Life, Literature and Prayer in Early Anglo-Saxon England

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Chapter Two of this thesis contains materials published as “Psalmody and the Role of Penance in the Book of Cerne’s Abbreviated Psalter”, *English Studies*, Volume 97, Issue 1 (2017), pp. 5-14. These materials appear on pages 92-100 of this thesis.

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.
I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the representation of prayer in literary texts from early Anglo-Saxon England, investigating the role of reading in the life of prayer and the various ways in which literary texts from the eighth and ninth centuries attest to cultures of prayer in this period. Chapter One looks at writings about saints, especially Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* and a number of early saints' lives, to identify the features most common to early Anglo-Saxon prayer. Prayer, in these texts, is most frequently ascetic and extra-liturgical, with an emphasis on the night vigil as the most important form of private devotion and a keen interest in the sanctification of time and space through prayer and communion with the saints. The representation of prayer in these texts represents both ideal and reality and, as this chapter argues, part of the purpose of these texts was to teach people how to pray. Chapter Two looks to the prayers of the ninth-century Mercian tradition, preserved in four private prayer books: Cambridge, University Library Ll.I.10 (The Book of Cerne), B.L., Harley 2965 (The Book of Nunnaminster), B.L., Royal 2.A.XX (The Royal Prayer Book), B.L., Harley 7653 (The Harley Fragment). This chapter investigates the way in which these books encourage meditative engagement with the Gospels through reading. These books focus on penance, the person of Christ, the Incarnation, the Passion and Judgment, themes that also emerge in Old English literary volumes. Chapter Three turns to the Old English poems of Junius 11, suggesting that prayer is central to the purpose of Junius 11's construction. This chapter argues that the manuscript as a whole is centred on the theme of moral behaviour and the appropriate response to God, on the one hand, and the rejection of God and judgment, on the other. Thus, the manuscript frequently juxtaposes the prayers of the Old Testament figures and, in *Christ and Satan*, the prayers of the saints with the 'anti-prayers' of God's enemies. In this way, the volume is preoccupied with the contemplation of judgment as well as with redemption. Furthermore, the volume bears witness to some aspects of the practice of prayer contemporary with the composition of each poem. Finally, Chapter Four dicusses the Old English poem *The Dream of the Rood* in light of the ascetic, penitential and

Christological focus of eighth- and ninth-century Anglo-Saxon prayers discussed so far in this thesis. This chapter argues that *The Dream of the Rood* is a poem about prayer and that its setting draws on conventional descriptions of the night vigil, which are discussed at length in Chapter One, and that the visionary experience of the dreamer represents a sustained poetic reflection on the kinds of meditative contemplation to which the Mercian prayer books bear witness.

Acknowledgements

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Biblical References and Translations

Biblical references in this thesis follow the numbering of the Latin Vulgate and quotations from the Psalms similarly follow the Vulgate numbering. Quotations from the Bible are taken from Robert Weber, B. Fischer, J. Gribomont, H. F. D. Sparks, W. Thiele and Roger Gryson, eds*., Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, 4th edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983).

Translations of the Bible are from the Douay-Rheims translation of the Vulgate.

Non-Biblical translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

Introduction

For the medieval monk, the moment of death was the climax of a life lived in prayer. It is unsurprising, then, that the Venerable Bede, who joined his monastic community at the age of seven, died an exemplary death. Bede's disciple Cuthbert records the details of Bede's final days of prayer, spent in the Northumbrian monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, in a letter written soon after the event.[1] First, Bede died at precisely the right time according to the liturgical calendar. Beginning to ail two weeks before the celebration of Christ's Resurrection, Bede spent the prelude to Easter in constant prayer and thanksgiving. Thus, Bede prepared for his own death while also preparing to celebrate Christ's death. Throughout the night Bede prayed between short sleeps. At night he also sang, not merely lying on his bed but with uplifted hands, praising God with his body as well as his mouth. At other times Bede gave himself to constant repetition of the Psalter. Bede recited scripture and liturgical antiphons, many of which would bring him to overwhelming tears. Bede also taught his students, inviting them to imitate him in his final hours while enlisting help in finishing his final books, a translation of John's Gospel into Old English and some selections from Isidore of Seville. In the midst of all this prayer, Bede offers a 'native' poem to his students 'concerning the dread parting of souls from the body'.[2] Finally, on the Eve of the feast of Christ's Ascension (and, we understand, the eve of Bede's ascent into heaven), Bede chose to die while sitting in his cell facing his own holy place, in which he prayed to God most often and alone.

Bede's final days were, first and foremost, days of prayer. And yet this prayer would be unimaginable without the well developed habits of devotional reading that were a part of Bede's monastic training: the memorisation of the liturgy, the psalter and the scriptures. Reading and writing were activities designed to focus the mind on prayer,

[1] Cuthbert, "Epistola De Obitu Bedae", in *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 580–587.
[2] Ibid., 580–1.

not just for intellectual stimulation but, most importantly, for emotional involvement with that pillar of the Christian faith: the story of Easter. To this end, time, space and physical gesture each play a role. Bede prays at night, dies the evening before the Ascension, sits for that most solemn moment facing the altar and, drawing emotional significance from these times and places, weeps in remembrance of his own sin but also in anticipation of salvation. For scholars of Anglo-Saxon literature, the most thrilling detail in this letter is the inclusion of Bede's so-called 'Death Song', which may or may not have been written by Bede himself.[3] The poem is conventional but, for its date and context, a remarkable attestation to the use of vernacular literature as one of the many tools in Bede's literary arsenal that allowed him to pray, to confess and to prepare adequately for the hour of his death.

This thesis is an examination of the activity of prayer in Anglo-Saxon England. It seeks to examine closely the relationship between prayer and reading and to ask how the remembrance and composition of literature, both in Latin and Old English, bore witness to and facilitated the practice of prayer. While both prayer and reading were activities that could be undertaken both privately and communally in monasteries, this thesis focuses on the culture of private prayer as it developed between the seventh and the ninth centuries, culminating in the composition of a series of 'private' prayer books in ninth century Mercia. I begin with the representation of prayer in saints' lives, which provide the earliest and most detailed attestations to the practice of both private and communal prayer. Having established some sense of how people prayed, I turn to the textual record of prayer as it appears in four Mercian prayer books, interrogating the interaction between prayer, reading, scriptural and liturgical borrowings and the innovative literary and meditative impulses that sit behind these books. Finally, this thesis turns to Old English biblical poetry to ask how these poems may have engaged with the practice of prayer, in an echo of Bede's recitation of Old English verse with the intention of fostering meditation in the final days of his life. I will also ask what evidence resides in the poetic record, and its manuscripts, for the practice of prayer in Anglo-Saxon England.

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[3] See Andy Orchard, "The Word Made Flesh: Christianity and Oral Culture in Anglo-Saxon Verse," *Oral Tradition* 24, no. 2 (2009): 296–98.

Review of Critical Literature: Prayer and Reading

The relationship between traditions of 'private' prayer and reading in Anglo-Saxon England has never been the subject, directly, of a full-length study. This study suffers from being limited to a small number of texts and manuscripts, and is by no means a definitive investigation of the relationship between prayer and reading. This thesis looks to saints' lives, prayer books and biblical poetry in order to understand prayer in Anglo-Saxon England, arguing that these texts were designed to exhort men and women to prayer.

Only one full-length study of prayer in Anglo-Saxon literature has been published, an article by Donald Bzdyl, based on his doctoral thesis. Bzdyl looks at prayers in Old English narratives, with a unique focus on the literary construction of prayer in the Old English corpus. He differentiates between narrative prayers, which are included in the action of the story, and 'prayers included by the author as narrator which do not form part of the action of the tale.'[4] Bzdyl draws a link between the frequency with which monks prayed, the exhortation to prayer in a variety of writers including Bede and Ælfric, and the way in which prayer functions in some Anglo-Saxon narratives. He suggests that prayers in private prayer books give us 'insight into Anglo-Saxon notions of prayer.'[5] His analysis extends, briefly, to the representation of prayer in poetry. Other studies briefly survey the appearance of prayers in numerous texts: Eric Stanley's chapter "Prayers, Praise and Thanksgiving in Old English Verse" emphasises the ubiquity of prayer in Old English verse, including *Beowulf*[6]; Christine Rauer discusses the narrative use of prayer in the *Old English Martyrology*[7]; and Scott DeGregorio discusses the insertion of prayers into Bede's spiritual writings.[8] More recently, Francis Leneghan's essay "Preparing the Mind for Prayer: *The Wanderer*, *Hesychasm* and *Theosis*" reads the poem *The Wanderer* within the context of

[4] Donald G. Bzdyl, "Prayer in Old English Narratives," *Medium Ævum* 51 (1982): 135.
[5] Bzdyl, 137.
[6] Eric Gerald Stanley, *In the Foreground : Beowulf* (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY, USA: D.S. Brewer, 1994).
[7] Christine Rauer, "Direct Speech, Intercession, and Prayer in the Old English Martyrology," *English Studies* 93, no. 5 (August 2012): 563–71.
[8] Scott DeGregorio, "The Venerable Bede on Prayer and Contemplation," *Traditio* 54 (1999): 1–39.

traditions of monastic prayer expounded by John Cassian and others.[9] Leneghan's approach, though specifically focused on *The Wanderer*, opens up ways of understanding how vernacular compositions could be considered 'in the light of monastic thought and prayerful reading.'[10] Jane Toswell's work on the Psalter in Anglo-Saxon England, consisting of several articles and one book, *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, is one study that combines a detailed investigation of prayer with the study of literature, both Latin and vernacular.[11] Toswell analyses various authors' approach to the Psalms, interrogates the appearance of psalm verses in a number of texts, including saints' lives, and provides detailed analyses of the paleography and codicology of Anglo-Saxon psalter manuscripts. She concludes further that some psalters were probably used for private rumination, based on their size and layout.[12] She also applies her analysis of psalm culture in Anglo-Saxon England to a variety of vernacular texts, including some less explicitly religious texts, showing how the language of the Psalms permeated the mental world of Anglo-Saxon authors. The Psalms were primarily prayers in Anglo-Saxon England, and the wide scope of their use is evidence for the importance of prayer in shaping literary culture. Most recently, in a collection of essays on the Psalms in medieval literature, Toswell contributed an essay on psalm genres in English poetry and Leneghan examined the metrical psalter from a literary perspective.[13]

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[9] Francis Leneghan, "Preparing the Mind for Prayer: *The Wanderer*, Hesychasm and Theosis," *Neophilologus: An International Journal of Modern and Mediaeval Language and Literature* 100 (2016): 121–42.

[10] Leneghan, 123.

[11] M.J. Toswell, *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, Medieval Church Studies, volume 10 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2014); M.J Toswell, "Psalters," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 468–81; M.J. Toswell, "The Late Anglo-Saxon Psalter: Ancestor of the Book of Hours?," *Florilegium* 14 (1995-96): 1–24.

[12] Toswell identifies several psalters that were more probably used for private than public devotion, such as MS Laud lat. 81 and Rouen MS A.44, as well as larger 'deluxe' psalters like Harley BL MS 603: *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, 216; "The Late Anglo-Saxon Psalter: Ancestor of the Book of Hours?".

[13] Francis Leneghan, "Making the Psalter Sing: the Old English Metrical Psalms, Rhythm and Ruminatio", ed. Tamara Atkin and Francis Leneghan, *The Psalms and Medieval English Literature: From the Conversion to the Reformation* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2017,), 173-97; M.J. Toswell, "Psalm Genres in Old English Poetry". ed. Aktkin and Leneghan, *The Psalms and Medieval English Literature*, 218-32. See also Patrick E. O'Neill, "Strategies of Translation in the Old English Versions (Prose and Metrical) of the Psalms in the Paris Psalter (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Fonds latin 8824", *Bulletin of the Institute of Oriental and Occidental Studies, Kansai University* 48 (2015), 137-71.

This thesis attempts to treat prayers in narrative and poetic sources as a reflection of the genuine practice of historical men and women, however anonymous they remain, in their lives. While prayer is fundamentally an internal, emotional experience, the method of praying and seeking transcendence involved the participation of the body in time and space. Jean-Claude Schmitt, writing on gesture in the Middle Ages, suggests a tension wherein the body was both a 'prison house' and the sole means of salvation. Thus, the use of the body was of profound importance, since physical existence is the link between the 'invisible *inside* and a visible *outside*.' Gestures, he writes, 'featured, or better, *embodied* the dialectic between *intus* and *foris* since they were supposed to express without the 'secret movements' of the soul within.'[14] This tension is very apparent in the works of Anglo-Saxon monastic authors, who emphasise the subjugation of the body through fasting and through physical acts of ascetic piety. The body, as Gabriel Bunge points out, reflects the relationship between the orant and God. He writes,

> it is the bodily countenance in which this spiritual essence is reflected. To turn one's face toward another or deliberately to turn it away from him is not something indifferent, as everyone knows from daily experience, but rather a gesture of profound, symbolic meaning. Indeed, it indicates whether we want to enter into a personal relationship with another or want to deny him this.[15]

While every attempt has been made to bear in mind that prayer is an action involving the body, the mind and the emotions in physical time and space, the fact remains that our main way of accessing these prayers is textual. Therefore, this thesis will examine prayers primarily as textual artifacts, produced for the most part by a small number of highly literate men and women whose prayer lives were profoundly influenced by their literacy. The wide spectrum of literacy in Anglo-Saxon society means that different people probably engaged with these prayers, and the words of prayer in

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[14] Jean Claude Schmitt, "The Rationale of Gestures in the West: Third to Thirteenth Centuries," in *A Cultural History of Gesture*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1992), 60.
[15] Gabriel Bunge, *Earthen Vessels. The Practice of Personal Prayer According to the Patristic Tradition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 13.

general, with varying levels of comprehension and sophistication.[16] However, the practice of prayer as a physical, mental and emotional event remains at the forefront of this invesigation and, even when reading Old English biblical poetry, it is important to acknowledge that prayer was a daily reality for many Anglo-Saxon men and women. For this reason, research addressing various aspects of the practice of prayer has been indespensible to this study. The last two decades have seen increased interest in various aspects of Anglo-Saxon religious and monastic life, including the life of prayer. Sarah Foot has investigated many aspects of daily religious life in Anglo-Saxon *minsters*, and she offers a helpful overview of how different Anglo-Saxon sources represent the practice of prayer.[17] Foot's approach to literary sources, particularly hagiography, has influenced my own. Other scholars of Anglo-Saxon church and society, including Hugh Magennis and Rachel Anderson, have offered a similar appreciation of hagiography as a powerful genre that both reflects and generates religious norms.[18] John Blair's study *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* provides a framework for understanding all aspects of church and society and, in particular, the key role played by the cult of the saints and hagiographic writings in the creation of religious ideals.[19]

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[16] Susan Kelly, "Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 36–62.

[17] Sarah Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c.600-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[18] Hugh Magennis, "Approaches to Saints' Lives," in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. Paul Cavill (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), 163–84; Rachel S. Anderson, "Saints' Legends," in *A History of Old English Literature*, ed. R. D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 133–56. Michael Lapidge provides an overview of the saint's life in Anglo-Saxon England: "The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England," in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, Second Edition, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 251–72. Generally, sociological approaches to Anglo-Saxon saints' lives tend to focus on later, vernacular translations of Latin lives. See, for example, the following collection of essays: Loredana Lazzari, ed., *Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England: Adopting and Adapting Saints' Lives into Old English Prose (c. 950 - 1150)*, Textes et Études Du Moyen Âge / Fédération Internationale Des Instituts d'Études Médiévales 73 (Barcelona: Brepols, 2014); Paul E. Szarmach, ed., *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996).

[19] John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Clare Lees also offers a helpful framework for understanding how homilies that were previously understood as bad copies of Latin originals might have played a vital role in religious instruction: *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Medieval Cultures, v. 19 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

The study of prayer in the early Middle Ages begins with study of the liturgy. In recent years, however, scholars have insisted on a fluid understanding of the boundaries between 'private' prayer and 'communal' participation in the liturgy, arguing that this distinction is not stressed in the Middle Ages. Susan Boynton uses the term 'liturgy' to 'designate acts of structured communal worship (such as the Mass, Office, processions, and other ceremonies in which clergy preside) and 'devotion' to refer to more flexible practices that can be performed by an individual and do not involve clergy', but reminds us that 'such terms operate in a continuum of practice'.[20] Although this thesis is primarily concerned with Anglo-Saxon 'devotional' practices, communal liturgy was the backbone of devotional life in the Middle Ages.

Extant witnesses to the liturgy of the early Anglo-Saxon church are extremely limited. Furthermore, scholars of Anglo-Saxon liturgical and monastic life have emphasised that diversity and flexibility were hallmarks of the early Anglo-Saxon liturgy, such that we may not meaningfully speak of a single observance prior to the tenth century provisions of the *Regularis Concordia*, and perhaps not even then.[21] Pre-Viking

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[20] Susan Boynton, "Prayer as Liturgical Performance in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Monastic Psalters," *Speculum* 82, no. 4 (2007): 896. See also Clifford Flangain, Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, "Liturgy as Social Performance: Expanding the Definitions," in *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, ed. Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter (Kalamazoo, Mich: Published for The Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages, by Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2001).

[21] For works addressing the liturgy in Anglo-Saxon England, see Jesse D. Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597-c.1000* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014); Jesse D. Billett, "The Liturgy of the 'Roman' Office in England from the Conversion to the Conquest," in *Rome across Time and Space: Cultural Transmission and the Exchange of Ideas c.500-1400*, ed. Claudia Bolgia, Rosamond McKitterick,and John Osborne (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 63–83; G.G. Willis, "Early English Liturgy from Augustine to Alcuin," in *Further Essays in Early Roman Liturgy*, Alcuin Club Collections 50 (London: Alcuin Club, 1972); Richard William Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Catherine Cubitt, "Unity and Diversity in the Early Anglo-Saxon Liturgy," in *Unity and Diversity in the Church*, ed. R. N. Swanson, Studies in Church History 32 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 45–57; Yitzhak Hen, "The Liturgy of St Willibrord." *Anglo-Saxon England* 26 (December 1997): 41–62; Catherine Cubitt, "Pastoral Care and Conciliar Canons: The Provisions of the 747 Council of Clofesho," in *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. John Blair and Richard Sharpe, Studies in the Early History of Britain (Leicester; New York: Leicester University Press, 1992); Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, Fabric of British History (London: B. T. Batsford, 1972), 168–90.

England, in John Blair's words, 'lacked any normative monastic rule'[22] and liturgical observance was likely to have consisted of

> a spectrum containing a rich and varied mixture of forms, and if some were spiritually unappealing or pastorally supine when viewed from the moral heights of Jarrow, it need not follow that they were socially or culturally useless to the laity around them.[23]

Jesse Billett's recent work *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England* sheds light on what scanty evidence we have for the performance of the Office in Anglo-Saxon England from 597-1000. He concludes that the form of the Office introduced by the Augustinian mission

> cannot have been 'Benedictine' in the later medieval sense. It was probably an early form of the Office sung by monastic communities attached to the major basilicas in Rome, a pre-cursor to what would later be called the 'secular' Office, sung by priests and clerks.[24]

These studies emphasise the need to look further than 'liturgical' manuscripts if we are to understand Anglo-Saxon devotional culture prior to the eleventh century, since witness to the exact form of the Office is scant indeed in the early Anglo-Saxon period. With this in mind, this thesis turns to records of extra- or para-liturgical prayers found in ninth century Mercian prayer books and alluded to in a variety of narrative and poetic sources.

To date, studies of Anglo-Saxon 'private' prayer have tended to focus on analysing sources and determining the provenance of prayers as they appear in manuscripts, particularly manuscripts from the eleventh century.[25] Indispensible studies, like

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[22] Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 80.
[23] Blair, 81.
[24] Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597-c.1000*, 11.
[25] These include Anselm Hughes, ed., *The Portiforium of Saint Wulstan (Corpus Christi College ,Cambridge Ms. 391)* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1958); Beate Günzel, ed., *Aelfwine's Prayerbook: London, British Library, Cotton Titus D. XXVI & XXVII*, Henry Bradshaw Society, v. 108 (London: Rochester, NY: Published for the Henry Bradshaw

Kuypers' work on the Book of Cerne, have been largely occupied with finding liturgical parallels for private prayers.[26] Editions of these prayer books date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Kuypers'*Book of Cerne* was published in 1902. An edition of The Book of Nunnaminster was published in 1889[27] and the Harley Fragment appears as an appendix to the Irish *Antiphonary of Bangor*.[28] The Royal Prayer Book was edited as an appendix to the Book of Cerne,[29] while Joseph Crowley has edited its marginalia.[30] There has been limited detailed discussion of the prayers themselves. In this area, Patrick Sims-Williams' article on the Mercian prayer books makes an important contribution to understanding the devotional mood of the prayer books and their thematic concentration on spiritual warfare and healing.[31] Thomas Bestul's essay on the continuity of Anglo-Saxon devotion from the Anglo-Saxons to Anselm speaks to the tendency toward affectivity in the prayer books.[32] Works by Susan Boynton and Thomas Bestul have investigated the relationship between Continental and Anglo-Saxon prayer books.[33] Boynton's work is especially significant in so far as it emphasises the connection between prayers within prayer

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Society by the Boydell Press; Boydell & Brewer, 1993); Bernard James Muir, ed., *A Pre-Conquest English Prayer-Book (BL MSS Cotton Galba A.xiv and Nero A.ii (ff.3-13))*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Wolfeboro, N.H: Published for the Henry Bradshaw Society by the Boydell Press, 1988).

[26] A.B. Kuypers, ed., *The Prayer Book of Aedeluald the Bishop, Commonly Called the Book of Cerne* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902).

[27] Walter De Grey Birch, *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century Formerly Belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester* (London and Winchester: Simpkin and Marshall, 1889).

[28] F.E. Warren, *The Antiphonary of Bangor: An Early Irish Manuscript in the Ambrosian Library at Milan* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1892), II, 83–6.

[29] Kuypers, *The Prayer Book of Aedeluald the Bishop, Commonly Called the Book of Cerne*, 201–25.

[30] Joseph Crowley, "Latin Prayers Added into the Margins of the Prayerbook British Library, Royal 2.A.XX at the Beginnings of the Monastic Reform in Worcester," *Sacris Erudiri* 45 (2006): 223–303.

[31] Patrick Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 3 (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[32] Thomas Bestul, "St Anselm and the Continuity of Anglo-Saxon Devotional Traditions," *Annuale Mediaevale* 18 (1977): 20–41.

[33] Susan Boynton, "Libelli Precum in the Central Middle Ages," in *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Roy Hammerling, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, v. 13 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 255–318; Thomas Bestul, "Continental Sources of Anglo-Saxon Devotional Writing," in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), 103–26.

books and their manuscript contexts and offers insight into the performative aspects of many of these prayers.

There have been a number of studies that focus on specific prayer books and editions of the prayer books. Michelle Brown's study *The Book of Cerne: Prayer, Patronage and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* gives a detailed treatment of the manuscript within the broader social and cultural context of ninth-century England, as well as suggesting some central themes and ways of understanding the prayers contained within the book itself.[34] She suggests the *communio sanctorum* (Communion of Saints) as a central devotional theme in the book. Brown argues for a Mercian provenance for the Book of Cerne, and draws out some of the implications of this argument. Positioning the Book of Cerne firmly within ninth-century Mercia, she also challenges the narrative of a 'golden age' and 'decline' that is popularized by tenth-century reformers. The book points to strong traditions of insular devotion and learning in the ninth century.[35] In the final chapter of her study, Brown presents an important codicological case for the unity of texts in the Book of Cerne. She argues that the prayers contained within the manuscript fit with its other components, including the *Harrowing of Hell* and the Old English *Exhortation*. Brown's emphasis on the unity of the Book of Cerne is also supported by Jennifer Morrish's dissertation on literacy and learning in the ninth century. Morrish suggested that the Mercian prayer books were sophisticated compilations formed around specific genres rather than random collections of prayer, and argued that Harley 7653 and Harley 2965 (The Book of Nunnaminster) represented an earlier stage in the development of the prayer books and suggested that the 'theme' of the books became increasingly more sophisticated.[36]

Several essays have surveyed prayer books in terms of the tradition of private prayer and its development into the later Books of Hours. Bernard Muir explains the prayer books in the context of monastic worship, noting that the canonical hours also

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[34] Michelle Brown, *The Book of Cerne: Prayer, Patronage, and Power in Ninth-Century England*, The British Library Studies in Medieval Culture (London : Toronto ; Buffalo: British Library; University of Toronto Press, 1996).
[35] Brown, 16.
[36] Jennifer Morrish, "An Examination of Literacy and Learning in England in the Ninth Century" (D.Phil: University of Oxford, 1982).

influenced 'the devotional practices of people not living under a religious rule.'[37] He notes the 'long acknowledged' relationship between the breviary Psalter and the book of hours.[38] He situates the Royal and Nunnaminster prayer book and Harley fragment in a Carolingian period and discusses relations between England and the Continent at mediated by Alcuin.[39] Kate Thomas's unpublished doctoral thesis 'The meaning, practice and context of private prayer in late Anglo-Saxon England' focuses on three eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon prayer books: Galba, Ælfwine's prayer book, and the Portiforium of Wulfstan.[40] Thomas's thesis is primarily interested in the way in which these books might have been used in monasteries as guides for private devotion. She looks at the development of private prayer alongside the liturgy of the hours, arguing for a reciprocal relationship between communal and private prayer. Thomas also suggests that unique 'special' offices developed around private prayer. Thomas's thesis looks at the Anglo-Saxon prayer books as embryonic forms of the later medieval Book of Hours, suggesting that the impulses toward private prayer that are evident in Late Anglo-Saxon prayer books form a basis for later medieval lay-piety.

Sr Benedicta Ward's monograph *Bede and the Psalter* addresses the use of the Psalter for prayer and devotion in Anglo-Saxon England.[41] Ward's discussion focuses on Bede's breviate Psalter and its place in the wider tradition of psalmody. Ward explains the fact that psalms offer the religious man or woman a chance for deep emotional engagement and interiority in their prayers through the tradition of *compunctio cordis*. She also discusses the potential for the Psalms to articulate subjective experience and 'articulate present terror and grief, as well as joy and wonder.'[42] She speculates that Bede intended his abbreviated psalter as an aide to memorise psalms, but that it later became a tool for compunction and personal prayer. This thesis suggests that *compunctio* was firmly embedded in the devotional tradition and that Bede's understanding of prayer was motivated by emotional engagement.

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[37] Bernard James Muir, "The Early Insular Prayer Book Tradition and the Development of the Book of Hours," in *The Art of the Book: Its Place in Medieval Worship*, ed. Margaret Manion and Bernard James Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 11.
[38] Muir, 11–12.
[39] Muir, 13.
[40] Kate Thomas, "The Meaning, Practice and Context of Private Prayer in Late Anglo-Saxon England" (University of York, 2011).
[41] Benedicta Ward, *Bede and the Psalter* (Oxford: SLG Press, 2002).
[42] Ward, 15.

Another major theme explored in this thesis relates to practices of reading, and several works have sketched out a general framework for the probable relationship between prayer and reading in the early middle ages and in Anglo-Saxon England. Columba Stewart's essay "Prayer Among the Benedictines" explains that the *Rule of St Benedict* sets out two contexts for monastic reading.[43] The first is public reading in the refectory at mealtime and during chapter.[44] The second is private, meditative reading, known as *lectio divina*. Outside Latin poetic saints' *vitae*, it is difficult to determine which texts and books may have been appropriate for private such reading. Scholars have suggested bibles,[45] psalters,[46] homiliaries,[47] martyrologies[48] and even manuscripts typically classified as 'classroom texts'[49] as candidates for private rumination. These texts are particularly suited to the practice of *lectio* since, as Leclerq puts it, 'the foremost aid to good works is a text which makes possible the meditated reading of the word of God.'[50] Nevertheless, meditative reading of the Bible, 'a slow repetition of the text from memory or for the purpose of committing it to memory', was the primary function of meditation.[51] Malcolm Parkes' essay on reading in Anglo-Saxon England explains, quoting Isidore of Seville, that public

[43] Columba Stewart, "Prayer Among the Benedictines," in *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Roy Hammerling, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, v. 13 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 201–21.
[44] *Rule of St Benedict* 38.
[45] The Bible was the conventional text for monastic *lectio*. See Duncan Robertson, *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading* (Liturgical Press, 2011), xi–xiii; 137-142; Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Mishari (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961).
[46] See above, n. 11.
[47] Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*, for one, were intended for both private reading and public recitation. See Mechthild Gretsch, *Aelfric and the Cult of Saints in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 158; Robert Stanton, *The Culture of Translation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), 163–65.
[48] Mary Clayton suggests that the *Old English Martyrology* 'functioned more as a reference book for private readers than as a book for public liturgical use': "Review of *Das Altenglische Matyrologium* by Günter Kotzor," *The Review of English Studies* 35, no. 139 (1984): 349.
[49] Michael Lapidge, "The Study of Latin Texts in Late Anglo-Saxon England," in *Anglo-Latin Literature* (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1996), 127.
[50] Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 22.
[51] Stewart, "Prayer Among the Benedictines," 209.

reading was designed to 'move the minds and feelings' (*mentes sentesque promoveat*) of the hearer.[52] This, however, was only a prelude to *meditatio*:

> The principal kind of reading practised by the monk was meditative reading which demanded rumination of the text: an affective response, and a sensitive and imaginative engagement with it.... The monk was urged to devote himself to diligent and constant reading of the sacred text until continual meditation imbued his mind, and, as it were, fashioned it in its own likeness. The knowledge of the word of God had to be both explored and felt (*percepta et palpata*) in a special way, so that it be stored deep within the senses.[53]

This personal, subjective, deep and imaginative reading, Parkes reminds us, required literacy. Thus Owine, Æthelthryth's chief officer, entered the monastery determined to work hard since 'he was less capable of the study of scriptures'.[54] Leclercq has written vividly about this act of meditation as a deeply physical process that 'requires the participation of the whole body and the whole mind.'[55] Reading and writing were vocalised, and thus the act of reading or copying a text was deeply performative. This fact has profound bearing on the transmission and use of texts that contain prayers. To read aloud the prayers of saints, or to copy a book of prayers while simultaneously reading them was to pray, as A.N. Doane's important essay on scribal culture reminds us.[56]

While we have some, admittedly limited, access to reading contexts for reading scripture and Latinate compositions closely related to scripture, scholars have had difficulty understanding how these observations apply to vernacular compositions. Paul Remley's introduction to his collection of studies on Junius 11 offers a comprehensive survey of the contexts in which Old English biblical literature may

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[52] M. B. Parkes, "*Rædan, areccan, smeagan*: How the Anglo-Saxons Read," *Anglo-Saxon England* 26 (1997): 7.
[53] Parkes, "*Rædan, areccan, smeagan*: How the Anglo-Saxons Read," 7.
[54] 'nam quo minus sufficiebat meditaitoni scripturarum': Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* iv.3, 338–39.
[55] Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 19.
[56] A. N. Doane, "The Ethnography of Scribal Writing and Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Scribe as Performer," *Oral Tradition* 9 (1994): 420–39. See also Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 41.

have been used in Anglo-Saxon England.[57] Emily Thornbury's study of the 'poet' in Anglo-Saxon England offers an overview of the principle poetic works attested in Anglo-Saxon *curricula*.[58] Thornbury gives a catalogue of frequently cited Anglo-Latin poets, some of which appear in liturgical and private prayer. Her understanding of the role of poetry in Anglo-Saxon *curricula* gives a critical context for the appearance of Latin poetry in prayer books and, in general, for speculations on the relationship between poetry and prayer in general.

The poems of Junius 11 and *The Dream of the Rood* have each been studied extensively, though rarely through the lens of prayer and prayerful reading. The purpose of this thesis is to read these poems in light of some aspects of the devotional culture that produced them; both the physical and practical aspects of Anglo-Saxon prayer life and the literary, imaginative world of the Mercian prayer books. In general, there has been little discussion of Old English vernacular poetry in light of the devotional context set out by early collections of Anglo-Saxon prayer and the description of prayer in saints' lives. Scholars have tended to analyse most vernacular output in light of the tenth century Benedictine Reform, partly because the major Old English poetic codices were copied in the tenth century. Certainly, the Benedictine Reform was associated with an interest in prayer, liturgy, vernacular composition and copying manuscripts. And yet, as Antonia Grandsen has argued, the impact of the Benedictine Reform on religious culture is often overstated. Gransden points out that reformers looked back to a golden age of Anglo-Saxon spirituality and were consciously conservative in their approach.[59] Nevertheless, specific studies of texts that are often related to the Benedictine Reform provide valuable insights into the role of the vernacular in devotional life.

Studies by Thomas Bestul and M. Bradford Bedingfield are among those that point to the Benedictine Reform as a turning point in vernacular spirituality. Bestul focuses on the 'devotional climate' of the tenth century as a probable context for the composition

[57] Paul G. Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse: Studies in Genesis, Exodus and Daniel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[58] Emily V. Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[59] Antonia Gransden, "Traditionalism and Continuity during the Last Century of Anglo-Saxon Monasticism," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 40, no. 2 (1989): 159–207.

of the Exeter Book's *Resignation*, while Bedingfield's study investigates the ritual and participatory elements that are embedded in the liturgy, arguing that in the tenth century there was a surge in lay participation in the liturgy.[60] This, he claims, was the point at which liturgy became dramatised so as to allow the audience to connect with the biblical models presented. Bedingfield's thesis is largely an attempt to build a context for vernacular homilies and to imagine the ways in which audience participation is inscribed within them. Although both these studies focus on the tenth century, both scholars nevertheless acknowledge the importance of earlier devotional traditions in understanding the spirituality of the Benedictine Reform. Bedingfield argues that 'dramatic identification' with characters from the Bible, such as Adam and Eve, was a longstanding feature of native Anglo-Saxon spirituality and that uses of the dramatic mode in later Anglo-Saxon devotion were probably an 'adaptation' of an earlier tendency, while Bestul points out that apparently defining features of tenth-century spirituality, such as use of the Penitential Psalms, were potent features of earlier devotional traditions.[61] Sarah Larratt Keefer has focused on the proliferation of liturgical poetry in the tenth century, arguing that the impulse behind 'liturgical poetry' is essentially 'meditative'.[62] Keefer claims that the vernacular impulse was a direct result of Benedictine monasticism, citing as evidence the fact that 'most, if not all, of our poems were composed no earlier than 950.'[63]

Some scholars have emphasised the importance of Anglo-Saxon vernacular writings in terms of their continuity with the later Middle Ages. In an article addressing the Anglo-Saxon penitentials, Allen Frantzen draws attention to the neglected topic of affectivity in Anglo-Saxon devotion. Frantzen argues for the continuity of English spirituality from the Anglo-Saxon period through to the later Middle Ages, arguing that affectivity, meditation and mysticism did not begin, as some scholars suggest, in 1200.[64] Frantzen draws on the work of John Hirsch, who sees prayer books as 'textual

[60] M. Bradford Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England*, Anglo-Saxon Studies 1 (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2002).
[61] Bedingfield, 149; Thomas Bestul, "The Old English Resignation and the Benedictine Reform," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 78 (1977): 22.
[62] Sarah Larratt Keefer, ed., *Old English Liturgical Verse: A Student Edition* (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 2010).
[63] Keefer, 37.
[64] Allen J. Frantzen, "Spirituality and Devotion in the Anglo-Saxon Penitentials," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 22, no. 1 (2005): 117–28.

instruments' that break with formal monastic hours and engage 'the individual in prayer.' According to Hirsch, prayer books allow for a more dynamic form of worship in which the individual becomes an 'active subject'.[65] Franzten agrees with Hirsch, but sees 'no compelling reason why this transition took place in the eleventh century.'[66] Hirsch, he says, is 'overly concerned with "the individual" as an eleventh-century phenomenon'. Moving away from this focus, it is possible to see that 'earlier prayers, written in Anglo-Saxon and closely associated with the practice of private confession, accomplish the same ends and achieve the goal of "felt prayer".'[67] Frantzen goes on to analyse the penitentials in this light. Frantzen's reading of the penitentials represents an attempt to locate the individual within the devotional process. Assuming that the laity used the penitentials in a very specific way, Frantzen claims that prayers within penitentials shaped the private prayers of Anglo-Saxon readers in their homes:

> if we remember that Anglo-Saxon habits of prayer shaped in confession were continued in private prayer in the home, we can imagine Anglo-Saxon Christians as receptive readers and as subjects of spirituality rather than as objects of clerical instruction.[68]

Frantzen's essay concludes by advocating the development of a 'vernacular theology' as a key to understanding the Middle Ages.

Overview of Thesis

This thesis explores aspects of the relationship between prayer and literature in Anglo-Saxon England. It is necessarily restricted to a narrow range of sources and, as such, many forms of prayer and poetry composed in Old English and Latin fall outside the scope of this thesis. This thesis will principally address prayers written or recorded in Latin and poems composed in Old English. Dealing with prayers in Latin,

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[65] John C. Hirsch, *The Boundaries of Faith: The Development and Transmission of Medieval Spirituality*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, v. 67 (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 14.
[66] Allen J. Frantzen, "Spirituality and Devotion in the Anglo-Saxon Penitentials," 120.
[67] Frantzen, 120.
[68] Frantzen, 125.

this thesis is restricted to prayers recorded in saints' lives from the Anglo-Saxon period, predominantly before the ninth century, and those inscribed in a number of ninth century prayer books. These prayers are indicative of a devotional tradition, predominantly represented by sources from Mercia and Northumbria, which was in many ways consolidated and revised throughout the ninth century and which came to have a profound influence on later devotional traditions, both in the Anglo-Saxon period and beyond. In a similar vein, this thesis restricts itself to biblical poetry composed in Old English: the poems of MS Junius 11 and *The Dream of the Rood*. Although these poems survive only in tenth century manuscripts, they were almost certainly composed before or during the ninth century. I focus on the representation of prayer in these poems and, furthermore, on the ways in which these poems seem to interact with the conventions of prayer as they appear in our Latin sources. Not only do these poems provide evidence for attitudes to prayer, they also represent the various ways in which prayer could be embedded in poetry. The ubiquity of prayer in these poems suggests that they were composed and read as devotional poems. Meditation on scripture was intended to exhort men and women to virtuous action. In this thesis, I argue that Old English biblical poetry exhorted men and women to prayer and was inextricably influenced by the life of prayer, predominantly monastic prayer.

Chapter One examines the representation of prayer in a number of sources, principally the lives of saints and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how these authors considered prayer as an actual event, a moment of contact between the God and man mediated through time, space, and the body. I argue that the designation of sacred time and space in these texts reflects genuine practice, in spite of the artificiality of the hagiographic genre, and that scenes of prayer were intentionally didactic. Several tropes emerge in this chapter that are intimately related to the performative aspects of prayer. These include the relationship between prayer, sacred space and physical and spiritual healing, the ascetic impulse to pray through the night and the important place of gesture and physical movement in the life of prayer. Readers (and hearers) of saints' lives, I argue, were supposed to imitate the prayers of the saints. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, which receives special attention in this chapter, is particularly noteworthy for the way in which it inscribes prayers and sacred stories in a distinctively English landscape and context. Bede writes the

prayers of English saints into the broader context of salvation history, allowing his audience similarly to locate themselves and their practices in the context of salvation history. Each of the texts studied reveals incidental details about prayer in Anglo-Saxon England while also providing valuable insight into the relationship between the reading and composition of devotional literature and the practice of prayer.

Having undertaken a broad survey of the depiction of prayer in narrative sources, I turn in Chapter Two to a group of ninth-century books specifically designed for private prayer: Cambridge, University Library Ll.I.10 (The Book of Cerne), B.L., Harley 2965 (The Book of Nunnaminster), B.L., Royal 2.A.XX (The Royal Prayer Book), B.L., Harley 7653 (The Harley Fragment). This chapter is focussed on the imaginative world conjured by the Mercian prayer books and argues that these books developed out of reflection on the person of Christ, his Incarnation and his suffering, and that they show a profound awareness of the relationship between prayer and reading. The prayer books of the Mercian tradition, like the descriptions of private prayer in Chapter One, represent penance and confession as tools that bring about physical, mental and spiritual healing. Chapter Two is primarily interested in the idea of words as instruments of healing in the Mercian prayer books. These books provide evidence for the assimilation of learning and poetic composition with meditative reading and private prayer in the early ninth century. This raises the question of *how* words healed. Primarily, it is healing engagement with God through his Word, the scriptures, that brings healing in these books. Engagement with scripture takes place through the reading of scriptural passages combined with numerous prayers that invite reflection on the Incarnation, the Passion, the Resurrection and locate the individual at prayer within the scheme of salvation, redemption and judgment.

Chapter Three turns to another 'book' that deals with prayer: the poetic codex Junius 11. Junius 11 is a highly selective retelling of biblical narrative through the medium of Old English verse and an incomplete illustrative programme. The poems of Junius 11, each composed at different times and by different authors, each represent the act of prayer in unique ways. In spite of this, the unity of the volume has long been accepted by scholars and is, in general, attributed to the careful planning of a compiler. Scholars, following J.R. Hall's influential essay, have generally accepted

that the poems of Junius 11 together constitute an 'epic of redemption' and demonstrate a preoccupation with salvation history.[69] This chapter offers an alternative reading of Junius 11, suggesting that the manuscript is preoccupied not only with salvation but also with moral and immoral behaviour, and that the necessity of prayer is represented alongside the refusal or inability to pray. Through this central opposition, Junius 11 represents and encourages virtuous action through meditation on scripture and also demonstrates the consequences of refusing to pray. Thus, the manuscript is an exhortation to moral action in which prayer dominates. While discussing this theme, this chapter also addresses the representation of prayer the individual poems of Junius 11, which reveal a variety of attitudes to prayer and some idiosyncracies relating to the practice of prayer in Anglo-Saxon England. Reading Junius 11 in light of the practice of prayer opens up exciting avenues for understanding the unique role that the vernacular played in devotional reading throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.

Chapter Four continues with this line of inquiry, focusing on the relationship between the practice of prayer and the Old English poem *The Dream of the Rood*. This chapter argues that *The Dream of the Rood* is a poem about the experience of prayer that offers a unique meditative reflection in the vernacular on a variety of devotional practices, most of which are familiar in the writings of Bede and other authors. I argue that the poem is a product of the traditions of ascetic monastic prayer outlined in Chapter One of this thesis, rather than those of the so-called 'Benedictine' tradition. This chapter also suggests that the central event of *The Dream of the Rood* – the dreamer's vision of the cross – can be understood as a reflection on the practice of meditative engagement with Christ through the remembrance of his passion, and that the interest in the cross underlies a tradition of affective engagement with Christ's body through the reading of scripture. In this way, *The Dream of the Rood* relates both to the practice of the monastic vigil and also to the affective engagement with the Word of God found in the Mercian prayer tradition, which is itself a synthesis of seventh- and eighth-century Anglo-Saxon prayer traditions.

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[69] J. R. Hall, "The Old English Epic of Redemption: The Theological Unity of MS Junius 11," *Traditio* 32 (1976): 185–208, reprinted in *The Poems of MS Junius 11: Basic Readings*, ed. R.M. Liuzza (New York: Routledge, 2002), 20–52; J.R. Hall, "The Old English Book of Salvation History: Three Studies on the Unity of Ms. Junius 11" (Ph.D., University of Notre Dame, 1973).

Chapter One

Prayer in Anglo-Saxon England

How did Anglo-Saxon men and women pray? This question is answered, to some extent, by the provisions of various monastic rules concerning the appropriate hours for communal prayer. Yet the apostolic injunction to pray 'without ceasing'[1] manifests itself in the prayer lives of some Anglo-Saxon saints, whose life of prayer is described more in terms of their personal, exceptional devotion than their participation in communal prayer. Sarah Foot, writing on the depiction of monastic life in narrative sources, notes that

> contemporary writers preferred to emphasize individual examples of prayer and devotion over the regular recitation of the Daily Office, the central corporate act of monastic worship.... This concentration on individual acts of spiritual prowess may partly reflect the focus of especially hagiographical texts on the extraordinary deeds of the saintly, in comparison with which participation in the Office, which dictated the rhythm of the monastic day, seemed rather less noteworthy.[2]

This chapter will provide an overview of evidence for the practice of prayer in Anglo-Saxon England, arguing that prayer was an experience wherein the mind and body interacted with time and space. To pray was to imitate Christ and his saints and, in this sense, to participate in the Incarnation. Furthermore, the engagement of the emotions through the body's interaction with time and space was significant to the conception of prayer that emerges in these sources. Three aspects of prayer dominate

[1] I Thessalonians 5:17.
[2] Sarah Foot, "Church and Monastery in Bede's Northumbria," in *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, ed. Scott DeGregorio (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 64–5.

narrative accounts of devotional life in Anglo-Saxon England. First, they emphasise the subjugation of the body through various ascetic exercises. These exercises were intended, first and foremost, to bring about emotional transformation. Accounts from Anglo-Saxon narrative sources show a disproportionate interest in private prayer at night and before the dawn. Second, saints' lives and historical records describe and define sacred space in relation to the practice of prayer. The landscape and its connection with the saints becomes a focal point. In this chapter, I argue that the delineation of sacred space is an important part of the didactic function of these texts. Third, authors allude to the content of these prayers. This chapter will address the use of scripture in prayer, focusing on the way in which the Psalms were used as deeply personal, penitential and particularly efficacious prayers. Each of these aspects of Anglo-Saxon prayer was connected to the quest for healing, both physical and emotional. This desire for healing was fulfilled in the ascetic impulse, whereby prayer was able to change men and women, through the subjugation of their body, from the outside in.

Monastic rules, including the *Rule of St Benedict*, were known in Anglo-Saxon England from an early date.[3] Provisions for private prayer appear sporadically in the *Rule of St Benedict*. Alongside his provisions for communal prayer, Benedict mentions the need to pray 'short prayers' with 'purity of heart and tears of compunction'.[4] Monks were encouraged to pray alone in the oratory, quietly 'with tears and heartfelt devotion', and reminded that nothing else is to be done there aside from praying.[5] Lent, according to the *Rule*, is a time for special dedication to 'prayer with tears, to reading, to compunction of the heart and self-denial', when monks ought to add to their 'usual service' by way of private prayer and fasting.[6] Benedict also points out the requirement that monks who are travelling or working far away ought to keep the Office in private at the canonical hours.[7]

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[3] For the knowledge and use of the *Rule of St Benedict* in early Anglo-Saxon England, see Patrick Wormald, "Bede and Benedict Biscop", *The Times of Bede* (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2006), 5–6.
[4] *Rule of St Benedict* 20 in *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes*, ed. and trans. Timothy Fry (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1981), 216–17.
[5] *Rule of St Benedict* 52, Benedict, 254–55.
[6] *Rule of St Benedict* 49, Benedict, 252–3..
[7] *Rule of St Benedict* 50.

Also in circulation, and highly influential, were the writings of Gregory the Great who, despite never having written an explicit rule of spiritual instruction for monks, was nevertheless interested in the practices of ascetic contemplation. Gregory, drawing extensively on the teachings of John Cassian, articulated a form of prayer and contemplation centred on the Holy Spirit's ability to transform thoughts and feelings (*cogitationes* and *affectus*) toward the love of God.[8] Put simply, Gregory believes that every desire must become a desire for God. Such a transformation begins, painfully, with the remembrance of sin and the contemplation of one's own sinfulness, known as *compunctio cordis*. One moves, with time, from tearful repentance to tears of desire for the heavenly home:

> For the fire of tribulation is first darted into our mind, from a consideration of our own blindness, in order that all rust of sins may be burnt away. And when the eyes of our heart are purged from sin, that joy of our heavenly home is disclosed to them, that we may first wash away by sorrow that we have done, and afterwards gain in our transports a clearer view of what we are seeking after.[9]

For Cassian, communal prayer was a helpful adjunct to the real work of the monk: continual prayer. He explains, for example, that the Egyptian monks celebrated no public services except for Vespers, Nocturns and mass on Saturday and Sunday. Instead,

> these offices which we are taught to render to the Lord at separate hours and at intervals of time, with a reminder from the convener, are celebrated continuously throughout the whole day, with the addition of work, and that of their own free will. For manual labour is incessantly practised by them in their cells in such a way that meditation on the Psalms and the rest of the Scriptures is never entirely omitted. And as with it at every moment they mingle

[8] Thomas L. Humphries, *Ascetic Pneumatology from John Cassian to Gregory the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 157.
[9] Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* 24.6.11, trans. as *Morals on the Book of Job by S. Gregory the Great*, vol. 3 (Oxford, John Henry Parker: F. and J. Rivington, London, 1847), 57.

> suffrages and prayers, they spend the whole day in those offices which we celebrate at fixed times.[10]

The significance of the Office, according to Cassian, comes from praying at times that are biblically meaningful, since at these times 'what completed the promises and summed up our salvation was fulfilled.'[11] The Egyptian monks, then, who pray all day in their cells while working, fulfil the requirements of the Office adequately. Here, as in the *Rule of St Benedict*, we see that the rites proper to communal prayer could be undertaken as acts of private devotion. Cassian pays particular attention to the round of psalms in the Night Office, noting that monks were required to devote themselves to prayer in their cells between the Nocturns and the Morning Office.[12] The night, Cassian argues, was an especially important time for prayer since he believed that monks were particularly susceptible to demonic temptation, sloth, and 'polluting' dreams at this time. For this reason, they should be encouraged not to go back to bed and rather to await the Morning Office with prayer.[13]

Similarly, all of Benedict's references to private prayer also include tears, recalling Cassian's 'phenomology of religious experience' and, perhaps, suggesting a penitential or confessional context for the practice of private prayer.[14] According to Gregory, internal transformation is the goal of the life of prayer. Following Cassian, Gregory insists that *affectus*, known to Cassian's teacher Evagrius as passions, either bring us closer to God or drag us away from him. Thus, the goal of the ascetic life is subjugation of 'the interior landscape of our thoughts and desires.'[15] Prayer was the means by which these internal states were mediated and dealt with in the external world. The prayers of the desert fathers stipulated various times and places in which one could confront both *affectus* and the demonic forces behind the monks' internal

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[10] Cassian, *Institutes* iii.2, trans. Edgar C. S. Gibson, "The Institutes of John Cassian," in Phillip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, , vol. 11, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series (New York: T&T Clarke, 1894), 212–13.
[11] Ibid., iii. 3, trans. Gibson, 213-14.
[12] Ibid., ii.14; iii. 4-5.
[13] Ibid., ii.8.
[14] Columba Stewart, "Prayer Among the Benedictines," in *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Roy Hammerling, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, v. 13 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 207–8.
[15] Humphries, *Ascetic Pneumatology from John Cassian to Gregory the Great*, 35-39; 161.

turmoil. Put simply, one confronted demons in the desert and at night. The work of subjugating the 'interior landscape' was intimately related to the necessary work of spiritual warfare.

This entire process is made possible through *ascesis*, 'the virtue of patience, laborious instruction in learning, chastening of the body, assiduity in prayer, confession of faults, a deluge of tears.'[16] As Fagerberg explains:

> In its purest form the Christian concept of *ascesis* seeks not the liberation of the soul from the body but the integration the person, spiritually and materially. *Ascesis* was thus a matter of disciplining the body and training the mind by prayers, vigils and fasting, until the whole person was attuned to his or her best ability to hear and obey the voice of God.[17]

Sources

This chapter addresses the representation of prayer in hagiographic texts, including Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (*EH*) which, I argue, was intended at least in part to function as a hagiographic text and was used as such by later readers.[18] Hagiography is, in Claire Lees' words, 'often thought of as that typologically flattened and therefore non-historical genre'.[19] And yet, while few of the distinctive features of hagiographic texts have endeared themselves to modern readers, scholars are increasingly aware of the fact that the lives of saints contain important evidence for social and religious life.[20]

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[16] Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* 25.44.
[17] David W. Fagerberg, "Prayer as Theology," in *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Roy Hammerling, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, v. 13 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 122.
[18] Scott DeGregorio, "The Venerable Bede on Prayer and Contemplation," *Traditio* 54 (1999): 1–39; George Molyneaux, "The Old English Bede: English Ideology or Christian Instruction?," *The English Historical Review* 124, no. 511 (December 1, 2009): 1289–1323.
[19] Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, 93.
[20] The seminal work on the function of saints' cults in Late Antique Christianity is Peter Brown's *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

Thomas Heffernan argues that saints' lives functioned as 'sacred stories designed to teach the faithful to imitate actions which the community had decided were paradigmatic.'[21] These paradigms for action derived from two examples: the life of Christ, and the lives of the saints. Saints' lives, according to Augustine, offer a concrete image of the Christian life that is ultimately more useful in the depiction of Christian truth than a complex argument.[22] Heffernan explains how sacred biography works as a kind of 'thesaurus' of 'approved action':

> In this narrative frame, action becomes ritual, and specific action becomes specific ritual.... Within this cultural setting, the saint's life, with its emphasis on right action, served as a catechetical tool much like the stained glass which surrounded and instructed the faithful in their participation in the liturgy.[23]

The catechetical nature of the hagiographic genre means that writings about saints provide a witness, not only into genuine practice, but also to the ideal behaviour expected of men and women embarking on the religious life, both professional and lay. Thus, hagiography is spiritual instruction. Read in this way, the lives and accounts of saints offer a manual for prayer in the early Anglo-Saxon period.

This chapter suggests that the Anglo-Saxon authors of saints' lives, including Bede, wrote prayers into their narratives to instruct readers in prayer and devotion. I include Bede's *EH* in this discussion on the grounds that Bede's work is, among other things, a compendium on the lives and deeds of local saints and is unapologetically didactic. Scott DeGregorio has argued that a process of instruction is at work in Bede's scriptural exegesis. He argues that there was still a vital need, in Bede's time, 'for basic instruction in the faith.'[24] Bede, he writes, also believed that 'monastic ideals and institutions should have a decisive impact on society at large.'[25] Given Bede's understanding of the importance of imitating models provided by Christ's saints, and his commitment to spiritual teaching, it is not difficult to see why the articulation of

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[21] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 5.
[22] Heffernan, 4–5.
[23] Heffernan, 6.
[24] DeGregorio, "The Venerable Bede on Prayer and Contemplation," 5.
[25] DeGregorio, 7.

sanctity was a key focus of his work. Bede's *EH* also has the advantage of having been translated into Old English, which gives us unique insight into the reception of the work in later Anglo-Saxon England. These observations similarly apply to the other texts that receive attention in this chapter: Felix's *Life of Guthlac*, both Bede's and the anonymous Lives of Cuthbert and the Lives of Anglo-Saxon missionaries on the Continent.

Contexts for Reading Saints' Lives in Anglo-Saxon England

Saints' lives in Anglo-Saxon England were intended primarily for public recitation. Michael Lapidge explains:

> a *passio* or *vita* in the accepted form would be required so that it could be read out on the appropriate feast day, either in refectory while the monks or clerics dined in silence, or else during the Night Office on the vigil of the saint's day, when the *passio* or *vita* would be distributed in separate lections, each lection being punctuated by prayer and psalmody.[26]

Thus, the saintly life was related to the seasonal round of liturgical prayer practiced within a monastery and sometimes, when recited during the Night Office, was accompanied by prayer and psalmody. As well as these 'institutional' uses, Lapidge reminds us that saints' lives 'could of course be read any time as an act of private devotion.'[27] Alcuin, in his preface to his twinned prose and poetic works (*opus geminatum*) on Willibrord, explains that he has set down two books:

> One, walking along in prose, can be read publically by the brothers in church, if it seems worthy to your wisdom, the other, running with the muse of poetry, your pupils ought to ruminate over and over again in their cells.[28]

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[26] Lapidge, "The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England," 261.
[27] Lapidge, 261.
[28] Paul Dräger, ed., *Alcuini Vita Sancti Willibrordi/Alkuin: Das Leben Des Heiligen Willibrord* (Trier: Kliomedia, 2008), 12: 'unum prosaico sermone gradientem, qui publice fratribus in ecclesia, si dignum tuae videatur sapientiae, legi potuisset: alterum Pierio pede currentem, qui in secreo cubili inter scholasticos tuos tantummodo ruminari debuisset', cited by Bill Friesen, "The Opus Geminatum and Anglo-Saxon Literature," *Neophilologus* 95, no.

The context for public reading here refers to chapter, when monastic rules and martyrologies were customarily read.[29] Alcuin implies that poetry is particularly suited to private rumination because of its complexity. The central focus on the saints' life is the life of prayer or, as Lapidge puts it, 'the saints' power of intercession.'[30]

The *Rule of St Benedict* specifies up to twenty hours every week in which a monk should dedicate himself to reading, including most of Sunday, and that a monk should read a whole book during Lent.[31] Since reading was normally vocalised and rarely silent, Benedict insists that a monk reading to himself in the dormitory should not disturb others.[32] Thus, as Stewart writes, 'even solitary reading was much closer to the communal experience of hearing the Word read in the liturgy or at the table than is the case with private reading today.'[33] While Benedict's use of the term *bibliotheca* suggests that he intended for his monks to read a book of the Bible during Lent, Michael Lapidge has demonstrated from Carolingian sources that this term was later interpreted to mean something more like library, and that a variety of books could be read during Lent.[34]

While the monastery offers the most obvious context for reading saints' lives, it is also worth bearing in mind that several of the works under discussion in this chapter were dedicated to secular patrons. Bede's *EH* was dedicated to the Northumbrian king Coelwulf, Felix's *Life of Guthlac* to Ælfwald, king of East Anglia. The direct accessibility of such works to high status patrons is, of course, debatable. It is significant, however, that saints' lives and hagiographic materials were among the

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1 (2011): 140. For a survery of the *opus geminatum* tradition, see Peter Godman, "The Anglo-Latin Opus Geminatum: From Aldhelm to Alcuin," *Medium Ævum* 50 (1981): 215–29.

[29] Michael Lapidge, "Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England," in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: Basic Readings*, ed. Mary P. Richards (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 91, reprinted from *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Peter Clemoes, Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[30] Lapidge, "The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England," 269.

[31] *Rule of St Benedict* 48. Lapidge, "The Study of Latin Texts in Late Anglo-Saxon England," 126.

[32] *Rule of St Benedict* 48. Stewart, "Prayer Among the Benedictines," 208.

[33] Stewart, 208.

[34] Lapidge, "The Study of Latin Texts in Late Anglo-Saxon England," 126.

earliest works translated into Old English prose. These include the Old English Martyrology, Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*, the lives of Chad and Guthlac and the Old English Bede, not to mention a variety of early poetic texts that discuss the lives of saints. Bede's Old English translator explicitly states that the work was designed to instruct the king and any other readers and hearers. Molyneaux notes that the translator 'appears primarily to have envisioned his work being read aloud to others.'[35] Molyneaux also notes the translator's various interpolations:

> Bede sought to provide examples for emulation, but also had wider concerns: towards the end of the preface, Bede states that he had, in accordance with the *uera lex historiae*, sought to commit to writing what he had collected from common report 'for the instruction of posterity' (*ad instructionem posteritatis*). The translator omits this: he does not share Bede's broader concern with posterity.[36]

For this reason, Molyneaux concludes that the Old English Bede was a text primarily concerned with providing its audience (hearers and readers) 'basic instruction in Christian living.'[37] In faithfully translating the prayers of Bede's saints, the translator aligns himself with Bede's stated purpose of providing good examples from history that men might imitate. In fact, that translator elevates this purpose, and his work becomes a repository for Bede's hagiographical material, as Rowley and Molyneaux have noted. That saints' lives were considered worthy material in the ninth century for translation suggests that they were important to religious education and that, at least in the ninth century, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* was read as a hagiographic text.

Private Prayer at Night

The monastic Night Office evolved from private vigils that came to be formalised in the Egyptian desert. In spite of this evolution, the vigil maintained a sense of ascetic prayer, particularly in Ireland where, as Jungmann puts it, there was 'the phenomenon of an extra burden, in the shape of private prayer, to be undertaken by the individual

[35] Molyneaux, "The Old English Bede," 1310.
[36] Molyneaux, 1310.
[37] Ibid.,1311.

monk, a burden which far outweighed what he was already expected to perform.'[38] According to the *Rule of St Benedict*, the Night Office was to be followed in winter by a long break and then, just before the dawn, with Lauds.[39] In summer, this gap was less pronounced. Billett has shown that the Night Office and Lauds formed a single Office in Anglo-Saxon England, which were either completed before cock-crow (in winter) or began at cock-crow (in summer). Monks, rising from their 'second sleep', would sing Prime.[40] The *Rule of Columbanus* also bears witness to the profound importance of the vigil in Irish monasticism, which was an important cultural influence on both continental and Anglo-Saxon monasticism. This *Rule* gives extensive provisions for the celebration of the Night Office, which consists of three Offices dedicated to the recitation of psalms. The number of psalms varies seasonally and in the height of winter, when the nights are longest, monks are required to perform the entire Psalter. Following communal prayer, he stipulates that monks should return to their cells afterwards to watch in private, according to their own strength and ability.[41] It is clear from narrative sources that the hours just prior to dawn were extremely important times for private prayer.

The original purpose of nocturnal prayer, to watch and wait for Jesus' return, was eventually suffused with the symbolism of light and dark. Indeed, this symbolism is present in the biblical tradition, but it was developed in the early centuries of the Church. Gregory of Nazianzus describes how the Paschal Vigil 'dispels the primordial darkness, brings everything back to light, form and order, and transforms the chaos of sin... into the cosmos of divine grace... the second creation [which] like

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[38] Josef Andreas Jungmann, *Christian Prayer Through the Centuries* (Paulist Press, 2007), 37.

[39] Stewart, "Prayer Among the Benedictines," 212.

[40] Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597-c.1000*, 35–36.The terminology around the night and Morning Offices is confusing and reflects the ambiguous development of these hours for prayer. The Night Office is variously called Nocturns and Vigils, while the Morning Office is variously called Matins and Lauds although, in some traditions, these offices took place before the breaking of dawn. As we have seen, Prime could be properly considered as the Morning Office in Anglo-Saxon England.

[41] *Rule of Columbanus*, 7. Billett, "The Liturgy of the 'Roman' Office in England from the Conversion to the Conquest," 88–89. Peter Jeffrey, "Eastern and Western Elements in the Irish Monastic Prayer of the Hours," in *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography: Written in Honor of Professor Ruth Steiner*, ed. Ruth Steiner, Margot Elsbeth Fassler and Rebecca A. Baltzer (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 110–12.

the first, commenced on the night between Saturday and Sunday, when God created the world and rose from the tomb'.[42] Nocturnal prayer became an enactment of Jesus' death and resurrection. Mary W. Helms explains the primary significance of nocturnal prayer as the time for remembering the resurrection and awaiting the *parousia*, or second coming.[43] Jonathan Black notes that the hymns of the Celtic Night Office, along with the Spanish Office, tend to note specific scriptural associations more than corresponding material in the Roman Office. At midnight, Peter's chains were released, the angels rejoiced on account of the nativity of the midnight hour, and the thief confessed and was promised paradise.[44]

Anglo-Saxon accounts of the monastic vigil associate the night with Christ's death and the assault of demonic forces, most often on the internal world of the man or woman at prayer. For this reason, such accounts are often emotionally charged, and the practice of praying at night was associated with a posture of penance and the promise of conversion. The exact moment of conversion and the defeat of evil is most often the time just prior to the dawn, which is also associated with the resurrection and Christ's harrowing of hell. The harrowing, which will receive more attention in Chapter Two, is frequently depicted in Anglo-Saxon sources in association with penitential prayer and especially the singing of penitential psalms.

At its most basic level the keeping of vigil was the special habit of the most devout. Describing Cuthbert's life as a monk, Bede refers to his custom of watching 'through the dead of the night', praying psalms while neck-deep in the ocean.[45] The ocean here represents the wilderness and Cuthbert's famous encounter with the sea creatures, who come to warm his feet after a time of prayer, represents his subjugation of the wilderness through prayer. This aspect of Cuthbert's prayer life receives special attention in Bede's metrical life, which emphasises the symbolic meanings of

[42] Mary W. Helms, "Before the Dawn. Monks and the Night in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval Europe," *Anthropos* 99, no. 1 (2004): 185–86.
[43] Helms, 185–6.
[44] Jonathan Glenn Black, "The Daily Cursus, the Week, and the Psalter in the Divine Office and in Carolingian Devotion" (Ph.D., University of Toronto (Canada), 1988), 378.
[45] Bede, *Life of Cuthbert,* x, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave, *Two Lives of St. Cuthbert* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 188–89: 'intempestae noctis uigilias'.

Cuthbert's spiritual activities.[46] In the prose lives, Cuthbert's solitary nocturnal prayer is contrasted with his return to the monastery at dawn for the hour of communal prayer. The anonymous life, explaining the same scene, states that Cuthbert 'began to walk about by night on the seashore, keeping up his custom of singing as he kept vigil.'[47] He afterward returns to 'public prayer with the brethren'. Æthelthryth, while remaining chaste and fasting often, also 'always remained in the church at prayer from the time of the Office of matins until dawn, unless prevented by serious illness.'[48] Likewise, Boniface and Leoba are said to have prayed in private, Boniface 'before the hours of vigils'[49] and Leoba between Compline and the hour for the Night Office.[50]

The hagiographic sources also show lay people keeping watch at night. Cuthbert received a vision alerting him to Aidan's death while he was still leading a secular life.[51] This vision, which took place in the hills, awoke in Cuthbert a profound emotional transformation and was the catalyst for his decision to seek a monastic life. King Oswald, according to Bede, was known to pray from morning (*matutinae*) until daybreak (*laudis*) and

[46] Michael Lapidge, "Bede's Metrical Vita S. Cuthberti," in *St. Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200*, ed. Gerald Bonner, D. W. Rollason, and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989), 87–88.
[47] Anonymous, *Life of Cuthbert* ii.3, ed. and trans.: 'coepit nocte maritima loca circuire morem consuetudinis cantandi et uigilandi seruans.'
[48] Bede, *EH*, iv.19, ed. and trans. *Colgrave, Ecclesiastical History of the English People, 392–93.*
[49] Willibald, *Life of Boniface*, ed. W. Levison, *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum* (Hanover, 1905), 1-57, trans. C.H. Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany, Being the Lives of S.S. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba and Lebuin, Together with the Hodoeporicon of St Willibald and a Selection from the Correspondence of St. Boniface* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1954), 33.
[50] Rudolf, *Life of St Leoba*, ed. Waitz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, vol. xv, I, 124 (Hanover, 1987), trans. Talbot, 209–10.
[51] Anonymous, *Life of Cuthbert* v.5, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave, *Two Lives of St. Cuthbert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 69–71: 'Alio quoque tempore in adolescentia sua, dum adhuc in in populari uita, quando in montanis iuxta fluuium quod dicitur Ledir... pernoctans in uigiliis secundam morem eius, mente fideli, pura fide, uberrimis orationibus, uidit visionem quam ei Dominus revuelavit...'

> was always accustomed, wherever he sat, to place his hands on his knees with the palms turned upwards. It is also a tradition which has become proverbial, that he died with a prayer on his lips.[52]

Oswald's custom of sitting with his hands over his knees is not widely attested in contemporary sources. Cassian mentions sitting as an eastern custom associated both with listening to chanted psalms during the Night Office and also with private prayer in cells following this Office.[53] According to Asser, Alfred would rise secretly at cock-crow and in the morning hours to visit churches and the relics of saints and pray, prostrated 'for a long while', for an affliction that would strengthen his mind in the love of God's service.[54] Essentially, at these times, Alfred was praying for the chastening of his body according to the mercy of God. The rulers Oswald and Alfred are both despicted as quasi monks, and the importance of their own lives of prayer consists not only in the freqeuency and duration of their prayers but also in their ability to seek God through the habits of regular discipline. Praying at night demonstrates their mastery of the ascetic life.

In Felix's *Life of Guthlac* there is a repeated link between nocturnal prayer, the defeat of demons and the fortification of the mental and emotional world. The height of dramatic action in the *vita* comes with a series of dream visions, each of which represent Guthlac as a *miles Christi* engaged in spiritual warfare. Guthlac's first vision comes to him when he is overwhelmed by despair and a sense of futility. Guthlac, meditating on his own sin, is struck with this despair for three days. On the third day, during the watch of *matutinae*, which refers to the period around the end of the Night Office, Guthlac defeats his despair by singing Psalm 17.7: 'In my affliction

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[52] Bede, *EH* iii.12, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 250-1: 'atque ob crebum morem orandi siue gratias agendi Domino semper, ubicumque sedens, supinas super genua manus habere solitus sit.'

[53] Cassian, *Institutes*, ii.7.

[54] Asser, *Life of Alfred* 74: 'galli cantu et matutinis horis clam consurgens, ecclesias et reliquias sanctorum orandi causa visitabat; ibique diu prostratus orabat, quo Deus Omnipotens, propter suam misericordiam, mentem illius amore suae servitutis multo robustius per aliquam infirmitatem, quam posset sustinere, non tamen quo eum indignum et inutilem in mundanis rebus faceret, ad se penitus convertens corroboraret.'

I called upon the Lord, and I cried to my God'.[55] Here Felix offers an aside reminding the audience that it was not a dream, consciously differentiating between the dreams of 'mere' sleep and the visionary experience of a prayer-filled vigil. A later temptation occurs when Guthlac is keeping vigil in the dead of night (*noctis intempesto*).[56] He is then interrupted by hoards of demons and taken to hell for a part of the night. Bartholemew rescues Guthlac and takes him back to his own dwelling, where they arrive at dawn (*aurora*). At dawn, Guthlac gives thanks and drives away demons with his morning prayers. In the next chapter, at cock-crow (*gallicinali tempore*), Guthlac is engaged in vigils and prayers (*orationem vigiliis incumberet*). Felix relates that, at this point, Guthlac is overcome suddenly by a dream-filled sleep where he seemed to hear shouts. He then wakes up from his light sleep (*leve somno*) to find a host of demons approaching who dissipate following Guthlac's recitation of Psalm 67.1. Here, dreaming is associated with demonic attack, and Guthlac's skill as a *miles Christi* lies in his ability to discern spiritual reality even in this vulnerable state. Singing the Psalms is a spiritual weapon that serves in an apotropaic capacity as a weapon against evil and also allows Guthlac to summon Bartholemew. At the end of the *Life of Guthlac*, we also find King Æthelbald of Mercia keeping vigil as he seeks intercession from Guthlac following his exile. Æthelbald prays at Guthlac's sepulchre, prostrate with tears and many words. Shortly after Æthelbald enters a light sleep (*leve somno*) and receives a vision of Guthlac.[57] Here Æthelbald, a lay-person, participates in Guthlac's asceticism and is rewarded by a revelation of his power.

Also in Bede, Egbert's tearful repentance comes in the morning (*tempore matutino*). Egbert, like Guthlac, is able to reflect on his sins when he finds himself alone and awake while others are sleeping. When Egbert returns from his prayers, he finds his companion Ethulrun asleep and he himself returns to sleep. The term *matutino*, then, must refer to the very early hours of the morning. Later in the same story, Ethulrun wakes up and relays to Egbert that he too received vision (*uisionem*) in which it was

[55] Felix, *Life of Guthlac* XXIX, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave, *Felix's Life of St Guthlac: Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 96-7.
[56] Ibid., 96–97: 'adsueto more vigil inintermissis orationibus cuiusdam noctis intempesto tempore perstaret.'
[57] Ibid., XLIX, 148–51.

revealed to him that Egbert made a vow of monastic penance while awake. Thus, at this time of morning, both the brothers receive visions.[58]

Bede frequently associates early Morning Prayer with visionary experience. He relates Fursa's dream vision from a 'little book' about his life:

> On one occasion when he was attacked by illness, as his Life fully describes, he was snatched from the body; he quitted it from evening to cock-crow and during that time he was privileged to gaze upon the angelic hosts and listen to their blessed songs of praise.[59]

Adamnan, who often spent whole nights in prayer, received a vision whilst occupied in watching and the singing of psalms in which he is commended in a vision for spending the time of rest in watching and prayer rather than sleep.[60] The angelic visitor rebukes other members of the monastery who, unlike Adamnan, chose sleep over prayer. His decision to stay awake in prayer has a distinctively penitential tone: he prays 'earnestly to the Lord to pardon [his] sins'.[61]

Dryhthelm's vision of heaven and hell likewise comes to him in the night. According to Bede, Dryhthelm died at the beginning of the night and revived in the morning (*diluculo*), much to the surprise of those weeping around the body.[62] He then repaired to an oratory to pray until day (*ad diem*). Dryhthelm, then, also has a transformational devotional experience early in the morning in the context of prayer and nocturnal vigil: his vision causes him to seek a monastery and leave his family, even though he was the head of a religious household. Boniface states that the Monk of Wenlock,

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[58] Bede, *EH* iii.27, trans. Colgrave, 312-313.
[59] Bede, *EH* iii.19, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 272-3: 'et a vespera usque ad galli cantum corpore exutus, angelicorum agmimum e auspectus intueri, et laudes beatas meruit audire'.
[60] Ibid.: 'non somne indulger, sed uigiliis et orationibus insistere maluisti.'
[61] Bede, *EH* iv.25, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 425: 'pro meis erratibus sedulo Dominum deprecari'.
[62] Bede, *EH* v.12, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 488-9.

after his vision, 'returned to his body by the angels' command at daybreak, as he had left his body at cock-crow'.[63]

Bede describes other instances in which the early morning is associated with the death of a saint and, by extension, their entry into heaven. Cuthbert, in Bede's life, begins to die at around the ninth hour of the day.[64] After spending the night in prayer, he passes away just before the dawn. Caedmon waits until the beginning of the Night Office to die and both Dryhthelm and the Monk of Wenlock, as we have just seen, died at the beginning of the night and returned to their bodies at daybreak.[65] A brother keeping vigil on the verge of Guthlac's death saw the saint's oratory lit up with 'fiery brightness from midnight until dawn'.[66]

The hours before the dawn are also associated with miracles of spiritual healing. Bede explains how Bothelm, a brother from Hexham, asked for a piece of Saint Oswald's cross to heal his broken arm. Receiving a piece of moss from the cross, he fell asleep with it in his bosom and woke up in the middle of the night (*at medio noctis*) perfectly healed.[67] Describing the healing of a demon-possessed man through Oswald's relics, Bede remarks that he suffered no more 'night alarms or afflictions from the ancient foe.'[68] Baduthegn, a monk in Cuthbert's monastery, prayed to the saint at night while seized with paralysis. While he was praying, according to Bede, he fell into a deep sleep and felt the hand of the saint touch his head and the place where his pain was. He awoke completely healed.[69] The anonymous life of Cuthbert relates the story of a young boy who, unable to be healed by the doctors of a monastery, sleeps for a night with Cuthbert's shoes and wakes healed and singing praise to the Lord.[70] Ælfric relates a similar story related to the healing power of St Swithun. The concerned friends of a diseased man carry him to Swithun's grave at the Old Minster and keep

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[63] Boniface, "S.Bonifacii et Lulli Epistolae, ep.10," in *MGH*, vol. 6, Epistolae Merovingici et Karolini Aevi, 1895. trans. Ephraim Emerton, *The Letters of Saint Boniface* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 3–9.
[64] Bede, *Life of Cuthbert* XXXVIII, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 283.
[65] Bede, *EH* iv.24, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 420-1.
[66] Felix, *Life of Guthlac* L, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 158–59.
[67] Bede, *EH* iii.2.
[68] Bede, *EH* iii.11: 'neque aliquid ex eo tempore nocturni timoris aut uexationis ab antique hoste pertulit.' 250-1.
[69] Bede, *EH* iv.32.
[70] Colgrave, *Two Lives of St. Cuthbert*, 136–9.

watch with him all night. The infirm man watched, according to Ælfric, until it was becoming day (*oðþæt hit wolde dagian*). At this point he fell asleep, and his friends saw the tomb trembling (*bifigende*) and a shoe being dragged off the sick man's feet. He awoke healed by Swithun. This passage does not exactly indicate private prayer, but it does show laymen keeping vigil at the tomb of a saint and an individual's encounter with Swithun outside of the church's formal services. The miracles at Swithun's tomb take place before his body was transferred to the New Minster at a point when the location of his body, as Lapidge argues, was known only to peasants. Swithun appears three times to a peasant and reveals the location of his body, which is confirmed by various miracles relating to watching at his tomb.[71] Lay prayer, as it is presented in these sources, consists of keeping watch at the tomb of a saint or in some other such holy place. We cannot access the content of these prayers, but the trope of laymen and monks falling asleep at tombs suggests something like the ancient practice of *incubatio* – waiting at the shrine of a god for a special message or visitation.[72]

Prayer and Sacred Space

John Blair has written extensively on the association between holy sites and devotional life in early Anglo-Saxon England, and has, in particular, drawn attention to the continued use and reuse of pagan sacred spaces in Anglo-Saxon Christian observance.[73] *Hagios* and *sanctus*, as Rollason points out, were ambiguous terms in late antiquity that could be applied to anything with the quality of being 'set apart from the everyday world'.[74] The lives of saints were an exercise in sanctification. Saints' lives present prayer in the wilderness in two ways. First, the wilderness is represented as the site of battle between the saint and evil. Second, and consequently, the landscape is the place of special communication between the saint and the people. Thus, the physical world is made holy through the ongoing prayers of the saint who

[71] Michael Lapidge et al., *The Cult of St Swithun* (Oxford : Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 16.
[72] A. H. M. Kessels, "Ancient Systems of Dream-Classification," *Mnemosyne* 22, no. 4 (1969): 390.
[73] Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 166–181.
[74] D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1989), 3.

has consecrated the landscape. Authors imply a relationship between personal ascetic piety and the defeat of demons that goes back to St Antony, at least. The conceit of the 'desert', inherited from the Life of St Antony and the lives of the Egyptian desert fathers, finds many expressions in saints' lives. Guthlac, having lived in a monastery for two years, began to read about the lives of solitary monks and 'burned with an eager desire to make his way to the desert.'[75] The fens of Crowland become a suitably wild, torturous place. Boniface, setting out on his mission to the continent, climbed a mound called the *mons episcopi* to pray and mediate on scripture.[76] In the same account, St Sturm is described as conquering the wilderness of Bachonia by singing psalms on his journey and making the sign of the cross as a protection against the wild beasts.[77] Repeatedly, the act of prayer is a process of consecrating the landscape and participating in spiritual warfare. Thus, Books I and II of Bede's *EH* explain the missionary activities of Germanus and Augustine almost exclusively using the language of spiritual warfare. Germanus' prayers involve the sprinkling of holy water and the invocation of the Trinity, both associated with the dedication of a church and the purging of evil spirits.[78] Explicitly, Bede makes repeated reference to the evil spirit of heresy oppressing Britain. Augustine and his companions, entering Kent, sing a litany from the Gallican Rogationtide rite that is intended to cleanse and consecrate the land. The representation of prayer as consecration continues later in the *EH*. Bishop Cedd, for example, having chosen a spot for a new monastery, took the whole season of Lent to pray at the site of the foundation, 'anxious first of all to cleanse the site which he had received from the stain of former crimes by prayer and fasting.'[79] So

[75] Felix*, Life of Guthlac* XXIV, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 86-7: 'tum inluminatio cordis gremio avida cupidine heremum quaerare fervebat.'
[76] Eigil, *Life of Sturm*, PL Volume II, 0429D-430A, trans. Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, 190.
[77] Eigil, *Life of Sturm*: 'Psalmos vero in ore retinens, Deum gemitibus, animo ad coelum levato, orabat; ibi tantummodo quiescens, ubi eum nox compulit habitare. Et tunc quando alicubi noctabat, cum ferro quod manu gestabat, sepem caedendo ligno in gyro composuit ad tutamen animalis sui, ne ferae quarum perplura ibi multitudo erat, illud devorarent. Ipse autem in Dei nomine signo crucis Christi fronti impresso securus quiescebat.'
[78] For dedication rites in Anglo-Saxon England, see Helen Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England*, Medieval History and Archaeology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 213–15.
[79] Bede, *HE*, iii.23, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 286-87: 'Studens autem uir Domini acceptum monasterii locum primo precibus ac ieiuniis a pristina flagitiorum sorde purgare, et sic in eo monasteriii fundamenta iacere.'

serious was this task that Cedd had to ask his brother Cynebill, a priest, to complete it when called away by the king ten days before the end of Lent.

From the point of view of catechesis, the embodiment of prayers in the landscape allows the reader (or hearer) of a saints' life to know where to pray, both in an abstract and in a specific sense. The efficacy of the ordinary man or woman's prayers is closely related to the continued presence of the saints, either by their association with the landscape or in the physical remains that they have left behind.

Several features of the landscape emerge as popular sites for prayer. These sites are satisfying at a metaphorical level (i.e. they represent the 'wilderness'), but the literary and archeological record indicates that they also enjoyed popularity as holy sites.[80] Oswald's Heavenfield is made holy by association with the martyred king but was, perhaps, already considered an appropriate place for religious activity. Semple, in her archaeological analysis of holy places, writes,

> *Feld* is generally interpreted now as a term used regularly in the sixth and seventh centuries for unencumbered land with unrestricted access, essential communal rough pasture.... The *feld* was thus peripheral but visited, accessible, even commonly used and owned by communities. Some of the earliest mentions of *feld* place-names refer to battle sites and meeting places or councils, which enforces the idea of the *feld* being particularly liminal and thus suitable for decision-making events.[81]

Feld translates the Latin *campus*, which appears in Boniface's condemnation of Adelbert's attempts to lead the people astray in Gaul. One letter to Boniface describes how 'in the fields or near springs or wherever he had a mind he erected crosses and small chapels and ordered prayers to be recited there.'[82] While this refers to eighth-

[80] Blair, "The Church in the Landscape, c.650-850", *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*.

[81] Sarah Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric in Anglo-Saxon England: Religion, Ritual, and Rulership in the Landscape*, Medieval History and Archaeology (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 67.

[82] Boniface, *Epistola* 144: PL 752D-753B, trans. Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany, Being the Lives of S.S. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba and Lebuin, Together*

century Gallican practice, it provides insight into the use of the landscape in prayer in the early eighth-century, seen through the eyes and described using the words of an Anglo-Saxon missionary. The reference to Aldebert's consecration of crosses is particularly relevant to the story of Oswald, since his *feld* was made famous by his erection of a cross. *Hefenfeld*, as a name, has a particularly strong sense of a liminal space where the power of heaven is made manifest on earth. According to Bede, it 'received this name in days of old as a portent of future happenings.'[83]

Stone crosses also appear in early narrative sources as sites for prayer, and appear to have operated as a substitute for churches. Willibald, for example, was dedicated at the foot of a cross and not in a church, 'for on the estates of nobles and good men of the Saxon race it is custom to have a cross, which is dedicated to our Lord and held in great reverence, erected on some prominent spot for the sake of those who wish to pray before it.'[84] Michael D. Bintley has suggested that there may have been a relationship between Anglo-Saxon sacred trees and the Cross (or crosses) ,[85] though there is little in the narrative evidence here discussed to add to his analysis, save perhaps for the naming of *Augustines Ac* as a potentially holy site in Book II of Bede's *EH*. Semple lists other types of site that maintained a religious appeal. Hilltops, she establishes through place names, can 'be regarded as an indisputable element of the pre-Christian spiritual topography.' In the *EH*, Alban prays on top of a hill, as did Boniface at the beginning of his missionary activities. Cuthbert, according to the anonymous author of his life, first received a vision of God while tending sheep on a hill, keeping watch with prayers at night.[86] While Bede's verse and prose life and the anonymous life all specify that this incident took place on a hill, Ælfric uses *felda*

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with the Hodoeporicon of St Willibald and a Selection from the Correspondence of St. Boniface., 109–10: 'Fecit quoque cruciculas et oratoriola in campis, et ad fontes'.

[83] Bede, *EH* iii.2, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 216-17: 'quod certo utique praesagio futurorum antiquitus nomen accepit.'

[84] Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, 154–55.

[85] M. Bintley, "Recasting the Role of Sacred Trees in Anglo-Saxon Spiritual History: The South Sandbach Cross 'Ancestors of Christ' panel in Its Cultural Contexts," in *Trees and Timber in the Anglo-Saxon World*, ed. M. Bintley and M. Shapland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). See also Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric in Anglo-Saxon England*, 69.

[86] Anonymous, *Life of Cuthbert* V.

to describe Cuthbert's setting.[87] Blair and Semple also note that prehistoric barrow burial sites, one of which appears in the lives of Guthlac, seem to have exerted an attraction for monastic establishments.[88]

Sacred space reveals many facets in these texts. The prayers of the saints interact constantly with the inherent holiness (and at times its contrary) of various places in the landscape and in church buildings. The *Hodoeporicon of Willibald*, an eighth century account of the Anglo-Saxon missionary Willibald written by Huncberg the nun, demonstrates this preoccupation with the relationship between prayer and sacred space. The text is essentially an account of Willibald's *peregrinatio*, which took the form of a visit to the Holy Land via Rome. Willibald is described as a *miles Christi*, a designation applied to him because of his commitment to a life of prayer. His journey is undertaken with brothers, leading to the conclusion he observed some form of the office with his travelling brethren while on his pilgrimage. Nevertheless, Huncberg's emphasis is on solitary prayer, nightly watches and, most importantly, the visitation of shrines associated with biblical stories. Willibald also prays at a fountain, bathes in the river Jordan, spends a night praying in the mountains of Didyme and stays alone for two years in an alcove 'so that he could sit and gaze upon the place where the saints lay at rest.'[89] This narrative is profoundly mindful of Christ's Incarnation and engagement with scriptural stories through physical space, since almost every scene of prayer is related geographically to an excerpt from the gospels. Willibald is praying with stories in mind and his prayer is a response to his deep meditation on the events of Christ's life, which were embodied in specific places. In a similar way, the culture of prayer in Anglo-Saxon England developed around stories of Christ's saints and their association with the physical world.

The first instance of prayer in Bede's *EH* comes with the story of the British proto-martyr Alban. Alban entertained a clergyman who was 'occupied day and night in

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[87] Malcolm Godden, ed., *Aelfric's Catholic homilies: introduction, commentary and glossary* (Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 2000), 417.
[88] Sarah Semple, "A Fear of the Past: The Place of the Prehistoric Burial Mound in the Ideology of Middle and Later Anglo-Saxon England," *World Archaeology* 30, no. 1 (1998): 109–26; Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 53-57; 471-89.
[89] Hucberg, *Hodoeporicon of St. Willibald*, ed. Holder-Egger, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores*, vol. xv, I, 80-117, trans. Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, 171.

continual vigils and prayers'.[90] Inspired by his guest's devotion, Alban decided to imitate him and become a Christian. Very soon, the authorities visited Alban's house to arrest the clergyman but are thwarted by Alban, who took on the cloak of his guest and was himself arrested in his place. Commanded by the guards to renounce his faith, Alban refuses, since 'the sacrifices which you offer to devils cannot help their votaries nor fulfil the desires and petitions of their suppliants.'[91] Destined for execution, Alban is led to a river but unable to cross due to the semi-miraculous appearance of a large crowd. Alban raises his eyes to heaven, which causes the stream to dry up and allows him to walk to his execution. This posture reflects confident petition of God. In Luke's Gospel, the penitent tax collector refuses to look up to heaven, but rather beats his breast and asks for mercy. Jesus also prayed looking up to heaven.[92] Just prior to his execution, Alban prays and a stream breaks out under his feet. Bede finishes the story with a description of the martyr's feast day, the place of his death, and the church subsequently built at the place of his martyrdom. Here, writes Bede, 'many sick people are healed... and the working of frequent miracles continues to bring its renowned.'[93] Alban's prayers are embodied, first in the person of Alban, second in the landscape, and third in history.

So far as the extant sources allow for comparison, Bede's unique contribution to the Alban story seem to be his naming of a site.[94] Helen Gittos notes Bede's adoption of a classical *locos amoenus* trope in his representation of the beautiful landscape. Bede, she writes, constructs an image of the kind of place worthy of a martyr's death.[95] At the same time, Bede establishes continuity between the site and contemporary practices of prayer so that the spiritualised, metaphorical landscape is also a real place. Bede's *EH* marks out sites for prayer, and he names various physical features (a sloping hill, a river) that are made holy by association with the martyr. According

[90] Bede, *EH* i.7, ed. and trans. Colgrave 28-35. 'Quem dum oratiobinus continuis ac uigiliis die noctuque studere conspicerit.'
[91] Ibid., trans. Colgrave, 30-31: 'Sacrificia haec, quae a uibis redduntur daemonibus, nec auxiliary subiectis possunt nec suplicantium sibi desideria uel uota conplere.'
[92] Mark 6:41, John 11:41; 17:1.
[93] Colgrave, 34-5: 'In quo uidelicet loco usque ad hanc diem curatio infirmorum et frequentium operatio uirtutem celebrari non desinit.'
[94] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People : A Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 12–13.
[95] Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England*, 24–25.

to Bede, Alban was able to produce a spring to replenish the river just before his death because it was fitting for him to leave behind a *testemonium reliquens*. In the act of prayer, Alban transformed the landscape into a relic.

The most important places for prayer in Anglo-Saxon England were those associated with the relics or physical remains of saints. As we have seen, these could be places in the landscape but, more commonly, devotional life was centred on the tombs of saints. The efficacy of the ordinary man or woman's prayers is closely related to the continued presence of the saints, either by their association with the landscape or in the physical remains that they have left behind. The conclusion to Alciun's *Life of Willibrord* encapsulates this attitude. The author beseeches his reader to remain pure, so that St Clement may be able to hear their prayers just as he healed the sick in the church:

> Nor need we doubt that just as he deigned visibly to heal their bodily diseases, so also through the intercession of the saint on our behalf, whose body rests here and whom we believe to be present in the spirit, listening to our prayers, he will continue daily to cure the hidden diseases of our souls, if with firm faith and sincere confession we pour out our hearts with tears in that place before the merciful face of Him who in His mercy is quick to pardon if we are not slow to ask.[96]

This passage speaks to the sense of the real presence of the saint, who listens to prayers providing that they are spoken with sincerity and tears. The efficacy of these prayers is also explicitly related to the place of their utterance – they must be offered, literally, in the presence of the saint. Furthermore, Alcuin equates physical, spiritual and emotional healing in this passage. The saint is able to heal both bodily infirmity and the diseases of the soul, through the intercession of Christ's servant.

Bede makes frequent reference to prayers uttered at the tombs of saints that accomplish physical healing through an emotional posture of penance and

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[96] Alcuin, *Life of Willibrord* ed. W. Levison, *Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*, vii, 81-141, trans. Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, 21.

compunction. One of the nuns at Peterborough, so disabled that she was not able to move a single limb, requested to be carried to the remains of Æthelburh inside the church and 'placed leaning up against [the remains] in the attitude of prayer.'[97] Whether this *modus oranti* refers to kneeling or prostration is unclear; Bede mentions both elsewhere in his *History*. The coffin in which Æthelthryth was first buried at Ely is said to have healed some suffering from eye troubles who 'prayed with their heads resting on the coffin.'[98] Baduthegn intended to pray at Cuthbert's tomb on bended knee, but 'prostrated himself before the man of God'[99] when entering the church. While praying, Baduthegn 'seemed to fall into a deep sleep', felt the touch of a hand on his body, and woke healed by Cuthbert's intercession.[100] That Bede associated genuflection with penance is clear from his Homily II.16 in Pentecost, when he explains that one should neither kneel straight away nor refrain from saying the Allelujah at the end of Pentecost, but rather pray standing in an attitude of praise 'to signify the liberation' of those who have recently been baptised.[101] Kneeling, on the other hand, is the proper posture of the penitent.

The focus on praying before a saint's tomb at night is based on a sense of the special presence of the saint in the night hours. Nightly visitation is the common practice of both saints and demons, as is described in the account of Theodoret of Cyrene, who was protected from nightly demonic visitations by a flask of oil which carried the blessings of many martyrs.[102] Keeping vigil at the tomb of a saint was clearly common practice in the early Middle Ages. John Crook, explaining the procedure for creating secondary relics of St Peter's tomb in the time of Pope Gregory I, quotes Gregory of Tours. Gregory explains a custom whereby

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[97] Bede, *EH* iv.9, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 360-61: 'postulauit se illo adferri et in modum orantium ad illud adclinari.'
[98] Bede, *EH* iv.19, ed. and trans. Colgrave 396-97: 'cum suum caput eidem loculo adponentes orassent.'
[99] Bede, *EH* iv.31, ed. and trans. Colgrave 446-47: 'prosternens se ad corpus uiri Dei'.
[100] Ibid., 'inter preces uelut in soporem solutus'.
[101] Bede, *Homilies on the Gospels Book Two: Lent to the Dedication of the Church*, trans. Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst OSB (Kalamazoo, Mich: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 160.
[102] John Crook, *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints in the Early Christian West c.300-c.1200* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 28.

> if someone wants to take away a blessed relic, he leaves a little cloth, previously weighed on a balance, inside [the shrine]. Then, keeping vigil and fasting, he earnestly prays that the apostolic virtue may assist his piety.[103]

After a night of prayer the relic is removed, now infused with Peter's divine power. Proximity to the tomb in itself infuses objects and people with the power of healing.

Bede also tells the story of a young boy healed by sitting and remaining quietly beside Oswald's tomb. Bede tells us that 'as he sat by the tomb of the saint the disease did not venture to attack him; indeed it fled away in such terror that it did not dare to touch him either on the second or third day or at any time afterwards.'[104] It is uncertain, in this story, if the young boys prays with words at all. Rather, Bede emphasises the passivity of the child: he is told to remain quiet (*quietus manens*) and still (*ne... mouaris*). What matters is this receptivity and proximity to Saint Oswald's physical remains. As with relics, physical contact with the object associated with a saints' body, usually a tomb, makes for a particularly effective prayer. The personification of the terrified fever points to an understanding of the saint's tomb as a place of spiritual warfare, and the person at prayer as a participant by proxy in the prayers of the saints. Bede ultimately relates the efficacy of Oswald's intercession to his habit of constant prayer and his ability to keep vigil. Thus, in remaining physically proximate to the saint in a prayerful attitude, the young boy participates in the saint's own piety.

Other scenes of healing are associated with church buildings themselves, rather than the intercession of a specific saint. An earl's wife, in Book Four of the *Ecclesiastical History*, is healed in the church *cymeterium* (cemetery). Her maidens accompanied her to the cemetery, where she declared 'how complete was her assurance that she

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[103] Crook, *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints in the Early Christian West*, 26: 'Quod si beata auferre desiderat pignora, palliolum aliquod momentana pensatum iacit intrinsecus; deinde uigilans ac ieiuans, deuotissime deprecatur, ut deuotionis suae uirtus apostolica suffragetur.'.

[104] Bede, *EH* iii.12, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 250-1: 'Fecit, ut ille suaserat, sedentemque eum ad tumbam sancti infirmitas tangere nequaquam praesumsit; quin in tantum timens aufugit ut nec secunda die nec tertia neque umquam exinde eum auderet contingere.'

would be healed' and 'prayed at length on bended knees'.[105] No particular saint, however, is invoked. The use of the monastic burial ground during less formal hours of prayer is described in a number of sources. Bede tells us how the nuns at Barking, following their morning psalms, went to the tombs of the departed brethren, in the graveyard, to sing praises.[106] Bede suggests that this was a customary activity and, implicitly, the nuns were praying for their departed brethren. While praying on one occasion, a resplendent light reveals to the sisters that they should bury any nuns who are killed by a present pestilence to the westward side of the oratory. The communal burial ground is similarly the setting for prayer in the ninth-century Northumbrian poem *De Abbatibus*, when a brother prays in the *locum cinerum* following the evening psalms.[107]

Private prayer for a monk or a nun seems to have taken place in a variety of settings, either in a church or oratory or in some location in the natural landscape. Archaeological records indicate that Anglo-Saxon churches in particular tended to consist of groups of buildings. Taylor suggests that the veneration of more than one saint in a church or *minster* necessitated the construction of multiple buildings, since each was only allowed to house a single altar. He also describes the need for multiple buildings in processions, such as the Rogationtide procession. This scattered layout provides the context for the chapels used for private prayer, and the proliferation of buildings in Anglo-Saxon monasteries is tied in hagiographic narratives to the various practices of prayer and devotion that could be expected of holy men and women. These many buildings offered a space for the special habits of more ascetically minded monks. Dryhthelm, for example, is said to have had a 'secret retreat' (*mansionis secretiorem*) where 'he could freely devote himself to the service of his Maker in constant prayer'.[108] This retreat was by a river, in which Dryhthelm, like Cuthbert, would recite psalms neck deep in freezing water. Bede implies that Dryhthelm often had an audience, and finishes the chapter by saying that he 'led

[105] Bede, *EH* iv.10, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 364-5: 'ubi fidem suae sanatiois integram se habere professa est.... cum ibidem diutius flexis genibus oraret...'.
[106] Bede, *EH* iv.7, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 356-57.
[107] See below, 166.
[108] Ibid., v.12, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 496-7: 'ubi liberius continuis in orationibus famulatui sui Conditoris uacaret.'

many to salvation by his words and life.'[109] When recounting the vision of a wicked monk, who refused to repent although he saw his own place in hell, Bede specifies that the vision was 'not for his own benefit' but 'for the sake of others.'[110] Bede concludes the account by stating that he thought it right to tell it simply, 'for the benefit of those who read or hear it.'[111] Bede imagines his audience receiving his spiritual instruction and, perhaps, passing it on verbally. This, as we have seen, is one of the main reasons he gives for writing the *History*.

Bede describes various imitable figures who had private oratories built in which they would pray, sometimes during special seasons for prayer and fasting such as Lent. Chad, he writes, retired to a dwelling place (*mansionem*) not far from the church, where he could read and pray privately (*secretis*) with a few brethren when free from labour and ministrations.[112] Bishop John was wont, whenever he was able, to retire to an oratory dedicated to St Michael 'in which the man of God with a few others used to devote himself to prayer and reading when a favourable occasion occurred, and especially in Lent.'[113] John's retreat is called a *mansio secretior*, and Bede specifies that it was enclosed by a rampart and scattered trees, and separated from the Church at Hexham by a river. Bishop Eadberht also spent time 'alone in a place remote from the church, surrounded on every side by the sea at flood tide. Here he was always accustomed to spend the season of Lent as well as the fourty days before the Lord's nativity, in deep devotion, with abstinence, prayers, and tears.'[114] Bede notes that Cuthbert also spent time in this place before he went to Farne. Bede's language emphasises that these places are located in the wilderness. Yet he is also quick to demonstrate the utility of the contemplative life for pastoral duties. John is continually engaged in healings and ministrations, and even asks his followers to seek out a poor man to stay with them one Lent. Trumwine likewise retired to a life of austerity with a few companions at Whitby, where he lived 'for many years a life of austerity in the

[109] Ibid., ed. and trans. Colgrave, 498-9: 'multisque et uerbo et conuersatione saluti fuit.'
[110] Ibid., v.13, ed. and trans. Colgrave 502-3: 'non pro ista...sed pro aliis uideret.'
[111] Ibid.: 'simpliciter ob salute legentium siue audientium narradam esse pataui.'
[112] Bede, *EH* iv.3, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 338-9.
[113] Bede, *EH* v.2.
[114] Bede, *EH* iv.30, ed. and trans. Colgrave 444-5: 'Qui tum forte in remotiore ab ecclesia loco refluis undique pelagi fluctibus cincto solitaries manebat. In hoc enum semper Quadragesimae tempus agere, in hoc quadraginta ante dominicum natale dies in magna continentiae, orationis et lacricarum deuotione transigere solebat.'

monastery to the benefit of many others besides himself.'[115] That Bede considered the solitary life as a benefit to others is also evident in the story he tells about the unsuccessful missionary Wihtberht, who 'reaped no fruit' in his labour with the Frisians, 'returned to his place of exile and began again to give himself to the Lord, in his accustomed life of silence; and although he failed to help strangers in the faith, yet he took care to help his own people more, by the example of his virtues.'[116] These accounts point to a strong regard for the eremetic life in Anglo-Saxon England, which has been discussed at length by Mary Clayton.[117] Bede suggests that solitary prayer was a key feature of the religious life, and it seems to have been particularly important for bishops, which is interesting in light of the episcopal owner of the Book of Cerne. The physical distancing of oneself from the *ecclesia* or *monasterio* was an important part of this tradition, and the professional religious seem to have valued certain sites for their remoteness and their connection with the wilderness.

Cuthbert is Bede's most famous hermit, and Bede presents his life in a prose and a metrical life, as well as in abbreviated form in the *EH*. Important in all accounts is Cuthbert's private place of prayer on the island of Farne where he served God in solitude (*solitarius*). Although Bede represents Cuthbert as a hermit (*anchor*), the saint clearly also took part in some form of communal life, and Bede even refers to his dwelling on Farne as a *monasterium*. Once Cuthbert and the brothers purge the evil spirits from the island, they set about building a 'small dwelling-place surrounded by a rampart which contained all the necessary buildings, namely an oratory and a living room for common use.'[118] Cuthbert's style of hermitage, retreat to a *mansio* with a few brothers, observes the pattern for retreat already observed elsewhere in the *EH*. Bede's prose life of Cuthbert places much more emphasis on the hermit's solitary life of prayer and his desire to withdraw from the brethren. Bede explicitly states that

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[115] Bede, *EH* iv.26, ed. and trans. Colgrave 428-9: 'ibique cum paucis suorum in monachica districtione uitan non sibi solummodo sed et multis utilem plurimo annorum tempore duxit.'
[116] Bede, *EH* v.9, ed. and trans. Colgrave 478-81: 'Tum reuersus ad dilectae locum perigrenationis, solito in silentio uacare Domino coepit; et quoniam externis prodesse ad fidem non poterat, suis amplius ex uirtutem exemplis prodesse curabat.'
[117] Mary Clayton, "Hermits and the Contemplative Life in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 147–75.
[118] Bede, *EH* iv.28, ed. and trans. Colgrave 436-7: 'Cum autem ipse sibi ibidem expulses hostibus mansionem angustam circumuallante aggere et domus ni ea necessarias iuuante fratrum manu, id est oratorium et habitaculum commune.'

Cuthbert prayed in his cell alone, and after a time would not even communicate with his visitors through a slit in the window of his cell.[119] In the *EH*, Bede praises Cuthbert for all aspects of both his solitary and his active life, since even as a bishop he maintained a posture of penitential discipline and offered prayers with 'tears which sprang from the depths of his heart.'[120] This same oratory was used as a hermitage after Cuthbert's death.[121]

Several sources mention certain places within oratories and rooms in which holy men prayed. Cuthbert's letter on Bede's death records that, after passing a long period of time in constant prayer both in the day and at night and in continual repetition of the Psalter and liturgical antiphons, Bede chose to die upon the floor of his cell 'against my holy place in which I used to pray'.[122] In Bede's account of Cuthbert's death, a brother finds him laying in the corner of his oratory, opposite the altar, prior to his death.[123] In an almost identical scene, which Colgrave suggests is a borrowing from Bede's *Life of Cuthbert*, Guthlac was found by his companion Beccel 'lying in the corner of his oratory opposite the altar.'[124] At the moment of Guthlac's death, he chose to pray by the altar. According to Bede, Cuthbert's companion Aethilwald fixed a calf skin to the corner of the oratory, the place where he and Cuthbert would most often stand or kneel in prayer.[125] Proximity to the altar seems to be the most important factor in these accounts, which suggests that men and women prayed in private before the altar in recognition of Christ and his Passion. Again, physical location and posture allows the individual to position himself in relation to salvation history and to remain mindful of the central event of their faith.

Prayer and Scriptural reading

[119] Bede, *Life of Cuthbert* XVIII, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 220-21.
[120] Bede, *EH* iv.28, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 438-9: 'ex imo pectore lacrimis.'
[121] Colgrave, *Two Lives of St. Cuthbert*, 302–3.
[122] Cuthbert, "Episola de Obitu Bedae", ed. and trans. Colgrave, 584–85: 'loco sancto meo, in qua orare solebam.'
[123] Bede, *Life of Cuthbert* XXXVIII, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 283: 'recumbentem in angulo oratorii sui contra altare.'
[124] Felix, *Life of Guthlac*, 154–55. Felix's wording is identical to Bede's.
[125] .Ibid., 302–3: 'in angulo quo et ipse et praedecessor eius Cuthbertus sepius orans stare uel genuflectere solebat.'

Since scripture was the foundation for liturgical prayer, professional religious in Anglo-Saxon England would have encountered scripture most frequently in the context of prayer, both in the Mass and the Office. Scripture was also central to the practice of private prayer and, most frequently, narrative sources describe saints engaged in the singing of meditation and the singing of psalms.

Traditionally, a distinction existed between 'psalmody' and prayer. Psalmody, as it is described by Cassian in the practice of the Egyptian desert, involved the recitation of the Psalms by a reader, followed by a time for private prayer. This prayer was meant to be short, and consisted of the monk prostrating himself briefly before rising up to pray with outstretched hands.[126] In this tradition, liturgical psalmody was not considered to be prayer itself, but rather the 'sacred text that invited a response in prayer.'[127] Abba Isaac also recommends psalm singing in the *Conferences*, when he famously gives Psalm 69:2 as the 'pious formula' that is a fitting prayer for every situation.[128] According to Abba Isaac, this psalm verse must be borne in mind at all times, when working, going to bed, sleeping, waking up and throughout the day.[129]

Private performance of the Psalter, whether based on the liturgical hours of prayer or undertaken outside of these hours, appears in several Anglo-Saxon narrative sources. In England and elsewhere, Jane Toswell notes, the Psalter was the most likely of all biblical a material to be produced for the individual and was the text most suited to individual contemplation and devotion.[130] The suitability of the Psalms for private devotion meant that they were, in church tradition, 'perceived to be the property of lay Christians in a way that the rest of the Scriptures were not.'[131] The Anglo-Saxons

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[126] Cassian, *Institutes*, ii.7.
[127] Stewart, "Prayer Among the Benedictines", 206; Peter Jeffrey, "Monastic Reading and Roman Chant," in *Western Plainchant in the First Millennium: Studies in the Medieval Liturgy and Its Music*, ed. James Haar, Timothy Striplin and Sean Gallagher (Aldershot; Burlington: Routledge, 2003), 45–103; James W. McKinnon, "The Book of Psalms, Monasticism, and the Western Liturgy," in *The Place of the Psalms in the Intellectual Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. Nancy Van Deusen, SUNY Series in Medieval Studies (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York, 1999).
[128] Cassian, *Conferences*, x.10.
[129] Cassian, *Conferences*, x.11.
[130] M. Jane Toswell, "Psalters," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 479.
[131] William Holladay, *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1996), 178.

inherited two frameworks through which they were taught to pray the Psalms. From the third century, the Psalms formed the basis for the Cathedral Office in Rome. This Office was established in the wake of Constantine's conversion and used certain psalms for morning and evening prayers. The use of these psalms was selective and they were mostly 'chosen for their appropriateness to the time of day.'[132] Pierre Salmon, writing of the rise of antiphonal psalmody from the fourth century onwards, explains the process by which the book of Psalms became Christian prayers:

> They confine themselves to making use of a few of the more striking expressions, when they are not satisfied with taking merely the final verse or starting point as a starting point of their prayer. This method could be compared with that which has yielded a number of the oldest antiphons – by starting frequently from the first verse. It is out of these words, with the aid of these images, that they formulate a Christian adaptation.[133]

The rise of desert monasticism in the fourth century introduced the radically different idea of praying the entire Psalter. In this tradition, psalms were use as a 'device to aid the meditation of individual monks',[134] as we have seen in Cassian. Monastic practice joined elements of cathedral psalmody with the meditative repetition of continuous psalmody. By the time of Augustine's mission, these traditions had fused together and produced various permutations. 'Psalm-singing', which is ubiquitous in Anglo-Saxon narrative sources, thus probably refers both to liturgical and private recitation of the Psalms.

Psalm singing is also ubiquitous in the hagiographic writings of Bede and other saints' lives. For religious men and women, singing psalms was the most basic aspect of their vocation. Pope Gregory commands all clerks who cannot remain continent to live orderly under ecclesiastical instruction, sing psalms, and be free from unlawful behavior.[135] Psalm singing was also a conventional measure of holiness and

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[132] James W. McKinnon, "The Book of Psalms, Monasticism, and the Western Liturgy", 49.
[133] Pierre Salmon, *The Breviary Through the Centuries*, trans. Sister David Mary (MN: The Liturgical Press, 1962), 58.
[134] McKinnon, "The Book of Psalms, Monasticism, and the Western Liturgy", 49.
[135] Bede, *EH* i.27, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 80-81.

commitment to the monastic life. Bede's holy men are often noted for their diligence in learning and performing the Psalms. Aidan, Bede tells us, was so diligent that all who were in his company, both monks and laymen, learnt the art of *meditatio*: reading the scriptures or learning the Psalms.[136] Likewise Wilfrid learnt the Psalter proficiently,[137] an angel commends Adamnan for passing the night in psalm singing,[138] and Cuthbert sang Psalms while immersing himself in water.[139]

Alcuin, in his treatise on the Psalms, recommends the verses of different psalms as prayers in a variety of circumstances.[140] The Psalter, he suggests, is able to affect both mind and heart:

> No man is able to explain completely the virtue of the Psalms. In the Psalms he will evoke the confession of sins, and repentant tears, in them the sting of the heart (*compunctio cordis*) is revived, for the whole book of Psalms emits the odour of heavenly mysteries, overflows with spiritual precepts, is full of divine praise. Whoever learns to chant and probe the Psalms with an attentive mind (*intenta mente*), he shall discover in them the aforementioned management of his own health/salvation, the wonderful charm of heavenly joy.[141]

Bede in particular identifies psalmody as a certain *type* of prayer that yields remarkable power. Chad, for example, is said to have called upon God for mercy in the event of a strong wind, prostrated and prayed with concentration if the wind grew stronger and, finally, 'if it proved a violent storm of wind or rain, or else that the earth

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[136] Ibid. iii.5, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 226-7.
[137] Ibid. v.19, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 518-19.
[138] Ibid. iv.25, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 422-3.
[139] Bede, *Life of Cuthbert* x, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 188–89.
[140] Jonathan Black, "Psalm Uses in Carolingian Prayerbooks: Alcuin and the Preface to De Psalmorum Usu," *Mediaeval Studies* 64 (2002): 1–60.
[141] Alcuin, *Expositio Pia ac Brevis in Psalmos Poenitentiales*, PL 574: 'Nullus mortalium virtutem psalmorum pleniter explicare poterit. In his confessiones peccatorum, in his poenitentiales lacrymae excitantur, in his compunctio cordis renovatur, nam totus Psalmorum liber coelestibus redolet mysteriis, spiritalibus abundat praeceptis, divinis repletus est laudibus. Quicunque psalmos intenta mente decantare, et scrutari didicit, inveniet in eis omnem salutis nostrae dispensationem praedictam, miras coelestium jucunditates gaudiorum.' See Black "Psalm Uses in Carolingian Prayer Books: Alcuin and the Preface to *De Psalmorum Usu*", 13-15.

and air were filled with thunder and lightning, he would repair to the church, and devote himself to prayers and repeating of psalms till the weather became calm.'[142] In this passage, repeating psalms is presented as giving Chad power over nature. We are not told which psalms he uttered yet, when questioned, Chad justifies his actions by quoting Psalm 18:14: 'Have not you read –"The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave forth his voice. Yea, he sent out his arrows and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them."'[143] Francis Leneghan has written that this passage seems to hint at the use of Psalm 18 in a penitential context and argues that its use here is penitential.[144] Chad, the bishop, is pleading for forgiveness on behalf of his people using the words of the psalm. Similarly in the life of Anglo-Saxon missionary Leoba, written in the early ninth-century, one of the sisters is unjustly accused of murdering an unwanted child. Leoba responds by asking all her sisters to to stand with their arms extended in the shape of a cross until each one of them had sung the whole Psalter.[145] This practice ensures that the nuns of Leoba's enclosure are vindicated. Anglo-Saxon writings sometimes carry evidence of more austere Irish practices, such as this *crossfigel* in Leoba's life and Cuthbert's recitation of the Psalter while neck-deep in water. The Psalms, which call continually on God's justice, are able to vindicate the righteous and secure forgiveness.

Furthermore, the Psalms also appear in protective charms and the utterance of psalms has a protective power. Sturm's recitation of psalms shields him from the chaos of wild Bachonia. His ninth-century life explains that Sturm sang psalms and crossed himself before sleeping in order to guard himself from the wild beasts and equip himself with the 'weapons of the Spirit' to do battle against the devil.[146] No specific psalm is mentioned, but later Anglo-Saxon charms often call on Psalms 118, 67 and 68 for protection.[147] In the Irish tradition certain psalms act as protective charms on a

[142] Bede, *EH* iv.2.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Leneghan, "Preparing the Mind for Prayer," 135–36.
[145] Rudolf, *Life of St Leoba*, ed. Waitz, 127, trans. Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, 218: 'mater venerabalis de eius puritate iam secura, praecepit omnibus oratorium ingredi, et extensis in crucis modum brachiis stare, quoadusque singulae psalterium totum ex ordine psallendo complerent.'
[146] Eigil, *Life of Sturm,* trans. Talbot, 186.
[147] See Toswell for further discussion of apotropaic uses of the Psalms (*The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, 164-67). Toswell mentions several charters that record the exchange of psalmody for

journey. The 'Beati', Psalm 118, often appears in this capacity in saints' lives.[148] Guthlac, as we have seen, uses three psalm verses in his nocturnal prayers, each of which has the capacity to protect the saint from demonic attack. Guthlac, early in the morning, sings the words of Psalm 117.7, which summons St Bartholemew and provides comfort and spiritual fortification in the face of demonic attack.[149] Upon singing Psalm 15.8, Guthlac is strengthened against the attacks of demons.[150] At his recitation of Psalm 67.1 at cock-crow, a host of demons vanishes from his presence.[151]

Bede's writings also attest to the association between psalms and penance. Psalms feature in most of Bede's scenes of tearful repentance. In his account of the English nobleman Egbert's deathbed confession, Egbert vows that besides singing psalms at the canonical times he would, unless prevented by corporeal infirmity, sing the entire Psalter every day.[152] The expectation for the penitent was to undergo fasting, almsgivings and vigils, and various 'groupings' of psalms are prescribed as spiritual medicine against sin.[153]

Outside of the realm of regular monastic life, the already ambiguous distinction between 'private' and 'public' prayer becomes less clear. Medical manuscripts, for example, command that prayers be spoken or written in response to illnesses or crises. We see this in Bede, where John, while away from the monastery with a select number of brethren, performs several miracles of healing. Bede makes references to 'words of blessing', perhaps derived from the liturgy. The Old English Bede, at several points, claims that John spoke words of blessing and also made a sign of blessing – the sign of the cross – in order to heal his patients. Many of these 'healing'

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land and wealth. These are Sawyer nos. 153, 193, and 197. She also mentions charters wherein monastic communities are commanded to pray psalms for the king, including Sawyer nos 421 and 422, and Shaftesbury no. 8 (*The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, 166-67). See also Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 150. Brown points out that Canon 3 of the Council of Celadea requires 600 recitations of the Psalter as part of obsequies of a bishop. She also cites the will of Ealdorman Oswulf, who requires 'three 50s' for soul of he and his wife', S 1188.

[148] Martin J. McNamara, *The Psalms in the Early Irish Church* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 358.

[149] Felix, *Life of Guthlac* XXIV, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 94-7.

[150] Ibid. XXXII, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 106-7.

[151] Ibid., XXXVI, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 111-12.

[152] Bede, *EH* iii.27.

[153] Thomas Pollock Oakley, *English Penitential Discipline and Anglo-Saxon Law in Their Joint Influence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), 93.

prayers, while deriving from the liturgy, lack a clear liturgical context and seem, like collections of private prayers, to have been excerpted and transformed, perhaps for non-liturgical use.[154] Nevertheless, they bear witness to the fact that the words of God – the scriptures – were also considered words of healing. In medical manuscripts, the Pater Noster, a variety of psalms (including Psalm 50, the 'penitential psalm' *per excellence*, Psalms 118, 67 and 68), the prologue to John's Gospel, the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* and different excerpts from the Mass are holy words capable of healing. Bede tells the story of a man taken prisoner in war who is presumed dead by his monk brother. For reasons unknown to both the prisoner and his captors, his chains become loose at certain times of day. Later, he realises that his chains were loosed at the precise moment when his brother performed masses for his soul.[155]

Bede, in his letter to Egbert, suggests that the Lord's Prayer and the Creed should be translated into English and taught to men and women ignorant of Latin, monks, clerks and laymen alike. Bede tells Egbert that he himself translated these prayers and reminds Egbert that

> the holy Bishop Ambrose, when speaking of faith, advises each of the faithful to repeat the words of the Creed in the morning, and by it, as if by spiritual antidote, to fortify themselves against the poisons of the devil which he can cast at them by day or night with malignant craft. Also the custom of assiduous prayer and genuflexion has taught us that the Lord's Prayer should often be repeated.[156]

Here, Bede hints at the idea of prayer as a shield against the devil. His reference to frequent repetition of the Lord's Prayer is reminiscent of Abba Isaac's constant psalm

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[154] See, for example Thomas Oswald Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England. Being a Collection of Documents, for the Most Part Never before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in This Country before the Norman Conquest* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), xlvii, for "dry diseases", which orders a man turn to the east, sign himself and, while ingesting a variety of medicines, sing the *Pater Noster*, Psalm 50 twelve times, and *Gloria in excelsis deo*, 116-117. Masses, prayers and psalms are frequently found in these manuscripts. See Karen Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Anglo-Saxon England*.

[155] Bede, *EH* iv.22, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 400-405.

[156] Bede, *Letter to Ecgberht*, in Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *English Historical Documents, c. 500-1042*, vol. 1 (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 738.

singing. Should Bede and Egbert have taught this method of prayer to laymen, it would certainly constitute a form of private rather than communal prayer, albeit one that is based entirely on set texts that feature strongly in the liturgy. Interestingly, Bede's insistence on teaching these prayers in English requires clearly that they should be understood and their contents sincerely intended, not merely recited.

The reforming Council of Clofesho (747) recommends psalmody as 'a divine work, a great cure in many cases, for the souls of them who do it in spirit and mind.' Psalms, according to Clofesho, should be sung with 'the inward intention of the heart, and a suitable humiliation of the body.'[157] In spite of the fact that the Clofesho canons, like Alcuin, recommend psalmody because of the inward emotional transformation that the words of the Psalms are capable of producing, they also suggest that it is the *words* of the Psalms that are powerful. Thus, it would seem, in speaking the words of the Psalms one is able to 'devoutly apply the intentions of his own heart' to them, regardless of how well one understands the actual content of the Psalter.[158] Similarly, the Psalms are just as efficacious whether spoken on one's own behalf or on behalf of another, and can be prayed for both the living and the dead, either in Saxon or in Latin.[159] Clofesho pays particular attention to the need for monks to intercede on behalf of royals and other Christian men using the words of the Psalms. The exact mechanism, then, by which the Psalms transform the emotional lives of men and women is somewhat mysterious, since they are tools both of personal and intercessory prayer. Clofesho is careful, however, to specify that the rich man who pays someone to recite psalms on his behalf is not excused from the work of almsgiving and fasting. Only in conjunction with individual piety and penance can the words of the Psalms, spoken on the rich man's behalf, procure salvation.

Linked to the penitential function of psalms is the importance of singing psalms for the departed. These prayers are often not personal, yet they are offered on behalf of an individual and have an intercessory and expiatory function. By the time of the

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[157] John Johnson, "Cuthbert's Canons at Cloves-Hoo," in *A Collection of All the Ecclesiastical Laws and Canons of the Church of England from Its First Foundation to the Conquest, and from the Conquest to the Reign of King Henry VIII*, vol. 1 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1850), 258.
[158] Johnson, 257–8.
[159] Johnson, 258.

Regularis Concordia at the beginning of the 970s, the praying of psalms as prayers of intercession, particularly on behalf of the royal family, was well established. The text's editor Symons suggests that this custom was among the native elements of the *Regularis Concordia*. Three centuries earlier, Bede describes men and women singing psalms for the souls of both Abbess Hild and Oswald.[160] The brothers of Hexham would visit Oswald's cross every year to 'watch there for the health of his soul, and having sung many psalms, to offer for him in the morning the sacrifice of the holy oblation.'[161] Conversely, a particularly wicked brother is denied the privilege of prayer and psalmody for his soul.[162] In his preface to the Life of St Cuthbert, Bede also requests that his patrons 'pray for the redemption of my soul, and to celebrate mass as though I belonged to your family' since, in the words of Psalm 26.13, he believes he will see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.[163] This verse appears, centuries later, in the 2nd Nocturn for the Office of the Dead.

The words of scripture and the Psalms in particular were, then, the essential prayers of holy men and women and the quintessential material for the practice of private prayer. Certain of the Psalms could be sung as penitential prayers, which could also make Psalms particularly suitable for praying on behalf of another, whether living or dead. Without doubt, the words of the Psalms are the most commonly used prayers in Anglo-Saxon hagiographical and related narratives. However, we also find hints in these accounts and other documents, including and medical texts that other scriptural prayers, especially the Lord's Prayer, and liturgical prayers such as the Creed and excerpts from the Mass, were also efficacious holy words widely used as private devotional prayers.

Conclusion

Saints' lives composed in the early centuries of the Anglo-Saxon period bear witness to the impact of asceticism on the devotional culture of this time. Although these accounts are hardly reliable records of historical events, and conform to the

[160] Bede, *EH* iv.23, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 412-13.
[161] Ibid. iii.2, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 216-17.
[162] Ibid. v.14, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 502-5.
[163] Bede, *Life of Cuthbert* Prologue, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 146.

conventions of hagiographic writing, they nevertheless give insight into genuine ideals and practice, and were in themselves literary instruments through which authors propagated and disseminated shared ideas about prayer. This chapter has presented a survey of representations of prayer that will constitute a foundation for the discussion of prayer in the remainder of this thesis. This survey has also established common elements associated with the practice of prayer in early Anglo-Saxon literature. Prayer, in these accounts, is firmly associated with certain times of day (and the year) and built and natural locations. While there is a liturgical impulse underpinning this ordering of time according to prayer, saints' lives, perhaps surprisingly, do not focus on official liturgical prayer. Moments of conversion, emotional transformation, and physical and spiritual healing are presented in extra-liturgical contexts. In particular, the period of night vigil either preceding or following the Night Office emerges from the literature as a potent and significant time for private prayer, which was often accompanied by visions, healing and conversion. Prayer is also associated with places within the landscape (remote places and cold water) and within monastery buildings (in cells and chapels). Lay participation in devotional life was centred on places associated with the saints live and relics, and their intercession. Bede's *EH* and other sources that depict the prayer lives of English saints were interested in inscribing prayer into the landscape and environment and incorporating the individual, through prayer, into the spiritual life of the universal church. In these saints' lives, as in many of the texts to be explored in this thesis, the sense of the 'communion of the saints' was an essential aspect of prayer. Finally, prayer is depicted as a process in which and through which physical and emotional healing could take place, and very often this healing was effected by the words of scripture and especially the words of the Psalms. Private prayer, from an early period, was built on the recitation of psalms. This prayer was often undertaken in a penitential spirit as, indeed, were most of the prayers discussed in this chapter. This emphasis on penance and confession was ultimately an appropriation of healing and salvation of the body and spirit through emotional transformation. The prayers explored in this chapter reveal the importance of affective piety for the early in the Anglo-Saxon period, an impetus reinforced by the ascetic impulse that underpins all of these hagiographic narratives.

Chapter Two
Writing Prayers in Anglo-Saxon England

While the work of Bede and his contemporaries offers insight into the place of private, not strictly liturgical prayer in the earlier pre-Viking Age Anglo-Saxon church, a series of codices bear witness to the textual transmission of personal prayers across the ninth century. These give deeper insight into the culture of prayer sketched out and commended by hagiographic texts. The earliest textual witnesses to Anglo-Saxon traditions of private prayer come from four ninth-century Mercian manuscripts:

Cambridge, University Library Ll.I.10 (The Book of Cerne)
B.L., Harley 2965 (The Book of Nunnaminster)
B.L., Royal 2.A.XX (The Royal Prayer Book)
B.L., Harley 7653 (The Harley Fragment)

These books are generally classified as devotional miscellanies, although critics have argued persuasively that each book seems to be organised and ordered around a specific theme.[1] They are small and portable, which suggests private rather than common use and, though passages adapted from the liturgy occasionally retain plural forms, the prayers contained in these prayer books show a preference for composition in the first person singular.[2] Cerne, according to Brown, is centred on the idea of the *communio sanctorum*, the communion of saints, living and dead, with Christ at its head.[3] Muir suggests, however, that Cerne is resolved rather on the theme of Christ's passion.[4] Sims-Williams has demonstrated that the Royal Prayer Book focuses on the idea of *christus medicus*, Christ as healer and physician. Nunnaminster contains a series of prayers addressed to Christ's body, which constitutes the principal theme of

[1] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 159.
[2] Brown, 42.
[3] Brown, 109.
[4] Muir, "The Early Insular Prayer Book Tradition and the Development of the Book of Hours," 15.

its prayers. This book is particularly concerned with health and shares some prayers with rites for the visitation of the sick.[5] Brown sees these surviving manuscripts as representing a fashion that was short-lived, based on earlier sources of prayers. She proposes that 'there was undoubtedly a strong earlier Insular tradition of private devotions, as indicated by the attribution of certain prayers to named Insular authors.'[6] Sims-Williams suggests that it was, perhaps 'the writing down of *loricae* in seventh-century Ireland that paved the way for the compilation and composition in eighth- and ninth-century England of the more varied private prayer books such as R[oyal], H[arley], N[unnaminster] and C[erne].'[7]

Thus far, we have appreciated prayer as a literary phenomenon in the way that it is represented or idealised in various narrative sources from earlier Anglo-Saxon England and shown how these accounts, dressed as they are as literary art in genre and metaphor, might describe genuine practice. Yet our access to Anglo-Saxon prayer is inseparable from the textual record that contains it, and so this chapter seeks to show how the practices of reading, composing and writing themselves are inseparable from the practice of prayer. Having touched on this issue so far, I probe further into the materiality of the textual record of prayer by analysing the appearance of prayers in a number of manuscripts and examining the contents of these manuscripts with the following questions in mind: First, how do the structures of these books relate to the practice of reading, and in what ways does reading relate to prayer? Second, what is the relationship between private prayer and the composition of prayer books, and which private devotional practices inform the surviving textual record? Third, how does the literary character of these prayers affect the ways in which the authors and compilers intend them to be read and/or prayed? Before addressing these questions in detail, a preliminary overview of the manuscripts is necessary.

[5] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, 288.
[6] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 155.
[7] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, 279.

The Mercian Prayer Books

London, British Library, Harley 7653
235x160 mm

Harley is dated to the late eighth or early ninth centuries. Morrish suggests the first decades of the ninth century as a probable date.[8] Like Nunnaminster and Royal, some of its prayers contain Latin inflectional endings indicating female ownership.[9] It also shares a peculiar paleographic feature with Royal, the marginal appearance of a rune-like dotted Y, possibly suggesting that these two books were in the same centre at an early date.[10] Morrish and Brown take Harley to represent what is probably the earliest stage in the development of the Mercian prayer book tradition.[11] No theme is apparent, yet the fragmentary nature of the manuscript does not allow for a comprehensive conclusion. Brown suggests that 'its apparent preoccupations do prefigure those which govern the compilations of the other manuscripts and it may be indicative of the type of source from which the other members of the group drew their material.'[12]

The extant seven folia of the Harley fragment contain eight prayers, the last one incomplete, which indicate a 'medical' emphasis and are very concerned with protection from evil. The first prayer is a litanic invocation against the devil. The second is a morning prayer, *mane cum surrexo*, which appears in each of the prayer books and takes the form of a *lorican* prayer naming various parts of the body. Another prayer addresses archangels, apostles and 'omnes sancti et martyres'. Next, a prayer to God appears which occurs identically in Royal and as a fragment in Cerne. Drawing on Augustinian themes, the prayer repeats the petition *trahe me* in an

[8] Jennifer Morrish, "Dated and Datable Manuscripts Copied in England During the Ninth Century: A Preliminary List," *Mediaeval Studies* 50, no. 1 (1988): 520–21.
[9] Michelle Brown, "Female Book Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England: the Evidence of the Ninth-Century Prayerbooks", in *Lexis and Texts in Early English: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts*, ed. by Christian J. Kay and Louise M. Sylvester (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 45-67.
[10] E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, vol. II: Great Britain and Ireland (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), 2.204.
[11] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 53.
[12] Brown, 153.

emotive and affective piece that includes, among its petitions, a plea never to be separated from the *ingens amor* of God. Another prayer invokes the Trinity while the next invokes the saints, each emphasising the picture of the heavenly host of angels, along with saints and martyrs, as celestial intercessors. Again, the prayer *in pace Christi* invokes a number of saints, martyrs and prophets, as well as God and his church, in a plea to save the soul from hell. The final prayer is incomplete. Overall, the Harley fragment shows an interest in several themes – protection from evil, often equated with night and death; the invocation of saints, Old Testament figures, angels, martyrs and apostles; the enumeration of parts of the body and sins associated with them; and the idea of spiritual protection in the form of health.

London, British Library, Harley 2965, 'Book of Nunnaminster'
215x160 mm

Nunnaminster has been confidently dated to the early ninth century.[13] It was kept at one point in the convent of St Mary's, Winchester, and traditionally said to have been owned by Ealhswið, wife of King Alfred, on account of a late ninth century Old English passage defining the boundary of her endowment at Nunnaminster. It is possible that this book was, at some point, the property of Ealhswið, and it appears to have been in female hands in Winchester in the late ninth and early tenth centuries.[14] Feminine forms in this prayer book indicate that either it was written for a woman or it was the work of a female scribe unconsciously slipping into feminine forms. Birch suggests that the manuscript was probably a copy of an eighth century exemplar, since the variations in script suggest the work of a scribe who 'began the task with an intention of copying what to him was an old-fashioned hand. As the task proceeded, the imitation, or perhaps unconscious similarity, became less keen, and the scribe fell into his own proper style of writing.'[15]

[13] Ibid., 153; Morrish, "An Examination of Literacy and Learning in England in the Ninth Century," 201–18; Morrish, "Dated and Datable Manuscripts Copied in England During the Ninth Century," 521.
[14] Michelle Brown, "Female Book Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England," 54–55.
[15] De Grey Birch, *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century Formerly Belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester*, 17.

Nunnaminster begins, like Royal and Cerne, with gospel lections that focus on the Passion of Christ. The first quire, containing the lections from Matthew, is missing. A prayer attributed to St Gregory follows, which also appears in Cerne (Prayer 15). The prayer is penitential, including a short catalogue of sins and a litany-like invocation of the saints, predominantly from the Old Testament. The next forty-seven prayers are a series of meditations on Christ's body and aspects of his life, passion and resurrection. These prayers share material with the Royal abcedarian sequence. Schilling Grogan refers to this sequence as the 'Christ Prayers', writing that it 'meditates in loving detail on the specific parts and experiences of Christ's human body from its infancy through the Final Judgment.'[16] Birch suggests that these prayers were presumably 'for special and private use at the Church seasons to which they so clearly refer.' The prayer *De iudicio future*, which 'probably belongs to [the collection] and aptly terminates the liturgical aspect of the arrangement'[17], ends abruptly at folio 32b. The next leaf is missing. At the recommencement of the manuscript a slightly more haphazard collection of prayers begins, with two rhythmical prayers called 'hymns' by Birch, in a style of versification 'very common' in early medieval Latin and French manuscripts.[18] A *sancta oratio* follows, which begins with the words of Christ on the cross but is cut short after one line. It is, perhaps, the same prayer as Cerne 45.[19] The latter part of the manuscript continues with a series of prayers, including a general prayer of confession, two general prayers, a prayer to St Michael, a prayer to St Mary, a prayer to John the Baptist, four short, penitential prayers. A prayer against poison follows, in another handwriting 'of contemporary antiquity'.[20] This is followed by the 'Lorica of Logden', which also appears in Cerne, a short prayer, 'perhaps a poem', forming a charm against pain in the eyes.[21] Finally, the manuscript ends with

[16] Marie Schilling Grogan, "Praying with the Book of Nunnaminster: Healing the Soul and Increasing the Body of Christ in a Medieval Benedictine Convent," *Magistra* 20, no. 1 (2014): 102.
[17] De Grey Birch, *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century Formerly Belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester*, 25.
[18] Ibid., 27. Birch explains that 'the general idea is to produce a line of four feet of two syllables each, irrespective of elision or quantity.'
[19] Mary W. Helms, "Before the Dawn. Monks and the Night in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval Europe," *Anthropos* 99, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): 185–6.
[20] De Grey Birch, *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century Formerly Belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester*, 27.
[21] De Grey Birch, 31.

the definition of Ealhswið's boundaries and, in a tenth century hand, an absolution and prayer.

Cambridge, University Library Ll.1.10, 'The Book of Cerne'
285x225 mm

Brown dates Cerne to c. 820-40 on paleographical and art historical grounds.[22] The manuscript refers twice to 'Aedeluald episcopus', once in connection with an acrostic poem and once as the author of the abbreviated psalter. The identity of this bishop has been the subject of some controversy, with earlier editors and some later commentators associating the bishop with Aedeluald of Lindisfarne. Dumville believes Cerne to be a copy of an early eighth century 'nucleus of texts which once belonged to a collection anterior to the present "Cerne" compilation.'[23] Dumville also argues that the final hymns (67-74), the abbreviated psalter and the Harrowing of Hell formed a part of this nucleus of substantially Irish materials.[24] Brown questions Dumville's hypothesis and argues that Aedeluald of Lichfield is the more likely candidate for Cerne's ownership, though she concedes that much of Cerne's material would have been circulated in an earlier form.[25] Cerne is the work of one main scribe, but underwent a series of corrections in the ninth and tenth centuries, including the addition of some Old English glosses.[26] Brown has argued that the extensive decorative scheme, mostly surrounding the text of the gospels, was the work of a single artist-scribe, who was also responsible for the Old English 'Exhortation to Prayer.'[27]

The manuscript begins with the Old English 'Exhortation', which is missing its beginning. Full-page evangelist miniatures accompany Gospel lections that follow. Between the lections for Mark and Luke, the acrostic poem *Aedeluald episcopus* appears. Next, three prayers addressed to the Trinity appear which, according to

[22] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 18.
[23] David Dumville, "Liturgical Drama and Panegyric Responsory from the Eighth Century? A Re-Examination of the Origin and Contents of the Ninth-Century Section of the Book of Cerne," *Journal of Theological Studies* 23, no. 2 (1972): 374.
[24] Dumville, 384.
[25] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 156.
[26] Brown, 45–46.
[27] Brown, 65–67.

Brown, were 'perhaps intentionally distinguished from the following prayers by their decoration and colouring.' The 'Lorica of Logden', with a tenth century Old English gloss, appears next, followed by seventy prayers of a miscellaneous character. The manuscript concludes with an abbreviated psalter and an *oratio* based on the apocryphal Harrowing of Hell. At least one folio is missing from the end.

London, British Library, Royal 2. A. xx, 'Royal Prayer Book'
228x165 mm

Royal was written perhaps in the late eighth but probably early ninth century, and is a collection of prayers based on the theme of *Christus medicus*.[28] Morrish has suggested that the volume may have had an explicit medical purpose and could have been owned by a female physician since, like Nunnaminster, it shows signs of female use.[29] Sims-Williams, on the other hand, argues for a double monastery as the most likely context for the production of such a book.[30] Royal's gospel lections differ markedly from the gospel lections in Cerne and Nunnaminster, focussing on the miracle stories of Christ and including the opening and conclusion of each gospel. Doane notes that 'the opening "Liber" on f. 2r is in gold and silver outlined in black, echoing the opening of a deluxe Gospel book.'[31] There are three distinctive hands: 2-12r (the gospels, Creed, Lord's Prayer and Letter of Christ to Abgar); 12v-80, 41-45 (prayers, canticles, charm, abcedarian prayer); 39-40, 46-51 (Bede's paraphrase of Psalm 84, the metrical creed of Cuð, confessional and intercessory prayers, charms, *Carmen sedulii*, metrical prayers), as well as an extensive set of glosses and marginal material from the early tenth century. The glosses are in a Mercian dialect. The reconfiguration of materials in the abcedarian prayer led Morrish to believe that Royal is a later composition than Nunnaminster.[32]

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[28] Sims-Williams, "Thoughts on Ephrem the Syrian in Anglo-Saxon England," 298.
[29] Morrish, "An Examination of Literacy and Learning in England in the Ninth Century," 201–10.
[30] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, 281–2; Morrish, "An Examination of Literacy and Learning in England in the Ninth Century."
[31] A. N. Doane, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile: Volume 1*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 136 (Binghamton, N.Y: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994), 283.
[32] Morrish, "Dated and Datable Manuscripts Copied in England During the Ninth Century," 526.

The Gospel Lections

Cerne, Nunnaminster and Royal all begin with gospel lections. The beginning of Harley, which may have contained gospel extracts, is missing. While it is difficult to generalise about such a small number of books, the gospel lections are evidently central to the purpose of these books and so deserve attention. Of the three sets of lections, Cerne's and Nunnaminster's have the most in common. While Cerne's lections present the whole of the end of the gospels, Nunnaminster's presents the death and burial of Christ from three gospels. Presumably, the lost beginning of the manuscript preserved similar readings from Matthew.

Cerne	Matthew 26-28	Passover – the Resurrection
	Mark 14-16	Passover – the Resurrection
	Luke 22-24	Passover – the Resurrection
	John 18-21	Gethsemane – the Resurrection
		‘
Nunnaminster	[Matthew missing]	
	Mark 14:61-15:44	Christ before the Sanhedrin – Joseph of Arimathea asks for Christ's body
	Luke 22:1-23:44	Passover – Christ's moment of death
	John 18:1-19:42	Christ's arrest – Christ's burial
Royal	Matthew 1:1; 18-19	Matthew opening
	Matthew 28:16-20	Matthew closing
	Mark 1:1-3	Mark opening
	Mark 16:15-20	Mark closing
	Luke 1:56	Luke opening
	Luke 24:48-53	Luke closing
	John 1:1-14	John opening

Comfortable words

John 3:16-17	'that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish...'
John 14:2-4; 6	'in my father's house are many rooms...'
John 15:12-16	'love one another, as I have loved you...'
	'in the world you shall have distress...'
John 16: 33-17:14	'the hour is come. Glorify thy son...' – Christ's prayer to the Father
	Healing/miracle stories
Matthew 4:23-24	Healing the the sick through Galilee
Matthew 8:1-17	Healing of the leper, Peter's mother in law, the possessed
Matthew 8:24-27	The calming of the storm
Matthew 9:1-2	Healing of the paralytic
Matthew 9:18-33	Raising of ruler's daughter from dead, healing of bleeding woman, healing of two blind men
Matthew 9:36-10:1	Command to people to pray for workers in the harvest and giving of powers over unclean spirits and diseases to disciples
Matthew 12:46-50	Christ asks 'Who is my mother, and who are my brethren'; declares whoever does the will of God his brethren
Matthew 16:13-19	Christ gives Peter the keys to heaven

Cerne's lections, quite simply, provide the final chapters of each gospel for private reading. This focus on the Passion is in keeping with what Brown has termed the 'Lenten' and 'penitential' themes of the book, beginning with Christ's Passion and ending with an account of his descent into hell.[33] Matthew 26, Mark 14 and Luke 22 are almost parallel chapters. Matthew 26 opens with Jesus' announcement of his death

[33] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 113.

in two days time, at Easter, while the Mark and Luke excerpts begin at the time of Easter.

The beginning of Cerne is dramatic, launching straight into the Passion narrative. Matthew 26, Mark 14 and Luke 22 continue with several scenes that would resonate strongly with prayerful reader and with the theme of personal devotion. A series of individuals interact with Christ. First, the woman anointing Jesus' feet at the house of Simon the Leper is a symbol of personal devotion and penitence. This pericope has strong resonances with the earlier act of the woman anointing Christ's feet with tears (Luke 7). Its affectivity prefigures some of the central themes in Cerne's prayers: tears, penance, devotion to the person of Christ and attention to his body. Next, Judas' betrayal is a reminder of sinfulness and the need for repentance. At the same time, Peter's betrayal at cock-crow is another reminder of sin and the need for sorrowful repentance. In the same chapters, Jesus enters Gethsemane to pray to God and also issues his disciples with the command to 'watch and pray'. They fail in this task – while Christ prays, they fall asleep. Finally, at the centre of this chapter is the Passover feast and the institution of the Eucharist, both a foreshadowing of the gruesome Passion to come and a reminder of forgiveness and the everlasting grace of the new covenant. Read in their entirety, these chapters orient the reader towards the coming Passion while also providing models for personal responses to Christ. Like the disciples, Cerne's reader is reminded to adore Christ in penance, to repudiate sin, to watch and pray, to live in communion with the Father (like Christ in Gethsemane) and to partake in Christ's sacrifice through the Eucharist. Each of these devotional attitudes is evident in Cerne's prayers. In some of these prayers, the reader is encouraged to adopt the internal posture of one of the figures in the gospels. In others, the prayer is attributed to one of the apostles, so that the reader can enter into the experience of the saints and, furthermore, enter into a sympathetic prayerful expression of their special relationship with Christ. Thus, through the process of reading the gospels the man or woman praying is prepared for the prayers that will follow. The penultimate chapter of each of the synoptic gospels presents Christ on the cross. These chapters encourage meditation on the suffering of Christ, a theme that also prefigures many of Cerne's prayers. The final chapters concern the Resurrection

of Christ and his commission to the disciples. John's gospel presents similar material, with a slightly extended Resurrection narrative.

Cerne's gospel lections are accompanied by a sophisticated set of evangelist miniatures. According to Brown, these 'form complex devotional images in which the nature of Christ, of the Evangelists and of the reader's incorporation into the mysteries of Christ's body (through the eucharistic sacrifice and participation in the Communion of Saints) were summarized.'[34] She suggests that the miniatures are intended to remind the reader simultaneously of Christ and of the apostles. Thus, Cerne's gospel readings and miniatures work together to remind the reader of Christ's humanity and the humanity of the apostles, allowing the man or woman to call on Christ and the saints in prayer.

Nunnaminster's lections are similar to Cerne's, but more selective. The readings for Matthew and the beginning of Mark are missing. Luke's gospel begins in the same place as Cerne, at Chapter 22 with the beginning of Easter. Likewise, John's gospel begins in the same place as Cerne, with Judas' betrayal at Chapter 18. Unlike Cerne, however, Mark's and John's gospels end with Christ's burial and Luke's gospel ends with the moment just before his death at the sixth hour. Nunnaminster's lections focus on Jesus' capture and crucifixion. This book highlights Jesus' burial by ending each lection at this point in the narrative. Thus, the focus remains on the earthly Christ and his physical body, which is in keeping with the tone of Nunnaminster's prayers.

The Luke gospel excerpt in Nunnaminster ends in a surprising place, just prior to Christ's death: 'And it was almost the sixth hour: and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.'[35] In fact, each of Nunnaminster's gospel lections ends in the evening, at the time of Christ's death. The ending of Luke, not with Christ's death but with the pronouncement of evening, suggests that the gospel lections were chosen to represent the times associated with Christ's death. Bede, in his homily on the Easter Vigil based on Matthew 28:1-10, is occupied almost exclusively with the timing of Christ's death and crucifixion. Christ's death, writes Bede, took place as the

[34] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 109.
[35] Luke 23: 44: 'erat autem fere hora sexta et tenebrae factae sunt in universa terra usque in horam nonam'

day was moving towards evening, which 'is a clear suggestion that he had submitted to the gibbet of the cross in order to take away the wicked deeds by which we fell away from divine light.'[36] Likewise, according to Bede, the women who went to Christ's tomb at dawn were busy at work preparing the spices on Saturday evening, since they had 'already began to be watchful about performing their service for him.'[37] For Bede, these details can hardly be accidental, crafted as they were by the 'author and controller of time' himself.[38] Nunnaminster seems to be based on a similar reading of the gospels in which the battle between night and day becomes a potent metaphor for sin, death, repentance and resurrection. In ending the gospel lections in the time of darkness before the Resurrection, the reader of Nunnaminster is invited to remain in the time of night, metaphorically or perhaps literally, keeping watch like the women preparing spices for the dawn. Like the women, the reader of Nunnaminser is encouraged to keep watch in prayer and adore Christ's body through their devotion. To stay in this moment, pausing at the death of Christ, is to remain in the moment of his descent into hell and his final victory over the darkness of night. Cerne's lections also position the reader of the manuscript at a similar time, beginning with the evening of Christ's betrayal and ending with the morning of his Resurrection. Whether or not the prayers of Cerne and Nunnaminster were actually intended for the private prayers of a vigil, they both draw on the metaphors of night and darkness that are suggestive of the kind penitential vigil that we have seen in Chapter One characterised the devotions of the early Anglo-Saxon church. The reader is invited to imagine him or herself in the darkness of spiritual night, and pray in this awareness.

In Cerne, the importance of time is made even clearer by the Old English 'Exhortation to prayer', a curious text written in a contemporary ninth-century Mercian hand, which Brown considers to be an original feature of the manuscript.[39] The Exhortation instructs the reader thus,

[36] Bede, *Homilies on the Gospels Book Two - Lent to the Dedication of the Church: Lent to the Dedication of the Church* ii.7, trans. Martin and Hurst, 58–59.
[37] Ibid., 60.
[38] Ibid., 60.
[39] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 59–60.

> Do ðonne fiorðan siðe ðin hleor ðriga to iorðan fore alla godes cirican 7 sing ðas fers *Domini est salus saluum fac populum tuum domine praetende misericordiam tuam* sing ðonne *Pater noster* gebide ðonne fore alle geleaffulle men in mundo.

Bishop translates the first sentence as 'Put then for the fourth time thy face thrice to the earth before all God's church.' The expression *fiorðan siðe*, for the fourth time, is used at times in association with the liturgical hour of None, which was understood to represent the exact hour of Christ's death. The Blickling Homily for the Third Sunday in Lent, for example, tells the reader to sign himself with the cross at the various hours of the day: first in the morning, next at *underntid*, the third time at midday, and the fourth time (*feorþan siþe*) at *nontid*.[40] The fourth time, then, may be a reference to prayer at the hour of Christ's death, which would be in keeping with the theme of the gospel lections and Cerne's prayers. Brown has argued that the Exhortation is an 'essential adjunct' to Cerne, articulating what she believes to be a central theme of the book, the Communion of Saints. If *fiorðan siðe* may be taken as an articulation of time, rather than a manner of prayer (putting ones face to the earth for the fourth time), then the Exhortation articulates the centrality of the hour of Christ's death as a time for meditative prayer. It is significant that Cerne begins with this exhortation and ends with the Harrowing of Hell, which was believed to have taken place at night, just prior to the Resurrection.[41] Cerne is framed by temporal references that take the reader across the hours of darkness from Christ's death to his Resurrection.

Royal's lections differ markedly from those in Cerne and Nunnaminster. They include the beginning and the end of each gospel (with the exception of the end of John's Gospel) which, Sims-Williams suggests, 'may stand symbolically for the gospels as a whole.'[42] In other Insular manuscripts, it seems, these miniature gospels function 'as

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[40] Richard J. Kelly (ed. and trans.), *Blickling Homilies: Edition and translation* (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), 30.
[41] Helms, "Before the Dawn. Monks and the Night in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval Europe," 185–6. In Matthew 28, the women appear at Jesus' tomb at the dawn to find an empty tomb, suggesting that the Resurrection had recently taken place. Anglo-Saxon poetic accounts of the Harrowing demonstrate awareness of this tradition. See below, 147-8.
[42] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, 292.

apotropaic or healing amulets rather than as texts for serious study.'[43] This would be consistent, he suggests, with the theme of healing in the book. Alternatively, the inclusion of these incipits and explicits may reflect the *apertio aurium* of Lent, wherein the 'mystery and symbolism of the four evangelists were explained to catechumens, and their openings were recited.'[44] The 'comfortable words' and healing stories, argues Sims-Williams, 'give the impression of an apocryphal gospel in which Jesus features solely as a thaumaturge and personal saviour, rather than a teacher.'[45] As well as focusing on Christ as healer, however, these gospel lections also focus the reader on the power that Christ gave to his followers to be able to expel sickness and evil and the status that his followers enjoy as his brothers and sisters. These lections are likely to have been included to emphasise the efficacy of Royal's various prayers to the apostles. However, they also appear at the beginning of the book to legitimise the practice of prayer. The endings of the gospels each contain Christ's commission to go and make disciples and narrate his ascension into heaven, both instances of Christ entrusting his followers with work. Prayer was an important part of this work, since the follower is able to fulfil Christ's commission only through his power. Royal f. 2v contains a small, marginal illustration of a face and a hand highlighting Christ's commission to 'baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.' Clearly, then, at least one reader of this manuscript thought the ending of the gospel worthy of special attention. The prayers of Royal represent an appropriation of the power given to the disciples which is, in turn, an appropriation of the power given to Christ by the Father.

Evidently, these gospel lections help centre the practice of prayer on a consideration of Christ's Passion, in Cerne and Nunnaminster, and his life and miracles in Royal. The gospel lections suggest a meditative context for the practice of prayer that is centred on a recollection of Christ, his life, his miracles, and his physical body, and also a penitential context, whereby the man or woman at prayer is metaphorically positioned in the narrative of Christ's life and passion. The gospel lections of the Mercian prayer book tradition each point to the processes of *lectio* and *meditatio*. *Lectio* is, simply, reading, but came in the monastic tradition to denote a form of

[43] Sims-Williams, 292.
[44] Sims-Williams, 293.
[45] Sims-Williams, 291.

prayer. Jerome, in his letter to Eustochium on reading, quotes Cyprian: *oras: loqueris ad sponsum; legis: ille tibi loquitor* (when you pray, you are speaking to your spouse; when you read, he is speaking to you).[46] Cassian writes extensively on the spiritual necessity of memorising scripture, which is a part of the *praktike* of spiritual life; activities which are critical in the early stages of spiritual development.[47] Once memorised, scripture is able to guard the mind from a multitude of temptations. Furthermore, the memorisation of scripture facilitates a deeper appreciation of the word of God. The monk will return again and again to the 'cistern' of his own mind for replenishment and spiritual protection.[48] Cerne, Nunnaminster and Royal each contain lections that represent the *verbum Dei* in a special sense. Reading and internalising the life of Christ means coming face to face with the Incarnate Word himself through the words of scripture and prayer. The purpose of the prayer book lections is to focus the man or woman at prayer on the person of Christ as the eternal word of God.

Prayers to Christ's Body

As we have seen, Cerne and Nunnaminster have in common lections concerning Christ's Passion. They also share a devotional preoccupation with Christ's physical body that is a key part of the 'precocious affectivity' described by Sims-Williams. Prayers to Christ's body, which form a major part of the main sequence of prayers in Nunnaminster, appear in all four books and and lean towards the penitential. They each draw on aspects of Christ's death and suffering in a highly personal way. Christ's suffering is appropriated by the suffering reader who shares in his Passion so as to share ultimately in the salvation that he brings.

This aspect of the Mercian prayer tradition is perhaps most evident in Nunnaminster. Following the gospel lections is a prayer attributed to Gregory the Great, which takes the form of an extended invocation of saints, from Old Testament figures to the apostles, and ending with a *lorica*-like appeal for protection of certain parts of the

[46] Jerome, Letter 22.25, in Robertson, *Lectio Divina*, 80.
[47] Fagerberg, "Prayer as Theology," 123.
[48] Cassian, *Conferences* xiv.13 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, ed. Phillip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. Edgar C. S. Gibson, vol. 11 (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1894).

body. Next, three prayers appear, one attributed to Augustine of Hippo, which introduce the theme of the 'Cosmic' Christ, spoken in praise of the creator of the universe, the angels, humanity, and the saints. Fourty-four prayers follow, forming what Mary Schilling Grogan has termed the 'Christ prayers'.[49] These take the form of a Roman collect: a pronouncement of one of God's characteristics, followed by a relative ('qui') clause, and ending with a petition for individual salvation (an 'ut' clause). This pattern can be observed in the following prayer, which begins the collection, given the title *Oratio de Natale Domini* by a tenth century hand:

> O mundi redemtor et humani generis gubernator domine Ihesu Christe uerus Dei filius, Qui non solum potens sed etiam omnipotens es, Heres parentis, Patrique conregnans, Cuncta cum ipso creans, Semper cum illo, Et nusquam sine illo, In sublimissimo spiritalium throno regnans, Omnia implens, Omnia circumplectens, Superexcedens omnia et sustinens omnia, Qui ubique presens es et uix inueniri possis, Quem nullus iniuste sed iuste laudare potest, Qui miseritis humanis erroribus de uirgine nasci dignatus es, Ut dilectam tibi nostri generis creaturam de profundo mortis periculo liberatam ad dignitatem tuae imagnis reformaris, Unde per Omnia ago tibi gratias per hoc altissime adiuro te, Conserua in me misero uirginalis pudicitiae propositum, Mentisque puritatem, Et cordis innocentiam, Et omnes quos reddidisti mihi tu ipse per uirginitatis premium perduc ad regnum gloriae tuae, Domine Ihesu Christe Amen.[50]
>
> [O, redeemer of the world and controller of the human race, Lord Jesus Christ, true son of God, you who are not only powerful but are also all-powerful, heir of the parent, reigning with the Father, creating all things with him, always with him, and never without him, reigning in the most sublime throne of spirits, filling all things, encompassing all things, exceeding all things and sustaining all things, who is present everywhere and scarcely able to be discovered, whom the unjust may never praise, but the just may praise, you who pitied humanity for its errors deigned to be born of a virgin, so that you

[49] Schilling Grogan, "Praying with the Book of Nunnaminster," 102.
[50] fols 20v-21r, De Grey Birch, *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century Formerly Belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester*, 62–3.

> restored our race of creatures, beloved by you, freed from the deep dangers of death, to the dignity of your image, from which in all things I give thanks to you, through this I entreat you, most high God, preserve in me, wretched person, the practice of virginal chastity, and purity of mind, and innocence of heart, and you yourself return all things through the gift of virginity, lead me to the kingdom of your glory, Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.]

This prayer is addressed to Christ the Word of God through whom all things were made, who is in all things and through all things and yet invisible to the unjust. There is a substantial sequence of relative clauses in this prayer, which meditate on the attributes of Christ and, finally, on the humility of his Incarnation and the mercy of his salvation. A series of present participles suggests that the petitioner is addressing Christ as a present, imminent God, whose salvation is a present reality as well as an historical moment. Nevertheless, the historical facts of Christ's life find their way into the prayer. On account of his mercy, he was born of a virgin. Christ's virgin birth becomes the topic of the prayer's main petition; that the petitioner remain chaste, pure and innocent, and be led into the eternal kingdom. The emphasis on virginity strongly suggests a monastic context for the prayer. There is a tension in this prayer between Christ's omnipotence, his ability to renew in humanity the image of God and his all encompassing mercy, and his hiddenness. The petitioner begs to be made worthy, through chastity, to see Christ.

This is the first of three prayers on Christ's nativity. The three prayers gradually move from the image of the Creator Christ, 'reminiscent of the God of the Old Testament', and the human Christ.[51] The tension between Christ the eternal deity and the Incarnate suffering servant, however, runs the whole way through the collection of prayers addressed to Christ. First of three prayers in the sequence that address Christ in Gethsemane, for example, juxtaposes the adoration of Christ in the final Judgment, when 'every knee shall bend in heaven and earth and in hell' (omne genu flectitur caelestium et terrestrium et infernorum) with the prayer of Christ in the garden. Christ bent not only his knees, according to the author of the prayer, but all the parts of his

[51] Barbara Raw, "Alfredian Piety: The Book of Nunnaminster," in *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately*, ed. Jane Roberts, J. L. Nelson and Malcolm Godden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 150.

body (*cuntos... artus*). This prayer, like others in the collection, is visceral. The petitioner asks to be rescued 'through the life-giving drops of holy sweat' (*per saluberrimas guttas sancti sudoris*), referencing the tears of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane. The petitioner also requests that she might be forgiven whenever she becomes drowsy with sleep, suggesting an affiliation with the apostles who cannot remain awake to keep vigil with Christ. This prayer, along with the rest of the sequence, is based on a close and intensely personal engagement with the scriptural lections at the beginning of the book.

As these examples attest, the imaginative focus in these remarkable prayers is on the parts and experiences of the body of Jesus. Because of Christ's bodily sacrifice, the user of these prayers is emboldened to imagine herself meriting the redemption of her body by linking her own enfleshed life to Christ's. As Schilling Grogan writes, 'although some of the Christ Prayers refer at times to the "narrowness", "filthiness", and "sinfulness" of "this mud of the body" (*hac lutea corporis*), the spiritual program they pursue is to seek union with Christ through real and imagined somatic experience.'[52] These somatic experiences each stem from reflection on the gospels. The petitioner addresses some feature of the gospel story (Christ's thorns, clothing, neck, nostrils, eyes, wounds, Judas' betrayal, the death of the thief on the cross) and asks forgiveness for a sin that relates specifically to this experience.

While Cerne and Nunnaminster share a number of prayers, only occasionally do individual prayers from this 'sequence' of Christ's life appear in the Book of Cerne. However, other longer prayers appear in the book that invoke a remarkably similar sense of Christ's physical body as the means of salvation and echo the main petitions and order of the Nunnaminster sequence. In Cerne, however, these prayers often take on the characteristics of Celtic *loricae*, a form of prayer in which the parts of one's body are listed and various petitions given to form a 'breastplate' for the protection of the petitioner. Thus, in many of Nunnaminster's prayers, the members of Christ's body are listed, along with the various sins of the petitioner. Indeed, the sequence of prayers concerning Christ's body and passion in Nunnaminster may have had a *lorica*-like function. In Cerne, however, these prayers also often end with a bid for

[52] Schilling Grogan, "Praying with the Book of Nunnaminster," 106.

protection against enemies, which are demonic forces and spirits of temptation. Prayer 17, *Oratio utilis de membra Christi*, is typical. The prayer begins with a petition, through Christ's birth, for illumination of the petitioner's mind from darkness. The prayer continues with a similar pattern, praying for the remission of various sins through the elements of Christ's life. The following excerpt illustrates this pattern:

> Et per circumcisionem circumcidi in me uitia cordis et corporis mei,
> et per omnem humanitatem tuam humillimam et mitissimam,
> Et per membra tua mundissima miserere membris meis inmundissimis
> Et per ministeria matris tuae quae tibi corporaliter et spiritaliter exhibuit
> expelle a me superbiae spiritum et concede mihi cordis humilitatem.
> Et per baptismum tuum et sacrum ieiunium xl dierum ac noctium absolue uincula uitiorum meorum et laua me ab iuistitia mea mediator dei et hominum.
> Exaudi me et libera me de manibus inimicorum meorum. Adiuua me domine sancte pater saluator.
> Et per uestigia tua felicissima filius dei et per flectionem genuum tuorum confirma gressus meos.
> Et per manus tuas sanctas ac uenerabiles munda manus meas a malis operibus.
> Et per uiscera tua quae semper diuinis uirtutibus impleta fuerunt innoua in uisceribus meis spiritum sanctificationis.
> Et per caput tuum christe castissimum miserere meo capiti criminoso
> Et per beatos oculos tuos parce pollutes oculis meis
> Et per aures et nares tuas suauissimas mitte medicinam auribus et naribus meis indignissimis.
> Et os tuum optimum et per linguam tuam mellifluam
> Et per labia tua dulcis sima custody Custodiam ori meo nequam et linguae meae dolosae et labiis meis iniquis...[53]

> [And through your circumcision circumcise in me the sins of my heart and my body, and through the whole of your humble and gentle humanity. And through your most clean limbs have mercy on my unclean limbs.

[53] fols 54v-56r, Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 108–11.

> And through the ministry of your mother, who furnished you bodily and spiritually, expel from me the spirit of pride and grant to me humility of heart.
> And through your baptism and holy fasting for fourty days and nights, take away from me the chains of my sin and cleanse me from my injustice mediator of God and mankind. Hear me and set me free from the hands of my enemies. Help me Lord, holy father and saviour.
> And through your most blessed clothing, *son of God,* and through the bending of your knees, make my steps firm.
> And through your holy and venerable hands cleanse my hands from all evil deeds.
> And through your flesh which was always satisfied by divine virtue, restore the spirit of sanctification to my flesh.
> And through your most chaste head, Lord, have mercy on my shameful head.
> And through your blessed eyes spare my violated eyes,
> and through your most charming ears and nose send medicine to my unworthy ears and nose(s).
> And (through) your good mouth and your tongue, flowing with honey, and through your sweetest lips keep watch of my wicked mouth and my sad tongue and my unworthy lips...]

There are striking parallels between this prayer and the main sequence of prayers in Nunnaminster. The petition based on Christ's circumcision suggests a clear relationship between the texts, probably based on a shared source, since they share the request 'circumcidi in me uitia cordis et corporis mei' (Nunnaminster reads *circumcide*).[54] Other similarities are not verbal but thematic. The petition in Cerne 17 and the Nunnaminster prayer based on Christ's forty days in the wilderness, for example, both ask for spiritual protection from enemies. Nunnaminster contains prayers based on most of the features of the gospels mentioned in this prayer, as the following table shows.

	Cerne 17	Nunnaminster	Royal

[54] De Grey Birch, *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century Formerly Belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester*, 64.

		‘Christ Sequence’	Abcderian
Nativity	x	x	x
Food		x	
Circumcision	x	x	
Epiphany		x	
Members of Christ’s body	x		
Mary	x		
Baptism	x	x	x
Lent	x	x	x
Christ’s ambition		x	
Water into wine		x	
The apostles		x	
Feeding the 500		x	
On the Lord’s tears		x	x
The Lord’s supper		x	
Bending the knees	x	x	x
Judas’ betrayal		x	
Clothing	x		
Hands	x	x	
Feet	x	x	
Flesh	x		
Head	x	x	
Eyes	x	x	x
Ears	x	x	x
Nose	x	x	
Mouth	x	x	
Tongue	x		
Lips	x		
The Judgment		x	x
The crown of thorns		x	x
The mockery		x	
Neck		x	x

Darkness		x	x
Side of Christ		x	x
Wine and vinegar		x	x
Giving up the spirit		x	x
The sepulcher	x	x	x
The harrowing of hell		x	
Evangelists		x	
7 gifts of the Holy Spirit	x	x	
Words	x		
Passion	x	x	x
Cross	x	x	x
Blood	x		
Resurrection	x	x	x
Peter's betrayal		x	
Ascension	x	x	x
Pentecost		x	x
Judgment		x	x

While this prayer is clearly based on the same idea as the Nunnaminster sequence and points to a shared source, it is nevertheless quite different. Birch suggested of the Nunnaminster prayers that they were probably intended as a basis for personal devotions at the times of the feasts to which they refer.[55] While this might well be the case with Nunnaminster, it is obviously not the case with Cerne 17. It is shorter and less developed than the Nunnaminster sequence, yet remarkably similar, suggesting that meditation on Christ's physical body and the enumeration of sins connected with the body of Christ was a common devotional motif in Mercian religious houses in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Also worthy of note is the consistent use of alliteration throughout Cerne 17, which might suggest the influence of Old English verse on the composition of this prayer. While the relationship between Latin and Old English verse is understudied, Michael Lapidge's has suggested that Aldhelm, for

[55] De Grey Birch, 25.

example, 'resorted to poetic techniques familiar to him from his native English' when composing Latin verse.[56]

Many of Nunnaminster's prayers are also found, substiantially rearranged, in the central prayer of the Royal prayer book (29r-38v). This prayer is abcderian in form. Barbara Raw has suggested that the Royal abcedarian prayer is an adaptation of some of the Nunnaminster material, since Nunnaminster's prayers agree with versions found in Cerne where Royal adapts the material, probably to fit the constraints of the abcedarian form.[57] Morrish has compared these two sequences of prayers, showing how they relate to each other in wording but differ substantially in their thematic content. This led her to suppose that Royal represents a later stage in development than Nunnaminster, since Royal shows a tendency to contract inherited material. Brown suggests that this conclusion is not sound, and argues that Royal and the Harley fragment probably represent an 'intermediate stage' in the development of the prayer book tradition leading up to Cerne.[58]

The Royal prayer for the letter 'S' demonstrates the relationship between these texts:

Royal – 'S'	Nunnaminster – *De Latere Domini*
Sancte saluator sanitas pereuntium medicus saluberrimas mundalium presumtionum uinum et oleum uulneribus eorum adhibens christe *qui tibi lancea latus aperire mihi ianuam uitae ingressusque per eam confitebor tibi* domine deus meus *per tui*que *uulnus lateris omnium uitiorum meorum per*	O mediciae diuinae mirabilis dispensator *qui tibi lancea latus aperire* permisiti, *aperi mihi* quaeso pulsanti *ianuam uitae, ingressusque per eam cofitebor tibi per tui uulnus lateris omnium uitiorum meorum uulnera per misericordiae tuae medicamen sana, ne umquam indignus*

[56] Michael Lapidge, "Aldhelm's Latin Poetry and Old English Verse," *Comparative Literature* 31, no. 3 (1979): 217. See also Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1–7; 119–25.
[57] Barbara Raw, "A New Parallel to the Prayer De Tenebris in the Book of Nunnaminster (British Library, Harley 2695, 28r-V)," *Electronic British Library Journal* article 1 (2004): 6–7.
[58] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 153.

misericordiae tuae medicament asana ne umquam ut indignus presumptor tui corporis et sanguinis reus efficiar pro meritis propriis meorum peccatorum. Deus meus dicens qui manducat corpus meum et meum bibit sanguinem ipse in me manet et ego in illo sic me per ineffabilem misericordiam tuam participem fac pro misionis tuae domine mei ihesu criste: [59]

presumptor tui corporis et sanguinis reus efficiar, pro meritis propriis meorum peccatorum, sed ut anima mea miserationum tuarum abundantia repleata, ut qui mihi es pretium ipse sis et praemium, Domine Ihesu Christe Amen.[60]

[Holy saviour, health of those who are dying, doctor applying life giving wine and oil to the wounds of our stubborn world, you who allowed your side to be opened with a spear, and having walked through it I confess to you, my Lord Jesus Christ, through the wound in your side, the wounds of all my sins, through the medicine of your mercy heal me, lest I, reckless and guilty, should ever prove unworthy of your body and blood, on account of the just merits of my sins. My God, saying 'he who eats my body and drinks my blood, that man shall remain in me and I in him', so make me a partaker through your indescribable mercy for your mission, my Lord Jesus Christ.]

[O marvelous dispenser of divine medicine, you who allowed your side to be opened with a spear, open to me, I ask, beating at the door of life and having walked through it, I confess to you through the wound in your side the wounds of all my sins, through the medicine of your mercy heal me, lest I, reckless and guilty, should ever prove unworthy of your body and blood, on account of the the just merits of my sins, but (I ask) that you might fill my soul with the abundance of your mercy, so that you who are my ransom might also be my reward.]

[59] fols 35v-36r, Kuypers, *The Prayer Book of Aedeluald the Bishop, Commonly Called the Book of Cerne*, 216.
[60] fols 30r-v, De Grey Birch, *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century Formerly Belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester*, 77.

The opening clause has been modified in the abcederian Royal prayer to fit with the letter S, yet the basic sense of the opening invocation is retained: Christ is the healer, holy saviour and health giver. Royal extends this invocation considerably, perhaps in light of its medical interest, and makes specific mention of wine and oil. The relative clause of the prayer remains basically the same, though the main petition differs. Royal quotes an amalgamation of Christ's words from John 6:54 and 15:4 and partake in Christ's *misionis*. Raw points out that Royal, if indeed it is an adaptation of the Nunnaminster material, tends to omit its liturgical phrases.[61] Royal's inclusion of Christ's words is in keeping with its tendency to play on the theme of Christ, the *verbum Dei*. Unlike Cerne and Nunnaminster, as we have seen, Royal's gospel lections include the beginning and the end of each gospel, establishing Christ's identity and his final command to his disciples as well as, literally, the words of Christ from the gospels. The miracles of Christ are also associated with his healing words. Likewise the letter of Christ to Abgar contains the words of Christ. In this context, then, the adaptation of prayers related to Christ's life into an abcedarian prayer seems likely to be a reflection on the word of God, the alpha and omega. Many of these (possibly) interpolated features demonstrate some literary flair through their use of rhyme and alliteration. The 'S' prayer is a good example, beginning 'Sancte saluator sanitas pereuntium medicus saluberrimas mundalium.' 'K' shows some interest in rhyme: 'Karitas auctor castatis doctor et amator hominum.' Cerne prayer 17, discussed above, displays a penchant for alliterating lines which might indicate the influence of Old English verse composition on some of these prayers.

Cerne, Royal and Nunnaminster each contain prayers to Christ's body that draw on shared material. The distribution of this kind of material throughout a variety of prayers suggests a large body of such material must have existed at the least by the early ninth century or, based on the attribution of certain prayers to eighth-century saints, earlier. We find traces of this devotional motif in the prayers attributed to Anglo-Saxon saints within the prayer books. Prayer 48, for example, contains petitions through the evangelists, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, and Mary's virginity, each the subject of a specific petition in Nunnaminster. This material is, in

[61] Raw, "A New Parallel to the Prayer De Tenebris in the Book of Nunnaminster (British Library, Harley 2695, 28r-V)," 7.

all cases, intimately related to the choice of gospel lections for each prayer book, suggesting that dedication to the Passion (in Cerne and Nunnaminster) and to the words of Christ (in Royal) were central concerns in the compilation of these books.

Prayers against enemies

Intimately related to the prayers of the passion sequence is the petition for protection against enemies. The extant fragment of the Harley prayer book is occupied almost exclusively with the request for liberation from spiritual enemies and protection, with its multiple litanies and petitions for spiritual defence. As we have seen, Brown has suggested that the Harley fragment is substantially earlier than other Mercian prayer books. The extant manuscript begins with a litany that calls on a variety of saints and is especially concerned with calling on the protection of angels. It ends thus:

> omnes inimici mei et aduersarii fugiant ante conspectum maiestatis tue. Et per istos angelos corruant sicur corruit goliath ante conspectum pueri tui dauid. Uiuersos angelos deprecor expellite in mundus uel siquis obligatio uel siquis maleficia hominum me nocere cupit, siquis hanc scripturam secum habuerit non timebit a timore nocturne siue meridian.
> Uide ergo egipti ne noceas seruos neque ancillas dei non in esca non in potu non in somno nec extra somno nec in aliquot dolore corporis ledere presum. Libera me domine libera me domine quia tibi est imperium et potestas per dominum ihesum christum cui gloria in secula seculorum.[62]
>
> [Let all my enemies and adversaries flee before the face of your majesty, and collapse through your angels, just as Goliath collapsed before the face of your boy David.

[62] fols 2r-v, De Grey Birch, "Appendix B: the Harley MS 7653", *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century Formerly Belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester*, 114–6. Printed in Henry Bradshaw Society, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*, ed. Michael Lapidge, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 106 (London ; Rochester, NY, USA: Published for the Henry Bradshaw Society by the Boydell Press, 1991), no. 25, 210–11.

I ask the angel host to expel him who desires to harm me by the world or by bonds or by man's deception, he who has this book with him shall not fear by the fear of night or day.
See, therefore, Egypt, you may not hurt the slaves nor the servants of God, not by food or drink nor in sleep nor outside of sleep, nor [will you] dare to hurt [them] by any misery of body.
Set me free, Lord, set me free, because yours is all power and strength, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who reigns forever and ever.]

This prayer conveys a sense of imminent spiritual peril and, at times, even addresses the devil himself, here called 'Egypt'. Sims-Williams notes that 'Egypt' was a common term for death in eighth century liturgies.[63] The reference to *hanc scripturam* suggests that the book itself may have been used as a kind of talisman.[64] Evil spirits, here, clearly are more than a metaphor for sin. The invocation of angels is also a familiar feature of the prayer books, and is often associated with a request for the protection of the soul after death.[65] Thus, the penultimate Harley prayer begins:

In pace Christi dormiam ut nullam malum videam a malis uisionibus in noctibus nocentibus. Sed uisionem uideam diuinam ac prophetam.
Rogo patrem et filium
....
ut animam meam saluare dignentur in exitu de corpore...
[Let me sleep in the peace of Christ so that I may not see any bad visions in the night, but may I see divine visions and prophecies.
I ask the father and son
....
That they deign to save my soul in its departure from the body.]

[63] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, 288.
[64] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 158.
[65] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, 286.

Again, Sims-Williams reminds us that 'in pace ... dormiam' was a metaphor for death.[66] The emphasis on evening is familiar in these books, although they do not have any instructions for anything like a comprehensive plan of daily devotions.

This theme is notably less pronounced in the Nunnaminster Christ sequence, yet in the midst of its many petitions against sin the prayers also ask for protection against enemies, the spiritual forces of sickness and oppression that are the cause of sin and death. The sequence is also framed by a variety of prayers that petition for protection from enemies. Nunnaminster's prayer attributed to Gregory, for example, ends with the petition, 'Libera animam meam ab omnibus insidiis inimici et conserua me in tua uoluntate.'[67]

The 'Lorica of Logden' appears in both Cerne and Nunnaminster with rubrics that suggest it should be said three times every day. Brown has argued that the final pages of Nunnaminster may have stemmed from an Irish exemplum and are representative of the kinds of 'pamphlets' that may have circulated prior to the compilation of the Mercian prayer books.[68] The 'Lorica of Logden' begins with an invocation and a request for defence against *hostibus* and *inimicos*, enemies. The hierachical structure of the invocation is familiar in the prayer books, beginning with angels and carrying on to patriarchs, apostles and martyrs. This invocation is followed by an extremely detailed catalogue of body parts.[69] This catalogue style of prayer is replicated many times in the Book of Cerne and was classified by Bishop as representative of a profuse, Celtic style of devotion.[70] Bishop also recognised, on the other hand, the adaption of these kinds of materials in light of the 'restraining' influence of the Roman sacramentaries. Thus, as we have seen, some of Cerne's prayers incorporate the same petitions (through various aspects of Christ's life and passion) into prayers that are more akin to the 'sober' materials of a Roman collect, such as prayer 47 and

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[66] Sims-Williams, 289.
[67] 'Free my soul from all the evils of my enemies and protect me in your will': De Grey Birch, *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century Formerly Belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester*, 58–60.
[68] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 154.
[69] For a discussion of *lorica* prayers in these books, see Kathleen Hughes, "Some Aspects of Irish Influence on Early English Private Prayers", *Studia Celtica* 5 (1970): 48–61.
[70] Kuypers, *The Prayer Book of Aedeluald the Bishop, Commonly Called the Book of Cerne*, xxvi.

48. Bishop, along with Birch, put the Nunnaminster prayers in this same category: they are epigrammatic and akin in style to the Roman collect. However, it seems clear that the spirit of the *lorica*, if not the style, sits behind both. The enumeration of Christ's body parts in Nunnaminster forms, ultimately, an extended penitential sequence that calls repeatedly on Christ to forgive sins and protect the petitioner from evil.

Other prayers, however, adopt this same theme of spiritual protection into various literary forms. Cerne's prayer 31, for example, is a poetic meditation on Christ's protection. In terms of style, it is far from the 'Lorica of Logden'. Cerne 31 and 32 are rare examples of continuous octosyllabic Latin verse whose rhythm is, to quote Lapidge, 'utterly distinct' from contemporary Irish usage.[71] Thematically, however, it incorporates many of the same ideas. Lapidge has argued that this prayer, along with Cerne 26 and 32, came either from Theodore's circle or directly from Theodore himself. I quote Lapidge's translation:

Sancte sator suffragator	Holy creator, sustainer
Legum lator, largus dator	lawgiver, bountiful provider,
Iure pollens es qui potens	You Who are mighty in your laws
Nunc in ethra firma petra	are now a firm rock in heaven;
A quo creta cuncta freta	by Whom were created all the seas
Quae aplustra ferunt flustra	which bear ships – the calm seas
Quando celox currit uelox	when he swift keel runs;
Cuius numen creauit lumen	Whose power, beyond the heavens,
Simul solem supra polum	created light and earth as well.
Prece posco prount nosco	I ask You in prayer, as I know my (sins),
Caeli arce christe parce	from the summit of heaven, Christ, spare (me)
Et pi ala dira iacla	and my foul sins, those dire darts,
Trude tetra tua scethra	thrust them aside with Your shield:
Quae capesso et fa cessa	(sins) which I often commit and

[71] Lapidge, "The School of Theodore and Hadrian", 47.

	perpetrate
In hoc sexu sarci nexu	in my sexual organs, the bond of the flesh.
Christi umbo meo lumbo	May the shield of Christ be on my loins,
Sit ut atro ceda latro	so that the Thief with his black,
Mox sugmento fraudu lento	deceptive growth may straightaway yield.
Pater parme procul arma	O Father, O shield, drive afar
Arce histis uti costis	the Enemy's weapons, as from my ribs,
Imo corde sine sorde	from the depth of my heart, free from filth;
Tum deinceps trux at anceps	then straightaway may the very cruel
Cata pulta cadat multa	and dangerous missile collapse.
Alma tutrix atque nutrix	Kindly Hand, protectress and nurse,
Fulce manus me ut sanus	sustain me, so that, purified
Corde reo pro ut queo	in my guilty heart I may say as best I can,
Christo theo qui est leo	to Christ the God, Who is the lion,
Dicam deo gratis geo	'I give [pour out?] thanks to God,'
Sicque beo me ab eo	and thus am gladdened by him.

Here, in this learned composition, we find many of the themes identified so far: the idea of Christ as the creative word of God, the penitential motif of sins as 'darts', a motif beloved in both vernacular and Latin writings, and Christ as the protector, the naming of body parts (loins, ribs, heart) and associations with various sins.[72]

[72] The image of sins as 'darts' is familiar from the Psalms and also from Ephesians 6:11-17, which describes spiritual armour. It was also popular in the Old English homiletic and poetic tradition (OE *stræl*): see, for example, *Andreas* line 391, *The Dream of the Rood* line 62, *Beowulf* line 1747 (in which Hrothgar describes pride, *oferhygd*, as a dart), *Christ B* line 65 and especially Vercelli Homily IV, lines 308-18, which contains a catalogue of different sins each described as a different arrow in the devil's arsenal. See also Felix, *Life of Guthlac* XXIX, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 94-7.

If Lapidge is correct, then these prayers were composed in the late seventh century. At this point, then, even in the most learned circles, we find the idea of prayer as a shield against demonic attack is prevalent. Yet this prayer also includes a palpable element of literary play and experimentation. This suggests that the devotional impulse was linked to self-conscious art in poetic composition, here exemplified in a taste for internal rhyme, assonance and alliteration.

This concept of spiritual warfare is also the driving idea behind the appearance of 'charms' in the prayer books, which are prayers wherein the words themselves are intended to affect the physical world in a specific way. The conventional idea of charms as mere superstition or 'magic' however, has rightly been questioned by recently scholarship.[73] The Royal Prayer Book, which is particularly notable for its erudition, repeats a charm twice that contains extracts from Sedulius' *Carmen* on the Nativity. Sedulius' poetry, composed in the fifth century, appears once towards the beginning and once towards the end of the manuscript:

> *riuos cruoris torridi contaca uestis obstruit*
> *fletu rigantis supplices arent fluenta sanguinis*
> per illorum quae siccata dominica labante coniuro sta.
> Oceani inter ea motus sidera motus uertat.
> [*By the touch of his garment he stopped streams of hot blood. By the flowing tears of the suppliant the stream of blood will dry up*. Through that which was dried up by the labour of the Lord, I command you, stop. Let it turn back from her through the motions of the ocean.]

Sims-Williams notes that the inclusion of lines from this hymn in these charms cannot be a coincidence, and that Sedulius' poem was used extensively in the Office.[74] The full poem is in an abcederian structure, and is followed immediately in the manuscript by another abcedarian poem, perhaps from the seventh century. The author of these

[73] For a discussion of recent scholarship concerning the problematic distinction between prayers and charms, see Roy Liuzza, "Prayers And/Or Charms Addressed to the Cross," in *Cross and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies in Honor of George Hardin Brown*, ed. Karen Louise Jolly, Catherine E. Karkov and Sarah Larratt Keefer, 1st ed, Medieval European Studies 9 (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2008), 321–23.
[74] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800,* 300, n. 111.

charms or the compiler of the manuscript may have attached power to Sedulius' words, perhaps by virtue of their place in the Office. It is also possible that the author and/or compiler of the charms were so familiar with Sedulius' poetic rendition of the biblical story that the association was natural. It should also be noted that Sedulius' poetry seems to have formed an important part of Anglo-Saxon schooling.[75] The influence of figures such as Archbishop Theodore on certain compositions in the prayer books should alert us that many of these prayers were steeped in learning. In these instances, the line between prayer and poetic reminiscence is thin, and the words of the poets become a part of the mental arsenal required to compose and recite a prayer.

The theme of protection from demonic forces is also developed in the Book of Cerne's abbreviated psalter, which harnesses the power of the Psalter as a penitential and a protective tool. As we have seen, penance and spiritual protection have a strong relationship in these books. Psalm verses are commonly found in Cerne's prayers. Some prayers are based entirely on the Psalms, such as the prayer *Psalmus dauid reconciliatio penitentium*, numbered 14 in Kuyper's edition of the text, which is a loose adaption of Psalm 50 (*miserere mei*) interspersed with some alternate verses from psalms and other biblical texts.[76] Cerne's abbreviated psalter contains 272 verses strung together from consecutive psalms, taken from the *Romanum* version of the Latin Psalter.[77] A retelling of the apocryphal Harrowing of Hell, which is essentially a 'pastiche' of psalm verses, follows Aedeluald's miniature psalter.[78]

Cerne's abbreviated psalter is the second oldest extant witness to this form of prayer.[79] The earliest extant abbreviated psalter is attributed to Bede, and survives in

[75] Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England*, 51–2.
[76] Kuypers, *The Prayer Book of Aedeluald the Bishop*, 100-101.
[77] The *Romanum* psalter was used in the Anglo-Saxon liturgy long after it was superseded elsewhere by the *Gallicanum* version of the psalter. See Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England*, 109-111; Toswell, *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, 11-13. The standard edition for the text of the *Romanum* psalter is Weber, *Le Psautier Romain et les autres anciens psautiers latins*. Psalm titles in this paper follow the Vulgate numbering, and translations are from the Douay-Rheims version.
[78] Dumville, "Panegyric Drama", 382.
[79] For a recent discussion of the abbreviated psalter tradition, see Anlezark, "The Psalms in the *Old English Office of Prime*", Tamara Atkin and Francis Leneghan, eds., *The Psalms and*

continental manuscripts associated with Alcuin. Alcuin recommended Bede's psalter in a letter to Arno and included it in a compendium of materials for private prayer, along with material and prayers related to the Penitential and Gradual Psalms. Bede, according to Alcuin, chose sweet verses in praise of God.[80] Benedicta Ward, in her 1991 Jarrow Lecture on Bede's abbreviated psalter, recognises that this psalter is a product of private rather than liturgical prayer and meditation on the Psalms. The purpose of praying the Psalms was to produce *compunctio cordis*, 'that bright sorrow without which Christianity is merely a religion and a rite'.[81]

The character of Aedeluald's psalter may be gleaned from his treatment of a few representative psalms. Psalms 1-6 speak of David's plight against his enemies. At times, these psalms are descriptive of David's situation. At other times, they implore, praise and petition God. Elsewhere, they speak in maxims and offer wise words concerning God's power and mercy. Aedeluald chooses verses that petition God for absolution and ask for victory over enemies. Descriptive verses are rarely chosen. Instead, this psalter asks God to act. For this reason, certain psalms are extensively excerpted and others hardly at all. Aedeluald's psalm selections for Psalms 1-6 are outlined in Table 1.

Psalm		
1	Beatus uir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum et in uia peccatorum non stetit et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit sed in lege domine fuit uoluntas eius et in lege eius meditabitur die ac nocte.	Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence: But his will is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he shall meditate day and night.
2	Seruite domino in timore et exultate ei cum tremore.	Serve ye the Lord with fear: and rejoice unto him with trembling.

Medieval English Literature: From the Conversion to the Reformation (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2017), 198-217 and Toswell, *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, 55-59.

[80] Alcuin, *Epistola CLVI ad Arnonem*, PL 169 col 407B: 'Bedae presbyteri Psalterium, quem ille collegit [Ms., collexit] per versus dulces in laude Dei, et orationibus per singulos psalmos juxta Hebraicam veritatem.'

[81] Ward, *Bede and the Psalter*, 2.

3	Tu autem domine susceptor meus es gloria mea et exaltans caput meum. Uoce mea ad dominum clamaui et exaudiuit me de monte sancto suo. Domini est salus et super populum tuum benedictio tua.	But thou, O Lord, art my protector, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. I have cried to the Lord with my voice: and he hath heard me from his holy hill. Salvation is of the Lord: and thy blessing is upon thy people.
4	Miserere mihi et exaudi orationem meum.	Have mercy on me: and hear my prayer.
5	Uerba mea auribus percipe domine intellege clamorem meum. Intende uoci orationis meae rex meus et deus meus. Ego autem in multitudine misericordiae tuae introibo domine in domum tuam adorabo ad templum sanctum tuum in timore tuo. Deduc me in tua iustitia propter inimicos meos dirige in conspectu tuo uiam meam.	Give ear, O Lord, to my words, understand my cry. Hearken to the voice of my prayer, O my King and my God. But as for me in the multitude of thy mercy, I will come into thy house; I will worship towards thy holy temple, in thy fear. Conduct me, O Lord, in thy justice: because of my enemies, direct my way in thy sight.
6	Domine ne in ira tua arguas me Neque in furore tuo coripias me. Miserere mihi domine quoniam infirmus sum sana me domine quoniam conturbata sunt omnia ossa mea et anima mea turbata est ualde et tu domine usquequo. Conuertere et eripe animam meam saluum me fac propter misericordiam tuam. Discedite a me omnes qui operamini iniquitatem quoniam exaudiuit dominus uocem fletus mei exaudiuit dominus deprecationem meam dominus orationem meam adsumpsit.	Lord, rebuke me not in thy indignation, nor chastise me in thy wrath. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak: heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled. And my soul is troubled exceedingly: but thou, O Lord, how long? Turn to me, O Lord, and deliver my soul: O save me for thy mercy's sake. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity: for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication: the Lord hath received my prayer.

Brown has written that the Cerne abbreviated psalter focuses on 'emphasising the merciful nature of God'.[82] Aedeluald also chooses personal petitions, and verses that emphasise the spiritual state of the man or woman at prayer. The selections from Psalms 3-6 demonstrate this proclivity well. Strung together, they depict the dejected state of the man or woman at prayer, God's mercy, and his triumph over 'enemies', historically the real-life enemies of David but here the spiritual opponents of sin and demonic attack. These themes fit together to create a spiritual mood that is distinctively penitential. Claire King'oo, explaining the history of the Penitential Psalms, writes that Augustine established what she calls a 'penitential exegesis' in which the interpretation of certain recurrent themes in these seven psalms —defeat of the enemy, attack, and compunction —are taken as metaphors describing the spiritual life.[83] With Aedeluald's selections from other psalms that are less penitential in tone, smaller segments are taken that fit within the general scheme of his abbreviated psalter. Psalm 1, for example, is represented by verses 1 and 2. This could be because Aedeluald intended for his psalter to be a compressed version of the entire Psalter, to which the opening verses of the Psalter would provide an apt introduction. Yet these verses, according to the highly influential exposition of Cassiodorus, are about Christ.[84] So, the *beatus uir* is precisely the one with the power to rescue the petitioner from his enemies and his sins. The next verse, *seruito domino in timore*, follows on well from this sentiment: Christ is the blessed man without sin, whom we serve and rejoice in prayer. By the time the reader gets to Psalm 3, they are prepared for the personal address to Christ, *Tu autem domine susceptor meus*. Contrary to Ward, the representative selection of psalms in Table 1 shows that Aedeluald does not necessarily select verses to assist with the recollection of the entire psalm. In Psalm 4, for example, he chose the most generic possible verse ('miserere mihi/mei') and quotes only an excerpt. Rather, Aedeluald chooses verses that reflect specific themes: defeat of the enemy, spiritual protection, repentance and praise of God. These themes are admittedly abundant in the Psalms, and yet we can see how Aedeluald has chosen

[82] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 150.
[83] Claire Costley King'oo, *Miserere Mei The Penitential Psalms in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 12.
[84] Cassiodorus, *Exposition on the Psalms*, 45-6.

to emphasise these themes to the exclusion of other themes, and how he has woven these themes together with other verses from the Psalms to create a continuous prayer.

The Harrowing of Hell, which follows the breviate psalter, is a dramatised account of Christ's rescue of the captives from hell between his death and Resurrection. While some scholars have argued that this text represents a primitive example of medieval drama, the rubric accompanying the text explicitly calls it the *oratio* (prayer) of the innumerable saints in captivity. Many of the psalms used in the Harrowing of Hell also appear in the Old English Blickling Homily 7, for Easter Sunday, which would indicate that the author of Cerne's Harrowing and the homilist had a source in common. Yet, as Dumville has noted, the psalm verses used in lines 14-30, in the middle section of the Harrowing, are unusual and bear no relation to other versions of the Harrowing of Hell.[85] Four of these verses agree almost exactly with the verses found in Aedeluald's abbreviated psalter. It is clear that the Harrowing, for all its 'dramatic' flair, was intended as a prayer and we should not lose sight of the fact that it is found in a book composed substantially of private prayers.

The text begins with the crowds in captivity crying out with the prayer 'aduenisti redemptor mundi' [you have come, saviour of the world.] This prayer is borrowed directly from Psuedo-Augustine's Homily 160 and also appears in the Old English Blickling Homily 7 for Easter Sunday. The following psalm verses then appear, comprising the prayers of the innumerable saints:

Line(s)		
14	Fiat nunc, Domine, misericordia tua super nos sicut sperauimus in te. (Psalm 32.22)	Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in thee.
15-16	Quoniam aput te est fons vitae, et in lumine tuo uidebimus lumen, (Psalm 35.10)	For with thee is the fountain of life; and in thy light we shall see light.
17-18	ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam et salutare	Show us, O Lord, thy mercy; and grant us thy salvation.

[85] Dumville, "Panegyric Responsary", 382.

	tuum da nobis! (Psalm 84.8)	
19	Memento congregationis tuae quam creasti ab initio; (Psalm 73.2)	Remember thy congregation, which thou hast possessed from the beginning.
20-21	ne memineris iniquitates nostras antiquas cita nos anticipiet misericordia tua, quia pauperes facti sumus nimis. (Psalm 78.8)	Remember not our former iniquities: let thy mercies speedily prevent us, for we are become exceeding poor.
22-24	Adiuua nos, Deus Salutaris noster, et propter honorem nominis tui, Domine, libera nos, et propitius esto peccatis nostris propter nomen tuum. (Psalm 78.9)	Help us, O God, our saviour: and for the glory of thy name, O Lord, deliver us: and forgive us our sins for thy name's sake.
30	Disrupisti, Domine, uincula nostra; (Psalm 115.16)	Thou hast broken [our] bonds.
31	tibi sacrificamus hostiam laudis, (Psalm 115.17)	I will sacrifice to thee the sacrifice of praise, and I will call upon the name of the Lord
32-34	quia non secundum peccata nostra fecisti nobis neque sucumdum iniquitates nostas retribuisti nobis. (Psalm 102.10)[86]	[because you have] not dealt with us according to our sins: nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

The Harrowing, like Aedeluald's psalter, borrows from the *Romanum* psalter, with a couple of minor modifications. The author changes two verse petitions from singular to plural. Thus, in Psalm 102, *fecit* becomes *fecisti* and *uincula mea* becomes *uincula nostra*. The crowd, collectively, uses these psalm verses to petition Christ for mercy, forgiveness and liberation, which perhaps gives weight to the notion of the piece as a collective, para-liturgical text. Later in the text, however, Adam and Eve appear as model penitents petitioning Christ using the words of Psalms 50, 118, 15, 141 (including the very literal verse 8, 'bring my soul out of prison') and 102. These psalm verses also appear in Blickling Homily 7 and each expresses contrition and

[86] This table is based on Dumville's edition ("Panegyric Responsary", 376).

begs for mercy. At this point, we see a clear overlap between the actual practice of prayer (to which Cerne is a witness) and the composition of literary texts depicting prayers, such as the Harrowing of Hell and Blickling Homily 7. The close relationship between the abbreviated psalter, which was clearly intended as a text to be prayed, and the Harrowing of Hell makes the devotional purpose of this text clear.

What, exactly, praying the text of the Harrowing was meant to achieve is a matter for some debate. Jackson Campbell makes a convincing argument that the Harrowing is metaphorical, and is intended as a picture of the liberation of righteous souls on earth.[87] If we adopt Campbell's reading, the Harrowing represents the necessity of penitential psalmody to liberate the Christian from his or her sin. Contrary to Jackson, however, Brown argues that the Harrowing fits with the *communio sanctorum* theme since it 'shows how Christ, through his sacrifice, accomplished redemption from purgatory.'[88] Thus, according to Brown, the image of the Harrowing is, quite literally, a picture of the way in which the Psalms are able to release souls from purgatory. For Brown, the Harrowing of Hell is a picture of intercessory prayer as much as personal penance. Interestingly, abbreviated psalters appear in later prayer books with rubrics suggesting that they were beneficial prayers to pray on behalf of the dead.[89]

While the exact purpose of and relationship between the abbreviated psalter and the Harrowing of Hell remain unknown, a close examination of Anglo-Saxon accounts of singing the Psalms reveals that the tradition of private, penitential psalmody developed early on into a system wherein the Psalms were sung in a variety of circumstances prayer to procure grace and forgiveness: in an emergency, against demons and on behalf of the dead.[90] Apotropaic uses of certain psalm verses, such as we find in the Life of Guthlac, show that the Psalms were held to have a special

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[87] Jackson Campbell, "To Hell and Back: Latin Tradition and Literary Use of the *Descensus Ad Inferos*," *Viator* 13 (1982): 130.
[88] Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 150.
[89] See Boynton for the text of the *suscipere digneris* prayer ("*Libelli Precum* in the Central Middle Ages", 281-282), which appears in Books of Hours and also in a number of Anglo-Saxon psalters.
[90] Felix's *Life of Guthlac* shows the saint praying psalms in the event of demonic attack. See Toswell for further discussion of apotropaic uses of the psalms (*The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, 164-167).

protective power and perhaps functioned as a form of *lorica*.[91] Yet this idea of the Psalms as quasi-magical formulae is not necessarily incompatable with the notion of deep, personal, transformative engagement with the Psalms as prayer. In Bede's *EH*, we have seen that private recitation of the Psalms has a direct impact on the external world. This can be seen in his account of the Mercian bishop Chad's prayer against bad weather. In the event of severe weather, Bede tells us that Chad would 'earnestly devote himself to prayers and psalms until the sky cleared'.[92]

Singing the Psalms, for Bede, is the next logical step in this process since the words of the Psalms are the words of penitential prayer.[93] Chad's penitential psalmody is able to protect, not only himself, but by extension the whole of mankind.[94] Thus, psalms could be sung on behalf of oneself and one's community at the same time. His office, as we can see in Bede's story, presupposes both private confessional prayer and intercessory prayer. Bede shows how these two kinds of prayer could take place simultaneously. By the time of the tenth-century *Regularis Concordia* singing the Penitential Psalms on behalf of the king and on behalf of the dead was established practice.[95] This document represents the end point of the kind of prayer the Bede described: personal penance is a necessary component of intercessory prayer.

Psalms in Cerne, then, function as an extended form of a *lorica*. They are simultaneously penitential and apotropaic and seem to have a relationship with prayer for the dead, or on behalf of the soul that is about to die. Sims-Williams has shown that this is one of the main features of Royal and Nunnaminster – the use of prayers associated with unction rites for the sick and dying.[96] Each of the prayer books references protection of the soul at the time of death. With the Harrowing of Hell, we see that the appropriation of prayer into a kind of 'literary' text, or perhaps vice versa, was an important feature of private prayer in ninth century England.

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[91] See above, 32-33.
[92] Bede, *EH*, iv.3: 'tunc ueniens ad ecclesiam sollicitus orationibus ac psalmis, donec serenitas aeris rediret, fixa mente uacaret.' Colgrave (ed. and trans.), *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 342-343.
[93] Kevin Uhalde, "Juridical Administration in the Church", 114-115.
[94] See Leneghan, "*The Wanderer*, Hesychasm and Theosis", 135-6 on Chad's penitential use of this psalm and connections with *The Wanderer*.
[95] Symons, *The Monastic Agreement*, 11-25.
[96] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, 196.

Conclusion

The Mercian prayer books are witnesses to a tradition of private prayer in early Anglo-Saxon England that was based on a number of themes. The theme of the Passion and Resurrection was associated with the Celtic *lorica* tradition, and devotion to Christ's physical body represents a form of prayer that is primarily concerned with protection from enemies, sins and the threat of death and disease. This theme appears to be more clearly metaphorical in the Nunnaminaster prayer book, and yet the framing of the 'Christ prayers' with a number of prayers for protection suggests that penance, the defeat of demonic forces and physical health were strongly associated in the mind of the compiler. These prayer books also show the process whereby materials were adapted to form new sequences of prayers, as is the case with the shared material in Cerne and Royal. There is a literary interest at work here, with the adoption of certain formulae and petitions into new structures, such as the abcedarian prayer, or the sequence on Christ's body, that satisfy a literary as well as a devotional impulse. To this category we may also add the poems of Sedulius and the compositions of Theodore, or one of his associates. Perhaps most importantly, these prayer books – as they came to develop in the Mercian tradition – demonstrate the absorption of this earlier material into a concentrated reflection on the Incarnation of Christ, his life, his suffering, his defeat of sin and the devil and his future Judgment. This is facilitated by an intensely personal way of reading scripture that lends itself, it seems, to extensive devotional and poetic reflection. I will return later to the evidence for the impact of this devotional mood on the poetic compositions of the Old English literary tradition. Reading these prayer books lends context to the records of Bede and his contemporaries, who discuss the fervent night vigils and ascetic tastes of the English saints. While we have only little indication of how these prayer books were used, they confirm the impression we find in the works of Bede and other hagiographic writers of intense personal prayer that grew out of communal liturgical prayer and an interest in praying the prayers of the saints, whose model was one of continual communion with Christ.

Chapter Three

Poetry and the Practice of Prayer: Devotional Reading

Bede's account of Caedmon, a miracle story concerning the conversion of the Old English secular poetic form into a medium for the exposition of scripture, represents both the validation and exemplification of the translation of scripture by a leading monastic intellectual of the early Anglo-Saxon period. Caedmon's stories, according to Bede, were recited to his teachers. The Old English Bede, in an unusually expansive translation, adds that his teachers *wrote and learned* ('wreoton 7 leornodon') his verse.[1] The translator may be implying that the teachers learnt them for the purpose of recitation, but Bede's ninth-century translator suggests a possible meditative context for the reading 'Caedmonian' poems that existed alongside their 'oral' performance. While it is clear, even in Caedmon's story, that Old English poetry once existed within the matrix of oral performance, we have no way of knowing how this practice relates to our existing corpus of vernacular texts, which are written down. Thornbury suggests that references to the *scop* in *Beowulf* may have been deliberately archaising and that the traditional image of the singing poet was, to some extent, a remnant of an imagined past.[2] Despite the probability of her thesis, Alcuin's famous complaint 'what has Ingeld to do with Christ?' sets the performance of secular song at feasts against the reading of the *verbum Dei*, probably a reference to patristic commentary on scripture.[3] William of Malmesbury claims that Aldhelm composed vernacular scriptural paraphrases and recited them publically to entice lay

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[1] Thomas Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (London, Pub. for the Early English Text Society by N. Trübner and co., 1890), 346–47. For a discussion of this passage see Mark C. Amodio, *Writing the Oral Tradition: Oral Poetics and Literate Culture in Medieval England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 41.

[2] Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England*, 14–15.

[3] Donald A. Bullough, "What Has Ingeld to Do with Lindisfarne?," *Anglo-Saxon England* 22 (December 1993): 104, n. 38.

people back into church.[4] Each of these references suggests that Old English verse was read publically. In spite of this, there is some indication that vernacular poetry may have fed private devotion. According to Asser, Alfred was given a book of Saxon poetry by his mother, which he memorised with the help of his tutor and recited back to her.[5] This practice involved a number of people and 'public' recitation. In spite of this, Alfred's goal of memorising Saxon verse with the help of his tutor, after which he learnt the order of the Divine Office, provides clear evidence for private, meditative engagement with vernacular texts. If we bear in mind the performative, physical nature of reading described by Leclercq, then Alfred's *lectio* can be understood as one that drew on Anglo-Saxon vernacular texts.

The previous chapters of this thesis have argued that personal engagement with the biblical narrative through prayer, *lectio*, was a crucial aspect of Anglo-Saxon devotional life. This chapter will build on some observations of the representation of prayer in vernacular poetry, focusing on the depiction of prayer in the youngest extant Old English poetic codex, Junius 11 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11). The four poems of Junius 11 conform, in varying degrees, to the genre of biblical poetry. They are now known as *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Daniel*, which comprise *Liber I* of the manuscript, and *Christ and Satan*, which constitutes *Liber II*. These works differ markedly in their style and treatment of biblical material. Wrenn's summary of the basic lack of continuity from poem to poem in Junius 11, written almost half a century ago, remains unchallenged – *Genesis* he classes as a 'free heroic paraphrase', *Exodus* as an idiosyncratic epic that can in no way be classified as a paraphrase, and *Daniel* as a retelling of the Book of Daniel that is quite different in style from the *Genesis* poem.[6] *Christ and Satan* only very occasionally uses canonical biblical material, at least in a narrative sense, and was in all likelihood added in the early eleventh century as an appendix to an earlier collection, though the addition is clearly

[4] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum. The History of the English Bishops*, v.190, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), 505–6. For a discussion of this passage see Paul G. Remley, "Aldhelm as Old English Poet: *Exodus*, Asser, and the Dicta Ælfredi," in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 91.
[5] Asser, *The Medieval Life of King Alfred the Great: A Translation and Commentary on the Text Attributed to Asser*, 23, trans. Alfred P. Smyth (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 14.
[6] C. L. Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature* (London; Toronto: Harrap, 1967), 103-4.

an important indicator from a contemporary reader to its perceived rationale, as well as giving the book its final structure and focus.[7] However, as Karkov notes, '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.'[8] This chapter analyses the poems of Junius 11 in light of their representation of prayer, arguing that the manuscript's structure revolves around the antithesis between prayer – the vocation most fundamental to humanity – and the refusal or inability to pray, which culminates in Judgment and damnation. Thus, the theme of the codex is not so much 'Fall and Redemption' or, as Hall puts it, an 'epic of redemption', as the necessity of prayer and the ultimate reality of the Judgment.

The focus on Judgment in Junius 11 reflects, to some extent, the preoccupation with Judgment in private prayer books, the Book of Cerne in particular. In the prayer books and in Junius 11, the process of salvation is intensely personal and comes down either to the individual's ability to praise God or refusal to praise him. Kevin Ulhade, explaining the boundaries between liturgical and 'private penance', observes that interaction with biblical and hagiographic narrative was a critical part of the penitent's ability to appropriate salvation:

> It is not that there were no meaningful differences between liturgical, professional, and daily penance, between public demonstrations of humility and private acts of devotion, or between crimes such as homicide and light sins such as profanity. Rather, we find an extension of penance beyond the ordinary limits of juridical administration and pastoral care. Pastors used biblical and hagiographic models of penance, such as Adam's mixed performance in Genesis and Peter's immoderate self-confidence in

[7] Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 23.
[8] Catherine E. Karkov, *Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England: Narrative Strategies in the Junius 11 Manuscript*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 31 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 2. Hall, "The Old English Epic of Redemption: The Theological Unity of MS Junius 11," 66. Hall originally put forward this argument in his dissertation, "The Old English Book of Salvation History: Three Studies on the Unity of Ms. Junius 11" (Ph.D., University of Notre Dame, 1973).

> the passion narrative, to create a community of penitents more inclusive than the living subjects of liturgical penance alone.[9]

As we have seen, connection with the biblical narrative through *lectio* and also through the sensual, affective avenues opened by the performance of private prayer are intimately related to the themes of Judgment and salvation in the Mercian prayer books. The goal of this chapter is to understand how, in Junius 11, the vernacular is used to represent the idea of prayer and also to help readers and audiences to participate in the narrative of salvation whilst contemplating, and eschewing, Judgment and damnation.

Junius 11 is generally assigned to the late tenth century, although some critics prefer an early eleventh-century date. Leslie Lockett's detailed codicological analysis concludes that the most likely date for the production of the manuscript was between *c*. 960 and *c*. 990.[10] This places the construction of the manuscript in the first phase of the Benedictine Reform. Junius 11's extensive program of illustration has most confidently been assigned to Christ Church or St Augustine's, Canterbury.[11] It is also

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[9] Kevin Unhalde, "Juridical Administration in the Church," in *A New History of Penance*, ed. Abigail Firey, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, v. 14 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), 120.

[10] Francis Wormald dates the manuscript to the second quarter of the eleventh century: "Decorated Initials in English MSS. from A.D. 900 to 1100," *Archaeologia* 91 (1945): 107–35; Barbara Raw prefers a date around 1000 for the initial binding of the manuscript: "The Construction of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius II," *Anglo-Saxon England* 13 (December 1984): 187–207. Leslie Lockett concludes her summary thus: codicological evidence suggests *c.* 950–c.1010. 'The decorated initials seem likely to have been produced in the years around the 970s, while the style of the first artist's figure drawings points to a date of execution after *c.* 950 and before *c.* 980. If the first artist and the second artist worked in the same scriptorium, the use of different colour techniques indicates that the first artist probably worked in the period before the introduction of coloured line drawing into the scriptorium, which may have happened at any time after *c.* 980. Palaeographically, many of the characteristics of canonical Phase II script are conspicuously absent from the work of Scribe 1, as are Caroline and Vernacular features, suggesting a range of dates between the middle of the tenth century and the 990s. Finally, the pointing of the Old Testament verse of Liber I is chronologically inconclusive because it may have been imported either directly from Latin poetic manuscripts during the Benedictine Reform or from pointed Saxon or Old High German exemplars much earlier in the tenth century', "An Integrated Re-Examination of the Dating of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11," *Anglo-Saxon England* 31 (December 2002): 172.

[11] Neil Ripley Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Clarendon Press, 1957), 408; A. N. Doane, ed., *Genesis A: A New Edition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin

evident that the scribe was working from an older exemplar. Doane notes that the handwriting is deliberately old fashioned, and the layout of the text, including chapter markings that were copied before the main body of the text, suggests that the scribe was copying an exemplar.[12] The manuscript itself is often attributed to the intellectual milleu of the tenth century Benedictine Reform.[13] However, we are faced with the probability that a prior copy of the manuscript existed earlier, on Doane's arguments some time before the reform, and thus does not necessarily reflect the late tenth century religious context. Doane argues on firm linguistic grounds that the translation and interpolation of the Old Saxon Genesis into *Genesis A* took place in Alfredian times.[14]

When reading the Junius poems, we are confronted with the problem of accounting for the attitude and context of each poems' original author(s) and also for the overarching design of the compiler. It is not always easy to distinguish between the work of scribes, compilers and composers, as Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe convincingly argues.[15] *Genesis*, in particular, shows signs of significant interpolation and it is clear that the transmission history that lay behind these poetic traditions is very complex. While it is difficult to pin down exact dates for the poems of Junius 11, it is clear that there is a considerable discrepancy between the original dates of composition and the copying of the manuscript.[16] Remley points out that vernacular poetry could have been put to good use at any date between 597 and the copying of the manuscript, and he concludes 'questions surrounding the dating of the Junius poems defy easy resolution and for the moment are best left entirely open.'[17] Despite this, it is possible to estimate approximate dates for the composition of the Junius poems, in some way or another. Doane dates *Genesis A* c. 650-900, favouring any

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Press, 1978), 23–24. Peter Lucas argues that the manuscript is from Malmesbury: Peter J. Lucas, "MS Junius 11 and Malmesbury," *Scriptorium* 34, no. 2 (1980): 197–220.

[12] Doane, *Genesis A*, 13. Doane favours an eleventh century date for the manuscript.

[13] Remley, "*Daniel*, the Three Youths Fragment and the Transmission of Old English Verse,": 81–140.

[14] A. N. Doane, *The Saxon Genesis: An Edition of the West Saxon Genesis B and the Old Saxon Vatican Genesis* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 35.

[15] O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, 65.

[16] According to Robert Fulk's metrical analysis, *Genesis A*, *Exodus* and *Daniel* should be dated after *Caedmon's Hymn*, which he dates between 657-680: *A History of Old English Meter* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 368–9.

[17] Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 5.

date in the eighth century.[18] *Genesis B*, on the other hand, must date after the composition of the Saxon *Heliand* c. 821-840.[19] Irving favours a late eighth or early ninth century date for *Exodus* with a Northumbrian provenance.[20] There is considerable evidence that some of the material included in *Daniel* circulated in the eighth century, and the existence of two independent witnesses to the poem in *Daniel* and *Azarias* suggests a long history of transmission prior to its copying in Junius 11.[21] A variety of dates have been suggested for *Christ and Satan*, from the seventh to the tenth centuries. Most critics favour a post-Cynewulfian date, perhaps in the late ninth-century. Finnegan, on the grounds of the Christological flavour of the poem, prefers a late eighth or early ninth century date.[22]

Junius 11, one of the four extant codices of Anglo-Saxon poetry, has received considerable critical attention. Despite this, basic questions about the date and provenance of the manuscript remain conjectural. Early critics of the manuscript attributed its contents to Bede's cowherd poet Caedmon who, according to Bede, was the first to render biblical text into alliterative verse.[23] This attribution is long since dismissed, however, and it is likely that the poems as they survive in the manuscript had a complex history of composition and circulation before they were copied around the late tenth century. There is some evidence for 'scenes' that may have formed formulaic compositional units, witnessed by repeated scenes in the Junius poems. Remley notes that the consignment of Satan to hell occurs three times, the simile of Israel being like stars of heaven occurs three times, and Abraham's binding of Isaac recurs. He notes that 'if the likelihood is granted that some of the biblical episodes

[18] A. N. Doane, ed., *Genesis A: A New Edition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 36–7.
[19] Doane, *The Saxon Genesis: An Edition of the West Saxon Genesis B and the Old Saxon Vatican Genesis* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 43.
[20] E.B. Irving, *The Old English Exodus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953).
[21] Paul G. Remley, "*Daniel*, the Three Youths Fragment and the Transmission of Old English Verse," *Anglo-Saxon England* 31 (2002): 81–140.
[22] Robert Finnegan, *Christ and Satan: A Critical Edition* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978), 61. Finnegan puts forward his 'admittedly circumstantial' argument on the grounds that, 'should we turn to the theological history of Western Europe to discover a time when the ideational atmosphere might have been conducive to the composition of such a work, we are drawn to the controversy caused by the adoptionist heresy at the close of the eighth, and the beginning of the ninth, centuries.'
[23] See, for example, the preface to Benjamin Thorpe's edition of the Old Testament Junius poems, *Caedmon's metrical paraphrase of parts of the Holy Scriptures in Anglo-Saxon* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1832), viii.

treated in the Junius poems did in fact circulate as type-scenes, then questions surrounding the authorship and artistic identity of these compositions become vastly more complex, as it follows that elements of their narrative as well as features of their diction properly belong to the formulaic stock of Germanic alliterative verse.'[24] Partly then, the history of the composition and compilation of Junius 11's poems is related to the process of Old English poetic composition, which is itself allusive.

The poems of Junius 11, though distinct, are united in their adaptation of the vernacular poetic idiom. While maintaining a historical interest, the Junius poems are interested in representing biblical characters and events as types that prefigure later events in salvation history, both the salvation of the *ecclesia* and the salvation of the individual. Thus, as Karkov has shown, the illustrative scheme of *Genesis* looks continually forward to later events – the Harrowing of Hell and the final Judgment – while the poetic text of *Genesis* takes an interest in Adam and Eve as the model penitents, praying continually for forgiveness.[25] The illustrated figures in the later chapters of *Genesis* are depicted, often, much like the typical Anglo-Saxon man or woman. At the same time, the extended narrative of Abraham's war with the kings of Sodom represents the patriarch as a heroic warrior, describing the battle in distinctively Anglo-Saxon terms.[26] *Exodus* also exhibits a series of anachronisms that, at a surface level, have very little to do with the biblical narrative, yet form a potent metaphor for the spiritual life. Part of the purpose of these poems, then, seems to be a recontextualisation of the biblical narrative in light of the juxtaposition between salvation and damnation. The use of the vernacular becomes an avenue for writing the compiler and his audience into the biblical narrative.[27]

This has a profound impact on the representation of prayer in Junius 11. Far from being a straight-forward rendering of the biblical accounts, the Junius poems interact with the prayers of the Bible and often recast them to emphasise various aspects of the

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[24] Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 7.
[25] Karkov, *Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England*, 58–9.illis
[26] Andy Orchard discusses the adaptation of vernacular idiom into Christian allegory: "Conspicious Herosim: Abraham, Prudentius, and the Old English Verse *Genesis*," in *The Poems of MS Junius 11: Basic Readings*, ed. R. M. Liuzza (Psychology Press, 2002).
[27] Judith Garde discusses the idea of *Heilsgeschichte*, or salvation history, in Anglo-Saxon poetry and especially in Junius 11: *Old English Poetry in Medieval Christian Perspective: A Doctrinal Approach* (Boydell & Brewer, 1991), 25–56.

practice of prayer. This revision is extensive in *Genesis* (especially *Genesis B*) and *Daniel*. *Exodus* offers little in the way of direct description of prayer, yet the overarching thematic and typological interpretation of the poem has bearing on how we understand some aspects of Anglo-Saxon spiritual life. *Christ and Satan* is interested in Christ's role as an intercessor on behalf of mankind and the ways in which he accomplishes redemption, as well as Satan's refusal to pray in hell. Prayer is a major part of this process, and the earlier prayers of Adam and Eve in *Genesis* look forward to *Christ and Satan* for their resolution.

The Old Testament poems in Junius 11 draw especially on biblical passages that were also used as lectionary readings for the Holy Saturday Vigil.[28] The Easter Vigil, with its emphasis on the initiation of catechumens and Christ's death, Harrowing of Hell and Resurrection, is a microcosmic encapsulation of the Christian life. Typologically, the events of the Junius poems relate to the salvation of the individual. In this way, the Junius poems relate intimately to the practice of prayer, since they represent various biblical events in terms of repentance, penance, Christ's healing and rescue of humanity and the resultant praise and thanksgiving. As we have seen, these themes feature strongly in the Mercian prayer books. Cerne, in particular, draws on materials from the celebration of Easter. This may be because the book was designed to be read during Lent, leading up to the great feast. Bede, as we saw in Chapter One, makes reference to bishops employed in reading and meditation across the time of Lent.[29] Given this background to practices of prayer and reading, the contents and structure of Junius 11 invite the possibility that this book and its antecedents could have been used in a similar context. However, the events of Easter, which are at the heart of the Christian faith, could easily have been meditated on at all times of the year. Indeed, as we have seen, the Easter Vigil is imitated, in some sense, during every monastic vigil, which awaits Christ's coming and meditates on his defeat of evil. J.R. Hall, in

[28] Bernard James Muir, "A Digital Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Junius 11" (Bodleian Library, 2004): Muir summarises the relationship between Holy Saturday lections and Junius 11: 'The readings focus specifically on the seven days of Creation, the Noah narrative, Abraham and Isaac, the Crossing of the Red Sea, the institution of the Passover, the renewal of the Covenant, the Babylonian Captivity, the Valley of the Dry Bones, Isaiah on the gaping jaws of Hell, the story of Jonah and the whale, the three children in the fiery furnace, and Moses handing down the Law before his death. It will be clear that these themes and incidents are central to the four poems in MS Junius 11, both literally, anagogically and typologically', "Introduction", ft. 47.
[29] See above, 46-7.

response to the arguments that Junius 11 is fundamentally related to the liturgy, has pointed out that the biblical material in the manuscript corresponds only to half of any given liturgical cycle. He argues, instead, that the manuscript points to an 'epic of redemption' that is not necessarily liturgical.[30]

The copying of Junius 11 is principally the work of a single scribe, who was responsible for the copying of *Genesis*, *Exodus*, and *Daniel*. *Christ and Satan* was copied by three scribes who exhibit a rounder hand, and was almost certainly copied later. Junius 11's principal scribe begins the manuscript with an invocation of Christ, found in the marginal inscription *xb*, which repeats itself on pages 2, 52 and 96 of the manuscript. *Xb*, Kenneth Sisam points out, is a prayer that probably represents the words *Christus benedic*, a blessing on the work of the scribe.[31] Pages 27 and 49 exhibit a marginal *x*, perhaps an abbreviated invocation of Christ.

Remley describes Junius 11 as 'transportable', but not pocket-sized like the prayer books discussed in Chapter Two. Lucas cites evidence, however, suggesting that quire 17, which begins *Christ and Satan*, may have been used as a booklet compact enough 'to be carried around in the pocket of a monk's habit and . . . presumably used for private reading away from the study facilties of the cloister.' Barbara Raw, however, disagrees with Lucas' theory, citing the fact that the poem is 'copied partly on vellum in connection with the end of *Daniel*' and contains the same sets of stitch marks as the original manuscript.[32] On the whole, however, Remley concludes that 'physical evidence for the use of these books is ambiguous at best' and it is difficult to reconstruct the exact circumstances of Junius 11's use.[33] Ker and Raw note a small mark on the manuscript that suggests it was, at some point in its life, chained in one place.[34] Muir has argued that the book 'may have been designed as a vernacular lectionary for use in monastery' based on the assumption that the correspondence

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[30] Hall, "The Old English Epic of Redemption: The Theological Unity of MS Junius 11."
[31] Kenneth Sisam, "Marginalia in the Vercelli Book," in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 109.
[32] Raw, "The Construction of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius II," 189.
[33] Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 19–20.
[34] Raw, "The Construction of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius II," 198–200; Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, 408. Raw dates the current binding between 1100-1250, meaning that a chain mark does not necessarily provide evidence for the book's use in a public setting.

between Holy Saturday readings and the Junius material must indicate some 'liturgical' use.[35] Remley notes that 'multiple canons issued by the *Clofesho* council forbid the use of secular forms of verse in church services, strongly suggesting that vernacular alliterative verse was on occasion recited paraliturgically before 747.'[36] In spite of these speculations, the manuscript's complex pictorial cycle, though unfinished, indicates that the creator of the manuscript intended for its poems to be read as well as heard, and that interaction with the physical manuscript through reading allowed for a different mode of interaction with the text.

Genesis

The first poem in Junius 11, *Genesis*, is a composite of two separate poems spliced together. An Old-Saxon poetic rendition of the Genesis story was interpolated at some point, certainly after 825.[37] Scholars universally agree on dividing the older *Genesis A*, usually assigned a late seventh or early eighth century date, from the interpolated *Genesis B*.[38] *Genesis A* is characterised by a heavy dependence on a mixed Vulgate, both in broad structural sequence and, often, in diction and syntax.[39] *Genesis B*, on the other hand, departs from scripture, offering an extrapolated account of the fall of Satan and the temptation of Adam and Eve. As is the case with the whole of Junius 11, these poems must be treated with recognition of their separateness (being the work of different poets in different times) but also with a sense of cohesion that the compiler of the manuscript and the original interpolator clearly intended. As Remley puts it, we must 'reckon with the certainty that at least some of the verse in Junius 11

[35] Muir, "A Digital Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Junius 11", "Introduction". Phyllis Portnoy makes a similar argument, claiming that the interpretation of the manuscript in light of the Holy Saturday lections is the only sufficient explanation of its structure and emphasis, since 'the Vigil cursus of readings is also the only one that works towards a climax and culmination - as does Junius 11 - in the archetypal struggle between Christ and Satan; that is, the Baptism': *The Remnant: Essays on a Theme in Old English Verse* (London: Runetree Press, 2005), 186.
[36] Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 57.
[37] Doane, *The Saxon Genesis*, 43.
[38] Fulk argues that *Daniel* and *Exodus* probably were composed no later than c. 825. Based on 'relative criteria' *Genesis A* and *Daniel* are likely contemporaries of *Beowulf*, which Fulk believes was not composed later than 725.
[39] Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 96; Charles Darwin Wright, "Genesis A Ad Litteram," in *Old English Literature and the Old Testament*, ed. Michael Fox and Manish Sharma (University of Toronto Press, 2012), 121–71.

has been altered in the light of an aesthetic (or an attitude towards texts) that is wholly foreign to the sensibilities of modern readers.'[40] Looking at scenes of prayer in Junius 11, I am mainly interested in how the representation of devotion in the *Genesis* poem might have conveyed to the reader information about the nature of prayer, different kinds of prayer, and how the audience is to pray. Approaching the manuscript, then, primarily in terms of its didactic function, it is appropriate to examine the *Genesis* poem as a unity. Of course, the direct dependence of much of *Genesis A* on the Vulgate and *Genesis B* on the Saxon exemplar means that we must look hard to find evidence of a specifically Anglo-Saxon attitude to prayer. This can be discovered, I believe, in the interpretation of these sources offered by the *Genesis* poet(s) and recapitulated by the manuscript's compiler(s).

Genesis begins with an exhortation to praise derived from, or at least strongly influenced by, the preface to the Canon of the Mass:[41]

> Us is riht micel ðæt we rodera weard,
> wereda wuldor-cining, wordum herigen,
> modum lufien. He is mægna sped,
> heafod ealra heah-gesceafta,
> frea almightig. … (1-5a)
> [It is very right that we should praise with words the guardian of the heavens, glory-king of the hosts, and love him with our minds. He is great in power, the head of all high-creation, almighty Lord.]

Doane notes that the opening creation sequence of *Genesis A* 'differs markedly from all other parts of the poem in its inclusion of a significant amount of extra-biblical material.'[42] This liturgical opening, with its invitation to praise God, is both prayerful in itself and also directly enhorts the readers to prayer. The poet, after praising God

[40] Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 8.
[41] Laurence Michel was the first to recognize this relationship, noting that the poet was most likely familiar with 'The Divine Liturgy of James, the Holy Apostle and Brother of the Lord', derived from the Clementine Liturgy. This particular version of the *praefatio* has 'as its chief aim praise of God the creator, and ruler of heaven and the angels.' "*Genesis a* and the Praefatio," *Modern Language Notes* 62, no. 8 (December 1, 1947): 545–50.
[42] Doane, *Genesis A* (1978), 128.

for his eternal nature (5-7a), his sovereignty in heaven (7-9) and his omnipotence (10-12), defines the state of the angels in heaven: they had *gleam and dream* (12). *Dream*, which might refer to any number of joys, refers in this context to the joys of heavenly contemplation and the praise of God. This is a recurrent theme throughout the poem and, indeed, throughout the entire manuscript.

The angels' joy in praise and contemplation points to the intended moral of Anglo-Saxon biblical poetry in general. Bede writes that Caedmon's songs excited the minds of many to despise the world, and to aspire to heaven.[43] Bede adds that Caedmon endeavoured by his songs to 'turn away all men from the love of vice, and to excite in them the love of, and application to, good actions.'[44] If we keep in mind the similarities between the opening of *Genesis* and *Caedmon's Hymn*, which both exhort the reader to praise (*herigan*), and Bede's idea that the purpose of Caedmon's biblical paraphrase was to teach men to love regular life, which was substantially concerned with prayer and the praise of the creator, we may conclude that one of the purposes of the kind of biblical poetry found in Junius 11 was to teach people how to pray, and to give them an opportunity to praise and worship the creator. Caedmon's Hymn is, in its most basic form, an exhortation to prayer. Thus, the opening of *Genesis*, with its liturgical underpinning and its summons to praise, sets a program for the remainder of the poem, which is designed to excite men in love of good actions and deeds.

The *Genesis* poet refers to *wordum* frequently: God creates with words, people praise him with words and Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is himself the divine Word. Thus, as we have seen in previous chapters, words take on a complex meaning in light of the Incarnation, and acknowledgement of God with words brings men close to understanding the divine nature. In *Genesis,* and other poems in Junius 11, the idea of words and the Word builds up a complex, self-referential sense of words of the poems as words of praise, eliciting praise from the reader. Likewise, the act of God creating the world through the Word, the ever-present Christ whose presence at the moment of creation is made explicit in the images and text of the manuscript, again

[43] Bede, *EH* iv.24: 'Cuius carminibus multorum saepe animi ad contemptum saeculi et appetitum sunt vitae caelestis accensi.'
[44] Ibid.: 'in quibus cunctis homines ab amore scelerum abstrahere, ad dilectionem vero et sollertiam bonae actionis excitare curabat.'

invokes a self-referential sense of the creative power of words. Catherine Karkov notes the frequent depiction of Christ in the illustrations of Junius 11, emphasizing the typological significance of the Genesis story and pointing, wherever possible, to the power of the *verbum Dei*, often accompanied by the gesture of making the sign of the cross.[45] The existence, throughout the manuscript, of the marginal *xb* also indicates that the act of prayer through invocation of Christ, the divine Word, was a part of the process of copying the poem. As Doane reminds us, scribal activity involved a performance of the text and, perhaps, the marginal prayers of Junius 11 can be taken as 'gestures' of genuine speech acts.[46] The poet and illustrator's Christological interest sheds light on the devotional context of the poem. Rather than presenting a historical account of the Genesis narrative, the manuscript instead positions the reader as a respondent to the narrative, weaving a complex interplay of text and image to remind the reader of Christ and his salvation even at the very beginning of creation and humanity's corruption and, through invocation of the sign of the cross, inviting the reader to pray.[47]

Following the introduction, a change in tense indicates a shift into narrative mode, wherein the poet describes the bliss of the angels living in perfect peace praising the Lord:

> Þegnas þrymfæste þeoden heredon,
> sægdon lustum lof, heora liffrean
> demdon: drihtenes dugeþum wæron
> swiðe gesælige. ... (15-18a)
> [The glory-fast thanes attended the prince, spoke eagerly with praise,
> honoured their life-lord, were very happy with the gifts of the Lord.]

[45] Catherine E. Karkov, "The Sign of the Cross: Poetic Perfomance and Liturgical Ritual in the Junius 11 Manuscript," in *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, ed. M. Bradford Bedingfield and Helen Gittos, Henry Bradshaw Society Subsidia 5 (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK ; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2005), 245–65.
[46] Doane, "The Ethnography of Scribal Writing and Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Scribe as Performer," 425.
[47] Karkov, "The Sign of the Cross: Poetic Perfomance and Liturgical Ritual in the Junius 11 Manuscript."

The verb *herian* occurs again, echoing the opening of the poem and suggesting that the bliss of the angels is partly accessible to corrupt human kind, to those who will praise the creator in faithfulness. The language of Germanic kinship, with the angelic *þegnas* praising their *þeoden*, recurs throughout the *Genesis* poem, particularly in this opening section. When the rebel angels are expelled on account of their *oferhygd*, heaven returns again to a state of friendship and peace between the *þeoden* and *his þegnum* (80). While the concept behind this description is scriptural, the terminology might have been useful in helping the Anglo-Saxon audience to relate heavenly peace and praise of the creator with the hallmarks of a harmonious earthly society: ties of kinship and friendship.[48] Doane has noted that the *Genesis* poem tends to treat historical events through a lens of social morality.[49] Here, the poem draws on the language of kinship to define the *herigen* of the angels as an act of service rendered to heaven's prince.

Genesis B, which begins around line 235, starts mid-sentence with God's instructions to Adam and Eve in paradise. The poem moves quickly to an explanation of Lucifer's fall, which is attributed to his refusal to praise God and give him thanks:

> ... Lof sceolde he drihntnes wyrcean
> dyran sceolde he his dreamas on heofonum, and sceolde his drihtne þancian
> þæs leanes þe he him on þam leohte gescerede þonne læte he his hine lange
> wealdan. (256b-258)
>
> [He should have performed the Lord's praise, he should have cherished his joys in heaven, and he should have thanked his Lord for the gift that he gave him in the light, then he would have let him rule for a long time.]

Satan, the *ofermod* angel, then speaks *feala worda* (271). Satan's many words stand in stark contrast to the poet's imperative to praise God with words: his utterances are the opposite of prayer and represent his direct defiance of God.

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[48] Samantha Zacher argues that this impulse was both social and personal, since 'the invocation of the scriptural past served as an important tool for religious, cultural and political self-fashioning in the present.' *Rewriting the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon Verse: Becoming the Chosen People* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 4.
[49] Doane, *Genesis A* (1978), 23.

Adam and Eve, in contrast, are depicted at prayer at several points in the poem and in the manuscript illuminations. Before the temptation, near the beginning of the extant portions of *Genesis B*, the couple is a model of praise, joy and obedience:

> Hnigon þa mid heafdum heafon-cycninge
> georne togenes and sædon ealles þanc,
> lista and þara lara. He let heo þæt land buan;
> hwærf him þa to heofonum halig Drihten,
> stið-ferhð cyning. Stod his hand-geweorc
> samod on sande; nyston sorga wiht
> to begrornianne, butan heo Godes willan
> lengest læsten. Heo wæron leof Gode
> ðenden heo his halige word healdan woldon. (237-245)
> [Then they eagerly bowed to the king of heaven with their heads and said thanks for all things, for his craft and his law. He let them occupy that land; then the holy Lord, the strong-minded king, turned to the heavens. The work of his hand stood together on the sand; they did not know anything of grieving for sorrows, except to fulfil God's desires for the longest time. They were beloved to God, then when they wished to keep his holy word.]

Like the angels, Adam and Eve maintain a posture of praise and thanksgiving. The verb *hnigan* (to bow) suggests and signifies their humility. This humility, combined with the ensuing list of blessings for which the couple may be thankful, stands in stark contrast to Satan's *ofermod* and wretched thanklessness. *Hnigan* is also suggestive of a physical pose of prayer. Adam and Eve are depicted in prayer in at least five of the manuscripts illustrations. On page 9, for example, an illustration accompanies the account of Eve's creation. On the right hand side of the page, God removes a rib from the sleeping Adam's side. To the left, the newly created Eve looks to God with a 'gesture of prayer'. Karkov writes:

> Eve's pose is complex, prefiguring both her fall and her ultimate redemption and also serving to unite her typologically with Mary, the new Eve. She looks up at the cross-nimbed Lord in a pose of prayer and adoration, while

> he bends over her and takes her by the hand. The composition is close to that of Anglo-Saxon representations of the Harrowing of Hell in which Christ bends over the mouth of hell while reaching down to Adam and Eve.[50]

Thus, while the compiler of the manuscript wishes to emphasise the fact that Adam and Eve were *engla gelicum* (like the angels) at this point in the story, hints of the later story of the fall and, ultimately, to the victory of Christ at the end of time relate even the blissful praise of Adam and Eve to their eventual redemption. This image simultaneously depicts the prelapsarian devotion of Eve, characterised by prayer and reverence, and also the penitential bidding that is to come.

Adam and Eve's prayerful repentance comes almost immediately after the eating of the forbidden fruit. This departure from the biblical narrative depicts Adam and Eve as penitents almost from the very moment of their disobedience. The process of Adam and Eve's conversion from sin to repentance is constructed according to the patterns of sin, confession, Judgment and penance familiar in Anglo-Saxon prayers. In the repeated reference their prayers, and the depiction of the two in poses of penitential prayer throughout this section of the manuscript, the compiler emphasises continuity between Adam and Eve, mother and father of mankind, and the everyday man. The two, in their immediate and sorrowful repentance, are models of penitential piety.

This piety appears mostly in the segments of the poem conventionally assigned to *Genesis B*. Prayers frequently appear in extant portions of the Saxon Genesis. After being fooled by hell's messenger, the two are filled with a fear of God ('godes him ondredon', 768) and have 'higesorga / burnon on breostum' (heart-sorrow burned in their breasts, 776-777). The poet takes considerable liberties with the biblical account at this point. Adam and Eve, according to his retelling, prayed often (with the term *hwilum* 'at times', suggestive of repeated action) in the intervening period between the Fall and God's response. Thus, in a sense, it is they who summon God to the garden:

[50] Karkov, *Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England*, 58.

... Hwilum to gebede feollon
sun-hiwan somed, and Sige-Drihten
godne gretton ond God nemdon,
heofones waldend, and hine bædon
þæt hie his hearm-sceare habban mosten,
georne fulgangan, þa hie Godes hæfdon
bodscipe abrocen. (778-83)
[At times the married couple fell to prayer together, and greeted the good Victory-Lord and called on God, guardian of heaven, and asked him that they should have a punishment, eagerly undergo it, since they had broken God's commandment.]

The poet elaborates briefly on the structure and content of Adam and Eve's prayer: they greet and call on the Lord and, following this, beg him for punishment. They do not ask God for forgiveness or mercy, but wish to receive the due penance – literally in the Old English, as in the etymology of the Latin *paenitare*, their 'share of harm' – for their crime. The poet's account of Adam and Eve 'falling' to prayer relates to the posture presented by the illumination on page 31 of the manuscript. In the picture, Adam is upon his knees with his arms raised in a posture of prayer. Eve is also genuflecting, with her head bent down to the ground and her hands over her head, in a posture suggestive of both shame and humility. Adam, it would seem, is imploring God while Eve is in a state of humble penance. To the right of the picture, behind the pair, is the figure of hell's messenger, no longer disguised as an angel. This inequality in the depiction of Adam and Eve reflects their differing responses of the two in the text. Eve expresses heartfelt regret for her sin, while Adam regrets ever asking God for a companion (816). Eve's response, the poet seems to suggest, is preferred, and the poet has Eve speak what must have been a mild rebuke of Adam's attitude:

'Þu meaht hit me witan, wine me Adam,
wordum þinum; hit þe þeah wyrs ne mæg
on þinum hyge hreowan þonne hit me æt heortan deð.' (824-26)
['You can punish me for it, Adam my lord, with your words; though you cannot grieve it worse in your mind than I do in my heart.']

Eve here contrasts Adam's cold regret, marked not by repentance but by anger and accusation, with her own *heart*felt grief. While Adam's grief is from his mind (*hyge*), Eve grieves her sin *æt heortan*. Clearly, Eve's attitude is exemplary and to be imitated, suggested by the description of her, even at this point in the poem, as *idesa scienost, / wifa wlitegost* (brightest of ladies, most beautiful of women, 821-2). Eve's virtue is a result of her status as a model penitent and, in this context, Eve's *heort* literally expresses the *compunctio cordis* that is necessary to penance. While the idea of *compunctio cordis* is familiar from Gregory, it finds consummate expression in Alcuin's various works. *Compunctio* comes at the beginning of a long sequence of spiritual states that lead from confession to pardon.[51] In Old English and Latin texts concerning the Harrowing of Hell, Adam and Eve are often represented as models for penance. The poet's high praise for Eve and his depiction of her spiritual posture are in line with this tradition. Furthermore, the commonplace association between Eve and Mary may sit behind his description of her as the fairest of women.

In an illustration on page 34, both Adam and Eve are illustrated crying, with one line of text above the image reading *nu hie word-cwyde his, lara forleton* (now, they abandoned his commands (*lit*. word-speech) and his teaching). Adam's response to Eve's rebuke, furthermore, conjures images of Celtic *perigrenatio*, which contributes to the 'implication that the way of exile for Adam and Eve is the way of the Christian penitent.' [52] Adam exclaims that he would do God's will, if only he knew what it was, and would endure any penalty:

> Gif ic waldendes willan cuðe,
> hwæt ic to hearm-scear habban sceolde,
> ne gesawe þu no sniomor, þeah me on sæ wadan
> hete heofones God heonone nu þa,
> on flod faran, nære he firnum þæs deop,
> mere-stream þæs micel, þæt his o min mod getweode,

[51] Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 80-1.
[52] John F. Vickrey, *Genesis B and the Comedic Imperative* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2015), 253.

ac ic to þam grunde genge, gif ic Godes meahte
willan gewyrcean. … (828-35b)
[If I knew the ruler's will, what I should have as a punishment, you would never see anything faster, though the God of heaven should command me now to fare hence on the sea, to journey on the seas, it would never be too wickedly deep, that I would ever turn from his desire in my mind, but I would go into the abyss, if I might be able to do God's will.]

Adam, desiring to obey, imagines the exile that he is to endure as some kind of service rendered to God. The theme of exile recurs frequently in *Genesis* and in the remainder of the manuscript. There is a double understanding of exile as punishment and also penance, the sole means by which the individual might return to God and the necessary journey of the Christian. In this way, Adam turns his banishment from Eden, God's punishment, into an act of contrition and penance to be performed in order to win the prince's favour.[53]

Just prior to God's pronouncement of Judgment, the poet describes how Adam and Eve pray, once again, in the morning. The association between morning prayer the penitential prayers of the Office, such as Psalm 50, strengthens the penitential undertones of this passage. The poet writes:

ac hie on gebed feollon bu tu ætsomne
morgena gehwilce, bædon mihtigne
þæt hie ne forgeate God ælmihtig,
and him gewisade waldend se goda,
hu hie on þam leohte forð libban sceolde. (847-51)
[But together they fell to their prayers every morning, asked the mighty one, God almighty, that he would not forget them, and asked him, the good ruler, how they could live henceforth in the light.]

[53] Vickrey argues that 'in their dual but combined being as the Adam and Eve of Genesis 3 and as post-redemptive persons, they become in *Genesis B* the proto-pilgrims of Christianity, so Adam's last speech, the resolve to endure richly in want, is not greatly unlike the endings of these and other Christian poems.' *Genesis B and the Comedic Imperative*, 253. Eventually, in *Genesis A*, Adam is included in the string of heroes, including Abel, Noah and Abraham, by his prayer of thanksgiving at the birth of Seth (1111-1116).

Adam and Eve's prayers are consistent (every morning) and thematically in line with the prayers of the Office and of the prayer books, which emphasise confession, God's goodness and, most importantly, ask that the petitioner be equipped to do good deeds. The metaphor of light and darkness is pronounced: the morning prayer looks forward to the hope of light and recurrection but is mindful of the darkness of sin. The depiction of Adam and Eve in *Genesis B* is reminiscent of the Irish *Saltair na Rann*, in which Adam and Eve do penance in the rivers Tigris and Jordan in order to atone for their sins.[54]

The interpolation of *Genesis B* raises interesting but ultimately unanswerable questions about the design, aesthetic and compilation of Junius 11. The most popular theory regarding the appearance of translated passages from the Saxon Genesis in Junius 11 is that they were inserted to account for some degree of textual corruption.[55] It remains possible that the poem was inserted because of a perceived lack in the original *Genesis* poem. Either way, the compiler of Junius 11 must have felt that the Saxon narrative fit in some important way into the scheme of his poem. The emphasis in *Genesis B* on penance and prayer, then, indicates that these topics held great interest for the compiler of the manuscript.

By the time the poem returns to the narrative of *Genesis A*, the biblical narrative of Adam and Eve's shame and attempt to hide from God is reinstated. Adam, in an expansive interpretation of the Vulgate, addresses God directly to express his sense of shame:

> 'Scyldfull mine sceaðen is me sare,
> fracne on ferhðe; ne dear nu forð gan
> for ðe andweardne. Ic eom eall eall nacod.' (869-71)
> [My sinfulness is painful to me, perilous in my spirit; now I do not dare to go forth before your presence. I am all, all naked.]

[54] Daniel G. Calder, *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry II: The Major Germanic and Celtic Texts in Translation* (Cambridge Cambridgeshire : Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Imports, 1984), 15.
[55] Doane, *Genesis A*, 240.

In the Vulgate, Adam is merely afraid. Here, his speech expresses his awareness of his own sin and his sense of unworthiness to approach God. This attitude, although representative of Adam's fall, is also the proper posture for prayers of penance and confession. The poet's attitude towards shame is complicated in this passage, since Adam's shame is both a sign of his contrition and a barrier between himself and God.

Following Adam and Eve's expulsion from the garden, *Genesis A* relates the narratives of Cain and Abel and their progeny (967-1054), Noah and the flood (1248-1648), Babel (1649-1705), Lot (2419-2575) and Abraham (1706-2923). Given the *Genesis A* poet's 'fundamentally historical approach to the biblical narrative'[56] and his aforementioned reliance on the Vulgate, there is little in the way of extra-biblical material related to prayer. However, the poet is extremely selective and frames his narrative with a 'long sequence of scenes of sacrifice and thanksgiving' that 'consistently emphasizes the duty of human beings to praise and obey God, and interprets human history as a series of decisive interventions by God – and by Christ – in human history.'[57] *Genesis A* invites a moral reading of scriptural history whereby 'heroes', especially Abraham, provide a model for good behaviour.

Abraham is introduced in *Genesis A* as a warrior. The poet explains that, to Abraham and Haran, 'the Lord of angels was a friend and father' (*Frea engla bam freond and aldor*, 1710). Obedience is his principle virtue, and the obedience of Abraham extends to his willing exile and culminates in the sacrifice of Isaac, his son. Typologically, this event looks forward to the death of Christ and is therefore the moment of redemption that undoes the sin of humanity. The sacrifices in *Genesis A* prefigure the sacrifice of the Mass and, in this sense, the sacrifice of Isaac at the end of the poem is the culmination of the poem's sequence of sacrifices.[58] The sacrifices of Abel (975b-979a), Melchizedek (2106-2125) and Abraham are explicitly related to the sacrifice of

[56] Wright, "*Genesis A* Ad Litteram," 123.
[57] Wright, 154.
[58] L.N. McKill, "The Offering of Isaac and the Artistry of Old English Genesis A," in *The Practical Vision: Essays in English Literature in Honour of Flora Roy*, ed. Jane Campbell, James Doyle, and Flora Roy (Waterloo, Ont: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978), 4. Mckill explains, 'the Offering of Isaac episode is pre-eminent among other scenes of sacrifice, however, both in its rich typological and liturgical significance, and in terms of its dramatic and climactic effect suitable for conclusion.'

the Mass in the *supra quae* prayer of the Roman Rite.[59] The *Genesis A* poet emphasises Melchizedek's blessing of Abraham, which comes in the form of a speech pronouncing God's special protection of Abraham and finally, a blessing 'through his hands'. Melchizedek is called 'Godes bisceop' (2123) and his blessing, which includes a prayer for Abraham's spiritual protection, is reminiscent of the many blessings given by Bishop John in Bede. In these accounts, the physical gesture of making the sign of the cross receives emphasis, especially in the Old English translation.[60]

Abraham makes four sacrifices, which are accompanied by commonplace, prayerful epithets concerning the nature of God: he is 'lifes leoht-fruman' (the source of life and light, 1792 and 1889); 'gasta helme' (protector of souls, 1793); 'lif frean' (life Lord, 1808); 'ecan Drihtne' (eternal Lord, 1885); 'þeodne engla' (prince of angels, 1888). These prayers each demonstrate Abraham's personal knowledge of God. This is an important part of Abraham's ability to intercede, as God explains to Abimelech:

> 'He is god and glæw, mæg self sprecan,
> geseon sweglcyning. ….
> .... He abbidan mæg,
> gif he ofstum me ærendu wile,
> þeawfæst and geþyldig, þin abeodan.' (2658-68)
> [He is good and wise, and may himself speak with God, see the shining king…. He can pray, if he wishes to deliver your prayer to me, virtuous and patient.]

This same sentiment – that Abraham is able to intercede for Abimelech – appears in the Vulgate, where Abraham's ability to intercede is tied to his role is a prophet. The Old English expands on this notion, insisting that Abraham can intercede because he

[59] The prayer asks for God to accept the sacrifice of the Mass, just as he accepted those of Abel, Abraham and Melchizedek.
[60] See the Old English Bede, Book V, chapters 2-6, in which the translator frequently translates *benedictione*, blessing, with the Old English *geblætsode & gesægnode*, often offering slightly expanded treatments of John's miracles of healing. Thomas Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (London, Pub. for the Early English Text Society by N. Trübner and co., 1890), 386-404.

can speak with and see God. Abraham is frequently called *halga* in the poem (2057, emphasising his status as a saint to whom readers of the poem can also pray. Ironically, Abimelech *is* able to pray to God and to speak with him, and the prayer of Abimelech is one of the few prayers narrated in *Genesis A*. He speaks to God in his sleep:

> 'Hwæt, þu æfre, engla þeoden,
> þurh þin yrre wilt alder lætan,
> heah, beheowan þæne þe her leofað
> rihtum þeawum, bið on ræde fæst,
> modgeþance and him miltse
> to þe seceð? ' (2643-49a)
> [Lo, will you ever, prince of angels, in your anger let one be cut off from life who lives here with right customs, who is firm in counsel, thoughtful in mind, and who looks to you for mercy?]

Abraham's ability to pray *effectively* and to heal Abimelech and his house is different from Abimelech's ability to speak with God, or even to recognise God's attributes.

Abraham's status as a saint and intercessor in *Genesis* culminates in his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, which is related to Christ's willingness to die and, therefore, to the salvation of humanity. Abraham's obedience foreshadows Christ's obedience and creates an association between his ability to intercede and Christ's ultimate intercession. This means that Abraham is both imitable but also one of the special holy men through whom salvation is accomplished: one ought to imitate Abraham in the same way one imitates other saints, while also recognising their special status as a holy intercessor. For this reason, the poet emphasises Abraham's immediate and complete mental assent to the task at hand: he is 'stið-hydig' (strong in mind, 2897), girded with the fear of God, which dwells within his breast (2865-7). The poet also creates a sense of haste and speed in Abraham's fulfillment of the task (2873).

Genesis ends with the fulfillment of its opening imperative: Abraham gives thanks to the *gifena Drihten* (the Lord of gifts, or graces, 1936). Throughout the poem,

including the interpolated *Genesis B*, prayer is presented as praise, thanksgiving and penance, and the prayers of the biblical narrative are adopted into a framework that brings them into contact with the devotional lives of readers. Furthermore, the prayers of *Genesis A* relate biblical prayers to the experience of prayer found in the liturgy, especially the Mass. While this reflects the influence of the liturgy on the composition of these poems, it also imparts a particular meaning to the biblical prayers: they are related to the history of salvation, in which the reader is an active participant. Furthermore, the particularly penitential character of *Genesis B* and the depiction of Adam and Eve as characters whose lives of prayer teach readers about the fundamental spirit, and even postures, of penitential prayer, is of particular interest. This kind of prayer may have been of particular interest to the creator of Junius 11's exemplum, and whoever chose to import these scenes into *Genesis A*. While the details of the poem's composition remain obscure, we can see, even within the relatively straight forward narrative of *Genesis A*, how the composer of both poem and manuscript intended for his audience to be instructed, through biblical narrative, in the life of prayer.

Exodus

The narrative strategy of *Exodus*, with its highly figurative language and layers of allegorical interpretation, makes it a unique poem not only in the context of Junius 11 but also in the corpus of Old English poetry. Basic questions arise, and have dominated scholarship, about how the author of this poem intended his audience to read it and, furthermore, how subsequent generations of readers, including the Junius compiler, read this poem.[61] Authorial intent and reader response are both fundamentally important in this discussion of Old English verse, which is primarily interested in how both authors and readers (both potentially vexed terms when speaking of Anglo-Saxon poetry) used the medium of verse as an aid to the life of prayer.

[61] J.W. Earl provides a comprehensive summary of the typological background of *Exodus*: "Christian Traditions and the Old English *Exodus*," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 71 (1970): 541–70.

At the most basic level, we can presume that the compiler of Junius 11 chose *Exodus* for inclusion in his collection primarily because it constituted an important narrative element in his greater story. Ultimately, the number of poems from which the original compiler could choose is unknowable, and it is likely that *Exodus* was chosen for its content as much as its style. It is also uncertain to what, if any, extent the compiler altered the poem for inclusion in the manuscript. The case of *Genesis B* reveals the willingness, if not the possibility of alteration to a poem in this collection; *Exodus*, as it currently exists, is an incomplete poem.

Exodus begins with Moses at the end of his confrontation with Pharaoh, which goes unmentioned in the poem. Thus, the poet begins his poem somewhere around Exodus 13, but with very little attention to the development of the biblical narrative. *Genesis* ends with the biblical narrative of chapter 22 and, like *Exodus*, skips all material relating to Egypt and the Israelite captivity. Between *Genesis* and *Exodus*, then, the manuscript moves from hero to hero (Abraham to Moses) and exile to exile.

Exodus, from its opening lines, signals the identification of the plight of the Israelites with that of the Christian. The poet tells of Moses, the law, and the promises and purposes of exile:

> Hwæt! We feor and neah gefrigen habbað
> ofer middangeard Moyses domas,
> wræclico wordriht, wera cneorissum,
> in uprodor eadigra gehwam
> æfter bealusiðe bote lifes,
> lifigendra gehwam langsumne ræd,
> hæleðum secgan. … (1-7a)
> [Listen! We have heard tell far and near over the earth of the judgments of Moses, promises made in exile to generations of men, proclaim to men the compensation of heavenly life for each of the blessed after the deadly journey, and to each living person everlasting counsel.]

Hauer calls the quest of the Israelites 'an Old Testament type of the Christian life', an identification that is common in patristic commentary and certainly in the mind of the *Exodus* poet.[62] The desert and exile are both metaphorically related to the plight of the Christian on earth and, indeed, the biblical Exodus is frequently invoked as a precedent for *perigrenatio* or the idea of 'pilgrimage'.[63] So central is the event of the exodus to the poet that it takes up the whole poem and there is no reference at all to the Israelite's entry into the Promised Land. It is the *lange lust / leofes siðes* (lasting desire for the beloved journey, 53), rather than the hope of a new land, that drives the Israelites into exile. The *Exodus* poet thus makes the entire narrative one of escape into the desert, where the Israelites might stand against the Egyptian army and seek God. The opening of the poem makes it clear that the promise of exile is heavenly *bot*, a term whose meaning ranges from 'reward' to 'atonement' or 'remedy' and which often has a penitential undertone. After undertaking a journey in the desert, the Christian is rewarded with absolution in heaven, making the experience of exile into a semi-purgative state of spiritual seeking. The poem, then, is fundamentally about the spiritual experience of exile as it relates not only to the Israelites but, more importantly, to the Church.[64] While there are few explicit references to prayer in *Exodus*, the life of exile was intended to allow men and women to experience God, as Moses did. Thus, metaphorically *Exodus* relates the struggles of the spiritual life in exile and the reality of God's presence in the 'desert'.

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[62] Stanley R. Hauer, "The Patriarchal Digression in the Old English 'Exodus', Lines 362-446," *Studies in Philology* 78, no. 5 (1981): 85; James H. Wilson, *Christian Theology and Old English Poetry* (The Hague; Paris: Mouton, 1974), 110–140.

[63] Peter Harbison makes some reference to the biblical basis of the idea of *perigrenatio*: Peter Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland: The Monuments and the People* (Syracuse University Press, 1995), 34. *Perigrenatio* is known in Old English as a form of exile and, as several influential studies have shown, the Celtic idea of *perigrenatio* made its way into Old English literature, transforming the experience of exile into a spiritual metaphor. See especially Dorothy Whitelock, "The Seafarer and the Peregrinatio pro Amore Dei," in *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe*, ed. Cyril Fox, H. Munro Chadwick, and Bruce Dickins, vol. H.M. Chadwick memorial studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 259–72.

[64] This metaphor is particularly pronounced in the representation of the Israelites as *sæmen* (105), the Egyptians and *landmenn* (179) and the representation of the cloud of God's protection as a ship, a conventional representation of the Church. Sobecki, *The Sea and Medieval English Literature*, 89; Zacher, *Rewriting the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon Verse*; Peter J. Lucas, "Landemenn and the Destruction of Egyptian Idols: Two Notes on the Old English *Exodus*," *Notes and Queries*, 1990, 139–41.

The flight from Egypt is a flight from the evil of captivity, which is metaphorically descriptive of sin and evil. As we have seen, the Harley fragment refers to the devil as 'Egypt'. Prayer 51 in Cerne invokes the same metaphor. In these prayers, the Israelites' delivery from Egypt is quite clearly a metaphor for the defeat of sin and evil in the life of the Christian. God's defeat of Pharaoh is a metaphor for his defeat of *inimicos*. Pharaoh, quite simply, represents the devil. He is repeatedly called *feond* and *andsaca*, and the Egyptians referred to as *hergas on helle* (46). Such a typological understanding of the exodus is made possible by the poet's selectiveness – Pharaoh is a one-dimensional anti-hero with none of the psychological complexity of the biblical figure. Indeed, the story of the exodus becomes the story of Moses, primarily, and his people.

Moses' heroic status is another of the poem's features that is reminiscent of Cassian's interpretation of the Exodus. Christopher Kelly notes that the Mosaic narrative is quoted in 'all but five *Conferences*, and of these five, two still mention Moses by name.' He also notes Moses' status as an 'archetypal monk' throughout the *Conferences*.[65] This comes primarily through his experiences of theophany, which was a major theme in Cassian's works. According to the poet, the first time God spoke to Moses was when he revealed to him *soð-wundra fela* (24), many truths concerning the creation of the world and, critically, his own name.[66] After this, God lifted up *Faraones feond* (32) with power. Moses is also the leader of the people, and is described in the poem as a shepherd. In Conference 3.4, Cassian reminds his audience that it was 'through Moses that the children of Israel were delivered from the Egyptian bondage.' In the context of the poem, Moses' leadership is envisioned as a militaristic leadership, which is in keeping with the vernacular idiom, He is *leof Gode, leoda aldor, / horsc and hreðergleaw, herges wisa, / freom folctoga* (beloved of God, a wise and prudent leader of the people, commander of the army, a strong general, 12-14).

Yet Moses also provides spiritual leadership, which is frequently conflated with his military leadership, as at lines 211-220:

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[65] Christopher J. Kelly, *Cassian's Conferences: Scriptural Interpretation and the Monastic Ideal* (Routledge, 2016).
[66] As revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14.

Wæron orwenan eðelrihtes,
sæton æfter beorgum in blacum reafum,
wean on wenum; wæccende bad
eall seo sibgedriht somod ætgædere
maran mægenes, oð Moyses bebead
eorlas on uhttid ærnum bemum
folc somnigean, frecan arisan,
habban heora hlencan, hycgan on ellen,
beran beorht searo, beacnum cigean
sweot sande near. … (211-20a)

[They were despairing of the true homeland, sat along the hills in pale garments, in expectation of woe: waking, the band of kinsmen all waited together for the more powerful army, until Moses commanded the noblemen at dawn to summon the people with brazen trumpets, the bold men to rise up, to take up their armour, to consider their courage, to bear their bright arms, to call the band to the beacons near the sand.]

This scene, which retells the events of Exodus 15, occurs after the Egyptians attempt to attack the Israelite army the previous evening, raising an *atol æfen-leoð* (terrible evening song, 201). An angel intervenes to conceal and protect the army and the Israelites are able to rest for the night, all excepting Moses' companions who keep watch and await their leader's command. The poet's description of the army elders, Moses included, watching through the night until the dawn in worn out clothing and contemplating their homeland is a variation of the biblical narrative. Nevertheless, the poet's diction draws parallels between *wæccende* of the kinsmen and the prayer vigil. They stay awake all night contemplating their status as exiles and considering the Promised Land. The phrase *wean on wenum*, as Scott Gwara explains, is used elsewhere in the corpus 'explicitly to describe exile or extermination'. *Wea*, then, has a double meaning, and refers both to military defeat and also to the pain of exile.[67] The association between the Israelites' watching and prayer may have been implied, for a monastic audience, in the Vulgate's description of a *vigilia matutina* (14:24).

[67] Scott Gwara, *Heroic Identity in the World of Beowulf* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 71.

Furthermore, in the biblical narrative and in the poem, the time for battle is *on uhttid*, the hour before dawn. The poet mentions morning three times, emphasising the Israelite's military victory at this hour. The Israelites' victory at dawn is also significant in light of the theme of spiritual warfare developed throughout the poem. The terror of night is a consistent motif. This motif takes shape most dramatically in the appearance of a 'niht geweard' (night watchman, 116) who appears to guard the camp from the 'westen-gryre, / har hæð-broga' (desert terror, the hoary heath fear, 117b-118a). Both *gryre* and *broga* might refer to mental states as well as a physical presence. Most probably *westen-gryre* is fear personified, referring both to mental turmoil and the real presence of the demonic in the desert, a common motif in the ascetic tradition of the desert fathers. Later in the poem, at midnight, wolves sing an 'atol æfen-leoð' (165), which stands in contrast to the performance of song in the remainder of the poem, usually following the hour of victory at dawn.

At the climax of the poem, prior to the crossing of the red sea, Moses commands his army to pray:

> ' ... Eow is lar Godes
> abroden of breostum. Ic on beteran ræd,
> þæt ge gewurðien wuldres aldor,
> and eow lif-frean lissa bidde,
> sigora gesynto, þær ge siðien.
> Þis is se ecea Abrahames God,
> frum-sceafta frea, se ðas fyrd wereð,
> modig and mægen-rof, mid þære miclan hand.' (268b-75)
> [The knowledge of God has been taken away from your breasts. I give you better counsel, that you should honour the prince of glory, and pray to the lord of life for grace, for prosperity in battles, when you go forth. This is the eternal God of Abraham, the lord of creation, who protects this army, mighty and powerful, with that great hand.]

This passage is expanded considerably from Moses' speech in the Vulgate, which merely instructs the army not to fear.[68] Moses claims that the Israelites are now deprived of *lar Godes* and, to remedy the situation, offers a prayer that reflects on God's nature, his relationship with Abraham, and his ability to protect the army. The purpose of Moses' prayer is to restore the knowledge of God to Israel so that they might perceive with confidence the miracle about to take place. He does this by reminding the Israelites of who God is, his eternal attributes and his special protection of Israel.

Several critics have drawn attention to the typological significance of the Exodus narrative and the crossing of the Red Sea as a type of Christian baptism and the Harrowing of Hell.[69] From the point of view of both of these associations, the poet's emphasis on the early morning is understandable: the harrowing was understood to have taken place before the dawn, at the same time in which catechumens were baptised at the conclusion of the Easter Vigil. This leads us to the association between the events covered in *Exodus* and the lections for the Easter Vigil. Material extraneous to the Exodus narrative appears with the so-called 'patriarchal digressions', which retell the stories of Noah (362-76) and Abraham (380-446). James Bright was the first to suggest a close relationship between the Old English *Exodus* and the Holy Saturday lectionary readings.[70] Few critics accept the full extent of Bright's analysis, and it is reasonably clear that the full range of Holy Saturday readings are not incorporated into *Exodus*. It is more likely, as Daniel Anlezark argues, that the range of sources consulted in the construction of *Exodus*' digressions 'points to an inspired poet ruminating on sacred history and drawing on a well-trained memory.'[71] Furthermore, Anlezark notes the likelihood that the *Exodus* poet was, in the episode of Isaac's sacrifice, deliberately alluding to the liturgy, 'creating a

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[68] Exodus 14.13. 'et ait Moses ad populum nolite timere state et videte magnalia Domini...'
[69] For the relationship of the Exodus to the Harrowing, see Earl, "Christian Traditions and the Old English *Exodus*," 568; Portnoy, *The Remnant*, 413.
[70] James Bright, "The Relation of the Cædmonian *Exodus* to the Liturgy," *Modern Language Notes* 27 (1912): 97–103. More recently, Remley had suggested a lectionary as the possible source for *Exodus:* Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 78-87 and 168-230. For an alternative interpretation of these passages and a possible relationship with the book of Wisdom, see Daniel Anlezark, "Connecting the Patriarchs: Noah and Abraham in the Old English *Exodus*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 104, no. 2 (2005).
[71] Anlezark, "Connecting the Patriarchs: Noah and Abraham in the Old English *Exodus*," 188.

thematic association between the context of the reading in the vigil and the events unfolding in the poem.'[72] In this case, it may be that the poet is attempting to remind the audience of their own experience of prayer to emphasise the significance of the events taking place for the every day Christian. Thus, Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac looks forward at all points to the paschal sacrifice and the promise of redemption.

Exodus concludes with the crossing of the Red Sea and an oblique reference to the canticle of Moses and Miriam. Having reached dry land, the *sige byman* (victory trumpets, 565) sound. The poet tells how

> Hreðdon hilde spelle, siððan hie þam herge wiðforon;
> hofon hereþreatas hlude stefne,
> for þam dæd-weorce Drihten heredon,
> weras wuldres sang; wif on oðrum,
> folc-sweota mæst, fyrð-leoð golan
> aclum stefnum eal-wundra fela. (574-79)
> [They triumphed with a battle song, after they had escaped from the army; the army bands raised up with a loud voice, the men sang a song of glory, they praised the Lord for the day's work; the women on the other side, a greatest of multitudes, sung a war song with excited voices about many wonders.]

The song of Moses and Miriam was used as an Old Testament canticle in the Divine Office. Here, the poet alludes to the songs but emphasises the fact that they were sung by the whole army. Aside from an earlier speech (or song) by Moses which, Irving argues, is influenced both by Psalm 104 and by the Canticle of Moses, no direct translation of either canticle is given.[73] This is dramatically different from *Daniel*, in which the Old Testament canticles take up a great part of the poem. The *Exodus* poet, it seems, assumes knowledge of the canticles and offers a commentary on their significance: the Israelites, delivered from the Red Sea, praise God in unity with war songs (*hilde-spelle*, 574; *fyrd-leoð*, 578).

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[72] Ibid., 187, ft. 45.
[73] E.B. Irving points out that lines 554-564 probably 'reflects a non-Vulgate version of Ex. 15, 2, such as that contained in the Vespasian Psalter': "New Notes on the Old English *Exodus*," *Anglia* 90 (1972): 322.

Exodus ends with the famous *æfrisc meowle* crux, either a representation of Moses' African wife or, following Song of Songs, a reference to the church.[74] In either case, the final image is one of exuberance and deliverance which, as Earl points out, makes sense in light of a tradition which viewed the crossing of the Red Sea itself as a microcosm of Christian salvation. The Israelites never enter into the Promised Land in this poem and, by the time the manuscript resumes with *Daniel*, we find the Israelites in exile once again. References to prayer are oblique in *Exodus* and, while it is hard to isolate prayer as a particular theme or focus in this poem, the poet nevertheless draws on the language of prayer, particularly in the context of spiritual warfare, to bolster his depiction of the Israelite journey through the Red Sea as a type of the Christian life. The poem ends with the judgment of the Egyptians, the *werigend* who 'lagon on deað-stede' (lay in the death place, 549b-590a). There is, perhaps, a hint of irony in the description of the Egyptians as laying dead, since the verb *licgan* might also denote a pose of prostration in prayer. In any case, their prostrate, lifeless bodies juxtapose the uplifted hands of the Israelites, who have received their *bote* (583); a term that refers both to health and to the remedy of penance. *Exodus* ends with a direct comparison of the spiritual health of the Israelites and the destruction of their Egyptian pursuers, or in the common metaphor of the ninth-century prayer books, between healing and death.

Daniel

Daniel begins with an historical, extra-biblical account of the Israelites settled in the city of Jerusalem. This passage, according to Remley, is evidence for the medieval practice of *ruminatio*, and represents a complex synthesis of biblical materials relating to the history of the Israelites and the Babylonians.[75] The poet's point, however, is quite straightforward. Israel had lived prosperously in God's *eces rædes*, enjoying the benefits of divine wisdom and a covenant relationship with God. Israel chose, however, to forsake the creator's love and embrace instead the *deofoles cræft*. The prologue to *Daniel* introduces the themes of good and wicked counsel that are

[74] Ellen E. Martin, "Allegory and the African Woman in the Old English 'Exodus'," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 81, no. 1 (1982): 1–15.
[75] Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 260.

consistently juxtaposed for the remainder of the poem. Daniel is 'snotor and soðfæst' (151) where King Nebuchadnezzar's advisors are called 'deofol-witgan' (128). When the king commands his people to bow down before an idol, the poet defines him as *rædleas* (without counsel) implying that his devilish counselors have rendered him unable to operate with any wisdom. The poet then completes this chain of associations by implying that Nebuchadnezzar, deprived of counsel, is unable to give good counsel to his people and thus fulfil his duty as king. While the biblical account suggests that Nebuchadnezzar compelled his people to worship an idol, the *Daniel* poem instead implies that the people followed Nebuchadnezzar's *example* rather than his command:

> Þa hie for þam cumble on cneowum sæton,
> onhnigon to þam herige hæðne þeode,
> wurðedon wih-gyld, ne wiston wræston ræd,
> efndon unrihtdom, swa hyra aldor dyde,
> mane gemenged, mode gefrecnod.
> Fremde folc-mægen, swa hyra frae ærest,
> unræd efnde (him þæs æfter becwom
> yfel ende-lean), unriht dyde. (180-7)
> [Then before that image they went on their knees, the heathen nation bowed to that idol, worshiped the pagan God, they did not know a better counsel, performed unrightousness, just as their lord did, sullied by sin, arrogant in mind. The mighty people did unrighteous deeds, just as their lord did, acted without counsel (an evil reward later came to them for that).]

The poet's emphasis on the Babylonian peoples' ignorance is reminiscent of the *Beowulf* poet's lament over the Danes' prayers to the *gastbona* (soul-slayer, 177). The *Beowulf* poet points out, with more than a hint of irony, that the Danes sat *ræd eahtedon* (mighty at counsel, 172), before turning in depseration to the worship of false Gods. The Danes, like the Babylonians, were deprived of the knowledge of the true God and do not know how to praise him.[76] Consistently, Junius 11 emphasises

[76]'metod hie ne cuþon, / dæda demend, ne wiston hie drihten God / ne hie huru heofena helm herian ne cuþon / wuldres waldend.' *Beowulf*, 180b-183a. R.D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork and

that knowledge of God is central to the life of prayer. Over and against these models of bad counsel stand the figures of Daniel and the three youths, who provide godly counsel to the king, teach him to praise God and ultimately affect his conversion. The *Daniel* poet subtly reworks his material to propel his narrative, which is implicit rather than explicit in the pseudepigraphical sources, given canonical status in the Vulgate. Nebuchadnezzar's conversion has long been recognised as the focal event in the *Daniel* poem.[77] The liturgical prayers embedded in *Daniel* are a critical component of the dramatisation of Nebuchadnezzar's conversion, and that the figure of the three youths in the furnace epitomizes the theme of good counsel given to guide a monarch.

The story of Daniel, especially the episode of the three youths in the furnace, held an important place in the liturgy and iconography of the medieval church.[78] More specifically, the story of the three youths and the associated *Canticum trium puerorum* is embedded in the earliest extant witnesses to the Anglo-Saxon monastic Office. The story was popular in insular Christian literature and iconography, as it had been in the early church. In Junius 11's poetic version of *Daniel*, the story of the three youths cast into the furnace takes up one third of the entire poem. By virtue of this fact, *Daniel* has, of all the Junius poems, the longest and most detailed representation of prayer. Criticism of the Old English *Daniel* has been historically dismissive of the poem's merit and originality. Paul Remley, whose indispensable, detailed source analysis of *Daniel* has made this study possible, nevertheless reminds us that, while there is much in the *Daniel* poem that reflects Anglo-Saxon social concerns, little of this is innovative, even though it does not appear in the original biblical story.[79]

John D. Niles (ed.), *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburgh*, 4th edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 8-9.

[77] Robert Emmett Finnegan, "The Old English Daniel: The King and His City," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 85 (1984): 194–211; Graham D. Caie, "The Old English Daniel: A Warning against Pride," *English Studies* 59, no. 1 (1978): 1–9.

[78] The figure of the youths in the furnace has great weight in the early church, both in liturgy and iconography. From extremely early times, a prayer has existed in the Judeo-Christian tradition in which various Old Testament figures are invoked in a time of need. See James Mearns, *The Canticles of the Christian Church, Eastern and Western, in Early and Medieval Times* (Cambridge, Univ. Press, 1914); R. T. Farrell, "Some Remarks on the Exeter Book 'Azarias'" *Medium Ævum* 41, no. 1 (1972): 1–8; "The Unity of Old English *Daniel*," *The Review of English Studies* 18, no. 70 (1967): 117–35.

[79] Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 327.

Nevertheless, the representation of prayer in *Daniel* repays careful attention and gives unique insight into aspects of the place of monastic prayer in Anglo-Saxon society.

Two prayers are at the heart of the *Daniel*'s dramatic action: the song of Azarias (*Oratio Azariae*) and the Song of the Three Youths (*Canticum trium puerorum*), both recited in the furnace. The *canticum trium puerorum* also appears in the Royal Prayer Book and the Book of Cerne. Portonoy has recently shown how the *Daniel* poem employs a 'ring-composition' structure to centralise these canticles. She also points out that each canticle is framed by a reference to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar.[80] Remley has demonstrated conclusively that the Old English rendition of the *Canticum trium puerorum* was inspired by a version of the monastic canticle.[81] He also notes the abbreviated form of the biblical *Oratio Azariae*, suggesting that this was most probably similarly based on a monastic canticle, but one that enjoyed significantly less prominence than the *Canticum trium puerorum*. Thanks to Remley's work is it now evident that the poet behind *Daniel* and *Azarias*, and also another scribe responsible for copying *Azarias*, were primarily acquainted with the *Canticum trium puerorum*, and perhaps the *Oratio Azarias*, as prayers from the monastic Office.

The impetus behind the episode of the three youths in the furnace is Nebuchadnezzar's command, brought about by bad counsel, that all should bow before a golden idol of his making. There is, again, a pointed irony in the poet's presentation of this situation. The youths would not obey the *earthly* king because of their steadfast obedience to the high king, the shepherd of souls (*gasta hyrde*, 199). The irony here stems from the fact that, for an Anglo-Saxon audience in particular, the king himself was meant to be the shepherd of his people defending them, in the words of Æthelwulf's preface to the *Regularis Concordia*, from the savage wolves.[82] Yet, in the *Daniel* poem, Nebuchadnezzar is called 'wolf-hearted' three times (116,

[80] Phyllis Portnoy, "Daniel and the Dew-Laden Wind: Sources and Structures," in *Old English Literature and the Old Testament*, ed. Michael Fox and Manish Sharma (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 195–228.
[81] Remley, "*Daniel*, the Three Youths Fragment and the Transmission of Old English Verse."
[82] *The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation*, ed. and trans. Thomas Symons, Medieval Classics (London; New York: Nelson, 1953), 2. 'Regali utque functus officio ueluti Pastorum Pastor sollicitus a rabidis perfidorum rictibus, uti hiantibus luporum faucibus. oues quas Domini largiente gratia studiosus collegerat muniendo eripuit.'

135, 246). His behaviour is thus precisely the opposite of what an Anglo-Saxon would expect from an ideal king. The emphasis on Nebuchadnezzar's inability to rule sets the stage for the songs of the obedient youths.

The first of the two canticles sung in the furnace is known as the *Oratio Azariae* and is usually taken by critics to be a request for deliverance. In the context of the book of Daniel, the song is one of repentance on behalf of the nation of Israel, a lament sung in exile and a plea for God to hold fast to his covenant with the faithful remnant. The Vulgate text specifies that they walked around in the midst of the flame, praising God.[83] However, the Old English *Daniel* has an angel descend into the furnace and fight against the flame on behalf of the youths. The poet dedicates fifty lines to the framing of Azarias' canticle, duplicating the angels' rescue to extend the narrative. The poet catalogues Nebuchadnezzar's responses. To begin with he is (following the Vulgate) *an-mod* and *yrre* (stubborn and angry, 224). When the angel descends into the fire, Nebuchadnezzar is *hreoh-mod* (fierce of mind, 241) and commands them, again, to be incinerated. When the *blið-mod* youths are incinerated, Nebuchadnezzar simply looks on. Just prior to Azarias' song, we hear that Nebuchadnezzar *geseah... ða his sefan ontrewode, wundor on wite angangen; him þæt wræclic þuhte* (saw… when he trusted his mind, a wonder happening in that punishment, 268-269). Progressively, Nebuchadnezzar's *mod*, initially filled with rage, is converted by the unfolding events. Yet still he remains *swið-mod*, obstinate, aware of a miracle yet unable to comprehend it (268). The *mod*, here, is the centre of emotion as well as intellect, and the poet appeals to both when contrasting the anger and obstinacy of the king with the joy of the youths. What is important here is the focus on Nebuchadnezzar's changing response in the lead up to the canticle.

The Song of Azarias was not used consistently as a canticle in the medieval Office. Remley notes that no extant witnesses exactly analogous to the Daniel canticle survives, and there is no direct evidence that the song was ever used as a liturgical canticle in Anglo-Saxon England.[84] Nevertheless, he concludes, it seems reasonable 'that a liturgical form of the prayer exerted an influence on the Old English version,

[83] Daniel 3:24: 'ambulabant in medio flammae laudantes Deum et benedicentes Domino.'
[84] Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 363.

although we have little idea what form such a prayer may have taken' and that, perhaps, this source could account for the abbreviated prayer found in *Daniel*.[85] Remley identifies several omissions in the version of the *Oratio Aariae* appearing in *Daniel* and *Azarias*. A lengthy and, for the Anglo-Saxon Christian, culturally inappropriate, passage concerning Temple sacrifice is omitted. More surprisingly, says Remley, 'given the scholarly tendency to view it as a prayer for deliverance, is the absence of any trace of the only supplication for deliverance that appears in the scriptural texts of the prayer.'[86] Furthermore, the sense of Azarias' prayer as a petition on behalf of Israel is diminished. There are also a number of additions to the prayer in both *Daniel* and *Azarias*. The Chaldeans are mentioned by name in the poems but not in the biblical version.[87] Both *Daniel* and *Azarias* begin with distinctive words of praise that do not appear in the original:

> 'Metod alwihta, hwæt! þu eart mihtum swið
> niðas to nergenne.'
> [Maker of all things, listen! You are mighty in power to save men. *Daniel*, 283-4b]

God's ability to save is the first point of acclamation. The youths sing praise to God who has already delivered them. It is clear, then, that the idea of the prayer as a plea for deliverance is, from the outset, subverted in the Old English rendition. The prayer, as it remains, is focussed on praise and intercessory petition to God. However, while the original petitions God on behalf of the sinful nation of Israel, the Old English canticle fails to mention Israel by name, referring only to the promises of the covenant (313-324). Rather, the canticle becomes a more generic song of national repentance, wherein the youths pray not only for their own deliverance but also for the deliverance of the nation in which they find themselves. In the very first line of the prayer, Azarias praises God's name which is *wlitig and wuldorfæst ofer werðeode* (beautiful and glorious over the nations, 285). The phrase 'over the nations' does not appear in the original, which is emphatically concerned with God's deliverance of the

[85] Remley, 367.
[86] Remley, 369.
[87] Remley, 369.

nation Israel. This reference to the nations is repeated at the end of the prayer, when the poet has Azarias ask:

> ‘Fyl nu frumspræce, ðeah heora fea lifigen!
> …
> Gecyð cræft and miht þæt þa Caldeas
> and folca fela gefrigen habbað,
> ða þe under heofenum hæðene lifigeað,
> and þæt þu ana eart ece drihten,
> weroda waldend, woruldgesceafta,
> sigora settend, soðfæst metod!’ (325-32)
> [Fulfil now that promise, though few of them live! … Make known the power and the might that the Chaldeans and many people have heard about, those who live as heathens under the heavens, and that you alone are eternal lord, ruler of hosts, of worldly creation, giver of victories, creator fast in truth.]

The original prayer asks that the persecuting pagans be confounded and defeated, while the *Daniel* poet softens this request and seems to be asking that the eyes of the Chaldeans be open to see the wonder of God. The *Oratio Azariae* in *Daniel* is, therefore, transformed into a song of praise for deliverance that has ostensibly already taken place, and a generalised song of repentance and petition spoken by holy Azarias and his companions on behalf of a nation.

The prayer specifically names sins of Israel, first mentioning crimes (*wom*) committed by the *yldran* (296-7). This sin is most clearly related to the sin of Israel, who *wommas wyrcean* when they began to turn away from God. However, the remainder of the sins listed find parallels in the poem not in Israel’s actions but in the sins of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. Azarias confesses the *oferhygdum* of the *burhsittende* in breaking commandments (*braecon bebodu*). Nebuchadnezzar is called *oferhygd* five times in the poem (107, 489, 494, 614) and Belshazzar once (678), but this term is never used of the Israelites. Similarly, *burh* is used in the poem to refer to Babylon four times (47: *on his burhstende* (referring to Nebuchadnezzar); 600: *Babilone burh*;

608: *mære burh*; 665) and only once to refer to the *winburh* of Israel (58). Similarly, the poet uses the term 'citizen' four times, each time denoting the citizens of Babylon and those under the command of Nebuchadnezzar (179, 659 (*Babilone burhsittendum*), 724, 729). This language links the prayer of Azarias to the theme of city and empire found in the rest of the poem.[88] The content of Azarias' plea for national repentance changes from a prayer on behalf of Israel to a prayer on behalf of the *burhsittendum*, which incorporates the city dwellers of Babylon. This quite radical departure from the meaning of the *Oratio Azariae* fits in with the narrative of the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar and his people, over whom he exercises such kingly influence.

Unlike the *Oratio Azariae*, the Song of the Three Youths (*Canticum Trium Puerorum*) was used extensively in the monastic Office. This prayer, and its relationship to the prayer in *Azarias*, has been the subject of close scrutiny from Remley, who concludes that the text of the *Canticum Trium Puerorum* in *Daniel* was based on a version of the monastic canticle influenced by Greek models, and that the *Azarias* poet makes changes to the text based on the *Gallicanum* canticle text, probably around the time of the Benedictine Reform. This canticle had an ancient association with the Morning Office, a time for praise and penitential prayer. The Rule of Saint Benedict also prescribed the singing of Old Testament canticles for Sunday Nocturns.[89]

While *Daniel* follows the sequence of the apocryphal additions to the book of Daniel, there are several significant deviations and extrapolations from the biblical account that have bearing on the discussion at hand. Watching on from outside the fire, Nebuchadnezzar is advised by one of his counselors that he should pay heed to the miracle taking place before his eyes and release the men from the fire. The king's *ræswa*, 'wis and word-gleaw' (wise and shrewd of speech), exclaims:

... 'þæt is wudra sum
þæt we ðær eagum on lociað.

[88] Earl R. Anderson, "Style and Theme in the Old English *Daniel*," in *The Poems of MS Junius 11: Basic Readings*, ed. R.M. Liuzza (New York: Routledge, 2002), 229–60.
[89] Mearns, *The Canticles of the Christian Church, Eastern and Western, in Early and Medieval Times*.

Geðenc, þeoden min, þine gerysna.
Ongyt georne hwa þa gyfe sealde
gingum gædelingum. Hie God herigað,
anna ecne, and ealles him
be naman gehwan on neod sprecað,
þanciað þrymmes þristum wordum,
cweðað he sie ana ælmihtig God,
witig wuldor-cyning, worlde and heofona.
Aban þu þa beornas, brego Caldea,
ut of ofne. Nis hit onwihtes god
þæt hie sien on þam laðe leng þonne þu þurfe.' [417b-429.]
[That is some miracle that we look on with our eyes. Consider, my prince, your duty. Understand clearly who has given that grace to these young companions. They praise God, alone eternal, and by each and every name call on him in need, they thank him for glory with bold words, say that he alone is almighty God, the wise king of glory, the world and the heavens. Call the men, prince of the Chaldeans, out of the oven. It is not in any way good that you should leave them in there any longer than you have need.]

This character is wholly invented. The *ræswa* is a critical figure in this retelling of *Daniel* because he provides a commentary for what, precisely, is taking place with the prayer of the youths. The first thing to note, again, is the emphasis on good counsel, epitomised here by the words of the king's wise advisor who has, in turn, been inspired by the prayers of the youths. The advisor urges three things of the king: that he consider his *gerysna*, or duty; that he hear and appreciate the way that the youths thank God; and, finally, that he not leave the youths in the fire longer than he has 'need'. The king's duty is most obviously his ability to give orders yet, in a deeper sense, it is also the duty of the king to lead the people. As we have seen, the poet insists on this point especially, that it was Nebuchadnezzar's bad *example* even more than his bad *command* that led his people into peril. His advisor, therefore, asks him to focus on right leadership of the people. He then gives the content of the youth's prayer in words that mirror not only the language of their prayers but also the language used by Nebuchadnezzar later, when he eventually commands his people to

pray like the youths. All this suggests that the youths have demonstrated true leadership by teaching Nebuchadnezzar and his people how to pray. Yet the poet goes further still in the counselor's speech. His final sentiment, suggesting somehow that the youths burning in the fire fulfills some need (*þurfe*) of Nebuchadnezzar's, might be read in a number of ways. The *ræswa* might here be suggesting that Nebuchadnezzar needed to make an example of the youths to retain his authority. Yet, if this was the king's intention, it has failed spectacularly and there is nothing to be gained by keeping the youths in the fire. In the context of the counselor's speech, it is most likely that the *ræswa* is here suggesting that the prayers of the youths have been efficacious for both the king and the people so far, but that it is not appropriate to keep them in the fire for longer than they need to be transformed in heart and mind and to learn to praise God for themselves.

The youths, instructed by Nebuchadnezzar to come to him, obey the king for the first time (430). This theme of obedience is pronounced: it is now possible for the youths, who were praised for their obedience of God, to demonstrate their allegiance to the king, God's representative. Immediately, the poet speaks of Nebuchadnezzar's change of heart. Then follows a remarkable passage in which Nebuchadnezzar begins the praise of God, echoing strongly the words of the youths and following, indirectly, the advice of the *ræswa*, who explains that the youths pray well because they praise god with thanksgiving:

‘’

> ‘Onhicgað nu halige mihte,
> wise wundor Godes! We gesawon
> þæt he wið swealme gebearh cnihtum on ofne,
> lacende lig, þam þe his lof bæron;
> forþam he is ana ece Drihten,
> dema ælmihtig, se ðe him dom forgeaf,
> spowende sped, þam þe his spel berað.’ (472-478)
> [Consider now the holy might, the wise wonder of God! We saw that he protected the boys from death in the oven, the leaping flame, those who bore his praise; therefore is alone is eternal Lord, almighty judge, he who gave them glory, good success, those who carry his message.]

Remley, remarking on this passage, notes the exaggerated emphasis on Nebuchadnezzar's conversion:

> The Old English version goes further than most scriptural accounts in having Nebuchadnezzar appear after his conversion as an active proselyte. The poem even risks effecting a typological absurdity by characterising the rehabilitated ruler as a virtual precursor of St Paul.[90]

Of course, Nebuchadnezzar's conversion and the redemption of the Chaldeans is short-lived. What is central, though, is the power of the youths' prayer and their ability to affect both king and nation through the practice of prayer.

The centrality of the episode of the three youths in *Daniel*, then, comes along with a slight shift in the presentation of the youths' prayer. The poet depicts the three youths praying prayers not of deliverance but of intercession for the king and his people. The fact that these two prayers were most familiar to literate Anglo-Saxons as prayers of the Office perhaps contributed to the poet's sense of their intercessory function. The depiction in *Daniel* of the three youths in a monastic role praying for the king and the people is consistent with the theories and practices of Anglo-Saxon monastic culture and its relationship with the monarchy. The *Regularis Concordia* famously commands monks and nuns to pray for the king and his family at every canonical hour throughout the day. Æthelwold, in the preface to the *Regularis Concordia*, appeals to tradition when defending this practice, stating that these prayers are a part of the common heritage of the whole English Church and that they should be prayed *usu patrum*, according to the practice of our fathers.[91] This practice is attested, furthermore, as early as the eighth century Canons of Clofesho. Canon 15 reminds religious men and women to pray for the king, while Canon 30 repeats and expands this command (*pro regibus ac ducibus totiusque populi Christiani*), commanding that

[90] Remley, *Old English Biblical Verse*, 283.
[91] Thomas Symons, ed., *The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation*, Medieval Classics (London ; New York: Nelson, 1953), 5.

monks pray for the well-being and protection of the king.[92] In the *Regularis Concordia*, prayers for the king and his family are explicitly penitential. The New Minster Charter, roughly contemporary with the *Regularis Concordia* and probably composed by Æthelwold, gives further insight into the practice of praying for kings as it had developed by the tenth century:

> Abbas autem armis succinctus spiritualibus monachorum cuneo hinc inde vallatus carismatum celestium rore perfusus. aerias demonum expugnans versuitaias, regem omnemque qui regminis clerum. Christo cuius virtute dimicant iuvante a rabida hostium persecutione invisibilium sollerter spiritus gladio defendens fidei scuto subtili protegens tutamine robusto prelians triumpho miles eripiat inperterritus.[93]

It is the duty of the monk to defend the king from invisible enemies. The monk here is pictured as a spiritual warrior, girded with the spiritual armour of prayer. The next section of the charter explains the king's inverse responsibility to protect the *monachos* 'ab hominem persecutione'. So, while the king is required to protect the church from visible enemies, the church is needed to fight spiritual battles for the king.

The picture of the monastic canticles as critical in the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar developed in *Daniel* is completely contradicted by the narrative of the Exeter Book's *Azarias*. *Azarias* presents a narrative that is slightly more straightforward, without the invention of the king's *ræswa* or Nebuchadnezzar's dramatic experience of conversion to the God of Israel. Which particular version of the poem represents an

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[92] Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, Volume 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869), 375: 'Divinam intercessanter exorent clementiam, quatenus quietam ac tranquillam vitam sub eorum pia defensione.'

[93] 'Moreover, let the abbot, girded with spiritual arms, defended on all sides by a troop of monks, drenched with the dew of celestial gifts, conquering the phantom-like tricks of devils, skillfully defending with a sword of the spirit, protecting with the subtle shield of faith as a defence, fighting in hardy triumph as an undaunted soldier, snatch the king and all the clergy of his kingdom from the rabid persecution of invisible enemies, with the help of Christ, through whose power they contend.' 'Refoundation of the New Minster, 966', ed. and trans. Alexander R. Rumble, *The Anglo-Saxon Minsters of Winchester: Property and Piety in Early Medieval Winchester*, Winchester Studies, vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 88.

innovation is the matter of some debate. Nevertheless, we can see that the conception of the three youths as something akin to monastic intercessors was, at some point, a genuine innovation in the retelling of the story of Daniel. *Daniel* is particularly remarkable, then, for its representation of Old Testament stories in light of contemporary spiritual practice and its willingness to impose social morality on the depiction of prayer.

Daniel does not end with the triumphant conversion of Nebuchadnezzar. Rather, the poem ends with the abuses of Belshazzar who, in his pride (*wlenco*, 677), chose to misuse the sacred vessels of the temple as instruments for drunkenness. The poet draws a clear parallel between the temple vessels and liturgical vessels, using the term *husl fatu* (704) to describe them. The poem ends with Daniel's rebuke of Belshazzar, which is based on his unwillingness to acknowledge God's supremacy:

> 'No þæt þin aldor æfre wolde
> Godes fold-fatu in gylp beran,
> ne ðy hraðor hremde, ðeah ðe here brohte
> Israela gestreon in his æhte geweald,
> ac þæt oftor gecwæð aldor ðeoda
> soðum wordum ofer sin mægen,
> siððan him wuldres weard wundor gecyðde,
> þæt he wære ana ealra gesceafta
> Drihten and waldend; se him dom forgeaf,
> unscyndne blæd eorðan rices –
> and þu lignest nu þæt sie lifgende,
> se ofer deoflum dugeþum wealdeð.' (753-764)
>
> [Your father would not ever bear the golden vessles in arrogance, nor the more quickly boast, though he brought the treasures of Israel here into his possession under his rule, but that leader of nations spoke more often with true words over his forces. after the guardian of glory revealed a wonder to him, that he alone is Lord and ruler of all creation; he gave glory to him, the noble glory of the earth's riches – and now you deny that he is living, who rules over hosts of devils.]

Belshazzar's impiety stands in direct contrast to Nebuchadnezzar's acknowledgement of God as 'ana… ece Drihten' (330). Thus, the poem ends with Belshazzar's condemnation based on his unwillingness and inability to worship the true God. Critics remain divided as to whether these lines represent the original close of the poem, since the poem ends on the last line of a page and on the last page of a gathering. Lucas argues that the poem must have ended with the rest of the material from chapter 5 of the biblical Daniel, explaining the interpretation of the writing on the wall and Belshazzar's destruction.[94] Farrell, on the other hand, sees no compelling reason why the poem should be incomplete and points out that the poet has already dealt with destruction of Babylon earlier in the poem.[95] If Farrell is correct, then the poem ends with a specific focus on the king's failings and his judgment. Antonina Harbus, who considers the work complete, argues that

> the final lines of the poem, 'Daniel's' words of reproach to the arrogant Belthazzar, are a fitting conclusion to a work centering on the sin of pride and its manifestation in the refusal to acknowledge the absolute supremacy of God.[96]

In the ending, she suggests, Belshazzar is a foil for Nebuchadnezzar and a pertinent reminder that 'responsibility for turning to God comes from the individual, not from prophetic admonition, a theme not derived from the Vulgate account.'[97] Thus, *Daniel* ends with a warning against pride and a reminder of the Judgment that awaits the man who fails to pray, even misusing the sacred vessels of prayer, he who in his blindness will not recognise the true God. In ending with a scene of judgment, the structure of *Daniel* precisely parallels both *Exodus* and *Christ and Satan*, which conclude with scenes of God's judgment, first against the Egyptians and in the end of Satan.

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[94] Peter J. Lucas, "On the Incomplete Ending of *Daniel* and the Addition of *Christ and Satan* to MS Junius 11," *Anglia* 97 (1979): 46–59.
[95] Farrell, "The Structure of the Old English *Daniel*," 539.
[96] Antonina Harbus, "Nebuchadnezzar's Dreams in the Old English Daniel," *English Studies* 75, no. 6 (November 1994): 506.
[97] Harbus, 507.

Christ and Satan

Christ and Satan follows the course of three biblical and extra-biblical events: the fall of Satan, the Harrowing of Hell and the Temptation of Christ in the wilderness, including a chronology of the Resurrection that emphasises the point of view of Jesus' disciples. This achronological structure, according to Ruth Wehlau, is a deliberate feature of the poem which she attributes to the 'need to conclude the poem with a model that the human reader may be able to emulate.'[98] The poem ends with Christ's defeat of Satan, a potent model for the reader engaged in spiritual warfare. Yet, as Wehlau points out, *Christ and Satan* ultimately concludes with Satan's cries from hell. He has been defeated, but must still be resisted.

The unity of the poem remains debatable. Early critics, of whom Coynbeare is representative, referred to the work as an 'accumulation of detached fragments.'[99] These critics reached little consensus regarding the exact number and composition of these 'fragments'.[100] More recently, critics have looked for underlying unity in the poem. Bernard Huppé encouraged critics to focus on the underlying theme of *Christ and Satan*, 'the incommensurate might of God', and suggested that homiletic interjections in the poem provide moral commentary on thematic material.[101]

Generally, there are compelling reasons to accept the intended unity of both manuscript and poem. *Christ and Satan*, although a later addition to Junius 11, offers an important contribution to its main themes. Indeed, the person of Christ, the significance of his salvific work at all points in history, both in the past and in the present, and the spectre of his final Judgment are implied in the rest of the manuscript. As Karkov writes, 'the promise of salvation inherent in the benedictions bestowed on Adam, Eve, Noah and Abraham in *Genesis* is fulfilled in *Christ and Satan*, and the

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[98] Ruth Wehlau, "The Power of Knowledge and the Location of the Reader in *Christ and Satan*," in *The Poems of MS Junius 11: Basic Readings*, ed. R. M. Liuzza (New York: Routledge, 2013), 287.
[99] J. J. Conybeare, *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London : Harding and Lepard, 1826), 189.
[100] Robert Finnegan, *Christ and Satan: A Critical Edition* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978), 12–17.
[101] Bernard Felix Huppé, *Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1959), 227–31.

same creation which praised God in *Daniel* is now blessed by God, king of all creation, in *Christ and Satan*.'[102] The poem is particularly interested in the roles and responsibilities of humankind to praise its creator and is full of homiletic exhortations reminding readers that they ought to observe behaviours in the poem, imitate the good and reject the bad. This attitude to reading is reminiscent of Bede's preface to the *Ecclesiastical History* in which he outlines the purpose of his history: to show good models for imitation and poor models for rejection.[103]

Prayer, the principle occupation of the devotional life, sits at the center of *Christ and Satan*. Satan, whose deceptive words are a major element in Adam and Eve's temptation as it appears in *Genesis*, calls ironically on the language of prayer in many of his speeches to highlight the discrepancy between his former state of glorifying God and his fallen state. Satan acts as a foil for the reader and a potent example of how not to pray. In the second episode of *Christ and Satan*, the Harrowing of Hell provides a contrast to this picture of the arrogant and impious Satan with the prayers of the righteous souls in hell. The most obvious comparison drawn in the poem is between Satan and Christ. Sleeth identifies the theme of 'self exultation, which abases, and self-humbling, which exalts.'[104]

Christ and Satan begins, like *Genesis A*, in praise of God's creative power, albeit in a more descriptive and less hortatory mode. The idea of God as *meotod*, 'measurer', recurs throughout the poem. Quickly, the poem moves to the fall of Satan and his host. His speech is announced at line 34:

> Cleopað ðonne se alda ut of helle,
> wriceð wordcwedas weregan reorde,
> eisegan stefne: (34-36a)

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[102] Karkov, *Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England*, 261.
[103] Bede, *EH* preface, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 2-3: 'Should history tell of good men and their good estate, the thoughtful listener is spurred on to imitate the good; should it record the evil ends of wicked men, no less effectually the devout and earnest listener or reader is kindled to eschew what is harmful and perverse and with greater care to pursue those things which he has learned to be good and pleasing in the sight of God.'
[104] Charles R. Sleeth, *Studies in Christ and Satan*, McMaster Old English Studies and Texts ; 3 (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 20.

[Then the old one cries out from hell, expels word with evil speech, a terrible voice.]

The repetition of three phrases related to Satan's voice emphasise the importance of his speech. The verb *cleopað* may denote mere speech, but could also be translated as 'cried out'; it is a verb often used of prayer.[105] Satan's speech is emphatically evil, yet in it he looks back on the joys of heaven, which consisted primarily of the joys of heavenly prayer:

'Hwæt, we for Dryhtene iu dreamas hefdon,
song on swegle selrum tidum,
þær nu ymb ðone Ecan æðele stondað,
heleð ymb hehseld, herigað Drihten
wordu[m] and wercum; and ic in wite sceal
bidan in bendum, and me bættran ham
for oferhygdum æfre ne wene.' (44-50)
[Lo, we had joy in the presence of the Lord once, singing in splendor in better times, where now about the high seat, where now about the eternal one noblemen stand, praising the Lord with words and with works, and I shall remain in punishment bound in chains, and never expect a better home because of my pride.]

Satan's references to praise and singing in heaven stand in contrast to the wickedness of his current speech. He refers to the inhabitants of hell as the *gnornende cynn* (133), the lamenting tribe, whose laments are constant (53, 273, 279). Satan's words are forced out, like poison (*attre gelicost*), and he laments his rememberance of heaven's music (142, 144). This receives full treatment in his first speech:

' ... Ful oft wuldres [sweg]

[105] The *Dictionary of Old English* notes that the verb *clipian* translates both *clamare* and *invocare* and is used both in the sense of talking to God and invoking God. *Dictionary of Old English: A to H* online, ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey *et al*. (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2016).

brohton to bearme bearn Hælendes,
þær we ymb hine utan ealle hofan,
leomu ymb Leofne, lofsonga word,
Drihtne sædon. Nu ic eom dædum fah,
gewundod mid wommum; sceal nu þysne wites clom
beoran beornende in bæce minum,
hat on helle, hyhtwillan leas.' (153a-158)
[Very often the children of the Saviour bought wondeful song to his bosom, where we all gathered about him, limbs around the Beloved, spoke words of praise to the Lord. Now, I am stained by deeds, wounded with sins; now I must bear these burning bonds of punishment on my back, hot in hell, deprived of the hope of joy.]

These lines repeat almost exactly the sentiment already expressed by Satan: he remembers singing in heaven, the Lord's *lofsonga word*, but is now cut off from this music by his own sinfulness. Satan's words echo the words of the dreamer in *The Dream of the Rood*, who is 'synnum fah', and 'forwundod mid wommum' (13-14). Satan is identified with the ordinary sinner, except for the fact that his punishment is final and everlasting. The reader of the poem, on the other hand, is not 'hyhtwillan leas'. Satan is a figure of empathy to the degree that his story is a cautionary tale. The poet, in one of his typically homiletic passages, labours the lesson, reminding the reader to be mindful (*gehycgan*, 193) lest he anger the Son of God, and to take the plight of the 'blacan feond... to bysne' (the dark fiends... as an example, 195).

Later in this same passage, the poet again urges all men to turn their mind to the Lord:

... Gemunan we þone halgan Drihten;
ecne mid al[l]a gescefta ceosan us eard in wuldre
mid ealra cyninga Cyninge, se is Crist genemned;
beoran on breostum bliðe geþohtas,
sibbe and snytero; gemunan soð and riht,
þonne we to hehselde hnigan þencað,
and þone anwaldan ara biddan. (201b-207)

[Let us be mindful of the holy Lord. Let us, with all creation, choose for ourselves a home in glory with the King of all kings, who is called Christ; let us bear in our breasts happy thoughts, peaceful and wise; let us consider truth and justice, when we think to bow down to the high seat, and ask the ruler for mercy.]

Here, the poet equates the reader bowing down (*hnigan*) to the throne of heaven with the prayers of the angels, including those of Satan before he fell. The verb appears four times in the poem, once describing the prayers of the reader (above), once defining the actions of the angels (238), once describing the reaction of the apostles to the resurrection (530) and, finally, once describing Satan's obligation to bow to hell (374). The irony of Satan's need to bow to hell, and his hellish laments, indicate that his life in hell amounts to a perverted form of prayer. He is unable to escape the deference demanded of him. This sense of irony runs throughout the whole poem, carried by vocabulary that relates to prayer. Sleeth points out that while Satan and his followers 'swearte þingað' (dismally plead/intercede, 446) in hell, Christ tells the captives in hell that he 'þingade... on beame' (interceded... on the cross, 508) for them. Similarly, Christ's status as *hælend* and his *læcedom* (588) are contrasted with Satan's *sic and sorhful* state (271).[106] This explains, perhaps, the ending of the poem, not with Christ's victory but with Satan's eternal lament. The figure of Satan, as the poet makes clear, is an example of what not to do and, more importantly, how not to pray, since his prayers have been rendered ineffective by his consignment to hell.

At the same time, the reader is given a model of effective prayer from hell in the episode of the Harrowing. The treatment of the Harrowing in *Christ and Satan* shows Christ entering hell with a whole host of angels. The poet emphasises the timing of the event: before dawn, *on uhtan*:

... Þa com engla sweg,
dyne on dægred; hæfde Drihten seolf
feond oferfohten. Wæs seo fæhðe þa gyt
open on uhtan, þa se egsa becom. (403b-06)

[106] Sleeth, *Studies in Christ and Satan*, 22-3.

[Then came the song of angels, a din at dawn. The Lord himself
had conquered the fiend. Their feud was still evident then, before the dawn,
when the terror came.]

Sixty lines later, the poet reminds us again that the action took place 'on uhtan, / ær dæg-rede' (463-4) and, at line 512, he tells us that Christ spoke 'ær on morgen'. While *uhtan*, *dægred* and *ær morgen* are, as we have seen, very widely associated with the Harrowing, the presence of all the angels singing at this hour suggests that the poet is associating this particular time with prayer. Eve is the only figure depicted as praying in this part of the poem. Her prevalence in Anglo-Saxon renditions of the Harrowing is unique to Anglo-Saxon versions of the Harrowing, in which she is explicitly compared to Mary. According to the poet, Eve was unable to leave hell until she spoke words to God. Eve's prayer amounts to a summation of her own story, in which she reminds God of the temptation in the garden and her punishment (409-19) and relates the appearance of Christ's follower, probably Judas, in hell three days earlier (420-44). Finally, Eve invokes Mary:

'Hwæt, þu fram minre dohtor, drihten, onwoce
in middangeard mannum to helpe.
Nu is gesene þæt þu eart sylfa god,
ece ordfruma ealra gesceafta.' (437-40)
[Lo, you were born into this world from my daughter, Lord, to help men. Now
it is evident that you yourself are God, eternal source of all of creation.]

This prayer of Eve's, which she prays while reaching out her hands (435), implicitly in the *orans* posture, is able to release both Eve and the rest of hell's prisoners. Eve's prayer is a proclamation of God's status and power, and differs markedly from the penitential psalmody attributed to Eve in the Book of Cerne and in Blickling Homily 7. This prayer, however, is precisely the kind of prayer sung by the angels, the praise of God which Satan, in his sin, is now unable to achieve. Christ's appearance in hell gives Eve the opportunity to pray and be heard, since through his death Christ has achieved the ability to intercede for men and hear prayers.

The conclusion of the prayers of the saints following the Harrowing of Hell is semi-homiletic:

> Laðað us þider to leohte þurh his læcedom,
> þær we moton seolfe sittan mid Drihtne,
> uppe mid englum, habban þæt ilce leoht,
> þær his hired nu halig eardað,
> wunað in wynnum, þær is wuldres bled
> torht ontyned. ... (589-93b)
> [He leads us there into the light through his healing craft, where we ourselves might be seated with the Lord, with the angels on high, and have the same light, where his holy household now lives, dwells in joy, where the fruits of glory are brightly revealed.]

Christ as *læce*, or healer, is the central focus of this prayer. The moment of redemption, crucially, is not merely a state to look forward to but something that has already taken place, an event in which the reader can participate through union with Christ and communion with the Church. Frequently, the poet's homiletic digressions encourage the reader to prayer and contemplation, invoking images of heaven and the songs of the faithful. Midway through a second homiletic passage, the poet gives the prayers of the martyrs in heaven who praise God:

> 'þu eart hæleða Helm and Heofendema,
> engla Ordfruma, and eorðan tudor
> [up gelæddest] to þissum eadigan ham.' [656-8]
> [You are the Protector of heroes and the Judge of Heaven, the Origins of angels, and you have led the children of earth to this blessed home.]

These homiletic passages, so long considered extraneous to the primary material of the poem, are critical in allowing the reader to understand his or her relationship to the narrative. In this section of *Christ and Satan* we find a poetic meditation on the *communio sanctorum*, of which the reader is a part. The constant emphasis on music

and singing in the poem reminds its audience simultaneously of the prayers of the church and the prayers of heaven.

Following the Harrowing, the poet goes on to describe Christ's Resurrection, his appearance before the disciples, his ascension and his Judgment. This chain of events follows roughly the sequence of the Creed, and the poet focuses on the reaction of the disciples to each event. The disciples, upon seeing Christ, fall on the ground and bow at his feet (*feollon on foldan, and to fotum hnigon*, 531). The brief resurrection narrative gives rise to a homiletic injunction: since Christ suffered on the Cross, men ought to thank the Lord in deeds and works (*dædum and weorcum*, 552), lest they end up in hell, where they might only lament and never pray.

Christ and Satan concludes with Christ, frequently known throughout the manuscript at *meotod* (measurer), commanding Satan to measure hell.[107] The poem's final image, then, is one of irreversible judgment and the infliction of never ending penitential discipline and exile (*wracu*, 710). Here, the poet emphasises sight as the primary sense in contrast to the focus on noise, music and speaking in the rest of the poem: Satan, in his punishment, has been rendered mute, and can merely look on in mental torture:

> Ða he gemunde þæt he on grunde stod.
> Locade leas wiht geond þæt laðe scræf,
> atoll mid egum, oð ðæt egsan gryre
> deofla mænego þonne up astag. (723-726)
> [Then he was mindful that he stood on the ground [of hell]. The destitute creature looked over that hateful pit, terrible with his eyes, until the fear of that horror rose up then in many of the devils.]

Ironically, the poem ends with the condemnation of this silent, fearful Satan by hordes of devils. Doane offers the compelling argument that the audience, at this point, is meant to relate to Satan: '[Satan's] binding in Hell, which is really a binding into the

[107] Thomas D. Hill, "The Measure of Hell: Christ and Satan 695-722," *Philological Quarterly* 60 (1981): 409–14.

present, is a message that Adam and Eve are not historically remote either, but in the same position as the audience.'[108] The poet's final image is an exhortation to the audience to fulfil the fundamental occupation given to humanity – the praise of God – while the opportunity exists. Prayer is critical to the purpose of *Christ and Satan* which is, of all the Junius 11 poems, perhaps the most explicitly didactic and certainly the most homiletic. In this way, the poem provides a didactic key through which the rest of the manuscript may be fruitfully read.

Conclusion

Junius 11 is a testament to the interaction between literate Anglo-Saxons and the text of the Bible. Its poems are distinct and, in many ways, represent different attitudes to prayer. As a whole, however, the manuscript focuses on individuals, often conceived as spiritual heroes, and their prayerful relationship with God. In Junius 11, we find many of the attitudes to prayer explored in biblical poetry, for the greater part composed in the eighth or ninth centuries, that were an important part of Anglo-Saxon spiritual life. *Genesis A* focuses on prayer as participation in the praise of saints and angels, and the poem's liturgical overtones invite the reader to position the prayers of the Old Testament in relation to the prayers of the church. *Genesis B* focuses on Adam and Eve as model penitents and pays particular attention to the times and postures appropriate for penitential prayer. *Exodus* narrows in on the spiritual victory of the Israelites brought about by the leadership of Moses. The language of prayer is evident in the poem and is related to the theme of the *bellum spirituale*. *Daniel*, which may be incomplete, recasts the biblical narrative to centre on the prayer of the three youths in the furnace and represents their prayer as a central moment in the deliverance and conversion of the pagan king Nebuchadnezzar. The originality of this narrative can be seen by comparison with the Exeter Book's *Azarias*, which employs the prayers of the youths to a completely different narrative end. *Daniel* marks a significant moment evidencing the translation of these liturgical prayers into Old English. *Christ and Satan* recapitulates many of the manuscript's major themes, exploring the theme of prayer as praise and the principal vocation of humankind. The

[108]Doane, *The Saxon Genesis*, 68.

existing focus on prayer may have invited the later addition of this eclectic poem to Junius 11.

This diverse selection of poetry is unified by the position of the reader in relation to the biblical narrative. Junius 11's retelling of the biblical narrative focuses on the moral lessons of scripture and the universality of the biblical story, recasting many aspects of the biblical narrative to emphasise its relevance in the context of Anglo-Saxon devotion and Christian society. In this way, the manuscript suggests an intensely practical emphasis. Part of the purpose of these poems is certainly didactic and, to adopt Hall's terminology, the purpose of the manuscript is to orient the reader to his or her place in salvation history. Prayer, the foremost good work demanded of Christians and the sole means of communication with God, forms a practical link between the reader and the biblical heroes or, in the case of Satan, anti-hero.

Thus, it is prudent to read Junius 11 in light of the reading practices hitherto discussed and to explore how the practice of prayer interacts with the composition, reading and performance of poetry. This chapter has argued that vernacular poetry, like various Latin texts and prayers studied so far, has an important role to play in teaching its readers about prayer and giving examples of how to pray, as well as providing translations of biblical prayer into Old English. Junius 11, particularly notable for its didactic function, gives an example of how reading biblical narrative in the vernacular may have been an important adjunct to the practices of devotional reading and prayer.

Chapter Four

Praying Alone: Asceticism and *Compunctio* in *The Dream of the Rood*

Anglo-Saxon prayer, in the textual record so far discussed, revolved around a sanctification of time and space through meditative engagement with the scriptures and related texts. This meditative engagement meant that the scriptures became relevant in all times and places and that the reader was allowed to participate in the narrative of salvation and redemption through prayer. We have seen this process at work, first in the Latin prayer books of the Mercian tradition and next in the Old English poems of Junius 11. This chapter applies this framework of meditative engagement with both scripture and with the practice of prayer to one of the most celebrated poems in the Old English canon, *The Dream of the Rood*. In this chapter, I suggest that *The Dream of the Rood* is primarily concerned with prayer. Its setting, in the middle of the night, evokes a form of monastic vigil that is attested in hagiographical narrative and implied in early Anglo-Saxon prayer books. The dreamer in *The Dream of the Rood*, a poem which almost all critics agree dates from the first part of the eighth century or earlier, finds himself alone and penitent in the middle of the night, mirroring the situation and practice of private, ascetical prayer and the monastic vigil described in Chapter One. *The Dream of the Rood* centres on the dreamer's emotional engagement with the story of Christ's passion, told to him by the physical object of the cross. While critics have rightly focused on the significance of the cross for the dreamer's conversion experience, this chapter suggests that the dreamer's ability to identify emotionally with the scriptural story of the passion, through prayer, sits at the heart of his conversion. Thus, the experience of prayer as an interaction with the Gospel story in *The Dream of the Rood* is directly comparable to the kinds of prayer we find in Latin prayer books and, later, in vernacular prayer books. The dreamer in *The Dream of the Rood*, who is at prayer, is transformed by an encounter with the divine *logos*. Furthermore, the poem's preoccupation with

judgment exactly shares the tone of the Latin prayer books and also the arching narrative of Junius 11 and its constituent poems.

Many critics have interrogated the complex interrelationship between prayer, meditation and the Old English visionary poem *The Dream of the Rood*. Anthony Grasso has argued that *The Dream of the Rood* was specifically inspired by the words of the Creed, which was an important part of both liturgical and private prayer in Anglo-Saxon England, as well as having specific associations with the sacrament of baptism.[1] John Fleming finds in the poem a 'Benedictine voice of a poem on the monastic life', pointing to the unification of eremitic and contemplative elements in the poem and its ultimate movement from solidarity to community.[2] While I question Fleming's use of the term 'Benedictine', I agree with the observation that the vision's context suggests a private, contemplative devotion. Research has uncovered the rich relationship between *The Dream of the Rood* and the ceremony for the Veneration of the Cross, which was probably introduced to England by the eighth century and appears in the tenth-century *Regularis Concordia*. Ó Carragáin has shown the poem's extensive debt to the Paschal liturgy and, he argues, the devotional preoccupations of the 'heroic age of Northumbrian spirituality', as well as the liturgical innovations of seventh century Northumbria.[3] In spite of this, the hunt for precisely identifiable liturgical borrowings and verbal echoes of the liturgy in *The Dream of the Rood* has yielded few results.[4] M. Bradford Bedingifeld summarises the scholarship succinctly:

> The general consensus of those looking to place *The Dream of the Rood* in some sort of liturgical context is that, due to the individual genius of the poet of the Vercelli version (and due to the fact that we know very little about the liturgical forms at the stages of the poem's development), we can find only echoes of the liturgy, not direct borrowings, and that we must therefore discuss the poem and the liturgy in terms of analogues, not sources.

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[1] Grasso, "Theology and Structure in 'The Dream of the Rood'", *Religion and Literature* 23 (2), 1991, 24.
[2] John V. Fleming, "'The Dream of the Rood' and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism," *Traditio* 22 (January 1, 1966): 46.
[3] Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 332.
[4] Howard Patch, "Liturgical Influence in *The Dream of the Rood*", *PMLA* 34 (1919); Earl Anderson, "Liturgical Influence in *The Dream of the Rood*", *Neophilologus* 73 (1989).

Sarah Larratt Keefer has argued that *The Dream of the Rood* might have been inspired by the ritual veneration of the cross on Good Friday. She writes that the context of the poem when all are sleeping 'suggests not an actual experience of the Veneration ritual but a recreated one, deemed perhaps to be a *visio* because it occurred as a result of meditation after Compline or around Nocturns.'[5] The most likely context for this kind of *visio* or, indeed, this kind of meditation is in the *intempestum* of night wherein brothers are engaged in private prayer.[6] Keefer suggests, in light of the role of the cross in the Good Friday veneration ritual at Nones, that the poem may be based on an experience that 'triggered a deliberate revisitation of that ritual's effect, perhaps as an act of personal devotion.'[7] According to Keefer, the relationship between the poem and the Veneration of the Cross ritual suggests a date 'much likely be later than the mid-800s.'[8] Despite this, Symons lists the prayers of the Veneration of the Cross in the *Regularis Concordia* amongst the native customs of the rule.[9]

The poem's setting and those elements of its opening that are, as I have suggested, related distinctly to prayer confirm Keefer's analysis of the poem as a private meditation on some form of devotional experience. Thus, considering the poem's interest in both liturgy and private meditation, we might conclude that *The Dream of the Rood* is a poetic meditation on the practice of prayer. Burlin writes that the poem 'might be the product of a contemplative who is attempting to express a real experience in available literary terms, but it might equally be the work of a poet who is exploiting the materials of his craft to convey the sort of experience for which he

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[5] Sarah Larratt Keefer, "'The Dream of the Rood' at Nones, Good Friday," in *Poetry, Place, and Gender: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honor of Helen Damico*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan Univ. Medieval, 2010), 42.

[6] Bede identifies seven parts of the night, beginning with dusk, eventide and early night and progressing to the dead of night, or midnight, which he calls *intempestum*. This is the time of midnight, 'the deep sleep of peace' when 'there is no time [tempus] for activity for any creature.' *Intempestum*, in Bede's reckoning, occurs just before cock-crow (*galli cantus*), which is also the hour for the Night Office in the Roman *cursus*. This same time of night is often referred to as *galli cantus* or *matutinus* in Latin, terms that might otherwise indicate the morning time but here seem to match up with Bede's *intempestum*. Bede, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, trans. Faith Wallis, Translated Texts for Historians v.29 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 31.

[7] Keefer, "'The Dream of the Rood' at Nones, Good Friday," 41.

[8] Keefer, "'The Dream of the Rood' at Nones, Good Friday," 49.

[9] Symons, *Regularis Concordia*, xlvi.

has merely an imaginative understanding.'[10] This thesis suggests that the poet of *The Dream of the Rood* used terminology associated with the keeping of private vigil and that the vision of the cross is represented as an experience that is specifically associated with private prayer. This does not discount the influence of the liturgy on the poem, but rather suggests that the poet frames his visionary experience in highly conventional terms used to describe the keeping of private vigil.

The poetic text of *The Dream of the Rood* survives in the Vercelli Book (Vercelli, Cathedral Library MS 117), a devotional florilegium that was probably compiled for private use.[11] Its discovery in the cathedral library of Vercelli strongly suggests that it was a portable book used for private reading, perhaps by an English pilgrim in Italy.[12] The Vercelli Book is a compilation of prose and poetic texts written in a late tenth-century hand and compiled from a number of different sources.[13] Szarmach suggests that the Vercelli Book is a 'compilation of booklets that easily betray at least three major origins'.[14] Donald Scragg, in his detailed analysis of the manuscript's linguistic forms, places *The Dream of the Rood* in a 'group' of texts within the manuscript that seem to be late West Saxon. The manuscript as a whole, he concludes, is Kentish. Scragg argues that the anthology was not planned in its entirety before its composition began.[15] While scholars have largely agreed that the book was created for personal rather than public use, the scribe's apparent lack of familiarity with materials in the book seems to imply that he was probably not making the book for himself (the scribe's gender is presumed here, rather than known).[16] Elaine Treharne has argued that the book was likely to have been compiled 'to meet the pastoral or devotional needs of the monks in the earliest years of the Reform period' though, she admits,

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[10] Robert B. Burlin, "The Ruthwell Cross, 'The Dream of the Rood' and the Vita Contemplativa," *Studies in Philology* 65, no. 1 (January 1, 1968): 38.
[11] Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "The Vercelli Book as an Ascetic Florilegium" (Ph.D., Queen's University, 1975).
[12] Paul Meyvaert, "Necessity Mother of Invention: A Fresh Look at the Rune Verses on the Ruthwell Cross," *Anglo-Saxon England* 41 (2012): 407–16.
[13] Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, 460. D. G. Scragg, "The Compilation of the Vercelli Book," *Anglo-Saxon England* 2 (December 1973): 189–207.
[14] Paul E. Szarmach, "The Recovery of Texts," in *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 131.
[15] Scragg, "The Compilation of the Vercelli Book," 205.
[16] The scribe, according to Scragg, 'copied mechanically and unintelligently, to the extent that he showed no grasp of the contextual meaning of words copied.' Scragg, 199.

'quite how far or in what ways the practices of the Reform movement had been adopted at St Augustine's is difficult to say.'[17] Treharne offers little evidence for the association between the Benedictine Reform and the Vercelli Book, save an interest in monasticism and a 'spiritual and pastoral impulse.'[18] Francis Leneghan has identified the manuscript's interest in the 'mixed life', which he sees as an underlying principle for the selection of various prose and poetic works. He shows that this interest in the mixed life of pastoral obligation and contemplative prayer is essential to Anglo-Saxon monasticism, having been inherited from the spiritual teachings of Gregory the Great and his *Pastoral Care* in particular.[19] Leneghan notes that Treharne's attribution of the Vercelli Book to the Benedictine Reform is 'problematic', especially given the manuscript's celebration of the ascetic life. The attitude of its texts is, he argues, is 'closer to the spirit of Cuthbert, and indeed Gregory himself, than it is to the reformed Benedictinism of Ælfric'.[20] Furthermore, Charles Wright argues, based on attitudes to land ownership, that the book was intended for secular clerics.[21]

The Dream of the Rood, while copied in the tenth century, almost certainly existed in some form before its appearance in the Vercelli Book. Éamonn Ó Carragáin argues that the *Dream* was 'old fashioned' by the time that it was copied in the tenth century.[22] The runic inscription of several lines of the poem on the Ruthwell Cross has been dated as early as the seventh century, but more reliably to the 720s.[23] Dates suggested for the inscription of these runes vary widely, even as late as the tenth century, while most scholars maintain that they are in fact original to the cross's

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[17] Elaine Treharne, "The Form and Function of the Vercelli Book," in *Text, Image, Interpretation:*, vol. 18, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 18 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 256. Scragg argues that the Vercelli Book originated at St Augustine's. D. G. Scragg, ed., *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, Early English Text Society. O.S 300 (Oxford ; New York: Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 1992), lxxix. Dumville proposes a similar origin based on the Vercelli Book's script, "English Square Minuscule Script: The Mid-Century Phases," *Anglo-Saxon England* 23 (December 1994): 140, n. 39.

[18] Treharne, "The Form and Function of the Vercelli Book," 265.

[19] Francis Leneghan, "Teaching the Teachers: The Vercelli Book and the Mixed Life," *English Studies* 94 (2013): 627–58.

[20] Leneghan, 651.

[21] Charles D. Wright, "Vercelli Homilies XI-XIII and the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform," in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Meussig (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 203–27.

[22] Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 308.

[23] Meyvaert, "Necessity Mother of Invention," 413–14.

design.[24] Andrew Breeze has ruled out a tenth century date on historical grounds, and their dialect also suggests a much earlier date.[25] In general, arguments for a late inscription of the runes are unpersuasive, and have not been accepted by many scholars. An echo of *The Dream of the Rood* also appears on the Brussels Cross, a reliquary believed to have housed a relic of the true cross. The Brussels reliquary-cross dates from the eleventh century.[26]

The poetic tradition surrounding *The Dream of the Rood* is unique in so far as we are presented with a variety of textual forms that each bear witness to the poem. Two of these objects, the Ruthwell Cross and the Brussels Reliquary, have a clear devotional context. Similarly, the *Dream* as it exists in the Vercelli Book can be understood in the context of the intersection between private reading and private devotion as it existed in the later Anglo-Saxon period.

The Vigil in *The Dream of the Rood*

The Dream of the Rood is a highly developed poetic meditation that has at its centre a dream vision which takes place *to midre niht* after the 'speechbearers' (*reordberend*) had gone *to reste*.[27] The reader is explicitly told that the poet is alone, which indicates that his dream is a private revelation and probably taking place in the context of private prayer. This chapter will explore the implications of reading *The Dream of the Rood* as a product of prayer and private meditation. It also seeks to re-examine the status of *The Dream of the Rood* as a reflection on the liturgy, which has been established by several scholars, asking how the contexts of its transmission (in the Vercelli Book and on the Ruthwell Cross) might shed light on how, and why, it was read. I suggest that *The Dream of the Rood* reflects the influence of especially the Christological devotions and ascetic cultures of prayer explored in the preceding

[24] For a summary of the debate, and an argument for an early date, see Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 48–53.
[25] Andrew Breeze, "The Date of the Ruthwell Cross Inscription," *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes, and Reviews* 16, no. 2 (2003): 3–5; Alan S. C. Ross, "The Linguistic Evidence for the Date of the 'Ruthwell Cross,'" *The Modern Language Review* 28, no. 2 (1933): 145–55.
[26] Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 339.
[27] Andy Orchard, "*The Dream of the Rood*: Cross-References", in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. Andy Orchard and Samantha Zacher (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 225-53.

chapters of this thesis. While several critics have argued against the asceticism of the dreamer in *The Dream of the Rood*, the setting of the poem in the middle of the night is closely associated with prayer, ascetic practice and poetic inspiration. These features of the poem suggest strong affinities with the devotional culture of the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, though as Ó Carragáin has suggested, its devotional setting would have looked antiquated by the tenth century.[28]

One of the frequent focuses adopted by critics of the *Dream of the Rood* is on the inactivity of the dreamer. Anne Savage, writing on the meditative tradition in Anglo-Saxon England, contends that there is a sharp distinction between mystical experience and meditation: 'The dreamer in *The Dream of the Rood*', she writes 'is frankly asleep, not meditating in any sense of the word.'[29] Contrary to Savage, the time *midre niht* places the dreamer in *The Dream of the Rood* at a moment, as shown in Chapter One, that is conventionally associated in earlier Anglo-Saxon devotions with fervent private prayer, visionary experience and eschatological reflection on the final Judgment. The Old English expression *midre niht* is most often glossed in Latin as *media nocte* and once used for *intempestum*, both of which describe, as we have seen, with the time around the Offices of Nocturns and Matins.[30] The Old English Benedictine Office uses *uhtan* and *midre niht* interchangeably to translate the Latin *media nocte*.[31] These expressions, then, can refer either to midnight or early morning. Bede, Felix, and a variety of other authors associate private prayer with the period between the end of the Night Office and dawn, variously called *uhtan*, *dægred* and *ærmorgen* in Old English, and *matutinae*, *uigilis*, *noctis intempesto* and *galli cantus* in Latin. The Old English translation of the *Rule of St Benedict* sheds further light on the English terminology surrounding the Night Office. Benedict quotes Psalm 118 (*media nocte surgebam*) to justify night watches, which are called *nocturnis vigiliis* in Latin

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[28] Patrick W. Conner, "The Ruthwell Monument Runic Poem in a Tenth-Century Context," *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, 59, no. 238 (February 1, 2008): 25–51.
[29] Anne Savage, "Mystical and Evangelical in The Dream of the Rood: The Private and the Public.," in *Mysticism: Medieval and Modern*, ed. Valerie Marie Lagorio, Salzburg Studies in English Literature. Elizabethan & Renaissance Studies ; 92 : 20 (Salzburg, Austria: Institut fur Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universitat Salzburg, 1986), 91.
[30] W. Stryker, 'The Latin-Old English Glossary in MS. Cotton Cleopatra A.III' (Stanford University: Unpublished Dissertation, 1951) 28-367.
[31] Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* , 460. 'On uhtan we sculon God herian ealswa Dauid cwæð, *Media nocte surgebam ad confitendum tibi super iudicia iustitie tue* , ðæt is, To middre nihte ic aras, and andette drihtenes doma rihtwisnesse.'

and *benihtlicum uhtsangum* in Old English. Both of these terms capture the sense of the Latin *media nocte* and the Old English *midre niht*. Thus, *to midre niht* is more accurately translated as 'the middle of the night' than 'midnight', per se.

The poet contrasts himself with the *reordberend*, who have gone *to reste*. That the dreamer is in some sense awake while others are sleep is obvious by the end of the vision, when he prays to the cross alone. The most generic meaning of *reordberend*, which literally translates as 'speech-bearers', is simply 'man'. Yet the term has sometimes been taken as lightly pejorative or read, as Marsden puts it, 'with a hint of disapproval', with the speech-bearers as a kind of rabble whom the dreamer must escape to seek transcendence. The contrast between the waking dreamer and the sleeping *reordberend* is, however, somewhat ironic given the dreamer's lack of voice. Later in the poem, the cross explains how he is now able to open the way of life to the 'reordberendum'. Theoretically it is true that the cross opens the way of life to humanity in general but there is a clear devotional imperative to the cross's speech: he will open the way to those who 'gebiddaþ… to þyssum beacne' (pray to this beacon, 83) and is able to heal 'þara þe him bið egesa to me' (86). Thus, the *reordberend* in the poem should be understood as those faithful humans who revere the cross. The speech that they bear, far from being empty talk, becomes prayer in praise of Christ and his cross.[32]

Praying at night, the dreamer in *The Dream of the Rood* is awake to spiritual reality. Galloway has discussed the Gregorian tradition of dream theory, which posits a state of nocturnal clarity in which spiritual reality is perceivable; God's voice emerges only when the daily tumult is silenced.[33] Evagrius, whose spiritual teachings informed many of Cassian's writings, maintains that we see the spiritual world more clearly at

[32] The term *reord* is specifically associated with praise and prayer in Advent Lyrics IX and XI, in which the faculty of speech is gives people the capacity to praise both Mary and the Creator. The Old English poem *A Prayer* concludes with the request 'læt me mid englum up siðian, / sittan on swegle, herian heofonas God haligum reorde' (76-8). In a similar vein, the soul's address to the body speaks of a time when the Lord will hear 'ealra manna gehwan muðes reorde / wunda wiðer-lean' (94-95).

[33] Andrew Galloway, "Dream-Theory in The Dream of the Rood and The Wanderer," *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, 45, no. 180 (November 1, 1994): 477.

night.[34] The depiction of nocturnal prayer discussed in Chapter One shows that the sense of the active presence of both saints and demons at night, or at the very least the perceptibility of saints and demons, was very much a part of the mindset of many Anglo-Saxons. Early in *The Dream of the Rood*, the visionary sees the cross surrounded:

> ... Beheoldon þær engel Drhtynes alle
> fægere þurh forðgesceaft. Ne wæs ðær huru fracodes gealga.
> Ac hine þar beheoldon halige gastas,
> men ofer moldan ond eall þeos mære gesceaft. (9-12)
> [All those fair through eternal decree there beheld the angel of the Lord. Nor was that a gallows for criminals, but holy spirits beheld it, men over the earth and all this fair creation.][35]

The dreamer has emerged into a state of communion with the saints *to midre niht*. The Old English poem *Soul and Body*, which survives in the Vercelli Book and, partially, in the Exeter Book, records the accusations of the damned soul against the sinful man. The soul tells him:

> 'Eart ðu nu dumb ond deaf, ne synt þine dreamas awiht.

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[34] Evagrius, *kephalaia gnostica*, V.42, ed. and trans. by Luke Dysinger, OSB, 'Kephalaia Gnostica', *Saint John's Seminary Course Lectures and Self Study Programs* (Camarillo: St John's Seminary, revised September 2005), <http://ldysinger.stjohnsem.edu/Evagrius/02_Gno-Keph/06_keph_5.htm> [20 November 2015]: Ὁ ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ κόσμος κτιζόμενος μεθ ἡμέραν μὲν δυσδιάγνωστος εἶναι δοκεῖ, τῶν αἰσθήσεων περισπωσῶν τὸν νοῦν, καὶ τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ φωτὸς περιλάμποντος· νύκτωρ δὲ ἔστιν ἰδεῖν αὐτὸν περιφανῶς κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς προσευχῆς ἐκτυπούμενον. 'The world created in the mind seems difficult to see by day, the *nous* being distracted by the senses and by the sensible light that shines; but at night it can be seen, luminously imprinted at the time of prayer.'

[35] Interpreting 9b is difficult, principally because the plural *beheoldon* demands a plural subject. If, indeed, the angel of the Lord is the object of *beheoldon*, then some explanation is required as to what is meant by the *engel Drythnes*. Critics have suggested that this might be a reference either to Christ or to the Cross. Helder offers an emendation of the text with the translation 'gems stood, beautiful on the surface of he earth, as likewise were five around the center of the cross, signifying the full glory of the angelic host.' Willem Helder, "The 'Engel Dryhtnes' in 'The Dream of the Rood,'" *Modern Philology* 73, no. 2 (November 1, 1975): 148–50. Raymond P. Tripp Jr., "'The Dream of the Rood': 9b and Its Context," *Modern Philology* 69, no. 2 (November 1, 1971): 136–37. Several attempts have been made to emend the edition, but since none have made the passage any clearer it is generally taken as it appears in the manuscript.

Sceal ic ðe nihtes swa þeah nede gesecan,
Synnum gesargod, on deft sona fram þe
Hweorfan on han-cred, þone halige men
lifiendum Gode lof-sang doð,
secan þa hamas þe ðu me her scrife.' [65-70]
[Now you are speechless and deaf, your joys amount to nothing. I am nevertheless obliged to seek you out at night, wracked with sins, and quickly part from you again at the cock's crow, when the holy offer their hymn of praise to the living God; then I must depart to seek out those dwellings that you have imposed on me here][36]

In this passage, the damned soul explains how it must seek out its former body at night. Earlier, the soul mentions that it is required to seek out the body in order to abuse it with words (*wemman þe mid wordum*, 64). Thus, the damned soul is able to accuse the flesh of wrongdoing at night. However, the hymns of cock-crow drive it back to its own *hama*, presumably imagined to be some kind of special abode for dead souls. While there is much in this short passage concerning the poet's imaginative conception of the soul, the afterlife and the residual presence of the dead in certain places on the earth, it is clear that the time of night was imagined to be a time when the spirits of the dead were active and when the soul was able to accuse the body of sin. Presumably, the songs of cock-crow render the soul unable to terrorise the body because they petition God for forgiveness and invoke the resurrection, the harrowing of hell and God's acceptance of penance. This preoccupation with sin in the hours before cock-crow is in keeping with the concerns of nocturnal prayer outlined in Chapter One. In *The Dream of the Rood*, the appearance of the cross reminds the dreamer of his own sinful state and drives him to a state of fear and dejection.

The transformation of the tree into the cross of Christ takes us firmly into the devotional context already suggested by the midnight dream, as it becomes clear that the cross is a mystical and devotional object:

[36] Christoper A. Jones, ed. and trans., *Old English Shorter Poems Volume 1: Relgious and Didactic* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), 196–97.

Þuhte me þæt ic gesawe syllicre treow
on lyft lædan, leohte bewunden
beama beorhtost. Eall þæt beacen wæs
begoten mid golde; gimmas stodon
fægere æt foldan scaetum; swylce þær fife wæron
uppe on þam eaxlegespanne... (3-9)
[I dreamed that I saw a beautiful tree led up into the air, covered in light, the best of beams. That beacon was all covered with gold; gems stood fair at the four corners; there were five up on the arm-crossing]

Swanton notes that the verb *begoten* is usually associated with water or blood, and thus prefigures the transmogrification of the tree into Christ's suffering and bleeding body.[37] The movement from contemplation to transformation begins with the dreamer's recognition of himself in this awe-inspiring vision: 'Syllic wæs se sigebeam, / ond ic synnum fah, forwunded mid wommum' (wonderful was that victory cross and I stained by sin, wounded with impurity, 13-14).[38] The image of the cross brings on an emotional crisis in the dreamer. This emotional crisis deepens as the dreamer notices that the cross is bleeding on the right side:

Hwæðre þurh þæt gold ongytan meahte
earmra ærgewin, þæt hit ærest ongan
swætan on þa swiðran healfe. Eall ic wæs mid sorgum gedrefed.
Forht ic wæs for þære fægran gesyhðe. (18-21)
[However, through that gold I might perceive the ancient strife of the wretched ones, when it first began to bleed on the right side. I was all troubled with sorrow. Because of that fair sight I was afraid.]

Reality becomes fractured in the dreamer's vision; he perceives (*ongytan*) first 'ancient strife' (*ærgewin*). *Earmra ærgewin* remains difficult to interpret. Swanton suggests that *earmra* must be read as a genitive plural, and offers the translation

[37] Michael James Swanton, ed., *The Dream of the Rood*, New. ed, Exeter Medieval English Texts and Studies (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 64.
[38] 13-14b.

'former struggle of the wretched ones'.[39] *Ærgewin*, ancient struggle, has sometimes been taken as a reference to original sin, while e*armra* is often used of both men and devils. In either case the dreamer, made aware of his own sin by the beauty of the cross, now begins to see the punishment inflicted on the cross for the sins of humanity, a corruption inflicted by evil spirits. In a state of beholding this external object he is turned towards self-reflection.

David Johnson has argued that the central vision of the cross is a reflection of the dreamer's fear of judgment.[40] Riddling and bizarre, the visual spectacle of a cross as at once sweating and changing colour, now and adorned with treasure and now adorned with blood and sweat, represents vividly the theme of meditative dislocation: '... hwilum hit wæs mid wætan bestemed, / beswyled mid swates gange, Hwilum mid since gegyrwed' (at times it was drenched with wetness, soiled with the going of blood, at times adorned with treasure, 22-23). These words recall the image of the body at the Last Judgment in Vercelli IV, a homily from the same manuscript as *The Dream of the Rood*. The good soul speaks fairly to its body, which moves through *manigfealdum bleon*, first appearing as a small man, then as a beautiful man, then moving through various degrees of fairness until it finally

> hæfð gelic hiw golde 7 seolfre 7 swa þam deorwyrðestan gymcynne & eorcnanstanum. 7 æt nehstan þæt he glitenað swa steorra, 7 lyht swa mone, & beorhtaþ swa sunna þonne hio biorhtust bið scinende.
> [has a colour like gold and silver and like the most precious gems and stones. And after this is glitters like the stars, and glows like the moon, and shines like the sun when it shines most brightly.][41]

The evil body, on the other hand, 'swæt swiðe laðlicum swate, 7 him feallað on unfægere dropan, 7 bryt on manig hiw' [sweats with very hateful sweat, and from him fall ugly drops, and he changes into many hues].[42] Payne's identification of *The*

[39] Swanton, *The Dream of the Rood*, 108.
[40] David Frame Johnson, "Old English Religious Poetry: Christ and Satan and The Dream of the Rood," in *Companion to Old English Poetry*, ed. Rolf Hendrik Bremmer and Henk Aertsen (Amsterdam: Vrije University Press, 1994), 159–87.
[41] Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, 96.
[42] Scragg, 96.

Dream of the Rood as a conventional poem about the Last Judgment makes this common trope all the more striking.[43] It is particularly interesting that the cross sweats, as does the 'evil' body in Vercelli IV, and also shines with gems like the good body. Hall has identified these descriptions as suggestive of a 'purgative and purifying' process that both bodies must undergo – the good body to be perfected, the bad body to be consumed finally by evil blackness.[44] Thus, the representation of the cross changing hue indicates anticipates the crucifixion while also expressing themes of judgment and purgation.

Through this portion of the vision, the poet has the dreamer in a passive mode; viewing, perceiving and afflicted, with no avenue for response except to lie down, see the cross and hear its words. The dreamer's break with reality and the intensity of his vision pushes him into the realm of affective engagement with the cross. *The Dream of the Rood* is centred on the 'paradox of a speaking tree'.[45] The dreamer, throughout the poem, is struck dumb by the wonder of the cross. Ironically, in the first line of the poem, the poet exclaims that he will *secgan*, yet the verbs of the poem's opening all concern sight and perception; he beholds the tree and perceives his own sin. It is not until the cross speaks that the dreamer is offered any absolution from his state of dejection, in which he can do nothing: 'licgende lange hwile / beheold hreowcearig Hælendes treow' (laying there for a long time, sorrowful, I beheld the Saviour's tree, 24-25). The dreamer remains in this state of prayerful sorrow, prostrated before the cross in contemplation of his own sinfulness, until the cross begins to speak.

Æthelwulf, in the ninth-century Anglo-Latin poem *De Abbatibus*,[46] also receives two visions that likewise take place immediately after the other brothers have gone to

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[43] Richard C. Payne, "Convention and Originality in the Vision Framework of 'The Dream of the Rood,'" *Modern Philology* 73, no. 4 (May 1, 1976): 329–41.
[44] Thomas H. Hall, "The Psychedelic Transmogrification of the Soul in Vercelli IV," in *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson Moreno-Riano (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 322.
[45] Andy Orchard, "The Dream of the Rood: Cross-References, " in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. Samantha Zacher and Andy Orchard (University of Toronto Press, 2009), 247.
[46] *De Abbatibus* is an 819-line hexameter poem celebrating the achievements of the poet Æthelwulf's monastery, a subsidiary of Linsdisfarne somewhere in Northumbria. It is dedicated to Bishop Ecgberht and can thus be dated confidently to his pontificate, 803-21. *De Abbatibus* moves from a history of Æthelwulf's monastery similar to (and probably based

sleep following nocturnal prayer, just before cock-crow. These visions share similarities with *The Dream of the Rood* that suggest that Æthelwulf was also inspired by the language and experience of the dream visions already recounted. The first vision in *De Abbatibus*, chapter XXIII occurs in the *locum cinerum* (678) or 'place for the ashes'. Campbell suggests that this is a monastic burial ground.[47] The poet finds himself awake after the brothers have completed their 'solemnities of spirit' (*complent sollempnia mentis*).[48] Billett suggests that the phrase *complent sollempnia mentis* might be a poetic way of referring to the Office of Compline, yet he agrees that it might equally apply to a more private time for prayer amongst the brethren.[49] While Æthelwulf and the unnamed brother stand watching, an *agmen immensum* (666-7) appears, filling the burial ground with light. The spirits then enter the church and begin to sing hymns (670). Æthelwulf and the brother turn to prayer and hasten to 'examine the marvellous vision with ears and eyes.' Yet, when it is over, they are 'afraid, and desire to seek... rest'.[50] Both *De Abbatibus* and *The Dream of the Rood* describe the onset of a vision at night in which the souls of the just appear before the living and produce in them a state of intense fear. In *De Abbatibus*, this takes place less ambiguously that in *The Dream of the Rood*, when people are awake at prayer.

Immediately following this vision, Æthelwulf describes a 'lurking dream' that comes to him in the hours just before the dawn (692-698):

> tempus erat noctis, lucem cum predicat ales,
> algida post ymnos laxassem membra quieti,
> furtiuus adueniens somnus subrepsit ocellis.
> candidus en subito uidebatur ductor adesse.

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upon) Alcuin's poem on the history of York to a description of the monastery in the poets' own day.

[47] Aethelwulf, *De Abbatibus*, ed. and trans. Alastair Campbell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 53.

[48] Aethelwulf, 52–53.

[49] Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597-c.1000*, 106.

[50] Aethelwulf, *De Abbatibus*, 44–45.

... ipse
atque alius frater pariter properamus uterque
aribus atque oculis mirandum noscere uisum.
continuo polum cantus cum lumie pulsat,
ulterius nobis licuit nec talia uisu
cernere, quin trepidi cupimus uisitare quietum. (679-684)

hunc ego prepauidus niidis iam uestibus album
uultibus acpulchris radientem gressibus ultro
callibus ignotis peditans comitatus adiui.
[It was the time of night, when the cock announces the approach of dawn, and after I had relaxed my chill limbs in rest after the singing of hymns, a lurking dream came and stole before my eyes. Behold, suddenly a shining being appeared to be my leader. Frightened as I was, I approached and accompanied this person, who was shining in very bright vestments and radiant with fair face, and of my free will I placed my steps on unknown paths.][51]

In this vision, the poet is about to go to sleep after the singing of hymns, but his sleep is delayed by a lurking vision. This vision immediately follows the sight of the spirits in the burial ground, and so the episode occurs within a pre-established context for night-time prayer. Æthelwulf's dream is called a *somnus* which, in Macrobius' scheme, suggests a prophetic dream with allegorical significance.[52] We are also told in the headings, which seem to be an original feature of the poem, that the *somnium* comes to him on a Sunday night – the conventional night for important Vigils and also the night most strongly associated with Christ's resurrection and second coming. The occurrence of a vision on a Sunday night, therefore, shares the eschatological overtones that are found in *The Dream of the Rood*.

Most tellingly, in *De Abbatibus*, this transition from crisis to comfort comes through a vision of the cross. From the beginning of the vision the poet is frightened, yet when a leader appears to him he nevertheless follows *ultro*, of his own free will (697). The culmination of the poets' fears comes in *De Abbatibus* when he looks upon the altar

[51] Aethelwulf, 54–55.
[52] A. C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: University Press, 1976), 10. Macrobius was probably known in the early Middle Ages but not nearly as widely read as he came to be from the eleventh- and twelfth centuries. Thus, we may note the possibility of some influence but cannot assume that Macrobius' dream theory is synonymous with 'medieval' dream theory. Michael Lapidge idetifies Byrhtferth of Ramsey as the first Anglo-Saxon author with a comprehensive knowledge of Macrobius' commentary: *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 124-5. Andrew Galloway has discussed the influence of Gregorian dream theory on *The Dream of the Rood* and includes in his paper a detailed analysis of possible sources for Anglo-Saxon dream theory, including an evaluation of Macrobius' influence. Galloway, "Dream-Theory in *The Dream of the Rood* and *The Wanderer*."

table of the church and the golden, gem-studded cross. There is a palpable absence of speech both in Æthelwulf's encounter with the spirits in the burial ground and in his *somnium*. In the first vision, he and the brother lift their eyes to the mountains (quoting Psalm 120) hoping for help. They 'examine the marvellous vision with ears and eyes.' The songs of the troop are manifold. The choir of the spirits is also divided 'into two bands', similar to way in which monks chant antiphonal psalmody. In this vision, the spirits inhabiting the chapel take on the work of prayer while the monks, who have just been at prayer, are muted. Indeed, the zeal of the spirits implicitly condemns the brothers, who desire to return to bed. Likewise, in Æthelwulf's dream, verbs of sight and descriptive imagery paint a vivid picture of the scene that cements the passivity of the dreamer. Æthelwulf, ultimately, can do nothing but look. He then observes the cross:

> crux ueranda nitens precelso stipite surget
> uertice de mense nimium candente smaragdo.
> aurea cum gemmis flammescit lammina fuluis.
> ...
> haec rutilo ex auro gemmisque nitescit opimis
> ex oriente, micans de bisso culmina tume
> uestis contexit, cuius que nescio sancti
> membra dicata qui tenuit sub uiscere uentris.[53]
> [The venerable cross rose up shining on a very long stem from the top of the table. A golden plate yellowed with tawny gems, and upon it emeralds shone full bright. The cross shone with reddening gold and shining gems from the east. A sparkling vestment of linen covered the top of the tomb, which had the consecrated bones of a saint held in the heart of its interior.]

Campbell and Orchard have briefly noted some superficial similarities between this passage and the cross in *The Dream of the Rood*, all to do with the appearance of a cross decked in jewels.[54] This is an image familiar in Anglo-Saxon literature and

[53] Aethelwulf, *De Abbatibus* 723-741.
[54] Campbell, 56; Orchard, "The Dream of the Rood: Cross-References," 246.

material culture.[55] There are, however, deeper similarities between the vision of *The Dream of the Rood* and Æthelwulf's dream.

Æthelwulf, after he has spent some time before the cross, finds himself suddenly alone and deprived of a leader. His vision of the church (which is in the shape of a cross) and of the cross itself forces him into reflection and ultimately he experiences a state of crisis that moves him from passivity to active prayer:

> talia dum cernens stupido de corde rimarem,
> ecce repente meus ductor me linquerat atque
> degrediens templo uacuis se condidit auris.
> ast ego pretrepidus faciem cum pronior aruis
> inserui rogitans Christum, 'miserere precamur,
> hostibus aduersis pauidum seruare momento',
> hinc oculos uertens partem qua dextera monstrat,
> aurigeris solium splendescere rite tabellis,
> quo senior quidam uenerandus membra locabat.
> ante suam faciem fuluis redimita coronis
> ara dicata deo mittebat munera summo,
> quae crucis excelse porrexit uertice signum.
> [As I was searching into these things distinguishing them from my dull mind, behold, my leader had left me suddenly and, departing from the church, disappeared into thin air. And I, afraid, bent my face close to the ground, calling on Christ: 'have mercy, I pray, and remember to save a frightened man whose enemies press against him.' Henceforth, turning my eyes away to the right, where there was a chair, which shone, and was adorned with gilt carvings and a venerable old man has seated himself upon it. In front of his face, an altar decked with garlands of golden flowers sent dedicated gifts to God, the highest one, and at the top it had the sign of a tall cross.]

[55] Catherine E. Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, Boydell Studies in Medieval Art and Architecture (Wookdbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2011), 32.

Æthelwulf's prayer has a formulaic character and alludes generally to sentiments from the Psalms in its plea for mercy and protection against enemies. Curiously, there are no obvious 'enemies' in this narrative, save Æthelwulf's fears alone. Outside of the fact that Æthelwulf is likely praying according to some convention, the identification of 'enemies' in the context of psychological turmoil is reminiscent of Guthlac's prayers, and suggests a link between emotional unrest and spiritual attack. Campbell translates the word *cor*, which usually denotes 'heart', as mind. Æthelwulf ascribes to the *cor* what are arguably mental functions – searching and distinguishing – as well as calling it *stupido*. This is a distinctively Anglo-Saxon reflex, wherein the faculties of the mind and the heart are often conflated. Phillips, writing about Old English terminology, points out that 'with verbs of thought and speech, *on heortan* [in the heart] and *on mode* [in the mind] can be used seemingly interchangeably'.[56] Æthelwulf's use of the term *cor* along with the general affectivity of his language is significant: his mystical experience impacts him at an emotional level and it is this emotional processing that allows the poet to move from fear to adoration of the cross and, ultimately, to a moment of contact with Christ through the eucharist.

De Abbatibus contains evidence for the continued high status of the nocturnal vigil in ninth-century Anglo-Saxon monasticism. The poet praises the brother Cwicwine, for example, who 'while the brothers sang the nocturnal hymns in sacred concert kept to the confines of the church, and did not refrain from pressing the floor with his knees, as he earnestly commended himself to God (to journey) to the stars.'[57] Cwicwine would remain in prayer until the brothers would again rise to sing the psalms of matins and afterwards begin their work for the day.

We have already seen in Chapter One that there is a strong association between private prayer around the time of the Night Office and ascetic, penitential activities. Analysis of the opening of *The Dream of the Rood* and strikingly similar passages in

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[56] Michael Joseph Phillips, 'Heart, Mind, and Soul in Old English: A Semantic Study' (Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1985), 124.

[57] Aethelwulf, *De Abbatibus*, 24–5.
nocturnos fratres sacris concentibus ymnos
dum caelebrant, rursusque suas uisitare quietes
incipiunt, frater memoratus septa sacelli
incoluitque suis non parcit tundere membris
marmora, seque deo diligenter mandat ad astra. (293-99)

De Abbatibus suggest that this hour, the time for private prayer, seems to be the hour not only for contemplation of judgment and one's own sinfulness, but also for the expression of these themes in verse. Cynewulf, in the epilogue to *Elene* (which also appears in the Vercelli Book), describes the *nihtes nearwe* (anguish at night, 1239) in which he, overwhelmed by his own sense of sin, began to contemplate the Cross and compose poetry based on his contemplation. Ó Carragáin points out the 'ascetic significance' of Cynewulf's nocturnal activities and points out the frequency with which the vigil is recommended in the Vercelli Book.[58] Ó Carragáin also notes that Cynewulf envisages a solitary reader for his poem and, indeed, positions himself as a monastic reader who is preparing himself for judgment through devotional reading.[59] Indeed, the story of Caedmon himself fits somewhat within this framework – Bede's cowherd is visited by an angel at night, given the gift of poetry and encouraged to recite his verse in the morning. *Uhta* is a common setting for Old English poems, including *The Wanderer*, who is *ana uhtna gehwylc* and *The Wife's Lament*, which defines itself as the expression of *uhtcearu*. Recently, Leneghan has argued that *The Wanderer* is a poetic meditation based on the experience of *hesychasm*, 'the harnessing of meandering thoughts prior to approaching the stillness of prayer.' [60] *The Seafarer*, which is an elegy based on the experience of *perigrenatio*, makes reference to the experience of *nearo nihtwaco*, the anxious night watch. These terms must have had clear resonances for their predominantly monastic, literate audience, and suggest a strong sense of the relationship between prayer and the expression of devotional themes in verse.

Prayer and Scriptural Reading in *The Dream of the Rood*

The Dream of the Rood is a poem about the experience of praying which draws on the language and setting of the monastic vigil. As we have seen, the poetic dream vision of the cross is also associated with prayer and vigil in the ninth-century Anglo-Latin poem *De Abbatibus*. We turn now to the experience of prayer in *The Dream of the*

[58] Eamonn Ó Carragain, "Cynewulf's Epilogue to Elene and the Tastes of the Vercelli Compiler: A Paradigm of Meditative Reading," in *Lexis and Texts in Early English: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts*, ed. Christian Kay and Louise Sylvester (Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2001), 198.
[59] Ó Carragain, 188.
[60] Leneghan, "Preparing the Mind for Prayer," 121.

Rood. The dreamer's vision of the cross is essentially an encounter with scripture, since the cross, a 'witness' to the death of Jesus, tells the story of the crucifixion from its own point of view. In spite of this, the cross's narrative is a long way from scriptural paraphrase and the poet draws on a number of apocryphal sources to reconstruct the narrative of the Passion from the point of view of the cross. The Christ of the cross's narrative differs dramatically from the Christ presented in the Gospels. Nevertheless, the poem masterfully weaves a series of identifications between Christ, the cross and the dreamer that allows the reader to connect emotionally with the narrative of the Passion. While the recollection of the Passion is at the centre both of the Mass and of the Easter liturgy, I would like to explore the relationship between devotion to Christ and the cross as it survives in collections of private prayers, outlined briefly in Chapter Two, and the poetic meditation represented in *The Dream of the Rood*.

The experience of prayer in *The Dream of the Rood* is directly comparable to the practice of prayer outlined in the Mercian prayer books. Cerne and Nunnaminster both begin with the lections relating to the passion. These lections, I have argued, strongly suggest that personal emotional connection with the biblical account of the passion was a vital part of private prayer in these early devotional books. The passion is the central narrative on which the remainder of prayers in Cerne and Nunnaminster hinge, as the reader is invited to contemplate Christ's body – both his physical body, suffering on the Cross, and his Church – in a deeply personal way. Critics have long since recognised the identification of the dreamer, the cross and Christ in *The Dream of the Rood*, enforced through a complex web of imagery. Thus, the dreamer is invited, through the cross's story, to participate himself in Christ's suffering and thus to share in the redemptive purposes of his death. In *The Dream of the Rood*, then, we find a poetic representation of the full culture of prayer identified in the Mercian prayer books.

The cross's narrative begins at line 28, when he describes being cut down by *feondas* and carried to a hill. Immediately, the cross's account of the crucifixion disagrees with the Gospels', wherein Christ is made to carry his own cross and assisted by Simon of Cyrene. Next, no less controversially, the Cross describes Christ hastening

to the cross, intent on mounting it. These idiosyncratic details bear theological weight, a fact which has been recognized since Rosemary Woolf's important article on doctrinal influences on the poem.[61] Yet we are here interested in how far, if at all, the cross's speech relates to monastic prayer and *lectio*.

From this point of view, Thomas Hill's observations regarding the influence of the *Passio Andreae* on the representation of Christ and the cross in the poem are important. Hill argues that Andrew, like Christ, heroically mounts a cross and goes willingly to his death. Hill also suggests that the *Passio Andreae* was a model for the poem's narrative.[62] The Book of Cerne contains a prayer derived directly from the *Passio Andreae*, which addresses the cross directly:

> Cerne Prayer 66 *Oratio ad sanctum andream apostolum*
>
> salue sancta crux quae in corpore christi dedicata es et ex membris eius tamquam margeretis ornata antequam te ascenderet dominus timorem terrenum habuisti. Modo uero amorem caelestem obtines pro uoto sussceperis. Scires enim a credentibus quanta gaudia habeas, quanta munera praeparata. Securus ergo et gaudens uenio ad te, ita ut et tu exultans suscipias me discipulum eius qui pependit in te. O bona crux quae decorum et pulchritudinem de membris domini suscepisti, diu desiderata sollicite quaesita et aliquando iam concupiscenti animae preparata. Accipe me ab hominibus et redde me magistro me ut per te me recipiat qui per te redemit me. Amen.
>
> [Save us, holy Cross, which has been sanctified by the body of Christ and by his limbs adorned like pearls. Before the Lord ascended you, you were the fear of the earth. Indeed, you received the love of heaven only when you were taken up as a vow/prayer. For you know that we will have such great joy and the gifts that have been prepared only by believing. Securely and joyfully I come to you, therefore, so that you may receive me exultantly, disciple of him

[61] Rosemary Woolf, "Doctrinal Influences on 'The Dream of the Rood,'" *Medium Ævum* 27, no. 3 (1958): 137–53.
[62] Thomas D. Hill, "The *Passio Andreae* and *The Dream of the Rood*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 38 (December 2009): 1–10.

who hanged on you. O good cross, which received elegance and beauty from the limbs of the Lord, I have desired and sought you unceasingly and even now I prepare my heart with longing. Receive me from among men and return me to my master so that he will receive me through you, who through you redeemed me. Amen.]

The inclusion of this prayer from the *Passio Andraea* in a compilation of private prayers focused on the Passion supports the notion that meditation on the Passion, which was central to Anglo-Saxon private prayer, incorporated the contemplation a range of apocryphal works that were also obliquely related to the biblical Passion. It is difficult to determine the exact status of these apocrypha, yet the implied close relationship between *The Dream of the Rood* and the *Passio Andraea*, both of which present devotion to the Cross, suggests that they were important in the practice of prayer. Similarities between the devotional tone and imagery of Cerne's *oratio ad sanctum andream* and *The Dream of the Rood* are striking: petition to the cross as an instrument of salvation, the description of the cross as *timorem terrenum* (corresponding with lines 88 of *The Dream of the Rood*, in which the cross is *leodum laðost*) and the adornment of the cross with pearls (reminiscent of the opening vision). Furthermore, this prayer matches *The Dream of the Rood* in the affectivity of its language. In it, Andrew describes longing, desire, and the preparation of the heart through contemplation of the cross. Each of these aspects of devotion to the cross also emerge in *The Dream of the Rood*.

Some aspects of the cross's speech are closer to the Gospel narrative. Yet it is only through understanding the cross as a surrogate for Christ that we can begin to see how the description of the suffering cross depicts the suffering Christ of the Gospels and the prayer books.

Ongyrede hine þa geong hæleð – þæt wæs God ælmihtig –
strang ond stiðmod. Gestah he on gealgan heanne,
modig on manigra gesyhðe, þa he wolde man-cyn lysan.
Bifode ic þa me se beorn ymbclypte. Ne dorste ic hwæðre bugan to eorðan,
feallan to foldan sceatum, ac ic sceolde fæste standan.

Rod was ic aræred. Ahof ic ricne cyning,
heofona Hlaford, hyldan me ne dorste.
Þurhdrifan hi me mid deorcan næglum. On me syndon þa dolg gesiene,
opene inwid-hlemmas. Ne dorste ic hira ænigum sceððan.
Besmyredon hie unc butu ætgædere. Eall ic wæs mid blod bestemed,
begotten of þæs guman sidan, siððan he hæfde his gast onsended.
[39-49]

[Then the young hero – that was God almighty – stripped himself, strong and resolute. He climbed onto the high gallows, brave in the sight of many, because he wished to free mankind. I trembled when the warrior embraced me. However, I did not dare to bow down to the earth, to fall to the surface of the earth, but I had to stand fast. I was raised up, a cross. I lifted up the powerful king, the Lord of heaven, I dared not bend. Then they drove into me with dark nails. Wounds were visible on me then, open malicious strokes. I dared not do harm to any of them. They mocked the two of us together. I was all drenched with blood, covered from that man's side, after he had given up his spirit.]

Through the figure of the cross, the audience and the dreamer meditate on Christ's physical suffering. More than this, however, the figure of the cross acts doubly as a surrogate for both the suffering of Christ and the sinful state of the dreamer.[63] The Book of Nunnaminster, which is substantially composed of prayers to Christ's physical body, frequently equates the wounds and sufferings of Christ with the sins of the world. The prayer titled *De latere Domini*, on the side of Christ, has been discussed in Chapter Two. In it, the petitioner asks to be admitted into the wounds of Christ so that she may confess that it was she who wounded Christ, with the wounds of her own sins. This confession is made possible through the 'healing medicine' of Christ's wounds. Thus, wounds are simultaneously marks of human sinfulness and of divine mercy. The cross, representing both Christ's human nature and the humanity of the dreamer, is able to communicate the complex chain of associations conjured by

[63] J.A. Burrow, "An Approach to the 'Dream of the Rood", *Neophilologus* 43 (1959): 127.

the image of the wounded Christ.[64] Elsewhere in the Book of Nunnaminster, and in corresponding prayers throughout the Royal Prayer Book, men and women constantly offer prayers of confession based specifically on meditative engagement with Christ's suffering body. For example, the Nunnaminster prayer *De brachis et manibus* petitions Christ as the 'dextera dei' (right hand of God) and reminds him that his arms were stretched out on the cross and driven through with nails (*perforare clauibus*). Through this suffering, the petitioner asks that Christ reach out with merciful hands and pierce through her heart with fear and love (*timoris et delictionis pectus meum perfora*).[65] Throughout the prayer books, specific atonement for sin is made through Christ's physical body. The conflation of human sinfulness with the wounds of Christ and the cross's ambiguous identity as both Christ and man reflects this meditative impulse.

Prayer, Speaking and Writing: the Word of God in *The Dream of the Rood*

The theme of speech is especially prominent in *The Dream of the Rood* which is, ultimately, a speech made about a speaking cross who commands the dreamer to tell of his vision to save the other *reordberend*, men over the earth who offer praise to God. In the beginning of the cross's speech, he explains how he was explains how he was 'stirred up' (*astyred*) from the edge of the forest and hewn down from his *stefn*. Literally, the cross is explaining the process of being cut down yet here, in the dream vision framework, we can see that the poet evokes the language of sleep to link the plight of the dreamer with that of the cross. The cross, like the dreamer, is awakened. The pun relating the cross's *stefn* (trunk) to the Old English word *stefn* meaning voice, makes the idea of the cross speaking implicit from the beginning of the story.

[64] Susan Irvine points out connections made in the poem between Christ and Adam, and the cross's 'fall' as a pun on the original fall of Adam. Typologically, we would expect such associations. In the poem, they strengthen the dreamer and the audience's ability to relate to Christ's suffering. "Adam or Christ? A Pronominal Pun in *The Dream of the Rood*," *The Review of English Studies* 48, no. 192 (1997): 433–47; Eugene R. Kintgen, "Echoic Repetition in Old English Poetry Especially 'The Dream of the Rood,'" *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 75, no. 2 (1974): 218..

[65] De Grey Birch, *An Ancient Manuscript of the Eighth or Ninth Century Formerly Belonging to St. Mary's Abbey, or Nunnaminster, Winchester*, 72.

The cross's awakening is traumatic: he is taken from his home, seized by enemies and forced, almost against his will, to crucify Jesus, since he did not dare 'to break to bits or bow against the word of the Lord' (35-6) (*Þær ic þa ne dorste ofer Drythnes word / bugan oððe berstan*). The notion of the 'word' in the poetic and religious imagination is well expressed by the eccentric *Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*. In the dialogues, special power is assigned to *Godes cwide*:

> ... Salomon cwæð:
> 'Gylden is se godes cwide, gimmum astæned,
> hafað sylfren leaf; …
> He mæg ða saule of siennihte
> gefreccan under foldan, næfre hie se feond to ðæs niðer
> feterum gefæstnað; ðeah he hie mid fiftigum
> clusu beclemme, he ðone cræft briceð
> and ða orðancas ealle tosliteð...'
> [Solomon said: Golden is the word of God, studded with gems, it has silver leaves; each alone may speak the gospel through the gift of the spirit… He can fetch the soul from everlasting night under the earth, however deep the fiend fasten it with chains, though he fasten it with fifty bolts, he will break the power, and completely tear apart the device.][66]

In this tradition, the word of God and, indeed, the words of God are powerful. The concept of the word of God (*verbum Dei*) is complex and multifaceted in religious culture; Jesus is the word of God, and his words (especially his words of prayer, such as the Pater Noster) are doubly so.[67] The scriptures are also the word of God and as such have certain powers; psalms, for example, resound through the literary, material and devotional culture of Anglo-Saxon England as powerful words of prayer, the words of God himself, spoken through his prophets. Likewise, the prologue to John's gospel, which discusses the Word of God (*in principio erat verbum*), was held to have

[66] Daniel Anlezark, ed. and trans., *The Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* , Anglo-Saxon Texts 7 (Woodbridge; Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 2009), 62–63.
[67] Anlezark discusses the charm-like quality of the *Pater Noster*: Daniel Anlezark, ed. and trans., *The Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*,, 26–27.

protective powers in the Middle Ages.[68] These first words of John's Gospel appear in later Anglo-Saxon medicinal charms.[69] In Leechbook I:lxii.3, there is an instruction to write the text of John, suggesting a power accorded to the both the written word and the spoken word. Mayr-Harting notes that the idea of God's words as in themselves sacred and needing, for example, to be pronounced correctly is a constant theme in Carolingian regulations.[70] The treatment of *Godes cwide* in *Solomon and Saturn I* gives some insight into how the cross functions in *The Dream of the Rood*. It is simultaneously a devotional object and also the incarnate word of God, Jesus the *logos*. Likewise the Bible, an object seen to have had apotropaic power, is not merely an object but a book with the very utterances and words of God. Both poems represent the spiritual reality behind physical artefacts and both artefacts, in some sense, point ultimately to the power of prayer as the true word of God that can rescue the soul from destruction. The notion of the cross as the word of God functions on a number of different levels in *The Dream of the Rood*: the cross, in so far as he endures Christ's suffering, is the incarnate *logos*; he is obedient to the word of the Lord; he is the speaker through which the Gospel is proclaimed and also the one who is ultimately able to make the dreamer speak the words of God in prayer when, after the Cross'ss speech, he is able to pray alone with *bliðe mod* (22). The faculty of speech in *The Dream of the Rood* is explicitly related to prayer, and it is in prayer that the dreamer finds his eventual catharsis.

The incision of lines from alternate recensions of *The Dream of the Rood* on the Ruthwell Cross and the Brussels reliquary cross adds a literal element to the speech of the cross: the Brussels Cross first person inscription reads *rod is min nam; geo ic ricne Cyning bær byfigynde, blod bestemed*. The rood was fashioned, according to the dedication, *Criste to lofe for Ælfrices saule hyra beroþor*. It has been noted that the

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[68] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, 292. Augustine tells of a Platonist who was in the habit of saying that this passage should be written in gold and hung up in all churches. (Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* X.xxix) The council of Seligenstadt in 1022 links the recitation of this passage explicitly with lay-superstition

[69] Leechbook I:lxii.3. Karen Louise Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 118–119.

[70] Henry Mayr-Harting, "Praying the Psalter in Carolingian Times: What Was Supposed to Be Going on in the Minds of Monks?," in *Prayer and Thought in Monastic Tradition: Essays in Honour of Benedicta Ward SLG*, ed. Benedicta Ward and Santha Bhattacharji, First [edition] (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 81.

attribution of speech to an inanimate object is an Anglo-Saxon common place, yet the relationship between speech and prayer in the poem confirms that the cross has a special capacity for giving words to those who pray to it.[71] This might also explain the vexed issue of the purpose of the runes on the Ruthwell Cross, which people were likely unable to read *in situ*.[72] The life of prayer is central to the Ruthwell Cross. Images of the monastic life dominate its iconographic programme.[73] More than this, however, depictions of scenes from the Gospels suggest that the cross may have been used as a focal point for meditation on the Incarnation and the Passion, in much the same way that the Mercian prayer books were clearly used. In the midst of all this, we have inscriptions from *The Dream of the Rood* that emphasise adoration of Christ's physical body and, in particular, the physical response of the cross and the followers of Christ in the wake of his crucifixion. Both the cross's refusal to bow down and, later, his bowing to Christ's disciples appear in the inscriptions. Also, the disciples' standing at the shoulder of the corpse and looking up to heaven appear in the inscriptions. In these ways, the Ruthwell Cross privileges the physical act of prayer and, indeed, the physicality of the Passion.

Many critics have noted the inherent illegibility of the runes, which were clearly not inscribed for ease of reading. The idea of the speaking cross is central to both the devotional impulse of *The Dream of the Rood* and to the programme of the Ruthwell Cross. In the Vercelli poem, both Christ and the cross represent the incarnate *logos*, the 'word of God' by whom and for whom all things were made. The idea of an object imbued with words and sometimes prayers was familiar in Anglo-Saxon religious culture. One item from the recently uncovered Staffordshire Hoard brings some aspects of the relationship between prayer and writing into focus. The object is a gold strip that was, perhaps, once attached to a sword belt. It contains an empty jewel setting and, most interestingly, a Latin inscription corresponding to (Vulgate) Numbers 10:35: 'surge domine disepentur inimici tui et fugent qui oderunt te a facie

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[71] Margaret Schlauch, "The Dream of the Rood as Prosopopeia," in *Essays and Studies in Honor of Carleton Brown* (New York: New York University Press, 1940).
[72] Patrick W. Conner, 'The Ruthwell Monument Runic Poem in a Tenth-Century Context,' *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, 59, no. 238 (2008): 25–51. Conner argues for a tenth-century context for the Ruthwell poem, based partly on its use of vernacular which, he claims, fits better in a tenth-century context.
[73] Burlin, "The Ruthwell Cross, 'The Dream of the Rood' and the *Vita Contemplativa*"; Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 295–6.

tua' (arise, Lord, and let thine enemies be be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee.) Elizabeth Okasha suggests that this might also be a loose recollection of Psalm 67:2: 'exsurgat Deus et dissipentur inimici eius et fugiant qui oderunt eum a facie eius' (Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: and let them that hate him flee from before his face.) This psalm, as we have already seen, is used in the Life of Guthlac of Crowland against a host of demons who appear to him, speaking British. St Antony also uses the same verse to repel demons.[74] This verse was held in the Middle Ages to have a special power over demons, and clearly popular in early Anglo-Saxon England. Yet the inscription of this verse points to its use as a kind of talisman, the power of which was independent of its recitation as a prayer. In a similar vein, numerous funerary inscriptions with the formula of a personal name and the command to 'ora pro anima', or words to the same effect, appear in both Latin and Old English.[75]

Patrick Conner has argued that the Ruthwell Cross runes represent liturgical devotion to the cross and date, therefore, from the tenth century.[76] His argument rests partly on the idea that the use of vernacular runes was more likely in the tenth century. However, Old English runes appear on the mid-eighth century Franks Casket and also, very significantly, on recently found silver clip dating between 725 and 825 which contains runic lines derived from the poem *Daniel-Azarias*.[77] The text on the object is an early version of the opening of *Canticum trium puerorum* inscribed in Old English. It is most likely that the function of the Ruthwell Cross, with its eighth-century runic inscription, was to exhort people to prayer and to act as a focal point for meditation on the gospel narrative. The voice of the cross represents both the intercession of the cross in the prayer life of men and, also, the physical and emotional response demanded of men and women in prayer.

[74] Felix, *Life of Guthlac* XXXIV, trans. Colgrave, op. cit., 111-112.
[75] For example the runic inscriptions of the Thornhill Crosses, dated somewhere between 750-850, which are given by Howlett, *Insular Inscriptions*, 214. For more Old English commemorative runes, see Page, *An Introduction to English Runes*, 141-145.
[76] Conner, "The Ruthwell Monument Runic Poem in a Tenth-Century Context."
[77] Antony Lee, "A New Anglo Saxon Runic Object from Barkston, Lincolnshire," *Lincolnshire Past and Present*, no. 94 (Winter 2013).

The cross's sole purpose, in *The Dream of the Rood*, is consistent with the purpose of the Ruthwell Cross: to bring people to prayer through contemplation of the scriptural story. This is confirmed by the cross's concluding exhortation to prayer and the dreamer's devotional response. Having encountered and obeyed the word of God, the cross is now able to bring speech to men:

> Nu ðu miht gehyran, hæleð min se leofa,
> ðæt ic bealu-wara weorc gebiden hæbbe,
> sarra sorge. Is nu sæl cumen
> þæt me weorðiað wide ond side
> menn ofer moldan ond eall þeos mære gesceaft.
> gebiddaþ him to þyssum beacne. On me Bearn Godes
> þrowode hwile. Forþan ic þrymfæst nu
> hlifige under heofenum, ond ic hælen mæg
> æghwylcne anra þara þe him bið to me.
> Iu ic æs geworden wita heordost,
> leodum laðost, ærþan ic him lifes weg
> rihtne gerymde, reordberendum.(78-89)
> [Now you may hear, my beloved holy one, what evil deeds I have suffered, what grievous woes. Bliss is now come so that men may revere me far and wide over the earth and all the great creation may pray to this beacon. God's Son suffered for a while on me. Therefore I now tower in glory under heaven, and I may bring healing to any one of those who pray to me. I was the bitterest of tortures, loathsome to men, before I opened up the right way of life to men.]

The cross warns the dreamer of the fate of the men who will not know what to say to Christ. This, however, is not a problem for those who bear the beacon within their breast and who have learnt to distinguish the way of the kingdom from earthly paths. Fleming here points to the monastic way of self-denial: *per crucem ad lucem*.[78] Yet there is a more specific reference here to the power of the cross to give speech to men, those who would wish to give an answer to the Lord on the Day of Judgment. They need not fear that know communion with the Cross and with Christ; those who, like

[78] Fleming, "'The Dream of the Rood' and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism", 50.

the dreamer, come to be able to pray happily. The imperative of the cross's speech is two-fold. The dreamer is to pray to the cross and to tell mankind what he has seen:

> Nu ic þe hate, hæleð min se leofa
> þæt ðu þas gesyhðe secge mannum,
> onwreoh wordum þæt hit is wuldres beam,
> se ðe ælmihtig God on þrowode
> for mancynnes manegum synnum
> one Adomes ealdgewyrhtum. (95-105)
> [Now I say to you, my beloved man, that you must tell men of this vision, proclaim with words that this is the glory tree, the one on which almighty God suffered for the many sins of mankind, the old works of Adam.]

Here, the poet gives the motivation for the composition of his poem. Through recording his vision and telling it to mankind, they too can experience the redemption that comes through contemplation of the passion and the cross. The dreamer also responds by praying with joy to the cross, fulfilling the requirement of the cross that all men who would wish to be saved might acknowledge him:

> Gebæd ic me þa to þan beame blíðe mode,
> elne mycle, þær ic ana wæs
> mæte werede. Wæs modsefa
> afysed on forðwege; fealra ealra gebad
> langung-hwila. (123-126)
> [Then I prayed to the cross with friendly spirit, with great zeal, where I was alone with little company. My mind was impelled on the way hence, it experienced very many times of longing.]

The dreamer's *bliðe mod* is reminiscent of Prayer 44 in the Book of Cerne:

> Supplico te domine ut mittas spiritualem dilectionem in corde meo et amorem caelestem in sensu meo, et obumbret me misericordia tua. Domine deus reuoca mihi ad memoriam agonem, ut merear te uidere in regno caelesti…

> [I ask, Lord, that you would send a delighted spirit into my heart and heavenly love into my senses, and cloak me with your mercy. Lord God, bring me back to the memory of your suffering, that I might deserve to see you in your heavenly kingdom…]

The dreamer has received the goal of his prayerful contemplation: joy, alone, in the presence of the cross and the assurance, through Christ's suffering, of salvation. Swanton writes that 'catalysed by his vision, the poet's resolution forms the directly devotional basis of the poem's conclusion. The visionary no longer lies passive and silent.'[79] The dreamer's solitude is significant. Fleming, who argues for 'Benedictine' undertones in the poem, argues that the dreamer longs to move from solitude to community.[80] However, the dreamer remains alone, and his resolution is affected by contemplation and private revelation rather than engagement with the living communion of the monastery.

Conclusion

The Dream of the Rood is a poem steeped in the language of early Anglo-Saxon private prayer and framed in the conventional real-life setting of early Anglo-Saxon night-time devotions. Part of the poem's devotional purpose is to orient its readers to the process of contemplation and, perhaps, of the *lectio* itself. The dreamer, catalysed by a vision that comes to him at the conventional hour for ascetical, transformative prayer, learns how to pray through contemplation of the cross, which is synonymous with contemplation of Christ's passion and the gospel story. As in the lives of saints and prayer books of the period in which the poem was composed, this contemplation in the poem is rooted in penance and the desire for healing. Both the Ruthwell Cross and the Brussels Cross maintain the close associations of the poem and the biblical story through their depiction of the evangelist miniatures. Correlations between the Vercelli text of *The Dream of the Rood* and the Ruthwell Cross point to a complex notion of 'the Word' in material and textual culture: words, which seem not to have been inscribed for ease of reading, appear on the Ruthwell Cross imbuing the cross with an analogous power of speech. This power of speech, in the poetic text of *The*

[79] Swanton, *The Dream of the Rood*, 77.
[80] Fleming, "The Dream of the Rood' and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism."

Dream of the Rood, gives the mute dreamer in the poem the ability to pray. The dreamer is encouraged to tell us, the readers, about his vision so that we, too, may pray. This he does through the composition of the poetic text of *The Dream of the Rood*, itself an act of obedience involving art, evangelism and penitence in an act of communal waiting for the Judgment.

Conclusion

For Anglo-Saxon authors, who were for the greater part steeped in monastic and clerical culture, the life of prayer was primary. Anglo-Saxon textual communities were communities of prayer. Devotional life is, therefore, not merely a contextualising 'source' to be examined. Rather, it is the very essence of the motivation for the composition and reading of literature. Seen in this way, the literature examined in this thesis was relevant in the most profound way to the lives and hopes of men and women who shared in Anglo-Saxon textual communities. In representing prayer, these texts became practical guides to devotional activity. In this way, reading taught people how to pray, and praying defined who these people were.

We find continuity from the extensive descriptions of prayers in saints' lives and in the Mercian prayer books, to the composition of Old English biblical literature in Junius 11 and in *The Dream of the Rood*. These texts also tell us about how people prayed. Prayer in these texts is predominantly represented as ascetic and penitential. Rather than focusing on the experience of communal prayer, these texts narrow in on the language and practice of private prayer which, as we explored in Chapter One, principally meant prayer at night, with tears and emotion, anticipation of judgment, spoken in the presence of and assisted by the intercession of the saints. To pray was to position the self in the narrative of salvation, and often join in with the words of those who had gone before. The Incarnation and the Passion sit at the centre of these prayer traditions and, in a wide range of texts, imaginative engagement with the story of Easter is critical to the life of prayer. Prayer, in these highly literate communities, was inextricably linked to engagement with a host of different written materials, especially with the Psalms and the Gospels. In the prayer books, we find the materials of the Psalms and the Gospels acting as platforms for the unique creation of many other texts, including the abbreviated psalter, the 'Harrowing of Hell' dramatisation in the Book of Cerne, a unique series of prayers centering salvation on the physical body of Christ and 'charms' that use the words of scripture and of poetry to access the healing power of the Word of God. When we turn to vernacular biblical poetry, the

spirituality of the prayer books resounds – focused on Easter, on penance and, most critically, on the transformative power of words to bring healing and salvation.

These facts lead to some interesting observations regarding the role and status of the vernacular in Anglo-Saxon spirituality prior to the tenth century Benedictine Reform. While the full impact of the Benedictine Reform on Anglo-Saxon spirituality is yet to be outlined, we may nevertheless confidently dismiss any notion that the use of the vernacular to supplement devotional life was unique to the tenth century. Substantial evidence exists to confirm that most of the poems discussed in this thesis – *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Daniel*, *Christ and Satan* and *The Dream of the Rood* – were composed by, or in, the ninth century and, as this thesis has shown, these texts each shows an interest in communicating various aspects of the life of prayer in the vernacular. They are, in many ways, vernacular meditations on the practice of prayer. Reading these poems in the light of the ninth century prayer books, which are substantially collections of earlier prayers compiled and arranged thematically, we find that they encourage meditative engagement with scripture through prayer. While scriptural reading is the activity most fundamental to the prayer books, other forms of prayer, some of which are remarkably 'literary', supplement imaginative and emotional connection with the scriptural story.

This thesis opens up many avenues for further investigation of the influence of Anglo-Saxon prayer cultures on vernacular literature and, in particular, the role of meditative reading in private prayer. Locating the individual (who was, it must not be forgotten, most often a member of a community) within the reading process and connecting the individual at prayer to the reading and composition of literature, offers insight into the wide variety of devotional practices that existed alongside regular liturgical life. In seeing poetic output in light of 'devotional' activity, furthermore, we can observe the interaction of men and women with the liturgy and the appropriation of communal devotion into the individual's relationship with God. We must, as Frantzen reminds us, move away from the idea of the 'creation' of the individual in the eleventh century and understand reading, at least partly, as a part of a complex matrix of activities that would connect the individual to God.[1] Many Old English poems have been studied

[1] Frantzen, "Spirituality and Devotion in the Anglo-Saxon Penitentials," 120.

through the lens of liturgy and scanned for liturgical references. As I hope I have shown in this thesis, this line of inquiry is valid and helpful, but at times restrictive. It is particularly restrictive in its explanatory power when critics begin to look for the liturgical 'uses' of various vernacular poems. As the compilation of Junius 11 demonstrates, writing could itself be an act of prayer that drew on the stuff of regular religious life, including the liturgy, and transformed it through meditation and rumination.

While we have seen that the practice of prayer sheds light on some aspects of the composition of biblical literature in Old English, the inverse is also true. Through literature, we can understand more about how Anglo-Saxon authors prayed and how they thought about prayer. Literature connects us, not merely to the external forms of prayer, but to the internal aspects of prayer and the connection between prayer and emotion. Indeed, through the literary text the reader is inculcated into the emotional life of prayer. Emotion is central to Bede's accounts of prayer, particularly prayer at night when men and women would contemplate judgment and salvation. Bede's so-called 'Death Song', with which this thesis began, shows how the vernacular may have assisted in this process. The poems of Junius 11 and *The Dream of the Rood* both represent prayer in highly emotive scenes that are structured around the opposition between judgment and salvation.

This thesis is not intended to act as an exhaustive catalogue of the representations of prayer in Anglo-Saxon literature. To undertake such a project, considering the vast body of religious literature in both Anglo-Saxon and Latin, would have left little room for meaningful analysis. Nevertheless, an examination of bodies of homiletic literature, both in Old English and Latin, as well as a reexamination of the Old English poetic corpus would yield further insight into the practice of prayer in Anglo-Saxon England. In particular, the early poems of the Exeter Book (which, Conner argues, probably formed a distinctive 'booklet' at some point)[2], the poems of Cynewulf and Old English poetic saints' lives offer ample material for the study of prayer. This thesis has also barely skimmed the surface of the relationship between

[2] Patrick W. Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: A Tenth-Century Cultural History* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1993), 110–12.

prayer and literary production in the ninth century. Arguments in Chapter One concerning the importance of saints' lives as both evidence for the practice of prayer and instruments to be used in the practice of prayer sheds new light on many hagiographic texts probably produced in the ninth century, including the Old English Bede, the Old English martyrology and translations of Latin texts such as the *Dialogues* and Augustine's *Soliloquies*. Similarly, many prose translations of saints' lives, including the lives of Guthlac and Chad, engage deeply with the practice of prayer. In looking to the evolution of Old English prose, and especially the likely roles of Mercia and the West Saxon court in the production of Old English literature, it is important not to overlook the devotional impulse behind the processes of reading and composing in the vernacular. There is much work to be done, then, on the role of reading and literature in the life of prayer, and much to learn about the life of prayer from the careful reading of literature.[3]

In prayer, words, quite literally, take on flesh. Prayers in poems, narratives and prayer books were living texts, repeated and performed in the very acts of praying, reading and writing. In reading literary prayers and prayerful literature, we must not lose sight of the daily practices to which these texual artefacts bear witness and the very real sense in which shared words mediated constantly between authors, scribes, stonemasons, and ultimately men and women across the Anglo-Saxon centuries, and their God.

[3] Scholars have argued for the devotional use of some Old English poetic codices, such as the Vercelli Book (Ó Carragain, "The Vercelli Book as an Ascetic Florilegium") and the Nowell Codex (Donald Scragg, "Old English Homiliaries and Poetic Manuscripts", R. Gameson (ed.) *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 553-562.

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