

# Anglo-saxon translation and transformation of the anglo-latin vita : the example of Guthlac B

Autor(en): **Bridges, Margaret**

Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Études de Lettres : revue de la Faculté des lettres de l'Université de Lausanne**

Band (Jahr): **2 (1979)**

Heft 1

PDF erstellt am: **25.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-870892>

## **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

## **Haftungsausschluss**

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

ANGLO-SAXON TRANSLATION AND TRANSFORMATION  
OF THE ANGLO-LATIN VITA:  
THE EXAMPLE OF *GUTHLAC B*

Of the five extant OE hagiographical poems<sup>1</sup>, only *Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B*, named after their Mercian protagonist who lived as a recluse in the fens of Crowland until his death in 714, have been associated with the tradition of the Antonine *Vita*. Of these two poems only the latter has the dubious advantage of having been traced back to an Anglo-Latin work of which it is by critical consensus considered to be the translation. I refer, of course, to chapter 50 of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*<sup>2</sup> by an otherwise unknown author who calls himself Felix, and who wrote his life of the Mercian Saint at the request of King Aelfwald of East Anglia (sometimes related in epitome) undercuts the biographical framework of the Anglo-Latin *Vita* as drastically as his development because *Guthlac B* is not a translation in the same sense that the tenth century OE prose Life of St. Guthlac is.<sup>3</sup> For the poet's selection of essentially one episode at the expense of most others (sometimes related in epitome) undercuts the biographical framework of the Anglo-Latin *Vita* as drastically as his development of some of the genre's commonplaces in the Anglo-Saxon poetic medium transforms the mood and meaning of his original. In fact *Guthlac B* tends to be considered a lot more like the rest of the OE poetic corpus (whatever the subject-matter) than like its hagiographical source, even though this in turn is thought to have been influenced by some of the conventions of vernacular poetry. Since it is generally assumed that the larger cultural context which produced, received and admired both works was more or less identical<sup>4</sup>, one is forced to consider the possibility that the writer's language (in the wider sense of the poetic medium and its conventions, whether topical or formal) was somehow responsible for this state of affairs.

Close examination of parallel passages in *Guthlac B* and in Felix's *Vita* will, I believe, reveal that the OE hagiographical poem, contrary to general opinion, extends many of the characte-

ristics of its Latin source into a medium which itself thrives on the contrastive structural features and rhetorical devices that constitute one of the most dominant traits of the *Vita*. One viable approach to the question of the continuity of the genre in the OE poetic medium seems to me to lie in the study of the contrasts underlying the relation through commonplaces of the Saint's life or passion, and the realization of those contrasts at three levels: the literal, the anagogical and the typological. The extent to which these features can be called generic will, I hope, be demonstrated by the following analysis of the plot-structure of the *Vita* and its threefold realization of contrast.

When the subject of the *Vita* is an eremitical monk, as is St. Guthlac, the importance of the Antonine model is such, that the narration of the various stages of his life varies but little from one work to another.<sup>5</sup> A summary of the stages relevant to the *Vita Guthlaci* might begin with the ancestry of the Saint, frequently described as noble in a metaphor which assimilates blood to grace, whilst at the same time anticipating the eschatological pattern of a new world in which this world's last shall be first.<sup>6</sup> Portents at his birth point to his election as God's champion and initiate the series of gradational<sup>7</sup> oppositions which underlies the Saint's relationship to the other *dramatis personae*. The Saint's youth may be evoked as one of exceptionally pious disposition, in which case his conversion is related in terms of gradational opposition (Antony, Cuthbert), or it may be qualified as dissolute, in which case his conversion is related in terms of diametrical opposition (Augustine, Guthlac). The Saint's renunciation of the world and progressive retreat into greater solitude widens the gap between him and the world. The hermit, who practises a moderate form of asceticism, is subjected to temptations in the form of a *psychomachia* in which the antagonistic forces are more or less recognizable projections of psychological conflict. This stage of the *Vita* tends to be marked by the same diametrical oppositions which characterize the antagonism of the martyr and his persecutor in the *Passio* (to wit: reciprocal invective and physical aggression which is countered by superior spiritual strength). The Saint's victory over the devil — frequently achieved by quotation from scripture or by divine intervention — is rewarded by the power to heal and perform miracles. The nature of the miracles performed at this stage of the *Vita* tends to differ from the polemic character of the miracles in the *Passio* insofar as the hermit's miracles, for the most part scriptural, demonstrate the extent to which he has

progressed along the continuum stretching from the moment of his election to his apotheosis, while the propagandistic miracles performed by the martyr prove the supremacy of his God over the idols/devil worshipped by his antagonists.<sup>8</sup> A period of public fame ensues, during which the world solicits the hermit in the form of requests for healing, instruction, and advice, besides petitioning for the Saint to return to the community in a position of ecclesiastical power (Martin, Cuthbert). Whereas the period of the Saint's temptation culminated in the affirmation of his perfect *fortitudo*, the stage of public fame is marked by his attainment of *sapientia*. This he ultimately transmits to members of the community in the course of a final address, or spiritual testament, inviting elevation and imitation. This stage of the *Vita* is reached only after the Saint's gifts of prophecy have miraculously been extended to his foreknowledge of death. Overcome by *desiderio passionis*, the Saint celebrates his impending death in a moment which reflects the festive commemoration that is the *legenda's* occasion. At the appointed hour the ascension and assumption of the Saint's soul is accompanied by miraculous tokens of divine grace, including such paradoxes as bright nocturnal light and fragrant odours emanating from the corpse. Finally posthumous miracles confirm the elevating process which the Saint continues to trigger off, even beyond the grave, and which the hagiographer enjoins the reader to participate in.

From this summary of the principal stages of the Antonine *Vita* and of some of the commonplaces through which they are narrated, it appears that structural contrast is realized at three levels. The first of these, related to *sensus literalis*, concerns the narration of the Saint's *acta* in terms of his confrontation with human or diabolical antagonists, or simply in terms of rhetorical contrast. An obvious example of the former is constituted by the hermit's temptations (Felix XXIX-XXXVI, *Guthlac B* 894-915), whilst an example of the latter might include the *topos* of death as the separation of body and soul (elaborated extensively by both Felix and the *Guthlac B* poet).<sup>9</sup>

Another level at which contrast is realized is that of scriptural reference, related to typological meaning. Through the authorial or the protagonistic voice the hagiographical narrator tends to make explicit the *imitatio* principle by virtue of which the Saint's confrontation with his antagonists imitates the original conflict between heaven and hell.<sup>10</sup> The achievement by the Saint of the paradisaical world through his overcoming of the infernal world re-

enacts Christ's example and that of his scriptural types. Explicit typological alignments between the protagonist's *acta* and scriptural events common to Felix and *Guthlac B* include a clear allusion to the Saint's imitation of the passion (Guthlac refers to his impending death as "following the lamb of God").<sup>11</sup> In this connexion the *Guthlac B* poet emphasizes the Easter setting of the Saint's death far more forcefully than does Felix.<sup>12</sup> A similar typological parallel is often established between the Saint's adversaries and Satan, to whom they are related in terms which parody the relationship between God and man ("father", "creator of all evil", "lord" are all common epithets applied to Satan by the Saint's adversaries). Unlike the Latin *Vita*, its OE prose translation, and *Guthlac A*, *Guthlac B* does not exhibit this feature of the Saint's Life, in conformity with the scant interest its poet shows in the doings of the devil.

Finally, contrast is realized at yet a different level every time the didactic finger of the author points out, in anagogical perspective, the ultimate alternative between damnation and salvation beyond the framework of the narrative. If the hagiographical narrative can itself be said to promote the elevation or conversion of its wider sympathetic audience (including the author and the reader), then it participates in the same relationship which characterizes the Saint and his specific sympathetic audience. Whether through mimetic commemoration (writing, reading and listening) or through active imitation of the Saint's spiritual elevation, the audience's salvation beyond time is at stake, as many a concluding eschatological vision will corroborate. Since the conclusion of *Guthlac B* is missing, there is no knowing how the poet handled these features, prominent in the final chapters of the *Vita Guthlaci*.<sup>13</sup> The almost total absence throughout of any sort of didactic *explicatio*, and the introduction into the lord-disciple relationship of unpredictable contrasts inhibiting the usual *imitatio* process (of which more below) suggest, however, that in this respect *Guthlac B* lives up to generic expectations less than any of the other OE hagiographical poems, in particular *Guthlac A*.

As an indispensable complement to this brief survey of structural contrasts in the Saints' Lives I should like to examine the imagery and rhetorical devices through which these contrasts are underscored in several parallel passages from the *Vita Guthlaci* and *Guthlac B*. I hope that, in spite of their limited number, they will demonstrate that *Guthlac B* — like the other



OE hagiographical poems, which also abound in antitheses, verbal and formulaic puns, irony and parody — delights in the opportunities afforded by its collocative medium for amplifying the contrasts suggested by its hagiographical model.

Although the narrative of *Guthlac B* is concerned almost exclusively — for over 90 % of the extant lines in fact — with the week separating the Saint's foreknowledge of death from that event itself, the framework of the OE poem may paradoxically be said to be both narrower and wider than that of the *Vita Guthlaci*, in which narration of the comparable period occupies about 11 % of the total work. For the OE poet leaves us in no doubt that the week extending from the moment when personified death first stretches his clutches towards the treasure/soul enclosed in the Saint's chest, dislocated with disease, to the moment when death is overcome by death in the miraculous ascension towards eternal life of the Saint's soul, is in fact coextensive with the whole range of salvific history. Comparison between the opening lines of Felix's chapter 50 and those of *Guthlac B* — too numerous to quote in full<sup>14</sup> — is revealing in this respect.

Felix begins chapter 50 of his *Vita* with a parallel and a series of antitheses:

Verum quoniam humanum genus ab initio mortalis miseriae cotidie ad finem decurrit, mutatisque temporibus generationes et regna mutantur, ad quem terminum dominus et servus, doctus et indoctus, iuvenis et senex pari conditione demergitur, et licet meritis, poenis praemiisque disiungamur, tamen nobis omnibus restat exitus idem. Nam sicut mors in Adam data est, ita et in omnes dominabitur. Quisquis enim huius vitae saporem gustaverit, amaritudinem mortis evitare nequit.<sup>15</sup>

The parallel, between the first mortal and post-lapsarian humanity, prepares us for the narration of the Saint's illness and death. But the link which death establishes between Guthlac and Adam, neutralizing all contrastive categories into which mankind is divided (*dominus/servus; doctus/indoctus; iuvenis/senex*), is short-lived, for after death the contrastive merits of men will bring them either *poen(as)* or *praemi(a)*. In a discreet evocation of the *poculum mortis* metaphor, the Latin author further contrasts the bitterness of death (*amaritudinem mortis*) with the sweetness of life (*huius vitae saporem*). The polarization of values here seems to be the exact opposite of what it will be in the antithesis with which the author later describes the advent of the Saint's illness, namely

the toilsome servitude of the Saint's life and the blissful repose of his afterlife.<sup>16</sup>

The *Guthlac B* poet also affirms both the parallel between primeval man and the Saint as well as the two contrastive attitudes to death, but not by way of a series of loosely connected metaphors serving as an introductory generalization. Indeed, both in his extensive opening passage, and in the course of his narration of Guthlac's illness and death, the poet dramatizes Felix's conventional parallel and antitheses to considerable effect. Thus where Felix seems to evoke Adam briefly for the sole purpose of stressing the inevitability of events to follow, the OE poem's exordial description of the loss of paradise through Adam (844b-71a) and its regaining through the hagiographical protagonist (878b-81a) sets up a series of antitheses which extend through the work as a whole, whilst the contrastive attitudes to death suggested by Felix's unelaborated *poculum mortis* and commercial (reward for labour) metaphors are dramatized in the course of the OE poet's confrontation of the Saint's death-longing with the disciple's disconsolate mourning. The OE poet must furthermore be credited with associating Felix's three disconnected statements about death's inevitability since Adam, its bitterness and its consequences. Our forefathers' gift to mankind takes the form in Guthlac 978b-91a of the fatal disease inflaming the Saint's body, a solid container (*banloca*) that is filled with a boiling (*hat*, *born*), bubbling (*weol*), brewing liquid (*brypen*) and equated with the *poculum mortis* handed down from the devil to Adam via Eve.<sup>17</sup> Not only the Saint's suffering during his illness, but also his expectation of reward — the last of Felix's introductory metaphors — is aligned with Adam's experience. For in 857b-63a the principle of recompense for good living is anticipated by the poet's representation of death's advent in paradise as part of the exchange system according to which Adam and Eve had to trade their immortality for their crime<sup>18</sup>. This commercial metaphor has its counterpart in the description of the activity of the many Godfearing men who sought to reverse the original exchange by obtaining *sigorlean* for their obedience in the world's marketplaces (872b-5). Finally, these elaborations of Felix's introductory metaphors are typical the OE poet's tendency not merely to align Guthlac and Adam — by placing the Saint's personal history against a background of world-history — but also to contrast them — by creating two antithetical categories of *dramatis personae* whose acts in paradise and in the *gewinworuld* are either lapsarian or redemptive.

Comparison of lines 932b-70a with the corresponding passage in Felix also shows that we are dealing with poetic transformation rather than translation, even though there is hardly an OE verse that cannot be traced back to the Latin original. This is how Felix describes Guthlac's miraculous foreknowledge of his death:

Contigit ergo inter haec, postquam dilectus Dei famulus Guthlac ter quinis annorum voluminibus devoto famulatu superni regis solitariam duxit vitam, ecce Dominus Iesus, cum famulum suum de laboriosa huius vitae servitute ad perpetuae beatitudinis requiem adsumere voluisset, quadam die, cum in oratorio suo orationibus vacans perstaret, subito illum intimorum stimulatio corripuit, statimque ut se subita infirmitate diri languoris vir Dei arreptum persensit, confestim manum Domini ad se missam cognovit. Tunc se ovante spiritu ad perennis regni gaudia praeparare coepit.<sup>19</sup>

The description makes essentially three points about the event. (i) The decision to end the life on earth of the Saint is of divine origin as is the sign by which that decision is communicated to the Saint. Compare *Guthlac* 936b-8a, 945b-53a and 957b-9a. (ii) The sign of the Saint's impending death is the onset of illness. Compare *Guthlac* 939b-40a, 945b-6a and 967b-9. (iii) The Saint reacts joyfully to the knowledge. Compare *Guthlac* 938b-9a, 953b-4a, 963b-5a and the litotes of 966b-7a.

The OE poet clearly repeats and varies each of the three points made by Felix. He also alters their order of occurrence, abandoning psychological realism by making the expression of the Saint's death-longing *precede* the onset of the fatal disease. In connexion with this disease he introduces a paronomastic collocation *adle onæled* (955), which has its counterpart in the *born/brond* collocation of 964 (*him dryhtnes lof/born in breostum, brondhat lufu*). Playing on the ambiguity of the concept of burning, *ælan* is used to designate the suffering of the body while *biernan* is associated with the longing of the soul. In contrast with the fairly static, complex period in Felix, lines 938b-45a and 953b-61a constitute two series of very short sentences, each of which is either a *varians* or a *variatum* in a sentence sequence evoking contrastive joy and suffering. This dynamic reiteration suggests the perpetual alternating of what seem to be progressively deteriorating stages of the Saint's disease and his ever-renewed desire to be with God. Though the sentences are generally unco-ordinated and unsubordinated, their sequence is for the most part adversatively related and comprises the following



alternations: *adl* (940), *beorhtra gehata* (941), *adl* (elliptic subject of 942b ff.), *hyht* (953), *adl* (955), *milts* (959) *faerhaga* (960). The sequence (which has begun with *nydgedal* 934 and *frofre gaest* 936, and continues with *adlþracu* 962, *lufu* 964 and *sorgcearu* 966) dissociates at breathtaking rhythm the contrastive poles whose simultaneity constitutes the paradox of *desiderio passionis*. Felix's hint of personification through terms like *corrigit* and *arreptum* (*esset*) is developed by the OE poet into a full-scale struggle in which the physical hardships of the Saint attack his personified death-longing in the military terminology usually reserved for the *psychomachia* of an earlier stage of the *Vita* (959b-66a).<sup>20</sup> It can be no coincidence that the new note struck by the OE poem in its reference to the Saint's acceptance of his illness is that of courage, evoked throughout by epithets such as *deormod*, *heard* and *hygerof*, and otherwise described in 940b-41a and 961b-3a. This emphasis on *fortitudo* during a stage of the narrative which generally affirms the Saint's *sapientia* suggests that the *Guthlac B* poet is dramatizing the Saint's experience of illness and death along the lines of the militarized psychological projections normally associated with the hermit's and the martyr's temptation. Finally, the OE passage in question culminates in a metaphor (967b-9a) which refers to the beloved couple of the body and soul whose forthcoming separation is as dramatically polarized in the narration of the Saint's death as is the description of passing time: *Dagas forð scridun, / nihthelma genipu* (969b-70a). Although the metaphor has its counterpart in Felix, I know of no other Saint's Life which so consistently tempers the soul's desire for salvation by repeated reference to physical suffering and to the cold lifeless body.<sup>21</sup> All in all the OE poet's stylistic development of this passage in the Latin *Vita* is typical insofar as it tempers the note of Christian confidence in the Resurrection by the introduction of what might well be called "the Anglo-Saxon melancholy sensitivity to transience."<sup>22</sup>

The same complexity of tone is perceptible in the OE poet's unusual handling of the relationship between the dying Saint and his disciple. Felix uses the servant Beccel in essentially two capacities. One of these is authenticating: Beccel is the only witness of a number of miracles (in particular the prophecy of death, the angelic company of the Saint, and the miracles attending ascension) which he reports, together with Guthlac's last wishes, to the Saint's sister and to society at large. The other capacity in which he is used is related to the mimetic process inso-

far as he is enjoined by the Saint to celebrate and not mourn his death (as does the *Vita*'s wider audience by participating in the celebration which is the *legenda*'s occasion).<sup>23</sup> Now the OE poet, while not materially altering the (unnamed) disciple's authenticating function, tends to inhibit the mimetic process by lending unusual prominence to the disciple's grief. It is normal in the *Vita* for the grief which all sympathetic witnesses may be expected to express at the Saint's death to be attenuated in favour of the didactic call for celebration. The following passage from Felix surely illustrates the principle that in hagiography the elegiac mood recedes behind an expression of confident optimism:

His auditis, praedictus frater flens et gemens crebris lacrimarum rivulis maestas genas rigavit. Quem vir Dei consolans ait: "Fili mi, tristitiam ne admittas; non enim mihi labor est ad Dominum meum, cui servivi, in requiem venire aeternam." Tanta ergo fidei fuit, ut mortem, quae cunctis mortalibus timenda formidandaque videtur, ille velut requiem aut praemium laboris iudicaret.<sup>24</sup>

This excerpt reports part of the disciple's conversation with Guthlac, who has just been taken ill. The Latin narrator's description of Beccel's grief upon hearing of his lord's impending death consists of an eloquent period which is repeated almost word for word in chapter 52, when Aeðelbald prays for guidance at the Saint's sepulchre<sup>25</sup>. Just as Aeðelbald will be comforted by the Saint's miraculous appearance *then*, Beccel *now* is to all intents and purposes silenced, if not comforted, by the Christian message of *consolatio* his master proffers, since this reference to his grief is followed by no other. Not so the OE poem, which reiterates the expression of the disciple's grief, while the passage corresponding to the lines quoted above amplifies that expression. Lines 1047b-61a comprise as many as nine half-lines which are constructed according to Anglo-Saxon formulaic patterns (state-of-mind formulas with nouns for the mind or breast — as the seat of emotions — qualified by epithets or predicates of mood) while the four half-lines of 1055b-7a clearly translate the Latin poet's description of Beccel's flood of tears. Within the framework of the poem itself, the disciple's lamentation (1047) is comparable with the devil's *wop* (905), while a number of expressions for his grief are paralleled by expressions for the Saint's refusal to mourn: compare *geocor sefa* (1048) with 1138, *modsorge waeg* (1051) with 1068 and 1137, *drysendne hyge* (1061) with 1139a. The Saint's

consolatory reply (1064-93) also expands beyond all common measure the Latin Guthlac's simple affirmation of perfect confidence in his reward. There are as many as eight *ex negativo* constructions, of which the Latin affords two examples (*tristitiam ne admittas* and *non mihi labor est*). In the adversative construction of 1069-76a the OE Guthlac also adds a fairly elaborate description of hell, where he is confident he will *not* end up. Like all negative constructions, this negation of opposites results in them being very much present, albeit in the form of words only. These stylistic features suggest that in *Guthlac B* even the dogmatic world-view, of which the Saint is the spokesman, is not entirely divorced from the elegiac world-view exemplified in the disciple.

One final quotation from Felix should serve to confirm that the Latin presents us with a pattern of grief transcended. In the present state of the MS there is no knowing, however, whether the corresponding passage in *Guthlac B* was itself part of a purposeful contrast between an elegiac and a providential world-view, or whether the elegiac perspective was an integral one. This is how Felix describes the disciple's report to Guthlac's sister of events he has just witnessed and her reaction:

Deinde supramemoratus frater inmensa formidine tremefactus, eximii splendoris coruscationem sustinere non valens, arrepta navicula portum reliquit ac deinde, quo vir Dei praeceperat, coepto itinere perrexit. Deveniens quoque ad sanctam Christi virginem Pegam, fraterna sibi mandata omnia ex ordine narravit. Illa vero, his auditis, velut in praecipitium delapsa, se solo premens, inmensi maeroris molestia medullitus emarcuit, lingua siluit, labrum obmutuit, omnique vivali vigore velut exanimis evanuit. Post vero interventum temporis, ceu somno expergefata, imis de pectoris fibris longa suspiria trahens, arbitrio omnipotentis grates egit.<sup>26</sup>

The Saint's exceptionality is here no longer measured in terms of the disciple's affection, but in terms of that of the "blessed virgin Pega", a yardstick of virtue in her own right. If one recalls that in a later chapter Aeðelbald too will mourn the Saint, the pattern of grief in Felix can be described as repetitive and transferable, presumably beyond the framework of the narrative to the *legenda's* wider audience. In the corresponding passage in *Guthlac B* the mimetic process which this transference is capable of triggering off is hampered by the continuing mournful attitude of the same *dramatis persona*, whose grief has not abated at all since

it was first mentioned: compare 1047a-57a with 1335b-44. It is also symptomatic that the OE narrator lends an ear to the messenger's report — which takes the form of a dirge in the first person (1348-79) — while Felix's narrator contents himself with referring to the "narration in order of the Saint's last wishes".

Felix relates how the miracles attending the Saint's death were too much for the mortal eyes of Beccel, whose journey to Pega is syncopated between the mention of his departure and arrival, presumably because it is essentially with Beccel's prompt obedience in carrying out his errand, and its effect on Pega, that he is concerned. In *Guthlac* 1326b-35a the disciple's crossing from Guthlac's island to the mainland is expanded into a full-scale sea-voyage of the kind prominent in OE poetry. I do not believe this journey to be as incongruous as is generally suggested in view of the short distance involved, but think that it makes good Anglo-Saxon poetic sense in conjunction with the exilic, elegiac expression of grief. In terms of poetic diction the disciple is exiled from his lord: this seems to be the implication of the deprivative formulas which recur in 1327, 1347 and 1354, as well as of the references to wandering in the *hweorfan* and *aswaeman* formulas of 1352, 1354 and 1379, and to the need to remain courageous in adversity in 1348 ff.<sup>27</sup> Only now is the heroic, elegiac style relevant to context, whereas earlier its relevance had been questionable (as when the disciple thrice refers to his mournful state of mind when overhearing the Saint's conversation with a nocturnal visitor: 1205, 1208-10 and 1220).

In Felix we see that Pega's grief upon learning of Guthlac's death is not just reported, but even elaborated rhetorically by the figures of asyndetic accumulation and of *homoioteleuton* (-uit endings). The portrait Felix gives us of Pega is of her dismembered parts, inanimate with grief. But the interval which separates this little *amplificatio* from the traditional "thanks for the Almighty's judgment" is brief, while Pega is exemplary in the way she puts the inanimation of grief behind her: *ceu somno expergefata*. The incomplete *Guthlac B* breaks off as the disciple is in the process of communicating the Saint's death to his sister, and so it is of course always possible that a didactic authorial voice, speaking through Pega and through posthumous miracles, existed and has not come down to us. But on the evidence of the rest of the poem it would be foolhardy to condemn outright — in the name of a hypothetical continuation — those who see the present ending of *Guthlac B* as similar to that of *Beowulf*.<sup>28</sup>

The limited number of parallel passages I have been able to examine here seems to suggest that the relation of *Guthlac B* to its source is both one of continuity and one of diversity. The subject-matter of hagiography has long been recognized as one of the important sources of inspiration for Anglo-Saxon poets, while recent typological criticism has pointed out generic continuity of the *Vita* in terms of relevant attitudes to narrative. Few have noted, however, that the OE idiom itself is congenial towards the generic features of the *Vita* insofar as these involve specific modes of realization of contrast. Analysis of all five OE hagiographical poems and comparison with the relevant sources and analogues in fact suggest that the OE poets tend to heighten the contrasts informing the Latin Saints' Lives both in terms of plot-structure and in terms of linguistic texture.<sup>29</sup> With these few examples from *Guthlac B* I hope to have illustrated some of the ways in which the OE poet has developed the generic features of his sources. In summary, *Guthlac B* achieves a superb balance between *se wuldres dæl* (1368) and *seðeordan dæl* (1366), essentially through its use of imagery (*topoi*, personification), its abundant *ex negativo* and deprivative constructions, and its starting use of traditional Anglo-Saxon poetic diction which, specifically in connexion with the disciple, attenuates the note of hagiographical optimism. These features may be said to transform as much as they translate the principal characteristics of the relevant chapter in the *Vita Guthlaci*.

Margaret BRIDGES.



## NOTES

This paper is a slightly modified version of a talk given at Crêt-Bérard on 3 December, 1977 in the context of the *séminaire de troisième cycle*.

<sup>1</sup> *Elene, Juliana, Andreas, Guthlac A and Guthlac B*. The latter two are printed in George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, eds., *The Exeter Book*, New York, 1936, pp. 49-88. *Guthlac B*, or *Guthlac II* as it is there called, begins on p. 72 at line 819. All quotations are taken from this edition.

<sup>2</sup> In Bertram Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, Cambridge, 1956. All quotations are taken from this edition.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Gonser, *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben des hl. Guthlac*, Heidelberg, 1909.

<sup>4</sup> Most critics tentatively suggest an early ninth-century date for *Guthlac B*.

<sup>5</sup> Felix's wholesale borrowing from the Lives by Evagrius, Sulpicius and Bede — themselves interrelated — have been catalogued by both B. Kurtz, in *From St. Antony to St. Guthlac: A Study in Biography*, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 12 (1925-6), and Charles W. Jones, in *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England*, Ithaca, N. Y., 1947.

<sup>6</sup> See M. de Certeau, under the heading "Hagiographie" in the *Encyclopedia Universalis*, Paris 1968, VII, 208.

<sup>7</sup> My use of the terms "gradational" and "diametrical" opposition follows that of Charles F. Altman in "Two Types of Opposition and the Structure of Latin Saints' Lives", *Medievalia et Humanistica* 5, (1974).

<sup>8</sup> R. Woolf distinguishes the two types of miracles in "Saints' Lives", *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in OE Literature*, ed. E.G. Stanley, London, 1966, pp. 42-3.

<sup>9</sup> See below p. 10 and note 21.

<sup>10</sup> In his chapter on "narrative romances as displaced myths", Alvin A. Lee (*The Guest-Hall of Eden*, New Haven, 1972) analyses the antithetical plot-structure of the OE hagiographical poems in terms of myths which are displaced insofar as their human protagonists imitate the protagonists of biblical myth, whose champions they are on middle-earth.

<sup>11</sup> In Felix (p. 154) we read: *expedit enim (...) agnum Dei sequi*. Compare *Guthlac* 1040b-44a: *ond ic siþþ an mot (...) godes lombær (...) forð folgian*.

<sup>12</sup> See Daniel G. Calder, "Theme and Strategy in *Guthlac B*", *PLL*, VIII, 3, (1972), pp. 238-9.

<sup>13</sup> A concise summary of hypotheses about the missing ending of *Guthlac B* is available in Jane Roberts "Gudlac A, B and C?", *Medium Aevum* XLII, I (1973).

<sup>14</sup> I refer roughly to lines 819-93.

<sup>15</sup> Pp. 150, 152.

<sup>16</sup> The *labor-requiem* contrast recurs twice on p. 154.

<sup>17</sup> Compare the description of its transmission in *neorxnawong*, in 868b-70a.

<sup>18</sup> In these lines the verb *ongioldan* is twice the centre of a period in which accumulated crimes are weighed out against death. There appear to be two symmetrical and largely repetitive periods (857b-9 and 860-63a) because the first relates to Adam and Eve (*hy*) and the second to their descendants (*mægð ond m cgas*).

<sup>19</sup> P. 152.

<sup>20</sup> Later on in the poem approaching death will be personified as *wiga wælgifre* (999), *jeond* (982), associated with *hildescurum* (1143) and *flacor flacpracu* (1144). On the device of personification in *Guthlac B* see James L. Rosier, "Death and Transfiguration in *Guthlac B*", *Philological Essays in Honor of Herbert Dean Meritt*, ed. James L. Rosier, The Hague, 1970.

<sup>21</sup> Rosier, *op. cit.* pp. 84-6, studies the *topos* of the separation of body and soul in both the OE poem and its Latin source, concluding that the subject was of special stylistic, as well as thematic, interest to the author of *Guthlac B*.

<sup>22</sup> R. Woolf, *Saints' Lives*, p. 58.

<sup>23</sup> On the probable use of the Saint's Life, and in particular its ending, as lections during the octave of the Saint see Colgrave, *Felix's Life of St. Guthlac*, p. 20 and James W. Earl, "Typology and Iconographic Style in Early Medieval Hagiography", *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 8 (1975), 34-5.

<sup>24</sup> P. 154.

<sup>25</sup> ... *supplex orans crebris lacrimarum fluentis totum vultum rigabat* (p. 164).

<sup>26</sup> Pp. 158, 160.

<sup>27</sup> The passage has all the characteristics of "The Formulaic Expression of the Theme of 'Exile' in Anglo-Saxon Poetry", specified in Stanley B. Greenfield's article of that name, *Speculum* 30 (1955).

<sup>28</sup> For example R. Woolf, *Saints' Lives*, p. 58.

<sup>29</sup> I have undertaken such an analysis in the course of my doctoral dissertation in progress.