" element makes its way into the *Heliand*. In fitt thirty-six, invisible entities strike a foreign tribeswoman's daughter with sickness.<sup>25</sup> This prompts Jesus to heal the girl's malady. Overall, these entities hold little resemblance to the demons seen in the *Diatessaron*; the beings do not inflict the girl with madness, but rather they strike with a bodily sickness that is not attributed to evil spirits in a source text. By causing physical ailments rather than mental strife, the figures are more reminiscent of the illness inducing spirits detailed in Old English metrical charms. By including these Germanic spirits, which are not explicitly under the devil's command, and excluding biblical demonic accounts, the poet further undermines Satan's power in the text.

Why then, does the poet downplay the threat of Satan and his demons? When viewed as a whole, the Old Saxon poet's choices when adapting the devil into the *Heliand* run contrary to Russell's definition of Satan as Jesus' "prime adversary." First, it should be noted that, while the *Heliand*'s Satan is not portrayed as wielding power that threatens Jesus, the Old Saxon poet shares the Anglo-Saxons' reluctance to assign Satan clownish traits or trivialize his menace. The reality of Satan and his danger was certainly a key aspect of the Saxons' Christian education; the devil's actions are openly referenced in the ninth-

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<sup>25</sup> See Murphy, *The Saxon Gospel* 97n135.

century Old Saxon Baptismal Vow. Here, aspiring Saxon Christians are asked to forsake “*allum diabolgelde . . . and allum dioboles uuercum*” (“all worship of the devil and all of the works of the Devil”) (Wadstein 3).<sup>26</sup> Moreover, in surviving Old Saxon literature, Satan is clearly portrayed as powerful, even in the context of Jesus’ trial, and he demonstrates a wide range of supernatural abilities that are presented quite seriously. However, while both the Carolingian church and the *Heliand* poet construct Satan as a powerful force, the devil is by no means the central antagonist of the Gospel harmony. Despite his appearance early in the text, Satan does not come face-to-face with Jesus again; though the poet does choose to later reintroduce Satan into the narrative, the devil encounters only human agents, and he is largely ineffective in achieving his goals. Instead, the *Heliand*’s Satan serves as a kind of “proving ground” for Jesus. By defeating Satan during the Temptation, Jesus proves himself as a hero capable of overcoming mighty challengers, thus paving the way for Jesus to confront further supernatural and mortal threats over the course of the poem.<sup>27</sup>

As a culture recently overtaken by military conquest, the Saxons have resonated more easily with a physical force than a spiritual opponent such as

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<sup>26</sup> Translation by the author. For a discussion of the Baptismal Vow’s treatment of the Germanic gods, see pages 70-71 of this study.

<sup>27</sup> For a lengthier discussion of the supernatural forces that Jesus confronts, see pages 67-87 in this study.

Satan. Because of this need, as Murphy acknowledges, the poet created “a consistent, powerful opposing force to provide a decisive contest with the hero of his epic” (“Jews in the *Heliand*” 18). Murphy further argues that the poet reframes the Gospel’s representation of the Jewish people to fill this narrative role (18).<sup>28</sup> Throughout the narrative, the poet “simplifies the Jewish parts of the story,” such as the discussions about the Sabbath, in order to better appeal to an audience that was unfamiliar with these debates (18). As a part of this effort, the poet also “[eliminates] . . . the subgroups of Pharisees, Sadducees and the Scribes” in order to create a singular “Jewish people” to oppose Jesus (18). By removing these divisions, “the Jews become responsible for the opposition to Christ on almost every page of the story” (18). While Satan largely falls away from the narrative after his defeat during the Temptation, these changes to the Jewish people’s representation provides Jesus with a more consistent threat. Because the Jews were a group of people unfamiliar to the Saxons and in opposition to the poet’s heroic representation of Jesus, it was easy for the poet to portray them as an opposing military force over which Jesus can triumph. This mortal, martial threat would have been much more cultural familiar to the Saxons than an otherworldly tempter.

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<sup>28</sup> While the author recognizes the inherent anti-Semitism in the *Heliand*’s representation of Jews, as it does not directly pertain to the topic at hand, the subject will not be discussed.

The *Heliand* poet chooses to downplay Satan's power in favor of opponents more familiar to his Saxon audience. Moreover, in other cases, the poet entirely excludes other prominent instances of demonic might. These adaptational choices are a direct result of the Franks' military conquest of the Saxons; rather than focusing on a primary supernatural adversary for Jesus, the poet instead emphasizes human opponents who are more closely reminiscent of the Saxons' recent conquest. Through these changes to the Gospel narrative, the poet was better able to present Christianity in a way that was understandable and appealing to the Saxon audience.

#### *Satan Across Cultures*

Why, then, were the Anglo-Saxon poets more willing to represent Satan as a genuine bodily danger than their continental counterparts? Despite each society's choice to emphasize Satan prominently in their literature, the devil and his diabolical power plays a very different role in the history of the two cultures' conversions. For the Anglo-Saxons, Satan's power represents a real, tangible threat, capable of physically confronting Jesus and, through the power of his influence and commands, causing bodily harm to the apostles. Yet, in the case of Satan's confrontation with the saints, this same danger is also a method through which the saints are formed and tested. As a force that is only loosely rooted in the physical world, the devil of Old English literature is able to harry and

challenge the saints as they move towards a more perfect form. Through these actions, poets are able to use Satan's infernal might as a way to encourage Christian behavior in the face of adversity and evil.

As opposed to a convenient way to test saints, Satan was markedly less useful for Old Saxon poets and their missionary efforts. In Old English, Satan is routinely depicted as capable of exerting control. In *Christ and Satan*, the devil is, at least momentarily, able to force Jesus into unwanted movement. Perhaps more importantly, *Andreas* clearly shows Satan as having real, demonstrable power over the mortal world, and it requires significant pain and sacrifice on Andrew's part to break this control. This magnitude of threat is simply not present in Old Saxon literature; even in *Genesis B*, despite being surrounded by forces that until recently were under his command, Satan shows no real power over his fellow demonic forces, and suffers a long series of rebukes at their hands. Instead, he is able to gain only the loyalty of one fellow resident of hell, and this comes as the result of a plea, rather than a command or directive. Moreover, despite his enhanced role in the *Heliand's* narrative, at no point does the devil gain an advantage against Jesus, and his victories over humankind are limited at best. Rather than granting the devil the wide-reaching powers seen in Anglo-Saxon literature, the Old Saxon poets frame Satan as lacking this key element of control and, ultimately, push him to the margins in favor of placing Jesus into conflict



with supernatural forces such as fate and martial powers such as the Jewish people.

### *Conclusion*

The Anglo-Saxons' and the Continental Saxons' contrasting representations of Satan, his powers, and the extent of his ability to threaten those bearing the power of the Christian God accentuate the cultures' starkly different conversions to the faith. Because of their gradual and complex conversion to Christianity through missionary efforts, Anglo-Saxon poets were able to use Satan and his power as an important tool in the narrative arc of the saints. The Continental Saxons, conversely, were converted suddenly and violently to the faith through military conquest. This made a mortal, martial enemy for Jesus a much more logical challenge than Satan's otherworldly temptation.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusion

Presenting the supernatural power of the Christian God, the disciples, and Satan was a marked challenge for Anglo-Saxon and Continental Saxon poets alike. In the case of the Saxons, the culture was converted suddenly and, as Dennis Green contends, imperfectly. This method of conversion left significant gaps in the Saxons' understanding of the biblical narrative and Christian doctrine. Even for the Anglo-Saxons, who experienced conversion in a more gradual and amicable manner, the divine and nefarious powers depicted in the Christian tradition were often foreign and unfamiliar. The observations made in this study are situated around one driving principle: in order for poets in Anglo-Saxon England and Continental Saxony to present the divine might of Jesus and his followers and the nefarious strength of Satan, they must accommodate their audiences. For Saxon and Anglo-Saxon poets, this accommodation took the form of the social structures, religious beliefs, and vocabulary that their audiences found familiar.

### *Divine Power and the Germanic Audience*

In order for both the Anglo-Saxons and their continental cousins to present the divine to their audiences, they needed to draw upon familiar, mortal social structures and cultural beliefs. In the case of Jesus, poets looked to both Germanic perceptions of the divine and earthly standards of heroism and kingship in order to convey the power and authority the Christian deity wields. For instance, to accommodate their respective audiences, the poets often turned to similar images. Both cultures, when faced with expressing the power Jesus wielded over the natural world, chose to expand and accentuate scenes that display his dominance over the perhaps all-too-familiar image of maritime storms. Similarly, both the Anglo-Saxons and their continental counterparts found the image of the lord/thane interaction invaluable when exploring the relationship Jesus shares with his disciples. However, poets found this interaction useful for more than representing the divine; the *Andreas* poet distorts this imagery in order to demonstrate the power Satan exerts over his own human followers.

To show Christian scripture and doctrine in a way that was familiar to their audiences, Germanic poets also turned to their own indigenous religious beliefs. The lingering uncertainty surrounding the pre-Christian religions of both the Anglo-Saxons and the Continental Saxons makes it difficult to understand

the full extent that these poets drew upon these beliefs. Though the influence of these pre-Christian beliefs may be obscured, it is undoubtedly present. Though the *Heliand* poet mentions no specific Germanic deities, he consistently portrays Jesus in conflict with forces that the Saxon audience would have associated with the supernatural, such as storms, and as performing feats that no surviving work of pre-Christian myth replicates, such as the raising of the dead. Additionally, in order to map out the extent of the unfamiliar deity's power, the Saxon poet shows Jesus in open conflict with *uurd*, the governing force in the Germanic world view. Yet, the poets' need to accommodate their audiences does not always lead to the supernatural holding a more prominent place in Old Germanic literature. Spurred on by the cultural images the newly converted Saxons found familiar, the *Heliand* poet instead chose to push Satan to the margins in favor of framing a human force as the central antagonist of his work.

The similarities in the cultures' choices in adaptation extended to their languages, as well. An obvious similarity is Anglo-Saxons' and the Continental Saxons' shared tendency to avoid the name Jesus in favor of the Germanic *heliand* or *hælend*. Additionally, the cultures' approaches were often similar even in places where the cultures used different words to express a Christian concept. Though they diverged in the words and ideas that they used to explain the dynamic, Anglo-Saxon and Continental Saxon poets each drew upon distinctly

Germanic vocabulary (“*wær*” and “*minnea*”) in order to explain the interpersonal interactions between Jesus and his twelve disciples.

More than pointing out the images and language the writings of these cultures share when depicting the supernatural, this study has shown that the ways the Saxons and Anglo-Saxons understood and wrote about these forces could also diverge sharply. For the Anglo-Saxons, Satan was a dangerous force that could move freely and without explanation between the human world and hell; sometimes, he even seems to occupy both of these spaces at once. This fluidity was not present with the Continental Saxons, whose limited remaining texts preferred to firmly define Satan’s movements in the spatiotemporal world. This difference suggests that the two cultures, perhaps, viewed the nature of the devil’s threat in a fundamentally different way. Similarly, while continental and insular poets each prominently considered the Crucifixion during their poetry, the way they approached the moment of Jesus’ death was different. For instance, the Old English *Dream of the Rood* provides a prolonged meditation on the deceased Jesus’ body, while the Continental Saxons glossed over the death in order to accentuate the miraculous signs that accompanied his passing. These opposing treatments highlight the difficulty of presenting the idea of a dying savior to these hero-centric societies.

*Moving Forward: Accommodation in the West Germanic World and Beyond*

While this study approaches the question of accommodation from many angles, there is still room for scholars to expand this topic. One particular avenue left to explore are the ways in which Anglo-Saxon and Continental Saxon poets conveyed the power of demonic forces to their audiences. As this study briefly notes in its fifth chapter, the *Heliand* poet chose to exclude every instance of demonic possession and exorcism from his adaptation. Yet, Peter Dendle's recent study *Demon Possession in Anglo-Saxon England* shows that this is not the case in the Anglo-Saxon world. The obvious question, then, becomes "why did the *Heliand* poet choose to exclude these forces?" A pursuit of this question promises to further expand scholars' understanding of the ways these cultures perceived diabolical powers in their everyday lives.

The conversation about the relationship between biblical text and cultural accommodation does not end with the Continental Saxons, or even with the Middle Ages. *The Message*, a modern-day idiomatic translation of the Bible, markets itself as "a contemporary rendering of the Bible from the original languages, crafted to present its tone, rhythm, events, and ideas in everyday language" (Peterson). This goal is, at a glance, remarkably close to the *Heliand* poet's own mission to transform the Gospel to better appeal to the Saxons. These

similar goals open the door for scholars to explore the ways in which biblical adaptations and translations have endeavored to accommodate their audiences.

### *Final Remarks*

The supernatural, be it the divine or the diabolical, permeates the literature of the Anglo-Saxons and the Continental Saxons on the most fundamental levels. Hagiographies or adaptations of scripture exist in each of significant manuscript of Old English poetry, and biblical adaptations comprise the whole of the surviving Old Saxon poetic corpus. The cultures often differ in their understandings and representations of these forces. However, the ubiquitous presence of these images and narratives reveal cultures that, at their core, were concerned with exploring similar topics – the relationship between humankind and the divine, the influence of evil in the world, and the difficulty of discussing these supernatural forces with their own language.

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