The Poems of Cynewulf
The Poems of Cynewulf

Charles W. Kennedy
Facsimile of Anglo-Saxon MS. of Eleventh Century

From the Cathedral Library at Vercelli
To

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

IN GRATITUDE AND FRIENDSHIP
PREFACE

It has long seemed unfortunate that although English readers have been given many translations of Beowulf, the group of religious poems which are associated with the name of the poet Cynewulf never have been translated in a single volume. To secure translations of all these poems the reader has been compelled to refer to scattered volumes, pamphlets, and philological publications. These translations differ in medium and inspiration. More especially does this seem unfortunate since many of these poems possess a haunting beauty not surpassed, and rarely equalled, in the field of Anglo-Saxon verse, and the various poems, which tentatively represent the product of Cynewulf's pen, have in common characteristics of thought and form which adapt them to group treatment, and, within certain limits, afford excellent opportunity for interesting generalization.

It is the purpose of this volume to present in prose translation those poems which, in the opinion
of leading critics, are the work of Cynewulf. The eight poems here printed are divided into two sections of four poems each. The first section is made up by four poems signed with Cynewulf’s name, of the authorship of which there can be little question. The second section consists of four of the unsigned poems attributed to Cynewulf which, so far as may be judged by internal evidence, seem most likely to be the work of his hand. The evidence bearing upon the ascription of each of these poems to Cynewulf is discussed in the translator’s Introduction.

The prose medium has been selected as being all in all the most satisfactory. For some years there has been much discussion as to the most successful method of translating Anglo-Saxon verse. The Beowulf has been a number of times excellently translated in prose. In other instances blank verse has been used with success as in Gollancz’ translation of Cynewulf’s Christ. Still other translators advocate strongly some form of imitative measure, which shall reproduce so far as possible the rough, alliterative, four-beat movement of the Anglo-Saxon verse. Gummere has given such a translation of the Beowulf in his Oldest English
Of these methods the blank verse, because of its smoothness and regularity, is least adapted to give an adequate idea of the original, while the imitative measures judged *per se* should be best adapted to this end.

The length and nature of a poem, however, are matters of much weight in the selection of a translating medium. It is by no means an axiom of translation that verse shall be rendered in verse. The purpose of a translation is to reproduce as faithfully as may be, by whatsoever medium, the material and spirit of the original. That the essential form and spirit of the rough Anglo-Saxon metre may be excellently adapted to modern ears, is shown in Tennyson's *Battle of Brunanburh*. In this bit of verse, however, Tennyson was not handling a long narrative poem, and it is in the question of length, and the danger of monotony involved in an attempt to form upon the principles of Anglo-Saxon verse an imitative measure, that one of the translator's greatest difficulties lies. Owing to changes in language it is impossible to reproduce the Anglo-Saxon metre with such variety as characterized it in the original. There has come also a change in that aesthetic feeling upon which all appreciation
of verse measures ultimately rests. For these reasons it has seemed best in this translation to use a prose form preserving something of the alliterative element of the original, and attaining, when possible, a rhythmic movement.

In the translation of the Christ, and the Dream of the Rood I have followed the texts of Cook, in the Juliana that of Strunk and in the Fates of the Apostles the text of Krapp. The remaining poems of the translation are based upon the Grein-Wülker text printed in the Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Poesie.

I take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to Professors Gordon H. Gerould and Charles G. Osgood, of Princeton, for assistance with the proof sheets of this volume; and to Professor J. Duncan Spaeth, of Princeton, for his generous and helpful interest in this translation from the time when it was first undertaken.

C. W. K.

Princeton.
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INTRODUCTION

Of the many problems arising from a study of Anglo-Saxon literature few are more confusing and baffling than those which connect themselves with the poems confidently or tentatively ascribed to Cynewulf. Of no one genius in the entire range of English literature do we know at once so little and so much. For when stripped of conjecture, surmise, and academic theory, our actual knowledge of Cynewulf, of his circumstances and life, is small. He is the merest shadow of a name given us in eight Anglo-Saxon runic letters. Scholars have had their way with him without dread of disproof, and pictured him a bishop or a wandering minstrel as they would. So ignorant are we of all that made his life.

Yet of the man himself we know much. The personal passages, in the poems signed with his name, give us swift gleams of insight into his nature in an intimate way such as is unique in the history of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Apparently some time during the life of this man there came a sharp and decisive change in his nature. The influence of the Christian faith in some way touched him, and the current of his life was turned. A sense of sin, a dread of final judgment linked with an unshaken faith in the goodness and perfect justice of God, give a wistful note to these striking passages of personal revela-
tion, which draw the reader closer to him, in involuntary response to an appeal alone remaining after the centuries have laid an obliterating finger on the event and circumstance of his life.

It has come to pass since Kemble’s discovery in 1840 of the runic passages establishing a personality upon which conjectural theories might be hung, that the various suppositions as to the life of Cynewulf and the possibility of his authorship of many poems not signed by his name, have been exalted into a Cynewulf problem about which has been waged a bitter if bloodless battle of words. Various critics have gone various lengths in assigning to him poems which are in his manner, and which he might have written. Thus for example Kemble and Thorpe regarded it as probable that Cynewulf was the author of both the Exeter Book and the Vercelli Codex. Ten Brink, making unqualified attributions to Cynewulf, which as a matter of fact rest merely on opinion, gives him the Riddles, Phoenix, Vision of the Cross, Descent to Hell, Guthlac, and Andreas, in addition to the Elene, Juliana, and Christ. This is no meagre list. Yet Sarrazin is able to surpass it by arguing for the Cynewulfian authorship of Beowulf, Judith, Wanderer, Seafarer, the Gnomic Verses of the Cottonian MS., and by assuming part of the Genesis, Exodus, Vision of the Cross, and a number of minor poems to be in Cynewulf’s manner, and probably composed

2 *The Poetry of the Codex Vercellensis*, i, 8.
3 *Geschichte der englischen Literatur*, i, 64–75.
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in part by him and in part by imitators. To this extent had attribution proceeded by the year 1888.

In this year was made the first and only discovery since that of Kemble's discovery of Cynewulf's runic signature in *Juliana, Elene,* and *Christ* which has definitely added to the known facts in the vexed question of Cynewulfian authorship. In the summer of 1888 Napier,¹ in collating the homilies and poetry in the Vercelli MS., found a fragment of 28 lines following immediately upon, and apparently belonging to, the short poem of 95 lines known as the *Fates of the Apostles.* These lines contained a runic passage again giving us the signature of Cynewulf, not in the due order of the letters, as had been the case in the other three signatures, but in the order FWULCYN—the E being omitted as in the signature of the *Christ.* Because of the position of the *Fates,* following as it does immediately upon the *Andreas,* to which it might be considered as forming an epilogue, and the apparent unity of the first 95 lines of the *Fates* and Napier's fragment, scholars such as Sarrazin, Trautmann, Skeat and Gollancz have held that this discovery had the effect of determining the Cynewulfian authorship, not only of the *Fates of the Apostles,* but also of the *Andreas.*

As a matter of fact it is extremely difficult to make definite attributions in the Cynewulf question on the evidence which is before us, and many theories, confidently regarded by their holders as proven,

¹ Published in the *Academy,* September 8, 1888, and the *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum,* xxxii (1888), 66 ff.
may be quickly rejected as unproven. The use of metrical tests, of word and phrase lists, and investigations of dialectal usage, never completely convincing in effect, has been exalted beyond its proper sphere of supplementary evidence. Thus for example the study of style and vocabulary, upon which Sarrazin largely depends for results in support of his theory of the Cynewulfian authorship of *Beowulf*, and which he summarizes in tables of phrase correspondence to between *Beowulf* and the Cynewulfian poems, seems to me to prove little more than that these poems are in the same language, and show at times a merely normal and natural correspondence of phrase or turn of thought, and that in Anglo-Saxon poetry style and imagery are in the main conventional and formal.

It is evident therefore that as undoubted work of Cynewulf we can claim only the four poems signed with his name—the *Elene, Juliana, Fates of the Apostles*, and that portion of the *Christ* which contains the runic signature. To these, with some degree of probability, may be added *Andreas*, on the ground of its close relation to the *Fates of the Apostles*, and the remaining portions of the *Christ*, on the ground that the three sections, the Nativity, the Ascension, and the Last Judgment, constitute an integral poem signed by Cynewulf at the end of a section instead of at the end of the whole. It may indeed be that the signature was originally made at the end of a completed poem, and that the section known as the Last Judgment was a later

addition by Cynewulf. Such a view would be borne out by the added strength and vigour of the third section, which might well find its cause in a maturer genius.

Here assumption must end. The attributions here made are made in connexion with and upon the basis of runic passages containing the name of Cynewulf, and these four complete poems—the *Fates of the Apostles* being considered merely as an epilogue—represent conservative opinion as to the undoubted work of Cynewulf. One or two other poems are sufficiently in the manner of Cynewulf to warrant their inclusion in this translation as the work of pupils or imitators writing in the traditions of their master.

**THE EXETER BOOK**

All the undoubtedly genuine poems are therefore found either in the Exeter Book or in the Vercelli MS. Our knowledge of the first is the older. At the death in 1071 of Leofric, the first Bishop of Exeter and tenth of Crediton, under whom the see was transferred from that city to Exeter, the Exeter library consisted of sixty volumes, among which was a manuscript indexed as *I mycel Englisc bōc be gehwilcum þingum on lēobwisan geworht*—i.e. a large English book on various subjects written in verse. This is the manuscript which has preserved to us so large a body of Anglo-Saxon verse, and which, from the Cathedral where it is still kept, has come to be known as the Exeter Book. Written by a single hand on vellum, apparently at the
beginning of the eleventh century,¹ the manuscript contains a number of important poems, among others the Christ, Guthlac, Juliana, Phoenix, Wanderer, Seafarer, Harrowing of Hell, and Ruin.

THE VERCELLI MANUSCRIPT

The Vercelli manuscript, on the other hand, had drifted out of England. Discovered in 1832 by Blume, a German Professor of Law, in the course of his investigation of the contents of the manuscripts in the Cathedral library at Vercelli, near Milan, the Codex Vercellensis is a thick volume, of the late tenth or early eleventh century,² consisting in the main of Anglo-Saxon homilies, but containing, interspersed among them, six poems. These are the Andreas, Fates of the Apostles, Soul's Address to the Body, a fragment of twenty-seven lines on Psalm xxviii, Dream of the Rood, and Elene. How this manuscript found its way from England to Northern Italy is unknown. Wülker's suggestion,³ which rests, however, upon no definite evidence, is that, since there was originally at Vercelli a hospice at which Anglo-Saxon pilgrims to Rome were accommodated, there may have been in connexion with this a small library, and that such a volume, finding its way to this library, may have passed later into the keeping of the Cathedral. It was also suggested by a writer in the Quarterly Review, vol. 75, that the manuscript may have been presented to the Cathedral library by Cardinal Guala Bicchierie in the third-

¹ Wülker, Grundriss, 223. ² Wülker, Grundriss, 237. ³ Grundriss, 237.
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teenth century. This theory is an interesting one because of the poem Andreas included in the Vercelli manuscript, and the connexion of Cardinal Guala with two churches named in St. Andrew’s honour the Church of St. Andrew in Vercelli, which Guala founded, and St. Andrew’s Church in Chesterton, Cambridgeshire, which he received as a benefice from Henry III. Cook¹ argues for this theory at some length, but can hardly hope to win conviction. The matter must after all remain one of conjecture.

THE POET

Our knowledge of the personality of Cynewulf, the poet, depends upon four signatures of his name in runic characters, occurring in the poems Juliana, Christ, Elene, and Fates of the Apostles. The runic characters are the following: BFrTfMPnhP, representing the letters CYNEWULF. In two of the poems, Christ and The Fates of the Apostles, the E is omitted. The method in which the runic signature is made is a most interesting one. Except in Juliana these Anglo-Saxon runes not only fulfil the function of letters, but each rune also represents a word. In the Juliana the runes are used only as letters forming words, which when combined give us Cynewulf’s name. We obtain a certain set of meanings for the Anglo-Saxon runes from the Runic Poem, which is, however, generally accepted as being a late production, and in certain instances fails to throw any light whatever upon Cynewulf’s usage of the runic characters. The names of the

¹ The Dream of the Rocd, ed. Cook, Introd. v., vi.
runes are as follows: (b) cēn, (h) ūr, (n) nēd (nīd), (m) eoh, (p) wēn (wyn), (n) ūr, (l) lagu, (f) feoh. The lines of the Runic poem so far as these characters are concerned may be translated as follows:

"Cēn is known to every one of living creatures at the fire, shining and bright; it burneth most often where princes rest within.

Ūr is a joy and honour to every prince and earl. It is fair upon the horse, a steadfast war equipment in the field.

"Nīd lieth heavy on the heart; yet it becometh a help and a healing unto every one of the children of men, if they hearken unto it early.

"Eoh is a joy unto the earls of princes, a horse proud of foot, where the warrior upon his steed exchangeth speech with the mighty; and it is ever a comfort unto the unquiet.

"Wyn he enjoyeth who knoweth little of care, of sorrow, or woe, and he hath for himself blessedness and bliss and eke many cities.

"Ūr is headstrong and horned, a savage beast. With its horns the great moor-stepper fighteth; that is a valiant wight.

"Lagu seemeth wearisome unto the peoples, if they must visit it upon dancing ships, and the sea waves terrify and the steed of the deep suffereth not a bridle.

"Feoh is a comfort unto every man; yet must each one of men deal it out widely, if that he will obtain judgment before God."

From this poem, therefore, according to Kemble, we obtain the following meanings for the runes composing Cynewulf's name, taking them in due
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order of the letters: Torch, bow, need, horse, hope, bull, water, money. Certain of these meanings may be applied at once to Cynewulf's signature in the four poems mentioned. With here and there a very slight shade of different meaning, such as wealth instead of money, or woe instead of need, the N, E, L, and F runes may be translated in the signed poems as Kemble translates them. Wynn, however, instead of hope, is to be translated joy. The C, Y, and U runes for which Kemble derives the meaning torch, bow, and bull, cannot be so translated as Cynewulf uses them. For the U rune Cosijn and Gollancz propose the pronominal adjective "our," Gollancz supporting his contention by the fact that upon the margin of a runic alphabet Ür was in one instance glossed as "noster." This is somewhat against the general usage of runes, which requires them to be substantives, but on the whole seems the best that can be done if the original name of the rune be retained. The C rune as used by Cynewulf quite evidently cannot mean torch. As there is an Anglo-Saxon adjective cène, however, meaning bold, keen, courageous, it has been rather generally assumed that the C rune may take on this meaning in Cynewulf, and, being used as a substantive, may be translated as hero or by some equivalent phrase.

The Y rune is the one which has perhaps given most difficulty. Nothing at all is to be made of the meaning "bow," and a number of substitutions have been offered. Of these either yrmdōu, "misery," proposed by Kemble and followed by Thorpe, Grein, and Wülker, or yfel, as an adjective to be translated "wretched," as a noun to be translated "affliction,"
proposed by Gollancz, seem to fit the context better than other conjectures that have been made.\(^1\)

Taking the runes, then, with these values Cynewulf has employed them in his poetry. It is an important fact that in those sections of his poems, which precede and follow the runic signature, Cynewulf drops at once into a personal tone. The veil between writer and reader is torn away, and we listen to his confession of sin, dread of judgment, longing for the sympathy and the prayer of friends and readers, as to the words of one speaking directly to us. It must be noted, however, that these passages are of a very general nature, and throw little light upon the actual facts of Cynewulf’s life. When Leo \(^2\) brought forward his view that Cynewulf was in youth a wandering minstrel, it was based upon the fact that Leo attributed the Riddles to him, believing that the so-called First Riddle could be interpreted as meaning “Cynewulf,” and the last of the series as meaning “The Wandering Minstrel.” Putting the two together, and taking this bit of information in connexion with what he believed to be references in the *Elene* to the receipt of treasure and appled gold in the mead-hall, Leo was able to build up a theory, as a matter of fact based upon nothing at all, that Cynewulf was in early life a wandering minstrel. And in spite of the absolute lack of evidence for such a belief it was destined, once taking root, to endure

\(^1\) For a fuller discussion of the runes as used by Cynewulf see Cook’s edition of the *Christ*, 151 ff., or Trautmann’s *Kynewulf*, *Bonner Beiträge*, i, 43–70, also Gollancz’ edition of the *Christ*, 173.

\(^2\) *Quae de se Cynewulfus tradiderit*, Halle, *Universität-Programm*. 
for many years. In a most interesting article on "The Autobiographical Element in the Cynewulfian Rune Passages" C. F. Brown has shown that the runic signatures themselves are not autobiographical in nature, and that the specific information which Cynewulf has left us of his life is extremely meagre. Except in the most general sense all that Cynewulf tells us of himself is to be found in the *Elene*, lines 1237–1257. These lines may be translated as follows: "Thus have I spun my lay with craft of word, and wrought it wondrously, aged and nigh unto death by fault of this failing house; at times I mused upon it and sifted my thought in the dungeon of night. I knew not clearly of the rood aright till wisdom with ample power imparted wider counsel in the thoughts of my heart. I was stained by my deeds of evil, shackled in sin, harried by sorrow, bound in bitterness, compassed about with trouble, till that in majesty the King of might granted me knowledge to console old age, till that he meted out to me His radiant grace, instilled it in my heart, revealed its glory, made it more ample, loosed my body, and undid the bolts of my breast, and taught me song-craft, which in the world I have used with will and gladness. Full often had I pondered on the glorious cross, nor once alone, ere I unriddled all the marvel of that glorious tree. I found the tale of that victor-token in books, to make it known in writings in due course of time."

In this passage we learn all that Cynewulf specifically tells us of his life—his conversion to a life of religious contemplation, his learning which he employs

1 *Englische Studien*, xxxviii, 196.
in searching out and piecing together the true tale of the cross which he has just narrated, his poetic powers which find their spring in religious thought, and finally old age pressing hard upon him with sorrow and decay. Brown's statement, however, that probably not overmuch weight is to be laid upon Cynewulf's confession of early sin must be questioned. It is by no means certain that this is a theological commonplace.

These facts are all that are to be had from the Elene. Those interpretations of the rune passage which make the allusion to the receipt of treasure and appled gold, the meadhall and war-horse of the Elene, apply to Cynewulf himself, did so only by emending the original text in order to get a translation not so convincing as that which Brown proposes. With Bradley's article upon the so-called First Riddle to be discussed later, and the above-mentioned article by Brown upon the autobiographical element in the rune passages, the theory which made the early life of Cynewulf the life of a wandering minstrel vanishes from the scene.

The identity of the poet remains undetermined to the present day. Our absolute lack of knowledge of the external circumstances of his life, and the fact that the name of Cynewulf is no uncommon one, have made the task of identifying him doubly hard. The religious nature of his poetry, and the fact itself of his learning, argues a connexion with the church, and attempts have been made to identify him definitely

1 Englische Studien, xxxviii, 219.
2 Ibid., 203 ff.
3 Academy for March 24, 1888.
with three ecclesiastics of the same or a similar name, whose lives fell in or near the conjectured period in which the Cynewulfian poetry was written. These are Cenwulf, Abbot of Peterborough and Bishop of Winchester, died 1006; Cynewulf, Bishop of Lindisfarne, died (circ.) 783; and Cynulf, one of the four priests in the company of Tidfrith, Bishop of Dunwich, who at Clovesho, October 12, 803, signed his name, after that of the bishop, to a decree forbidding laymen to be elected to the lordship of monasteries.

The identification with Cenwulf of Winchester first suggested by Kemble, and later adopted by Thorpe, Ettmüller, and Earle, may be set aside as one hardly deserving serious consideration. Two arguments are strong against it. In the first place the two names are separate and distinct names not to be confused as variants of a single form. In the second place the time is much later than the age at which our poet must have lived. In the runic passages of the Juliana and the Elene the author's named is spelled Cynewulf. In the runic passages of the Christ and the Fates of the Apostles the e is omitted, and the name appears as Cynwulf. This affords a not unimportant clue to an approximate date for these poems. Sievers points out that the older form of the name would have been Cyniwulf, the change from an i to a later e coming approximately about the middle of the eighth century. Again, about the end of the eighth century or

1 Archaeologia, xxviii, 362.
2 Sievers, Anglia, xiii, 20.
3 Anglia, xiii, 11-15.
beginning of the ninth, instead of Cyni- or Cyn-
we find a movement toward the form Cyn- (e
disappearing before h, l, r, w, and s), though all
three forms are found. On the basis of this evidence
it would seem that the Juliana and the Elene could
not have been written before the middle of the eighth
century, nor the Fates of the Apostles and Christ
before 800. On the other hand, that we may not
rely too confidently on the spelling of his name as an
index to the date and order of composition of the
various poems is shown by the fact that in the per-
sonal passages in the Elene the poet expressly states
that he is old "and ready to depart by reason of
this failing house (the body)," which would seem
to place the Elene later in his lifetime. At any rate
it has been made clear that any identification which
places the death of Cynewulf in the eleventh century
may be quickly rejected.

The second theory which identifies the poet with
Cynewulf, Bishop of Lindisfarne, an identification
suggested by Dietrich¹ and followed by Grein and
more recently by Trautmann,² unfortunately does
not admit of definite proof. One argument
that Cook regards as quite conclusive ³ weighs
strongly against the theory. We know that the
Bishop of Lindisfarne left his charge in 779 or
780 and died some three years later. If with
Cook,⁴ therefore, we take the dates of the Christ
and the Fates of the Apostles to have been later

¹ De Cruce Ruthw., 14.
² Kynewulf, Trautmann, Bonner Beiträge, i.
³ The Christ of Cynewulf, Cook, Introd., 73.
⁴ Ibid., Introd., 69.
than 783, there is no possibility of their having been written by Cynewulf of Lindisfarne. Cook
finds another and still stronger argument against the identification in the correspondence of lines 1277–1321 of the *Elene*, lines which in that poem immediately succeed the runic passage, with the description of the Day of Judgment given by Alcuin in his *De Fide Sanctæ et Individuæ Trinitatis*, Bk. 3, ch. 21.² The correspondence of ideas is so close as in Cook’s opinion to postulate a dependence of Cynewulf upon this source; and as the *De Fide* must have been written after 800, being dedicated to Charlemagne, the date of the *Elene* would seem to be determined as early in the ninth century. The belief of Cook, however, that the similarity of the passages in the *Elene* and the *De Fide* would tend to show a dependence of Cynewulf upon Alcuin and therefore establish the date of the *Elene* as later than 800, was attacked by Trautmann³ on the ground that Cynewulf and Alcuin might in the passages in question have borrowed from a common source. That this was in all probability the case is proved by C. F. Brown in his article on ‘‘Cynewulf and Alcuin.’’⁴ He discovers a source for the Alcuin passage in a sermon by St. Eligius, Bishop of Noyon. With a portion of this sermon Alcuin had combined fragments from Augustine’s *Enchiridion*. Brown also proves that the ideas of the judgment day which Cook takes to be peculiar to the *Elene*

¹ Anglia, xv, 7–20.
² Migne’s *Patrologia Latina*, ci, 53.
³ Anglia Beiblatt, xi, 324.
passage and to Alcuin were current in the writings of the earlier church fathers. Since there is evidence that Cynewulf was familiar with the patristic writings, Brown concludes that he may well have drawn upon them in the Elene passage. This argument, therefore, for placing the Elene in the ninth century may be dismissed.

Trautmann relies for one of his strongest bits of evidence toward proving Cynewulf Bishop of Lindisfarne upon a particular translation of a certain sentence in the runic passage of the Christ which seems to me unwarranted. The passage is as follows—

\[
\begin{align*}
&U(nne) \text{ was } longe \\
&L(ond) \text{ flodum bilocen, liif-wynna dael,}
\end{align*}
\]

which he translates as follows—"Vergönnt war mir lange der besitz des (eines) flutumschlossnen landes," and adds to this "Das flutumschlossne land ist die insel Lindisfarena Ee, der bischöfliche sitz jenes Cynewulf." \(^1\) This interpretation one will be little inclined to follow, I think, even if one accept Trautmann’s interpretation of the U and L runes. The thought in the personal passage at this point is not specific but general. The poet is considering the transitory nature of all earthly benefits and possessions. As they were formerly overwhelmed by the waters of the flood, so at the last day they shall burn in the fire of judgment. This is his thought as I understand the passage, and not a particular reference to an estate of his own surrounded by water. Therefore, while there is a slight possibility that, if the date of the later Cynewulfian poems

\(^1\) Kynewulf, Trautmann, Bonner Beiträge, 94.
could in some way be shown to fall before 783, our author may be one with the Bishop of Lindisfarne, as Trautmann so positively states him to be, the facts at present before us are not sufficient to furnish definite proof in the matter.

The third theory of the identity of Cynewulf, which would make him Cynulf, the priest accompanying Tidfrith, bishop of Dunwich, at Clovesho in 803, has been proposed by Cook. The date would certainly fit the accepted dates of the Cynewulf poems more nearly than either of the earlier identifications. As a theory, however, it must be said that if there is little definitely against it, there is also little definitely for it. It throws no clear light on the question of the person of Cynewulf. The theory of Cook is an interesting possibility, but it yet remains for it to be proved anything more than this.

Yet in spite of the mists that veil the identity of Cynewulf to a sympathetic reader of his poems, he seems less an unknown singer of the eighth century than an intimate friend. So strong is the personal element in all he writes and so winning its appeal. We find in him combined a passionate poet of the singing heart, in whom the colour and fragrance of the world find instant response, and one who can put all this away to dream in ecstatic vision of the joys of wider and fuller life hereafter. His theology taught him to expect

1 The Christ of Cynewulf, Cook, Introd., 73.
2 Notice Cynewulf's love of colour as shown by a fairly wide use of colour adjectives, and particularly his love for contrast between light and darkness, with all that it symbolized. See "Colour in Old English Poetry," by W. E. Mead, Mod. Lang. Ass. Pub., xiv, 169.
rigorous judgment for men according to their works, and it is with trembling and fear that he awaits the reward of his deeds. How vividly we feel the sincerity and simplicity of his heart! "How great a need have I of gentle friends upon my way when I seek out alone my long home, that unknown dwelling-place." This same thought comes to Everyman when summoned of Death to appear before God, and he exclaims—

*Alas! I may well wepe with syhes depe:*
*Now have I no maner of company*
*To help me in my journey, and me to kepe.*

The personal note in the religious strains of Cynewulf, the sense of weakness and penitence and aspiration, are echoed centuries later in the poems of Donne and Herbert, of Christina Rossetti and Newman; and the devotional element which here and there brings to English verse so wistful and so tender cadences finds its source on English soil in him.

Few who have realized the transient nature of all the beauties of the world have loved them so well. His verse reflects his keen delight in outdoor sights and sounds, the gleam of the sea, the tender green of earth, sunrise and sunset and the beauty of the stars, or the sound of the harp and the gleeman's voice, and the flash and colour of gold and jewels. His love of nature is intimate and vital, giving us vivid etchings of land and sea in a thousand moods, descriptions which in truth of portrayal are not surpassed by Chaucer. The sea atmosphere of his poems, the raging of wind and wave smiting against
headlands as in the Christ, or the gentle, smiling grandeur of the sea stretching from the sandy shore to the horizon, as in the Elene, the sinking of the sun under the wave and the gathering of dusk, the hurry and gay bustle of an embarkation and the glad arrival at the haven—how well he knew to paint these scenes! Few lines are sometimes needed to give us a vividness and intensity of feeling which bear the stamp of truth.

No less a master of description is he in portrayal of the more vehement and impetuous forces of life. The pomp and lust and fury of war, the shock of battle in the Elene, where shield clashes upon shield, and above, unwavering and relentless, the eagle soars in expectant flight, all scenes of bloodshed and cruelty and martyrdom, the tumult of surging waters and the hurtling might of flame, all are sketched with brief insistent power. In choosing to write upon the Last Judgment in the third section of his Christ Cynewulf assigned himself a task which might well give pause to a poet of highest genius. Yet he does not fail. In almost every instance where intensity and dramatic force are to be obtained by artless means Cynewulf obtains these in ample measure. To him the fires of the Judgment Day are real flames that should consume earth, while the stars sank from their stations, and he needed no canons of art to aid him in their portrayal. As he saw them in his heart so he painted them. Simple, naïve, direct, his dramatic power increases with the grandeur of his subject and the intensity of his feeling, and not even Dante's painting of the flame-red towers of the city of Dis or the
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slow remorseless fall of the flakes of fire surpass Cynewulf in the sweep and splendour and majesty of his Day of Judgment.

It will be easily seen, however, that the freshness of outlook upon life, keen enjoyment of beauty in all its manifestations, and power of vivid, forceful portrayal have a more important effect in the poetry of Cynewulf than the mere adornment of a particular passage or the vivifying of single scenes. It affects intimately the entire tissue of his work. In all the signed poems of Cynewulf he was working after certain models, and in the case of the poems Juliana and Elene, where his material is drawn from the more or less formal sources of the saints' legends so dear to the heart of the early church, there was more than a slight danger that a rehandling of this material, without great genius, would descend into a mere translation, or such a reworking of the legend as would better fit it to make its appeal to the social and religious spirit of the day. As a matter of fact Cynewulf's treatment of his material is in each case something more than either. It is a new poem upon a borrowed theme, fresh, vital, and sincere. This is by no means to say that Cynewulf's method of poetic architecture is free from criticism. As Cook¹ points out, the perspective and symmetry in the Christ are marred by frequent repetitions, irrelevancies, and anticipations, and the same faults may be found in the other poems. But granting all these things, one must after all feel that in view of the traditional scholastic methods of the school in which he was bred and in comparison with

¹ The Christ of Cynewulf, Cook, Introd., 91.
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the so-called Caedmonian poetry, sincere and dramatic as in part it is, we may only marvel that in this early poet we find to so full a degree the tender, wistful, passionate strains of the poetry of a later civilization. Such is the nature of this unknown voice singing in the mists of Anglo-Saxon England.

THE SIGNED POEMS OF CYNEWULF

Juliana

Of the signed poems of Cynewulf the Juliana, a poem in the Exeter Book of 731 lines, marred by two breaks in the manuscript between lines 288 and 289, and again between 558 and 559, is probably the earliest in date of composition, though Wülker is disposed to date it after the Christ. The facts which claim for the Juliana an early place in Cynewulf's writings are many. The style is that of a writer who has not yet mastered narrative verse, and the vivacity of treatment which marks the Elene and Andreas is almost completely lacking. Less influence is felt of that love of nature which gives us in his later poems flashing bits of fresh and artless description. There is one reference to the sea only and that is slight; the splendid sea scenes of the Elene and the Christ are lacking. In short, the style and manner are the style and manner of one using a power not yet brought to full fruition. Moreover, the personal passage at the end of the poem in which his name is signed gives us no hint of his age. In striking contrast are the runic

Geschichte der englischen Literatur, 41.
passages in the *Elene* and the *Fates*. In the first the voice of the poet is avowedly the voice of an aged man, one for whom the joy of life and youthful gleam have passed away. In the *Fates* also, though there is no specific reference to the age of Cynewulf, a certain note of weariness and experience of life would seem to urge against so early a date as Wülker assigns it.¹ Trautmann,² though unwilling to trust too much to the value of internal evidence, is inclined to regard the *Juliana* as an early poem, many other critics giving it the earliest place.

Mention of St. Juliana is first made in the *Martyrologium Vetustissimum* ascribed to St. Jerome (d. 420), and the *Martyrologium Romanum Vetustius seu Parvum*, dating supposedly about the end of the seventh century. Both these notices, however, are slight.³ Bede in his *Martyrology*⁴ gives the story at greater length, in most details agreeing with the *Acta St. Julianae* of Bolland. In the Bollandist collection of the *Acta Sanctorum* under date of February 16, Vol. ii., two lives of St. Juliana are found. The one, by an unknown author and edited from eleven manuscripts by Bolland himself, may be taken as the nearest to the source of Cynewulf. From the fact that this version of the legend gives no account of the translation

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¹ *Geschichte der englischen Literatur.*
² "Ist es zwar meist bedenklich aus stil, wortgebrauch, versbau, behandlung der quelle, etc. auf frühere oder spätere zu schliessen, so fühl ich mich doch gestimmt die Juliana für ein früheres werk des dichters zu halten." Bonner Beiträge, Kynewulf, 113.
⁴ Migne *Patrologia Lat.*, xciv, 843.
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of St. Juliana to Cumae, supposed to have taken place between 568 and 600, Bolland would date this form of the story no later than the early sixth century.¹

The story of St. Juliana as given in the fifth and sixth century prose form of the Acta Sanctorum, which we have taken to be the closest to the source of Cynewulf's poem, may be given in a few words. In the reign of Maximian (308–14) Juliana, a maiden of Nicomedia, daughter of Africanus, a persecutor of the Christians, was wooed by Eleusius, a Roman prefect. Rejecting his suit because he refused to embrace the Christian faith, she suffered persecution at the hand of her suitor by repeated imprisonments, scourgings, fire, breaking upon the wheel, and immersion in molten lead. So great was her faith and fortitude that she was enabled by divine aid to endure these persecutions, to confound the evil spirit that came to her prison to tempt her, and received power to convert many bystanders who witnessed her tortures. Her martyrdom was finally consummated by decollation, and her body translated after death by a certain Sephonia to Puteoli, where a tomb is built for her one mile from the sea. Eleusius, setting sail soon thereafter for his suburban villa, was caught in a great tempest and drowned with twenty-four of his men.

Between the legend of the Acta Sanctorum and the poem of Cynewulf a number of discrepancies exist. Some of these may be explained by the poet's voluntary omission of pagan references, or expansion

¹ For a complete discussion of various forms of the legend see J. Garnett, Mod. Lang. Ass. Pub., xiv, 279 ff.
of Christian sentiments, according as he found them adverse or favourable to the Christian colouring of the poem. In matters of fact or number, where a voluntary change would seem purposeless and unnatural, the correspondence is closer. Thus for example the bath into which Juliana is thrown is represented by Cynewulf as being filled with boiling lead, being thus in agreement with the Acta Sanctorum. Likewise, after the pouring forth of the lead from the vessel, the number of bystanders slain is given both in the Latin and Anglo-Saxon as seventy-five. There is a discrepancy, however, in the number of those drowned of the company which had set sail with the prefect Eleusius after the death of Juliana. The Acta Sanctorum gives the number as twenty-four, Cynewulf as thirty-four. Reference to the translation of Juliana’s body to Puteoli is also omitted in Cynewulf.

It is in those portions of the legend that lend themselves to expansion or easy omission that the greatest difference is found. And an examination of these passages reveals with what skill Cynewulf has used these means to add to the gentleness and beauty of Juliana’s character or to emphasize the spirit of the Christian faith. Thus at the very beginning of the Acta Sanctorum legend Juliana is convicted of something very closely approximating deceit. Being unwilling to marry Eleusius she puts her unwillingness on the ground of ambition: “Unless thou hold the dignity of a prefect I am in no wise able to be joined to thee.” Whereupon Eleusius takes measures to achieve her wish. With fresh naïveté the Latin tells us that “he gave a gift to
the Emperor Maximian and succeeded the other prefect who was then ruling," apparently a proceeding of much simplicity. When Juliana learned that her demand, perhaps considered an impossible one, had been fulfilled, and when Eleusius again pressed for her hand, she was obliged to change her ground. This time she gives her real reason, and demands his conversion to the Christian faith as a prerequisite to the marriage. Cynewulf, feeling undoubtedly that this double dealing was a blemish upon the poem, omits all reference to the prefecture, and makes belief in the true God her only demand of her suitor. Moreover, as the poem proceeds, the language of Juliana is modified by Cynewulf in such a manner as to bring into softer outline a certain coarseness of nature ascribed to her by the Latin legend. Likewise the fact that Juliana’s father is a persecutor of the Christians, and the lukewarm character of her mother’s faith, who while abhorring the worship of Mars consorted neither with Christians nor pagans, is omitted from the Anglo-Saxon poem. Nor does Africanus, the father of Juliana, swear by "the merciful gods, Apollo and Diana," as in the Latin text. In the opening lines of his poem Cynewulf makes a noteworthy expansion in his description of the wicked deeds and character of the Roman emperor Maximian. That which the Latin passes over with "persecutoris Christianae religionis" is given in Anglo-Saxon in much detail. He speaks of Maximian as "the profane king, the heathen war-lord, who throughout the world stirred up persecution, slew Christian men, destroyed churches, and poured out the holy blood of righteous wor-
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shippers of God upon the grassy plain. His kingdom was broad, powerful, and mighty over the nations, almost over all the spacious earth. Among the cities, went, as he bade, his mighty thanes; oft they committed violence, misled in their deeds, they who despised the law of the Lord in their sinful might. Deeds of hatred they wrought in that they exalted idolatry, slew holy men, destroyed those learned in the Scriptures, burned chosen men and persecuted the champions of God with spear and fire." Since his close following of detail shows that some manuscript was before Cynewulf as he wrote, and that he was not merely reproducing the general outlines of a remembered legend, it is evident either that the version he used was not that given in the *Acta Sanctorum*, but one similar to it in general detail offering some hint for the apparent expansion, or that Cynewulf has given freedom to his muse in one of the interpolated passages more frequent in his later work. The latter would seem the more likely of belief.

The reflection of Anglo-Saxon life is less vivid in the poem than in the other signed Cynewulfian poems. Certain bits of local colour, however, here and there creep into the text. Before entering upon their conference Africanus and Eleusius lean their spears together, quite in the fashion of Anglo-Saxon warriors. The usual martial epithets applied to divinity and those of Christian faith in the poetry of the period are here used. God is "the Protector of Warriors," etc., Christian men are "the thanes of God," Satan is "the accursed foe," and his followers are his thanes. In short, the whole war
of good and evil is reproduced in the military terms of Anglo-Saxon England. Also reference is made at the end of the poem to the drinking of ale and the giving of treasure in the mead-hall. In the one mention of the sea which the poem contains it is called the swan-road, one of the more usual kennings of the sea in Anglo-Saxon verse, alternating in usage with whale-path, whale-road, sea-monster’s home, fishes’ bath, etc.

On the whole, therefore, it may be said that while Cynewulf’s poem Juliana does not correspond exactly with the prose version of the legend given in the Acta Sanctorum, which is, however, the nearest in detail to the Cynewulfian form of the story, it is unlikely that any version of the legend will be found corresponding exactly to Cynewulf’s poem. His work was not intended to be a translation in the strict sense of the term, but such a rehandling of the material of the legend as would give a new poetic rendering of the story, a reweaving into a new artistic whole of such threads as Cynewulf chose to pluck from the source or sources before him.

**THE CHRIST**

The Christ is found at the beginning of the Exeter manuscript in fifteen sections of varying length and style, certain of them being devotional, others homiletic, and still others almost epic in tone. These sections were considered by Thorpe to be separate poems and were so printed. The first section is incomplete, the first leaf being numbered
8a. Later Dietrich came to the opinion that we may regard all these short poems as parts of a long poem upon the threefold coming of Christ, and divided into sections as follows: 1–440, The Coming of Christ to Earth or the Nativity; 440–779, The Coming of Christ into Glory or the Ascension; 779, The Second Coming of Christ or the Last Judgment. This view, while probably untenable in the matter of division, was important in that it postulated for the first time the unity of these various sections and the attribution of them to a single author. As the runic signature of Cynewulf occurs in the section included in lines 779–866, it afforded ground for the supposition that he may be regarded as the author of this single poem, the Christ. Dietrich's theory was received with interest by the leading critics of his time, but his views did not pass unchallenged. The discussion of the unity of the Christ was rendered a matter of more doubt and difficulty by the fact that lines 779–866 have been regarded by certain students of the poem as ending section II, and by others as beginning section III. Inasmuch as it is in these lines that the runic signature occurs, if one were to argue for the Cynewulfian authorship of that portion of the poem only which may be considered as including the signature, it is easily seen that different views of the relationship of these lines to the second and third sections of the poem at once involves the whole subject of Cynewulf's authorship in much confusion. Sievers

1 Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum, ix, 193–214.
2 "Rhythmi des Alliterationesverses," Paul und Braune’s Beiträge, xii, 455–6.
in 1887, apparently, however, with some doubt, regarded section III as being that portion of the poem included in lines 779-1693, and since in the matter of versification he found differences existing between section I-779 and section 779-1693, he leans toward the view that, if the entire poem be attributed to Cynewulf, at least sections I and II must be regarded as being written at another period than section III, the first two sections having metrical characteristics in common with the Juliana, while the third section would apparently fall in the same period as the Elene. Cremer,\(^1\) dividing with Sievers, finds linguistic difference between sections I-II and section III, and inclines therefore, on the basis of the runic passage, to assign section III to Cynewulf and I-II to another poet. Mather,\(^2\) in reviewing Cremer's dissertation in 1892, divides at 779 and concludes: "There is no good reason for doubting that the three parts of the Christ are by Cynewulf." In 1896, in an essay entitled "Der sogennante Crist," Trautmann\(^3\) assigns lines 779-866 to section II, and supports by many arguments the view that there is no reason for supposing I and III to be by the same hand as II, but that II on the ground of metre, language, and signature may be assigned to Cynewulf. Blackburn,\(^4\) arguing also against the unity of the Christ, agrees with Trautmann in giving only section II to Cynewulf.

\(^1\) _Metrische und Sprachliche Untersuchung_, 47-8, Bonn, 1888.
\(^3\) _Anglia_, xviii, 382 ff.
\(^4\) _Anglia_, xix, 89-98.
A careful and conservative consideration of the problems centering around the Christ, as well as a strong argument for the unity of that poem and the attributions of all three sections to Cynewulf, is to be found in Cook’s introduction to his edition. He leans toward Sievers’ theory that some time elapsed between the completion of section II and III, and thinks with Cremer that section II may have been originally intended to complete the poem, but does not regard either of these theories as incompatible with the assumption that section III was later added by Cynewulf himself. He supports the inclusion of the runic signature of lines 779–866 in section II by pointing out the fact that these lines 779–866 are related to the preceding portion of section II by common dependence upon one source. Dietrich had pointed out that a source of section II was found in Gregory the Great’s homily on the Ascension, No. 29 in his homilies on the Gospels. But in assigning these lines 779 ff. to section III Dietrich had apparently overlooked the fact that by so doing he was breaking in upon the unity of his second section, since lines 782–796 and 850–866 are plainly based also upon the same homily of Gregory. This point tends to strengthen the view, therefore, that the rune signature of Cynewulf, included in lines 779–866, was at the end of section II and not at the beginning of section III. Cook

1 The Christ of Cynewulf.
2 Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum, ix, 204.
3 Migne, lxxvi, 1218–9 (Sancti Gregorii Magni Homiliarum in Evangelica, Lib. ii, Homil. xxix).
4 For an analysis of the relation of section II to Gregory’s homily, also to a hymn of Bede, see Cook, 115.
then proceeds to show a close relation between section II and the other two sections. Gregory is not only the principal source of II, but a subsidiary source of III. Part II contains a number of allusions to the Nativity and the Last Judgment. Many features of the Last Judgment are common to II and III. The motive of the Harrowing of Hell is found in all three parts. In certain theological views the three parts of the poem are consistent, and there are various verbal and material resemblances between the three parts. The chain of evidence thus forged is no slight one. In a review of Cook’s edition, however, while acknowledging Cook’s achievement in the discovery of the sources of parts I and III of the Christ, Trautmann takes occasion once again to state his view that the three sections of the Christ are in reality three separate and distinct poems.

It is but natural in a poem of so widely varying poetic spirit as the Christ—a poem in which lyric and devotional passages alternate with those of homiletic or epic nature—that the dependence of the Anglo-Saxon poem upon its sources would be less close and consecutive than in the case of poems based upon legends, as were the Juliana and Elene. And in each section of the poem this is found to be true. While in a certain sense, however, the Christ is a mosaic, to which the better known liturgical writings of Cynewulf’s day have all contributed their mite, each part of the poem has one main definite original. In the case of section I Cook gives as the original a series of twelve antiphons

1 For complete statement see Cook, Introd., 21 ff.
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comprising the seven Greater Antiphons of the Roman Church for Advent, four other antiphons sometimes used with the Greater Antiphons, and a double antiphon for Lauds on Trinity Sunday.\(^1\) The short devotional sections of the first part of Cynewulf's *Christ* (lines 1–440) all breathe the spirit of Advent and, while in no sense translations of the antiphons mentioned, may in each case be shown to be a variation upon the theme of a particular one of these Advent Antiphons.\(^2\)

The source of the second portion of the *Christ* (lines 440–866), or the Ascension, is, as shown by Dietrich,\(^3\) to be found in Gregory the Great's homily upon the Ascension. Here again we find Cynewulf influenced by the spirit rather than the letter of his original, and while Cook's analysis shows a clear logical dependence of the Anglo-Saxon upon its original, and while certain lines and sections are demonstrably based upon corresponding lines in

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\(^1\) For a list of these antiphons with translations and table of correspondences with the text of the Anglo-Saxon, see Cook, 71.

\(^2\) A somewhat more detailed examination of the sources of sections I and II of the *Christ* by Johannes Bourauel is to be found in *Bonner Beiträge*, xi, 65 ff. He sums up his conclusions as follows: "Als sichere ergebnisse zu der Quellenfrage des Crist stelle ich folgende auf.

(a) Crist I beruht auf dem Lectionale, Graduale, Antiphonarium, Missale, und Hymnarium der Gregorianischen Liturgie. (b) Erweiterungen und Ausschmückungen sind der hl. Schrift, den kirchen Vätern und den christlichen Dichtern, besonders Sedulius, Fortunatus, Gregorius und Ambrosius entnommen. (c) Die Quellen zu Crist I und II waren sämtlich Lateinische.

\(^3\) *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*, ix, 204.
the Gregory homily, the treatment on the whole is quite free.

This may be said also of the third section of the poem (lines 866–1640) or Last Judgment. While the poetic imagination and fervour of Cynewulf is perhaps more discernible here than in either of the other parts of the *Christ*, Cook pointed out in 1889¹ that one main source of the Last Judgment is to be found in an alphabetic hymn beginning "Apparebit repentina dies magna Domini," cited by Bede in his *De Arte Metrica*.²

From the tender devotional spirit of the Nativity to the flaming, imaginative pictures of the Judgment Day is a change finding, it is true, an inspiration in the differing character of the two subjects. But the cause of the change lies even deeper than this. The poet's imagination has been kindled and his visualizing power has enabled him to give us in his mind-pictures the sweep and force and colour we might more naturally look to find upon a Renaissance canvas. It is the triumph of law, of absolute, unwavering justice. Through the flames in which the world is crumbling into nothingness the eye may yet spell the letters upon the tables of Sinai. It is unnecessary to emphasize the fact that the creed that postulated the fire of Doomsday was as actual to Cynewulf as the Ptolemaic astronomy. Yet it is worth remembering, when we find that in the Ascension and Judgment Day he gives us neither a mere abstract representation

² For copy of this hymn and analysis of its relation to section III, see Cook, 171.
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of an idea which appealed to his imagination, nor a
scholastic restatement of theological dogma. The
dream of Judgment Day envelopes an accepted
revelation of truth, and the vision and supernal
light spring as naturally from his belief as flower
from seed. All the affairs of life and death have
their origin in choice, and it is choice that Cynewulf
stresses in the Ascension and Doomsday. "Every
one of men," he says, "while he dwelleth here
in life may choose the deceits of hell or the splendours
of heaven, the gleaming light or the loathsome
night, the spell of glory or the vengeance of dark-
ness, joy with the Lord or tumult with devils, tor-
ment with the fiends or bliss with the angels, or life
or death as may be dearer to him to accomplish so
long as flesh and spirit dwell together upon earth."
It is this element of personal choice which reconciles
the first and second coming of the Christ, which
harmonizes the dusky flames of Doomsday with
the tender radiance of the Star of Bethlehem.

ELENE

The Elene, a poem of 1321 lines, containing the
runic signature of Cynewulf woven into the text
between lines 1258 and 1270, is found in the Vercelli
manuscript, folios 121a to 133b. The question
of the probable date of this poem has been already
discussed, and Cook's theory of its dependence in
certain lines upon Alcuin's De Trinitate, and
the arguments of Trautmann and Brown against
this theory, have been stated.¹ Aside from this
question it can at least be said that from the stand-

¹ Page 15.
point of style and handling of material one would be inclined to assign this poem to a period of ripened genius, a view supported by the personal passage and its reference to old age. It is a late poem then, perhaps the latest poem of Cynewulf. Nowhere is the poet's love of active life shown to greater advantage. The account of Elene's sea journey is the finest sea scene in Cynewulf's signed poetry, and in two other descriptions, Constantine's battle against the heathen, and the preparations for embarkation upon the sea voyage, the poet's powers of vivid narration show to equal advantage.

The source of the *Elene* is usually given as the *Vita Quiriaci* contained in the *Acta Sanctorum* collection under the date of May 4. In this life is given an account of St. Helena's journey to Jerusalem, and her discovery of the cross and the nails used at the Crucifixion. That this is the original which Cynewulf used in the composition of his poem, however, is by no means certain. Glöde,¹ after a careful examination of the discrepancies existing between the Anglo-Saxon poem and the Latin life of Quiriacus, decides that while Cynewulf was in all probability reproducing some Latin version, the *Vita Quiriaci* is to be taken merely as a similar form of the legend, and not that particular version which Cynewulf had before him.

The legend of Constantine's vision and the discovery of the true Cross by St. Helena, mother of Constantine, is one section of a vast body of legendary literature connected with the cross which

¹ *Cynewulf's Elene und ihre Quelle*, Rostock, 1885, also *Anglia*, ix, 271–318.
sprang up in the early Christian centuries and flourished through the Middle Ages. Most of these legends are concerned either with the history of the wood of the cross before Christ, or the fate of the cross itself after the Crucifixion. An early hint of the origin of the wood of the cross in the Garden of Paradise is given us in the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, Pt. 11, chap. 3, where Seth relates how he had been sent by Adam, who was ill, to beg for the oil of the Tree of Mercy in the Garden of Paradise. The Archangel Michael refused the oil, but prophesied the redemption of men. From this kernel there later grew up a body of legends of the cross varying in many details, but tracing the history of the wood of the cross back to the Tree of Knowledge.¹ A complete form of this legend was given in the Invention of the Holy Cross in the Golden Legend. According to this version of the story Seth is given by Michael a branch of the tree of which Adam had eaten, with the prophecy that when the branch bore fruit Adam should be healed. Seth, coming and finding his father dead, planted the tree upon his grave, where it throve until the time of Solomon. The Queen of Sheba on her visit to Solomon worshipped it, prophesying the Crucifixion, and for this reason Solomon had it buried deep under ground. Here the Pool Bethesda welled forth, receiving virtue from the buried wood, and many miracles were wrought there. When the time of the Passion drew near, it rose and floated on the surface of the water, and

¹ For a number of these legends of the cross see Legend of the Holy Rood, ed. R. Morris, E.E.T.S., 46.
of it was made the cross. According to a twelfth century form of the legend the rod of Moses sprang from this same branch. It was later planted, and grew to the tree of which the cross is made.

Early in the Christian era traditions also grew up that the cross was composed of three or four distinct species of wood, a belief possibly suggested first by the words of Isaiah lx. 13: “The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee; the fir tree, the pine tree and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.” Thus Bede speaks of the cross as being formed of four kinds of wood, cypress, cedar, pine and box; the main shaft being of cypress as far as the tablet, and pine above it, the tablet of box. As to the use of the box, however, he seems uncertain. “Crux Domini de quatuor lignis facta est, quae vocantur cypressus, cedrus, pinus et buxus. Sed buxus non fuit in cruce, nisi tabula de illo ligno supra frontem Christi fuit, in qua conscripserunt Judaei titulum: Hic est Rex Judæorum. Cypressus fuit in terra usque ad tabulam, cedrus in transversum, pinus sursum.”

The legend of the discovery or invention of the cross by St. Helena arises within a century after the event is said to have taken place. Eusebius first tells us in his Life of Constantine of the vision

2 In the Dream of the Rood, however, there is naturally no attempt made to identify the wood of the cross in any of the ways mentioned above, as the cross wood legend is of later date.
3 Patrología Latina, xciv, 555.
4 Chap. xxviii.
which the Emperor saw when praying to the true God that He would reveal himself unto him. "About noon, when the day was already beginning to decline, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription: 'Conquer by this.'" Whereupon, moved by the vision, he ordered a standard to be made in the likeness of his dream for use in battle, and was instructed in the Scriptures. The sequel to this vision, which has to do with the journey of Helena to Jerusalem and the discovery there of the cross and nails, is narrated in the ecclesiastical histories of Socrates and Sozomen. Socrates narrates that Helena "was divinely directed by dreams" to go to Jerusalem, and there, under a statue which had been erected to Venus in a temple built in her honour, discovered the cross and nails. Sozomen gives practically the same account, save that Helena instead of being prompted by dreams had gone to Jerusalem in order to offer prayer. Moreover, in the account of Sozomen, the information of the whereabouts of the cross is obtained from one of the Hebrews, who had it by tradition from his forefathers. This detail is reproduced in the *Vita Quiriaci* of the *Acta Sanctorum* and in *Elene*. Similar versions of the invention are given by Rufinus and Theodoret.

The succeeding history of the cross is variously given. According to general tradition part of it was left by Helena in Jerusalem, in a church built upon the site of the discovery, where the former

1 *Hist. Eccles.*, i, 17.  
3 *Hist. Eccles.*, i, 7.  
4 *Hist. Eccles.*, i, 18.
temple of Venus had stood; and a portion was sent to Constantinople. This was divided by Constantine, and part placed in the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome. The portion of the cross left in Jerusalem was carried off by Chosroes II, after the taking of Jerusalem in 614. It was recovered by Heraclius in 628, brought back to Jerusalem and its restoration commemorated later by the Exaltation of the Cross on September 14. After the capture of the city by the Saracens in 637 all trace of it was lost. The fragment brought by Helena to Constantinople is later supposed to have been moved to the Sainte Chapelle in Paris.

The *Elene* abounds in the more usual motifs of the saints' legends of which it is a type. The character of Helena herself, as was also the case with Juliana, is consciously elevated by her struggle, given at times in wearisome detail and repetition, against unbelief and stubbornness of heart. The introduction of Satan, bewailing the devastation wrought in his domain by the conversion of Judas to the cause of Elene, is a conventional device for enhancing the glory of the heroine. It may be compared with the somewhat cruder struggle between Juliana and Satan's emissary, which, beginning in dialectic debate, ended in a physical chastisement administered by the maid of Nicomedia. All such means for the creation of an atmosphere of miracle and wonder, or for revealing the close

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1 See the account of the carrying off of the cross by Chosroes, and its recapture by Heraclius in Caxton's *Golden Legend* "Of the Exaltation of the Holy Crosse."
relation of human life to the powers of heaven and hell, Cynewulf accepted without question. It is in the two interpolated descriptive passages that we are suddenly transferred from the more unreal atmosphere surrounding these events, as portrayed in the Latin legend, to the vital air of the real world. The many touches here and there which render the poem essentially Anglo-Saxon serve to accomplish this, and with careful reading one recognizes with what consummate skill the poet has used the old and the new, the borrowed theme and the imaginative vision which clothes it in new beauty.

THE FATES OF THE APOSTLES

The *Fates of the Apostles*, a short poem of 122 lines, containing the runic signature of Cynewulf in the last 27 lines, is found in the Vercelli manuscript. As has been already stated, the poem which was known as the *Fates of the Apostles*, in the early editions of that manuscript, had only 95 lines and contained no signature; but in 1888 a further fragment of 27 lines with the Cynewulf runes was discovered by Napier, following in the codex immediately after the *Fates of the Apostles* and apparently belonging to it. This gives us our fourth signed Cynewulfian poem.

This short poem is a mere recounting, in a few lines, of the work and manner of death of each of the twelve apostles. There is no opportunity for poetic imagery or expression save in the personal passage, where the familiar reflections upon death
and appeals for sympathy and prayer usual to the Cynewulf signature are found. No immediate source for the poem is yet known, though Krapp points out in his edition of the *Andreas* and *Fates of the Apostles* \(^1\) that, while the poem differs slightly from the *Martyrology* of Bede and the *Breviarium Apostolorum*, it may well have been compiled from such Latin lists as these were based upon.

Since so slight a poem upon a theme so lacking in unity offers no opportunity to the poet for the attainment of poetic effect, it is somewhat surprising that Cynewulf should have been careful to mark it definitely as his by affixing his signature. Moreover, it seems strange that the opening lines of the poem should be: "Lo! travel-worn, with weary heart, I wrought this lay, made gleaning far and wide." To begin by telling us of the difficulties of writing a poem which he was about to set forth is certainly not as usual as if such a statement came after the telling of his story. As a matter of fact, this is exactly what does occur in the *Elene*, where, at the end of the legend proper and the beginning of the personal passage, Cynewulf tells us: "Thus have I spun my lay with craft of word and wrought it wondrously, aged and nigh unto death by fault of this mouldering house."

Moreover, the statement in the *Fates* seems to carry with it the implication of more thought and labour than would seem to be represented in so short a poem, though the references to "wide gleaning," and to sources employed are explained

by Krapp as being merely "conventional poetic formulæ." This may perhaps be so. But it is evident that if with reasonable probability a dependence of this short poem upon the *Andreas* could be assumed, all of these difficulties would vanish at once. Therefore, in discussing the *Andreas*, we shall have occasion to return again to the consideration of the *Fates* in its relation to that poem.

**POEMS ATTRIBUTED TO CYNEWULF**

**Andreas**

The *Andreas*, a poem of 1722 lines, is found in the Vercelli Codex, folios 29b to 52b. As was first pointed out by Grimm, who was disposed to assign the *Andreas* to another poet than the author of *Elene*, possibly to Aldhelm, the general source of the poem is to be found in the πράξεις Ἀνδρέου καὶ Ματθεία,¹ though Bourauel,² after careful investigation, concludes that both Latin and Greek manuscripts may have been used by the poet. The events of the poem, which are more varied in nature, and somewhat nearer in character to the tone of the Heldenepos than is usually the case in the poems of Cynewulf, have to do with the journey of St. Andrew to Mermedonia, or the land of the Ethiopians, and his fortunes there. It is revealed to him in a vision that he must journey to the land of the Mermedonians, where Matthew lies in prison, and deliver him. Having been ferried across the seas by Almighty God and two angels in the guise of ship-

² *Bonner Beiträge*, xi, 65 ff.
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men, he is left sleeping upon the seashore with his followers about him. Awaking and recognizing by whose divine help he had been brought thither, he repaired to the town near at hand where Matthew lay in prison. At this point begins that portion of the narrative which deals successively with the freeing of Matthew, and the long martyrdom of Andrew by various cruel tortures, his final victory and conversion of the people, and at length his triumphant departure, when his former persecutors "brought the stirring warrior unto his ship at the headlands of the sea, and stood upon the sea-strand weeping after him so long as they might behold that Joy of princes across the seal-path." Few poems in Anglo-Saxon are more readable than this, a fact largely due to the changing incidents, many images, and swift, varied movement, to which Stopford Brooke calls attention.1

The Andreas has always been the poem about which, in the Cynewulf controversies, the bitterest struggle has been waged. Fritzsche's views upon this poem,2 while not absolutely convincing, went far to shake belief in its Cynewulfian authorship, though Fritzsche was inclined to assign it to an imitator of Cynewulf. Dietrich,3 on the other hand, had thrown the weight of his opinion in favour of the authorship of Cynewulf. In 1885 Wülker4 was disposed to accept the conclusions of Fritzsche, and regarded the theory that Cyne-

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1 History of Early English Literature, 413.
2 Anglia, ii, 441 ff.
3 Commentatio de Aetate Kynewulfi.
4 Grundriss, 189.
wulf was the author of *Andreas* as very improbable, and Sievers \(^1\) was led to the same opinion by linguistic evidence.

With Napier's discovery of the rune passage of the *Fates of the Apostles*, the whole question of the authorship of the *Andreas* was reopened with new vigour. The runic passage seemed to determine the question of the authorship of the *Fates*; would it not be possible to prove the *Fates of the Apostles* an epilogue to the *Andreas* and so secure Cynewulf's own testimony that both poems were his? This was the line upon which the controversy began anew and along which it has since proceeded. Sarrazin, whose studies had led him to the view that Cynewulf was also the author of *Beowulf*, was quick to take up the argument from the new standpoint,\(^2\) being particularly desirous of proving *Andreas* to be Cynewulf's, since in its style and language it was nearer to *Beowulf* than was any other of the Cynewulfian poems, and would afford, therefore, a link of great strength in his chain of argument, if it could be assigned with any degree of probability to Cynewulf. His view was that there was no inconsistency in the fact that, if the *Fates* were joined to the *Andreas*, Matthew and Andrew would be twice treated in the course of the poem. For he argues that, since the *Andreas* had to do with Andrew's work of conversion among the Mermedonians, and ended with his departure back to Achaia, it was but natural that the poet should feel a need

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\(^1\) *Paul und Braune's Beiträge*, x, 209 ff.

\(^2\) *Anglia*, xii, 375.
to bring his poem to a final ending by a few words about the death of these two apostles; and that, having determined upon this, it was but natural again that he should include in a few words the fates of the other Apostles.¹ Also the argument, brought forth by Wülker, that, were the Fates an epilogue to the Andreas, it is likely that Andrew and Matthew would have been treated together in the Fates, and not separated as is the case, is refuted by Sarrazin, who points out that in a martyrology, such as this practically is, the accepted order in which the passions of the Apostles are usually treated would naturally be followed, and that in this accepted order Matthew and Andrew are never found together.

In the following year Sievers, in considering the relation of the two poems,² holds the view that not only does the Fates not constitute an epilogue to the Andreas, but that it is even doubtful whether the runic passage discovered by Napier belongs to the Fates. He closes his essay by the statement of his view that the Andreas is not by Cynewulf, and that in this negative is to be found one of the few certain results of investigation in the Cynewulf problem. Sievers finds his main support for the theory that Napier’s runic passage does not belong to the Fates in the fact of what he calls the double ending of the Fates. From line 88 to 95, that is, the last eight verses of the original Fates, the meaning runs as follows: "And now I pray that man, whosoever hath joy in the course of this lay, that

¹ Anglia, xii, 379.
² Anglia, xiii, 1–25.
he entreat that holy band for me in my affliction, for health and peace and succour. How great a need have I of gentle friends upon my way, when I seek out alone my long home, that unknown dwelling place, and leave behind the body, this bit of earth, to be a spoil and solace unto worms.” Immediately after this begins the acrostic passage with Cynewulf’s signature, and line 108 begins again: “May that man who hath pleasure in the course of this lay be mindful thereof, and for me seek aid and comfort. For I shall fare far hence alone, unto an alien land; set out upon a journey, I myself know not whither, out of this world. Unknown are those courts, that land and realm,” etc. In the close proximity of two passages so similar, not only in thought but in actual word and phrase, Sievers finds a serious objection to the theory that the acrostic passage is a part of the Fates. He would regard it as having been composed as a signature to some other poem, and as afterwards misplaced, and offers the suggestion that possibly the diagonal flaw which mars the runic passage in the manuscript may have been an intentional blot or erasure by the scribe, who realized that he had misplaced this portion of another poem and wished to cancel it. This view was contested later by Wülker on the ground that the blemish was not an intentional blot or erasure, but the result of the action of some strong reagent.

Some years later Trautmann again entered

1 Trautmann in his article, “Zur Kenntnis des Altgermanischen Verses,” Anglia Beiblatt, v, 87–96, had said (p. 93), “Auch der Andreas kann nicht von Cynewulf gedichtet
the lists with his article entitled "Der Andreas doch von Cynewulf"¹ and asserts the Andreas to be Cynewulf's. In the double ending, which Sievers had used as an argument against joining Napier's rune passage to the 95 lines of the Fates, he finds evidence for making this juncture, as he considers that by the repetition the two sections are more closely linked or bound together. Again in Sievers' argument that it was unlikely that Cynewulf would have 34 lines of personal ending to a poem of 87 lines long, a proportion well over a third, while in Juliana this section constituted approximately only one-twentieth of the total poem, and in the Elene one-sixteenth, Trautmann finds another support for his own view. Join the Fates and Andreas, and this discrepancy disappears! He restates the view that the narrative of the fates of the twelve Apostles constitutes a most natural ending for a poem dealing with the heroic achievements of two of their number. He also regards it as unlikely that Cynewulf would have taken trouble to mark so slight a poem as the Fates by an elaborate runic signature, and finally brings forward an argument for the joining of Andreas and the Fates by pointing out that in the phrase ðysses giddes begang— which I have translated "The course of this lay"—begang has an implication of long or broad extent, since it is usually found with such words

¹ Anglia Beiblatt, vi, 17–23.
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as sea and time. As Krapp points out, however, in such phrases the word *begang* secures its implication of wide extent from the words dependent upon it.

Bourauel attempts to connect the two poems by making the expression *bās fitte* of the *Fates* refer back to the *Andreas* by translating it as accusative plural, "these sections," instead of accusative singular. He would divide the two combined poems into three sections, each beginning with the exclamation Hwaet! These sections in his opinion are *Andreas* i—i477, *Andreas* 1478—1722, and *Fates* i—end. In answer to this argument it need only be said that such an interpretation of *bās fitte* is possible, but there is no other single reference in the *Fates* which would indicate that the expression is plural in significance. And under these circumstances the natural interpretation would be to consider it as singular referring to the poem in which it occurs.

These are the main arguments which have been brought forward on this question. Gollancz, in his edition of the *Christ* in 1892, also suggested the epilogue relation of the *Fates* to the *Andreas*, but Stopford Brooke regards the suggestion with suspicion, because of its very attractiveness, unless more definite evidence be secured. That the question of the relationship of these two poems is still far from determined is easily seen. Fritzsche

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2 *Bonner Beiträge*, xi, 129.
3 *History of Early English Literature*, Note D, 488.
and Ramhorst,¹ working along generally similar lines, came to opposite conclusions regarding the Andreas; Sarrazin and Trautmann in certain cases use the same arguments on opposite sides of the question, Sarrazin regarding them as supporting his view, and Trautmann finding in them only a strength for his own position.

If no definite conclusion may be drawn in the matter, however, at least it may be said that it is almost certain that Napier's runic passage does belong to the Fates, and that there is some probability that the Fates is an epilogue to the Andreas, and therefore both poems signed poems of Cynewulf. The unlikeness that Cynewulf should have taken the trouble to sign with an acrostic and a personal passage of 34 lines a poem of 87 lines, and particularly a poem which Brooke calls "as marrowless as a bleached bone,"² the relation of the subjects of the two poems, their position in the manuscript and the fact that nothing there argues against the unity of the two, and the fact that any apparent inconsistencies between the two poems vanish when closely tested—all these things would seem, on the whole, to favour the supposition that the Fates of the Apostles does constitute an epilogue to the Andreas, and that this long combined poem was signed by Cynewulf with the runic signature on fol. 54a of the Vercelli manuscript.

In assuming some degree of probability that the Andreas may be Cynewulf's, however, we join

¹ Das Alteng. Gedicht vom hlg. Andreas, Diss., Berlin, 1885.
² History of Early English Literature, Note D, 487.
to his certain poems one which differs somewhat in style from any of them. There is not the tranquillity of mood which allows the author to take a quiet satisfaction in the narration of legends which may in their course contain much tedious matter. Rather there is a conscious striving after effect, a search for colour in the narrative, which gives a slight effect of strain to the style. Moreover, there is an evident attempt to reproduce as clearly as may be the heroic atmosphere of the Saga. That it is a conscious striving for effect, rather than a quiet putting forth of those powers of the imagination which make for force, is shown by the fact that, even at its highest points, the narrative of the Andreas lacks the brilliant surety of the imaginative pictures in the Christ, as well as the quiet power of the better portions of the Elene. Yet while the effect of all this is to produce in the Andreas a poem with somewhat greater tension of style than in the signed poems of Cynewulf, there are some excellent situations, and a sincerity of feeling throughout. And in the description of the storm during Andrew's voyage we find that feeling for the sea which we have noticed in this connexion elsewhere in Cynewulf. "The sea was stirred; the hornfish played, gliding through the deep, and above circled the grey sea-mew, greedy of prey. The sun was darkened and the wind arose; waves broke and seas ran high; the rigging moaned. Billows swept them and water-terror rose with might." In this passage speaks a man whose knowledge of the sea was won in wintry nights and days of tempest, and the description of the storm-
tossed ship here given us shows that same truth of observation which drew for us the vivid picture of Elene's ship scudding before a brisk wind toward its Grecian haven.

**Guthlac**

The *Guthlac*, a poem of 1353 lines, the ending of which has been lost, is found in the Exeter Book, fols. 33a—52b, immediately following the *Christ*. It differs in subject matter from the *Juliana* and *Elene* in that it deals with the life of an English hermit saint, Guthlac of the Fens, nearly contemporaneous with Cynewulf himself. The main source of the poem was a Latin life of the saint by Felix of Croyland.¹ Born of noble parents, and distinguished at birth by a supernatural portent, Guthlac in his youth apparently led a godless life, given over to crime and violence. Suddenly resolving to forsake his manner of living, he entered a monastery for two years, at the end of which time he decided to become a hermit, and withdrew with two chosen companions to the island of Croyland in the Fens. Here he remained until his death in 714. In this lonely dwelling Guthlac was repeatedly tried by temptation, and assault of fiends, but received strength to overcome these trials. He was often visited and encouraged by St. Bartholomew, and the very birds and beasts of the wood became his friends. The Anglo-Saxon poem, in a quaint and lovely passage, pictures his relations with these wild things of the forest. "The tribe of forest birds

¹ *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. ii for April, 37 ff.
with their notes proclaimed the coming of the holy man unto his home. Oft he held out food to them, and they were wont to fly in hunger round about his hand, in great desire, rejoicing in his succour. So that kindly soul, severed from mankind’s delights, served the Lord, having joy in wild things, after he forsook the world."

As the fame of Guthlac spread abroad in the land many men came to him for counsel and advice. Through jealousy Beccel, one of the monks who had accompanied him to Croyland, resolved to poison him, but, being taxed with his resolve by the saint, became his devoted servant until his death. On his deathbed Guthlac sends this attendant to his sister Pega, whom he had not seen in years, with directions for his burial and a promise of their union in Heaven. "Haste thou, therefore, and say unto my sister, that dearest woman, that I have journeyed forth upon a long way, unto the radiant joy, unto my eternal home. And say thou also unto her in my words, that I denied myself the light of her face all the days of my life in the world, for that I yearned that we twain might meet again in Heavenly glory, in that unending joy, before the face of the Eternal Judge, all free of sin. There shall our love abide for ever." Upon the burial place of Guthlac was later founded the Abbey of Croyland.

The entire question of the attribution of Guthlac to Cynewulf is somewhat complicated by the fact that we are apparently dealing here not with a single poem, but with two poems upon the life of Guthlac, known by scholars as Guthlac A and
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Guthlac B. The A section of the poem extends over lines 1—790, the B section from 791 to the end. Dietrich had regarded the two parts of Guthlac as constituting a single poem, and, because of similarities in it to the authentic work of Cynewulf, was disposed to attribute the entire poem to him. Rieger, recognizing the two-fold form of the poem, was of the opinion that both portions could be assigned to Cynewulf. Charitius, however, in a careful examination of both sections of the poem from the standpoint of verse measure, compounds, and the phraseology as a whole, came to the following conclusions: That section B of Guthlac followed closely the Latin life of the hermit saint; that a number of echoes of certain passages in the Christ favour the conjecture that Guthlac B stands near the Christ in order of composition; that section A of the poem was known to the author of section B, but was earlier in time; and that section B should be attributed to Cynewulf. Charitius would date Guthlac A, as well as the Latin life of Felix, between 730 and 740, a date he obtains by bringing the founding of the Abbey of Croyland in 715 into relation with the passage in Guthlac A, lines 124 ff. “With temptation was he tried within the times of men who still remember, who even now revere him for his ghostly wonders, and cherish the glory of his wisdom.”

Lefèvre, in his examination of the metrics of Guthlac, makes a three-fold division of the poem,

1 Zacher's Zeitschrift, i, 325-6.
2 Anglia, ii, 265-308.
3 Anglia, vi, 181-240.
namely, verses 1-500, 501-790, and 791 to the end. He is of the opinion that all three sections are the work of a single author, and that in this author we must recognize Cynewulf. He regards the third section, however, as being later in date of composition than sections I and II, conjecturing that Cynewulf may have finished verses 1-750 as a complete whole, turned to other work, and later returned to continue the story of Guthlac in the vivid portrayal of his sickness and death. Holtbuer\(^1\) on the other hand, in his article "Der Genitiv bei Cynewulf," is convinced on grounds of language that no portion of Guthlac can be assigned to Cynewulf.

In 1892 Mather,\(^2\) reviewing the Cynewulf question from a metrical point of view, sums up his views of the two portions of Guthlac as follows: "There is no strong reason for excluding Guthlac B from the Cynewulfian poems; on the other hand the evidence in its favour is not wholly convincing. If it be admitted provisionally it would fall into the third or Christ III group. Guthlac A is certainly not by Cynewulf, and as certainly not by the author of Guthlac B. Its metrical use appears quite unique." Ten Brink\(^3\) assigns both A and B to Cynewulf, and Trautmann\(^4\) believes that Guthlac B can be attributed to him with some degree of probability. Forstmann\(^5\) brings forward argu-

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1 *Anglia*, viii, 1-40.
3 *English Literature*, Appendix B.
4 *Bonner Beiträge*, i, 42.
5 *Bonner Beiträge*, xii, 1-40.
ments to show that Guthlac A has no dependence upon the Latin life which forms the basis of Guthlac B.

From these varying opinions one or two facts at least are clear. It is quite evident that a division must be made in the entire poem of Guthlac. All the tests applied to the poem have served to emphasize an apparent difference in authorship between the two sections obtained by dividing the poem at line 790. Secondly, in comparing this poem with the authentic work of Cynewulf, the majority of critics have been willing to acknowledge some degree of probability that the second section, or Guthlac's death, may be Cynewulf's. But as to Guthlac A they are divided. Some would believe it to be by Cynewulf, as Dietrich, Rieger, Lefèvre, Ten Brink; while others, as Charitius, Wülker, Mather, Trautmann, are against such an attribution. Wülker,¹ who thinks that Guthlac B, being incomplete, may possibly have had originally the runic signature of Cynewulf, is inclined to place this second section of Guthlac immediately before Juliana in order of composition.

The difference in style between Guthlac A and Guthlac B may be noticed by a casual reader. The author of the B section has more control of his material, more skill in the selection of those points in his narrative which he may stress to advantage, and more dramatic feeling than we find in the first 790 lines. In those lines which portray the death of Guthlac we feel that poetic sincerity and pleasing gentleness of phrase which one comes to associate

¹ Grundriss, 183.
with the typically Cynewulfian passages in the signed poems. Yet if this poem be Cynewulf's, it shows beyond doubt a prentice hand. It is true that the reference to the sea journey is in the usual manner of Cynewulf, and it is an interesting fact that the legends of Juliana, Elene and Andreas also contain descriptions of a sea journey near the close. But on the whole it may be truly said that there is a more sharply defined Anglo-Saxon atmosphere in the legends of Juliana and Andreas, which are laid far from England, than in the description of the life and death of Guthlac, an English saint.

THE PHOENIX

We come now to two shorter poems, the Phoenix and the Dream of the Rood, which, because of their simple beauty, we should be glad to be able to attribute to Cynewulf. Evidence which would allow such a definite attribution is not, however, at hand, and the question, as always in the case of the doubtful poems, resolves itself into a question of probability. The Phoenix, a poem of 677 lines, is found in the Exeter Book fols. 55b to 65b. Like the Guthlac and Dream of the Rood it contains no signature, and the only evidence for or against Cynewulf's authorship is such as has resulted from the repeated tests applied to the poem on grounds of style, metre, language, and grammatical usage. It should be noted, however, that the poem has an unusual ending, in that the last eleven lines are
composed of both Latin and Anglo-Saxon phrases, the Anglo-Saxon forming the first half of the line, and the Latin the second. Moreover by the alliteration, these two halves are closely bound together. Kemble and Thorpe, who held the view that Cynewulf might be regarded as the author of both the Exeter Book and the Vercelli manuscript, naturally assign the Phoenix to him. Dietrich, Rieger, and Ten Brink also regarded this poem as Cynewulf’s.

It is an interesting fact that, in the main, those who have attempted, by metrical tests, to find evidence for or against the theory of the Cynewulfian authorship of this poem have been forced to decide against that theory. Cremer 1 in 1888 found little correspondence in metrical usage between the Phoenix and the authentic poems of Cynewulf, and on that ground did not favour the view that this poem may be assigned to him. Mather, 2 on metrical grounds, is also very decided in his denial of this poem to Cynewulf. He finds the poem unique in its use of double alliteration, and says, “We need have no hesitation in denying the Phoenix to Cynewulf. The interesting point of this conclusion is that there must have been, contemporary or nearly so with Cynewulf, another poet of equal or greater skill than he, the author of the Phoenix, the most artistic poem in the Anglo-Saxon language.” Trautmann also 3 in his Zur Kenntnis des Allgermanischen Verses after declaring on metrical grounds against Cynewulf’s authorship

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1 Metrische und sprachliche Untersuchung. Bonn, 1888.
2 Mod. Lang. Notes, vii, 207.
3 Anglia Beiblatt, v, 87–96.
of Andreas, an opinion which he later withdrew, remarks: "Still less is it possible to attribute to him the Phoenix and the Riddles."

On ground of style and adaptation of the source Gábler is inclined to assign the poem to Cynewulf. The results of his investigation, however, are on the whole negative, simply proving that there is no urgent argument against this assignment. Wülker, accepting the results of Gábler's study of the poem, remarks that the view of the Cynewulfian authorship of the Phoenix may be looked upon as probable, "so far as it may be made probable with the means at hand," though he would not go so far as to include the poem in a list of Cynewulf's work. Sarrazin assigns the Phoenix to Cynewulf, and Trautmann, who had previously on metrical grounds denied the poem to Cynewulf, now thinks that it may be assigned to him with some degree of probability, though not so much as in the case of Guthlac B. Fulton, after an examination of the metre, style, and grammar of the poem, concludes that there is much in the poem which argues against Cynewulf's hand, and that Gábler has produced no strong evidence in favour of his theory. Taking into account also that there is no runic signature, "presumably attached to all, since attached to at least four of his poems," he decided against the inclusion of the Phoenix among Cynewulf's authentic poems. In general, however,

1 Anglia, iii, 488-526. 2 Grundriss, 185.
3 Geschichte der englischen Literatur.
4 Anglia, ix, 544. 5 Bonner Beiträge, 1, 42.
6 Mod. Lang. Notes, xi, 146-169.
it may be said that, while the question does not submit itself to definite conclusions, the weight of critical opinion leans toward the side of the probability of Cynewulf’s having written the *Phoenix*, and that its time of composition would fall between the *Christ* and the *Elene*. Another fact, however, that becomes evident from a study of the poem, is that in its metrical construction it differs widely from any signed poem of Cynewulf.

The source of the Anglo-Saxon *Phoenix* is the Latin poem of Lactantius upon the Happy Land and the Phoenix who dwells there. The poem opens with a description of this land of joy and delight. “That plain is full of beauty, blest with joys, with the fairest fragrance of the earth; single in its loveliness.” Here dwells the Phoenix, for a thousand years not tasting of death. The life of the bird is traced through the course of the day. In the early morning “black night creepeth wanly away; then strong of flight, exulting in his pinions, beneath the sky the fowl gazeth eagerly upon the mountain-stream, over the water, when the gleam of Heaven may come up gliding from the east over the spacious sea.” The Phoenix bathes in the sea-cold springs, and the sound of its singing during the day is “sweeter than all songcraft.” “Thus it singeth and caroleth till the sun is sinking in the southern sky. Then is it silent and listeneth, boweth its head boldly, sage of thought, and shaketh its pinions thrice, fain of flight. The fowl is hushed.” After a thousand years, accompanied by a retinue of all other birds, the Phoenix journeys to the Syrian land, where it builds its
funeral pyre and is consumed. But from the ashes creeps a worm, and from the worm grows an eaglet, and from the eaglet a Phoenix again as before, which, returning to its native grove, buries the relics of its former body. "So the blessed fowl, after his time of death, cometh unto his old abode, his beauteous home."

The author of the Anglo-Saxon poem follows his original closely, at times expanding, in particular where the text allows him an opportunity to introduce the note of joy in nature so beloved of the Cynewulfian school. After line 380, however, the author leaves his original in order to adapt the subject to the purpose for which he had chosen it. The Phoenix was commonly treated by the early church fathers as a symbol of the resurrection and of immortality. So it is used in the writings of Ambrose, and so the author of the *Phoenix* employs the theme. The latter half of the poem is simply an interpretation of the fable of the first half in terms of Christian faith.

It must be acknowledged that we feel nowhere in the poem the personal note which is found in all the signed poems, unless, as Stopford Brooke suggests, we find it in a passage adapted from Job, but on the other hand, as has been often noted, the description of the fire of Doomsday in the *Phoenix* shows the same spirit and feeling as Cynewulf's handling of that theme in the *Christ* and *Elene*. The merit of this poem, however, lies in the quiet idyllic beauty of its portrayal of the Happy Land. The intrinsic

1 *Phoenix*, 552 ff.
charm of the version of Lactantius has been freed from the somewhat stately rhythm of the Latin measures, and the result in the hand of the Anglo-Saxon poet is a simplicity of presentation greatly enhancing the beauty of the legend with which it is so entirely in keeping.

There occurs in this poem a passage worth noting perhaps in connexion with the section in the runic passage of the Christ, which Trautmann, as already mentioned, strives to make specific in connotation, and which he makes refer to the island of Lindisfarne, the seat of the Bishop of Lindisfarne. This entire passage in the Christ, lines 805–14, would read as follows: "Long time was our portion of life's joys compassed about by ocean floods, our possessions on earth. Then shall treasure burn in the fiery blast; brightly shall rage the swift, red flame, darting in wrath over the wide world. Plains shall perish and castles crumble away. Then shall the fire be fleet; greediest of spirits, which shall devour ancient treasure ruthlessly, which men possessed in olden days while still was pride on earth."

It is most interesting now to turn to a reflection of this same idea in lines 41–9 of the Phoenix. That passage is as follows: "As of old the turmoil of the waters, the sea-flood, covered all the world, the compass of the earth, yet that noble plain stood all unhurt, firm held against the waters surging, blessed and uninjured of the tossing waves, through the grace of God: so it shall bide in blossoming until the coming of the fire of the judgment of God, when the chambers of death, the shadowy sepulchres of

\[^1\] Page 16.
men, shall be opened.” The same sequence of ideas is suggested again, though not so strongly, in the *Christ*, lines 984-86: “As of old waters flowed, the driving seas, then in that bath of fire the sea-fish shall burn, sundered from the deep.” This close parallel of thought in the two passages from the *Christ* and the *Phoenix* is interesting not only from the fact that it makes Trautmann’s interpretation of the *Christ* passage still further doubtful, but also in the suggestion it implies that since one of the two passages occurs in a runic signature of Cynewulf, thus identifying the thought closely with himself, we may possibly in the second passage in the *Phoenix* have some fugitive evidence of his hand at work.

**Dream of the Rood**

*The Dream of the Rood*, a short poem of 156 lines, is found in the Vercelli manuscript, fol. 104b-106a, between the *Andreas* and the *Elene*. It is in one way the most interesting of all the poems which have been attributed to Cynewulf, because of its connexion with the Ruthwell Cross, near Dumfries, on the Scottish border.¹ This connexion consists in the fact that upon the Ruthwell Cross are sculptured in runic characters passages which are identical with portions of the *Dream of the Rood*. This identity was first made known by Kemble in 1842.²

¹ For a detailed description of the cross and consideration of the runic passage upon it, see Kemble’s article “On Anglo-Saxon Runes,” *Archaeologia*, xxviii, 349 ff. Also *Old Northern Runic Monuments*, by George Stephens, i, 405-448.

² *Archaeologia*, xxx, 31-39.
In its simplicity the *Dream of the Rood* is one of the most beautiful of Anglo-Saxon religious poems. The poet tells of a vision which came to him “at midnight, when mortal men abode in sleep.” It seemed to him that he beheld the Cross enwreathed with light, adorned with gems and gold, rising in the air. It was given to him, stained as he was with sin and guilt, to see the Tree shining with radiant light. In this portion of the *Dream* the influence of Constantine’s vision of the Cross is very apparent. The Cross flamed with changing colour and was now decked with jewels, now wet with blood. As he gazed upon it the Cross addressed him, telling how first it was hewn down as a forest tree upon the edge of the wood, and was borne away by men and set upon a hill. The Crucifixion is then related in an entirely heroic vein, the deposition and burial are described, and the poem ends with passages of a personal nature which strongly resemble those of the *Christ* and *Elene*, and with the motives of the Harrowing of Hell and the triumphal return of Christ to Heaven.

It was suggested by Daniel Haigh in 1856 that the *Dream of the Rood* must have been composed by Caedmon. He supported this view by dating the Ruthwell Cross about 665. Having set the Ruthwell inscriptions at this early date, conjecturing the *Dream of the Rood* to be a later reworking of a poem of which the Ruthwell inscriptions formed part, Haigh then suggested that Caedmon was the only religious poet in England at that date worthy the name, and therefore naturally to be looked upon as the author of the religious fragments upon the Ruth-
well Cross. This view of Haigh's was supported by Stephens in 1866 in his *Old Northern Runic Monuments.* 1 Stephens strengthens the case for Caedmon's authorship by his interpretation of a nearly obliterated runic passage on the rune side of the top stone of the cross. According to his conjecture, the runes there formed the words "Cadmon made me," that is, "Cadmon made me." He further supports the theory of Caedmonian authorship by calling attention to the long epic lines found in the *Dream,* which are found also in the so-called Caedmonian paraphrases and in *Judith,* and concludes that both *Judith* and the *Dream of the Rood* are by Caedmon. These arguments, however, fail to hold. In the first place, Haigh's date of 665 for the Ruthwell Cross was merely a conjectured date, and according to expert opinion the cross must be placed after 800. 2 Secondly, no trace of the name Caedmon is to be found upon the cross. 3 The language of the inscription upon the cross "lacks some of the marks of antiquity," is probably later than the *Dream of the Rood* instead of earlier, and is to be placed at least as late as the tenth century. 4 Without reference, therefore, to the whole vexed question of Caedmonian authorship, any claims for the attribution of the *Dream of the Rood* to him may be dismissed at once.

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1 Vol. 1, 419.
The second theory of the authorship of the Dream of the Rood connects it with the name of Cynewulf. Kemble and Thorpe, who were inclined to attribute all the poetry of the Vercelli manuscript to Cynewulf, favoured this view, neither of them making, however, any close examination of the poem to support their theory. Dietrich first brought together a number of reasons for attributing the poem to Cynewulf. He strove to connect the Elene with the Dream, since the theme of both was the Cross, and conjectured that the poet was inspired to write of the invention of the Cross by the influence of the vision which he narrates in the Dream. He called attention to a similarity in tone between the personal passages in the Juliana, Christ and Elene, and certain passages of a personal nature in the Dream. The diction of the poem he finds also to correspond with that of the authentic Cynewulfian poems, and concludes, therefore, that the Dream was written by Cynewulf towards the end of his life.

Dietrich's views were supported by Rieger, who also strives to show a connexion between the Dream and the Elene. Ten Brink also argues for Cynewulf's authorship of the Dream, making it his first poem. He connects it with the conversion of Cynewulf, and conjectures that all the rest of his poems are later than the Dream, the Elene being last of all. Wülker, in 1885, brings one or two important criti-

1 Disputatio de Cruce Ruthwellensi.
2 Cf. note of age in Dream, lines 122 ff.
3 Zacher's Zeitschrift, i, 313 ff.
4 Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum, xxiii, Anzeiger, 53-70.
5 Grundriss, 194-5.
introductions to bear upon the view of Rieger, Dietrich and ten Brink. If with Rieger we hold the opinion that the Dream, the first of Cynewulf's poems, was followed immediately by the Elene with which it is vitally connected, and then by his other poems, Wülker points out that we have an order of composition quite at variance with normal development of literary merit, since the Juliana, Guthlac, and Christ\(^1\) were less important poems. Again, if with ten Brink and Dietrich we take the Dream as the first of the poems and the Elene as last, and regard the Elene as springing from the inspiration of the vision related in the Dream, it is curious that Cynewulf should only at the end of his career have turned to the writing of a poem the inspiration for which is considered to come from the early poem. Moreover, certain verses (124 ff.) in the Dream are of such a tone as to suggest a date for its composition late in the life of the poet. Ebert,\(^2\) because of certain discrepancies between the Elene and on grounds of diction, denies the Dream to Cynewulf.

Stopford Brooke\(^3\) finds little that would argue for Cynewulf's authorship in those portions of the Dream written in the long epic line of the Caedmonian school, but regards the introduction and the close, which are in the short epic line, as having characteristics of Cynewulf's verse. He holds the view, therefore, that there may have been an old

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\(^1\) In this criticism of the Christ one can hardly agree with Wülker.


\(^3\) History of Early English Literature, 438.
poem upon the Crucifixion in the manner of the Caedmonian school which was retold by Cynewulf in the form of a dream. Trautmann ¹ thinks that the Dream cannot be attributed to Cynewulf with any degree of probability. Cook ² is inclined upon the whole to attribute the poem to Cynewulf. "Making all due allowances," he says, "for the weakness of certain arguments, both pro and con, the balance of probability seems to incline decidedly in favour of Cynewulfian authorship."

It must be admitted, I think, that the problem of the authorship of the Dream has been confused, rather than rendered clear, by the attempt made by Dietrich and others to find a specific allusion to the Dream in the personal passage of the Elene (lines 1251–56). The passage runs as follows: "Full often had I pondered on that glorious cross, nor once alone, ere I unriddled all the marvel of that radiant tree. I found the tale of that victor token in books, to make it known in writings in due course of time." Here is certainly no specific allusion either to a previous writing by him on the subject of the cross, or to a vision. It is hardly possible to regard this passage seriously as a reference to the Dream, or as anything more than a general statement of the fact that the poet had often pondered as to the fate of the cross,³ and, after searching

¹ Bonner Beiträge, i, 40.
through books and writings, had at last thoroughly familiarized himself with the story of the invention of the Cross which he has just related in the body of the *Elene*.

The question of the authorship of the *Dream* must after all rest upon these general facts: that the diction of the *Dream* is on the whole thoroughly Cynewulfian; that Cynewulf had written another poem upon the Cross, in which he handled the Constantine vision with evident appreciation of its beauty; that the personal passages of the *Christ* and *Elene* are remarkably similar in tone to certain lines at the beginning and the end of the *Dream*; and that the narrative of the Crucifixion here given has many parallels in section III of the *Christ*. These facts tend to make the theory of Cynewulfian authorship probable.

**THE RIDDLES**

It was for some time regarded as definitely shown that Cynewulf was the author of the *Riddles*. Of late years, however, the opinion of conservative scholars has gone counter to this belief. The reason for this change in view can be briefly shown.

The *Riddles*, ninety-five in number, are found in the Exeter manuscript in three sections, namely, upon folios 100b–105a, 122b–123a, and 124a–130b. They were first ascribed to Cynewulf by Leo, an attribution which resulted naturally from his interpretation of the so-called *First Riddle*. Since the name Wulf occurs a number of times in this poem, Leo at once jumped to the conclusion that
it might be explained as a charade, and, having succeeded to his own satisfaction in twisting the first and second syllables of Cynewulf’s name from certain words in the poem, added them to the Wulf, and announced the discovery of Cynewulf’s signature in the First Riddle. Therefore, since the Riddles seemed to him a single collection, this signature naturally applied to the entire number of Riddles. Curiously enough, far-fetched as Leo’s interpretation of the First Riddle seems to conservative critics today, it was at once hailed as a remarkable discovery, and was accepted by Dietrich, Rieger, Sweet, Ten Brink, Grein and many others. Moreover, since Dietrich interpreted the last riddle to mean “The Wandering Minstrel,” this was at once treated as a light upon Cynewulf’s own life, and added to the meagre stock of autobiographic material left us by him; and, in connexion with incorrect references from the personal passage in the Elene, served to establish a belief, destined to endure for many years, that Cynewulf was in his early life himself a wandering minstrel. Aside from the question of the interpretation of the riddle, the weakness of such reasoning is at once manifest. The eighty-sixth riddle, in which was a play upon the word lupus, was also taken by Dietrich as referring to Cynewulf, and supporting Leo’s theory of the Cynewulfian authorship of the Riddles.

It was in 1883 that an attack was first brought against Leo’s explanation of the so-called First Riddle, and an attempt made to offer a better

1 Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum, xi, 448-490, and xii, 232-252.
interpretation. This was in Trautmann's article, "Cynewulf und die Rätsel,"¹ in which he succeeds in completely overthrowing Leo's theory, and himself offers as an interpretation "The Riddle." He derives likewise the same meaning from the last riddle, which Dietrich had interpreted as "The Wandering Minstrel." Discussion arose anew over Trautmann's interpretations, though in general they were accepted. In 1888, however, criticism upon the riddle cycle assumed an entirely new aspect. In his review of vol. ii. of Morley's English Writers,² Bradley went at some length into the question of the Riddles. Morley, rejecting both Leo's and Trautmann's interpretation, had given a religious meaning to the "first" and the Latin riddle. The "first" he had explained as referring to the "Christian preacher," and "The Devil" represented by Wulf. Before discussing Morley's interpretation, Bradley says:³ "I may as well state my own view, which is that the so-called riddle is not a riddle at all, but a fragment of a dramatic soliloquy, like Deor and The Wife's Complaint, to the latter of which it bears, both in motive and in treatment, a strong resemblance." He takes as established by the grammar that the speaker is a woman, probably a captive in a foreign land, that Wulf is her lover and Eadwacer her "tyrant husband." Bradley adds: "Whether the subject of the poem be drawn from history or Teutonic legend, or whether it be purely the invention of the poet, there seems to be no

¹ Anglia, vi, Anzeiger, 158–169.
² The Academy, March 24, 1888, 197.
³ Ibid. 198.
evidence to determine." He then gives his proposed translation of the poem, which is as follows:—

Is to my people as though one gave them a present.
Will they give him food if he should come to want?
   It is otherwise with us!
Wulf is on an island, I on another;
The island is closely surrounded by fen.
On yonder isle are fierce and cruel men;
Will they give him food if he should come to want?
   It is otherwise with us!
I waited for my Wulf with far-wandering longings
When it was rainy weather and I sat tearful.
When the brave warrior encircled me with his arms
It was joy to me, yet was it also pain.
O Wulf! my Wulf! it was my longings after thee
That made me sick—it was thy seldom coming—
It was a sorrowful heart, not the want of food!
Dost thou hear Eadwacer? The cowardly (?) whelp of us two
Shall Wulf carry off to the wood.
Easily can that be broken asunder which never was united,
The song of us two together.

Bradley’s view attracted wide attention, and the belief gradually spread that here was indeed no riddle but a fragment of a poem of lament.

In 1902 a careful study of the poem was made by W. W. Lawrence and W. H. Schofield. In the first article, entitled "The First Riddle of Cynewulf," Lawrence propounds the theory that this poem is a translation from old Norse. He calls attention to the short lines 3, 8, 17, and 19, and points out that these hint at a strophic structure in the poem, something that in Anglo-Saxon is exceedingly rare. The repetition of lines 2 and 3

in lines 7 and 8, especially in a poem so short in number of lines, seem to point to their use as a refrain. In diction Lawrence finds support for his theory in the fact that a number of troublesome words or phrases in the Anglo-Saxon poem may be explained on the ground of kinship to a Norse idiom. The faulty alliteration seems to be also an argument of some weight in favour of the theory that the poem is a translation. In strophic structure, refrain, language, and faulty alliteration, therefore, he finds support for his view.

Lawrence's study is supplemented by Schofield's article entitled "Signy's Lament." His purpose is to accept the general conclusions of Lawrence, and to show specifically that not only is this poem a translation from the Norse, but that it can be shown to be connected with the story of Siegmund and Signy from the Volsungasaga. The narrative of Signy's revenge as told in the story of the Volsungs certainly shows a remarkable similarity to a number of points in the poem under discussion. Volsung, the Hunnish King, had ten sons and one daughter, Signy. This daughter was betrothed and married to Siggeir, King of Gautland. Siggeir, angered by Siegmund at the time of the marriage, returns to Gautland, accompanied by Signy, before the marriage feast is celebrated; but invites Volsung, his sons, and followers to a feast in Gautland three months following. When they arrive there they are treacherously set upon by Siggeir and his people, and all slain save the ten sons of Volsung. They are placed in the stocks to die, and nine of them are devoured by a
she-wolf in nine successive nights, Siegmund alone remaining. He escapes by Signy's help and takes up his dwelling in a forest. Signy devotes her life to avenging the treacherous wrong done her house. She has two sons by Siggeir, and, when they are old enough, sends them to Siegmund that he may test their courage and try if they be fit instruments to aid him in his vengeance. Being found unworthy, both are slain. As a last resort Signy goes to Siegmund's stronghold in the guise of a witch, receives shelter for the night, and, when her time is come, has a son, by Siegmund, who is named Sinfjótli. When old enough he is tested and trained by Siegmund, and coming to full age is fit to aid Siegmund to his revenge.¹ They leave their hiding-place, come to Siggeir's palace and set fire to it in the night. All within perish and with them Signy, who, having gained her revenge, refuses longer life. "So much have I done to accomplish revenge that it is now nowise possible for me to live; I will die gladly with Siggeir the King, though I married him by compulsion." Such is the story of the revenge of the Volsungs.

It will be seen how closely this story dovetails into the poetic fragment formerly looked upon as a riddle. Signy is the speaker in the poem and, as Schofield points out, the term Wulf is correctly applied to Siegmund, both as head of the Wolfings and as an outlaw. Read in connexion with this narrative there is a clear meaning in the lines:

¹ Cf. Beowulf, lines 875 ff, where, in the Lay of Siegmund, the exploits of Siegmund and Siegmund's nephew Sinfjótli, there spoken of as Fitela, are chanted.
INTRODUCTION

When the brave warrior encircled me with his arms
It was joy to me, yet was it also hateful;

and the killing of the unworthy offspring of Siggeir
and Signy would seem to be referred to in the lines:

The cowardly whelp of us two
Shall Wulf carry off to the wood.

The unhappy marriage of Siggeir and Signy
could well be hinted at in the final lines of the poem:

Easily can that be broken asunder which never was united,
The song of us two together.

There is one difficulty with this explanation of
Schofield's, however, which cannot be lightly passed
over. In the sixteenth line of the poem is the
name Eadwacer, evidently applied to the husband
of Signy. There is no possible connexion between
Eadwacer or Odoacer of the *Hildebrandslied* and
Siggeir. Schofield has regarded this word not
as a proper name but as a corruption of an old
Norse form *audvakr*, meaning "very vigilant one."
Such an explanation is regarded by Bradley ¹
as impossible. After reviewing Schofield's argu-
ments Bradley concludes: "I think, therefore, that
Dr. Schofield is wrong in giving to the poem of
'Wulf' the new title of 'Signy's Lament,'
although the imagined speaker is a lady whose
circumstances closely resemble those of Signy."
Bradley believes that the husband of the heroine
of the poem was not Siggeir, but was in truth the
Odoacer of the *Hildebrandslied*, admitting, however,

¹ *Athenaeum*, 1902, ii, 758.
that the story of Wulf and Odoacer may have come to England through a Scandinavian channel. It is at this point that criticism on the poem of Wulf rests at the present time. The investigations of Lawrence and Schofield, while bringing forward a most interesting conjecture, have not proved their point beyond dispute. But since Bradley's article in 1888, it may be regarded as practically shown that we have here to do with a poem of lament, something in a way analogous to the *Wife's Complaint*, and not with a riddle; and since the theory of Cynewulf's authorship of the *Riddles* rested upon the belief that this poem was the first riddle of the collection, and that in it Cynewulf had in charade fashion given us his signature, with this foundation gone, the whole case up to the present time for the attribution of the *Riddles* to Cynewulf likewise falls to the ground.

OTHER POEMS ATTRIBUTED TO CYNEWULF

Of the other poems which have from time to time been attributed to Cynewulf not one has a serious claim to consideration as his work. Sarrazin has argued for the Cynewulfian authorship of *Beowulf*,¹ a view so far from conservative as to be hardly worth challenging. A number of supporters have arisen here and there for the theory that the *Harrowing of Hell*, and the *Physiologus*, three poems upon the panther, partridge and whale, are by Cynewulf. It must be admitted that the motif of the Harrowing of Hell is a not unpleasing one to Cynewulf, and that

¹ *Beowulfstudien.*
certain slight parallels, parallels in the main inherent in the subject, could be drawn between that poem and certain passages in the authentic poems. A certain connexion might also be urged between the allegorical poem on the Phoenix and the poems of the *Physiologus*, so much so that Trautmann \(^1\) includes both these poems among those that may with some probability be ascribed to Cynewulf. It may be said, however, that in the case of no one of the poems mentioned is the evidence or likelihood in favour of Cynewulf’s hand strong enough to warrant serious consideration. In summing up, therefore, it may be said that the authentic work of Cynewulf consists of the four signed poems; that there is some probability that the *Fates of the Apostles* constitutes an epi-
logue to *Andreas* and that the *Andreas* therefore is Cynewulf’s; that there is a possibility that *Guthlac B* and the *Phoenix* may be by him. Of the other poems treated it may be said that to a greater or less degree they are in the manner of Cynewulf.

**THE CHURCH IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND**

While but few traces remain of the Anglo-Saxon paganism which was supplanted by Christianity, those few traces would seem to point to the fact that it was entirely Teutonic in tradition. To what extent the worship of the Teutonic gods flourished in England is a matter difficult to determine. A number of local names such as Ednesbury

\(^1\) *Bonner Beiträge*, i, 42.
or Woden's borough, Wampool or Woden's pool would seem to point to the fact that Odin or Wotan, originally the Germanic wind-god, also god of war and god of the dead, must have had some considerable cult on English soil. But few references are found to the other gods of the Teutonic hierarchy, and though we know from Bede that temples existed to heathen gods, he does not mention the name of the gods to whom they had been reared. Wyrd, a dim impersonation of the Fate which is more powerful than all the gods in ruling man's destiny, seems to have been a potent force in the religion of the Saxon invaders of Britain, and references to this power linger on in Christian poetry. With the Teutonic paganism there came to England also much of Teutonic mythology, and though a great part of this is not touched upon in the body of Anglo-Saxon literature which remains to us, still mention of Weyland, Walter of Aquitaine and Odoacer, Siegmund, and Sinfjötli show that in the main the saga literature of the Teutonic continental peoples must have found its way to English shores.

With the conversion of England to Christianity however, the Pagan element disappeared. The completeness in many cases of the conversion to the new from the older faith, is well illustrated by an incident, narrated by Bede in his Ecclesiastical History, in connexion with the baptism in 627 of Eadwine of Northumbria to the Christian faith. Eadwine had granted to Paulinus license to preach the Gospel, and had himself accepted Christianity. When he inquired of Coifi, his pagan
high priest, who should first profane the altars and temples of the older gods, the latter answered: "'I; for who can more properly than myself destroy those things which I worshipped through ignorance, for an example to all others, through the wisdom which has been given me by the true God?' Then immediately in contempt of his former superstitions, he desired the King to furnish him with arms and a stallion, and mounting the same he set out to destroy the idols; for it was not lawful before for the high priest either to carry arms, or to ride on any but a mare. Having, therefore, girt a sword about him, with a spear in his hand, he mounted the king's stallion and proceeded to the idols. The multitude beholding it concluded he was distracted; but he lost no time, for as soon as he drew near the temple he profaned the same, casting into it the spear which he held; and rejoicing in the knowledge of the worship of the true God, he commanded his companions to destroy the temple, with all its enclosures, by fire. This place where the idols were is still shown, not far from York, to the eastward beyond the river Derwent, and is now called Godmundingham, where the high priest, by the inspiration of the true God, profaned and destroyed the altars which he had himself consecrated." In this spirit was Christianity received into Northumbria.

The actual conversion of England to Christianity dates from Augustine's mission in 596. For two centuries previous to this the Church in England, so far as it was established at all, had done little more than hold its own. Under Roman occupancy of the island Christianity had naturally prospered.
there in proportion as it was received by the Romans of the Continent, and by the Roman emperor. It exerted little influence, however, upon the Teutonic invaders of Britain, and little progress was made until in 597 Augustine and his forty Benedictine monks, sent out by Gregory the Great, landed upon the shores of Kent. Ethelbert of Kent was at once baptised, numbers of his subjects following the example set them, and from this most auspicious beginning Kent always remained a centre from which Christian influence spread abroad through England. As Ethelbert in an informal way exercised a kind of overlordship over all kings south of Northumbria, the rapid spread of the Christian faith was facilitated. The conversion of Eadwine in 627 by Paulinus added Northumbria to those kingdoms which had already accepted the new belief; but with the overthrow of Eadwine in 633 by Penda of Mercia, who had already brought the West Saxons under his sway, the cause of Christianity in Northumbria seemed threatened. The battle of Heavenfield, however, in 635, placed Oswald, nephew of Eadwine, upon the throne. Having been converted to Christianity in his youth at the Monastery of Iona, he sent thither for a missionary who might proclaim the true faith to his subjects. Aidan was accordingly sent to Northumbria, and by his humble life of piety and his wayside preaching many were converted.

Though the Christian faith was thus gradually spreading through every kingdom, the Church as a whole was yet quite disorganized. The dispute between the Celtic and Roman Church as to the
reckoning of Easter was settled in favour of the Roman usage by the Synod of Whitby in 664. But many disputes on minor matters arose, and a lack of harmony made organization imperative. With the appointment by the Pope of Theodore of Tarsus to be Archbishop of Canterbury, this organization was begun and carried out. The Church was welded into a single whole, synods instituted, bishops appointed, and the parochial system strengthened over against that of monasticism. The result was the establishment of a single unified Church through all the English kingdoms.

Yet even in these early years a process of decay, "running quicksilver-like through all her veins," was to be observed in the life of the Church. Simony and plurality of benefices, immorality in monastic life, episcopal neglect and clerical avarice spread more and more. Even as early as Bede these evils were forcing themselves upon the attention of those sincerely interested in the welfare of the English Church, and in the letter of Bede to Ecgberct, Archbishop of York, he takes the opportunity afforded him bitterly to arraign those given over to these practices. He speaks of those bishops who have about them no men of any religion or continence, "Sed potius illos qui risui, jocos, fabulis, commissationibus et ebrietatibus, ceterisque vitae remissoribus illecebris subigantur, et qui magis cotidie ventrem dapibus, quam mentem sacrificiis coelestibus pascant." The lax life of the monasteries is deplored by Bede, and Ecgberct is exhorted to "oversee most diligently what right and what wrong is being done in every monastery of your
parish." The same state of affairs is hinted at in a most interesting passage in Guthlac A. There the fiends tormented and taunted Guthlac by raising him into the upper air and bestowing the gift of sight upon him "so that he saw before his eyes all the bearing of the cloistered men, under the sway of holy shepherds, who have passed their lives in vain delight with idle wealth, and gathered treasure and splendid raiment as is the way of youth when fear of old age does not bridle it." This passage confirms the complaint of Bede that as a result of the corruption of Church life the young men of the kingdom were not being trained up to the service of their land, but rather to a life of wickedness, shame, and luxury. There can be no doubt that the history of the secular clergy in England, in the eighth and ninth centuries, furnished many examples of profligacy and neglect, and that in many instances those within the monastic orders indulged in lives closely bordering on the secular, and characterized by hard drinking and riotousness. It was this state of affairs which called forth the efforts of Dunstan toward reform in the tenth century.

This side of clerical life must not, however, be over-emphasized. The Church included within its fold, both in parochial work and within the monastic establishments, many sincere and humble men, such men as Aidan had been, whose purity of character and earnestness of life left their stamp upon all who came within their influence. If there was weakness, there was also strength, and it is this fact that is emphasized by Guthlac in his con-
temptuous reply to the fiends who had assailed the Church of God. "Ye made it my reproach that laxly I condoned the easy rules and brutish hearts of young men in God's temples. Thus would ye bring the praise of holy men to scorn! Ye sought the weaker out; the better ye judged not according to their deeds."

The movement of conversion in England had been marked from its beginning by Benedictine influence—an influence which narrowed the breach between secular and clerical life. It was in their moulding of secular life as instructors of the children of the nobility as well as those pledged to their own order, as innovators in agriculture and the rude engineering of the day, as sponsors of order and peace and established government, that their main service consisted. But in the turbulent centuries of early England it was within the arms of the Church that absolute peace and safety were to be found, and for many, to become identified either with the secular clergy or a monastic order symbolized the attainment of a secure refuge from the distractions and disasters of general social life. The monasteries in particular have always been most flourishing in periods of great social unrest. And emphasizing as it did the antagonism between the life of the flesh and the life of the spirit, in its ascetic idealism bidding that the one be crushed and the other exalted, the Church became naturally the sponsor of art and letters in the Middle Ages. It is not necessary to mention the part played by Bede in the founding of the School of York, and the spread of its influ-
ence to the Continent in the teaching of Alcuin, nor to emphasize the firm marriage of learning with theology in the early English Church. The Church of the East and the Church of the West in the Middle Ages were one in this regard.

It is, therefore, but natural to find the poetry of Cynewulf, the poetry that is perhaps most representative of the best in Anglo-Saxon England, so intimately related to the religious life of his day. Even before the Danish invasions life on English shores was an unquiet one. The struggles between Mercia and Wessex in the latter half of the eighth century were felt beyond those kingdoms, and it is within the quiet borders of the church that we should naturally look to see art and letters fostered, and invocations chanted, however faintly, to the Muses. There, safely sheltered from the din and strife of the outer world, one might picture on the parchment page all the various phases of that outer life. The moving pen caught the tramp of marching feet, and the changing echoes of war and revel, joy and sorrow; but in a softer key and attuned to the still religious atmosphere of that cloistered life, where

*Through one window men beheld the Spring,*  
*And through another saw the summer glow,*  
*And through a third the fruited vines a-row,*  
*While still, unheard, but in its wonted way*  
*Piped the drear wind of that December day.*
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