

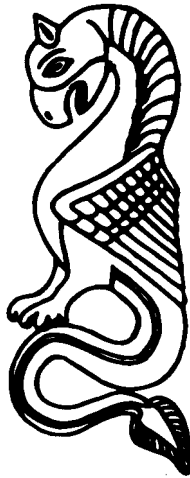
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An Edition of *Vainglory*

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Vainglory appears in folios 83r–84v of the Exeter Book, between *The Seafarer* and *Widsith*.¹ According to Conner, it belongs to the second, oldest booklet of the Exeter Book, the production of which may have just predated or coincided with the Benedictine reform of Exeter, beginning in 968.² To briefly summarize, the fulcrum of the poem is the dichotomy its speaker draws between God’s child, whose main virtue is humility, and the devil’s child, whose main sin is immoderate pride. This is not to say that *Vainglory* possesses an immediately lucid didactic structure. Notoriously elliptical, the poem is a frustrating read; but one which, I suggest, repays the effort spent. Editors and critics have had to contend with a confounding array of ambiguities: an unnamed ‘prophet’ and/or ‘wise man’ who is the original source of the speaker’s wisdom; uncertainty as to how many wise men or prophets are referred to; a host of uniquely attested forms;³ lines which seem to make no sense without emendation; and an apparently paraphrased, assumedly biblical *gyd* (51b), the end of which is not clear, and which may be something completely different from the initial *gealdre* (5a) mentioned. Further, it is difficult to decide what *Vainglory* is, in the main, ‘about’. As such, the poem has proven something of a struggle to name. First printed in Thorpe’s edition as *Monitory Poem*,⁴ numerous titles were then proposed: Ettmüller’s *Be monna môde* (‘About the Mind

¹ I have used the electronic facsimile in the DVD that accompanies Bernard J. Muir, ed., *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry: An Edition of Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501*, Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000).

² Patrick W. Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: A Tenth-Century Cultural History*, Studies in Anglo-Saxon History, 4 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), pp. 148–49. See also Michael D. C. Dout, ‘Possible Instructional Effects of the Exeter Book “Wisdom Poems”: A Benedictine Reform Context’, in *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence: Papers Presented at the International Conference Udine 6–8 April 2006*, ed. by Patrizia Lendinara, Loredana Lazzari and Maria Amalia D’Aronco, *Textes et Études du Moyen Âge*, 39 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 447–66 (p. 452).

³ Bernard F. Huppé, *The Web of Words: Structural Analyses of the Old English Poems ‘Vainglory’, ‘The Wonder of Creation’, ‘The Dream of the Rood’, and ‘Judith’* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1970), p. 8. According to Huppé, the uniquely attested forms are: *sundorwundra* (2b), *ærcwide* (4b), *wilgest* (7a), *mæþelhergendra* (13b), *æscstede* (17a), *ungemedemad* (25a), *fligepilum* (27a), *breodað* (28a), *boð* (29b), *blenceþ* (33a), *hinderhoca* (34a), *hygegar* (34b), *inwitflan* (37b), *symbolwlonc* (40a), *þræfte* (42a), *nearowrencum* (44a), *forðspellum* (47a), *grundfusne* (49a), *ahlæneð* (53b), *neosiþum* (55a); *bælceð* (28a) may be an uniquely attested form or ‘represent only an unusual usage.’

⁴ Benjamin Thorpe, *Codex Exoniensis: A Collection of Anglo-Saxon Poetry, from a Manuscript in the Library of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter, with an English Translation, Notes and Indexes* (London: Pickering, 1842), pp. 313–18.

of Men'),⁵ followed by Grein,⁶ Sedgefield's underwhelming *A Bad Character*;⁷ Mackie's *A Warning against Pride*, later adopted by Guntner;⁸ finally, Krapp and Dobbie's *Vainglory*, followed by all other editors thereafter, excepting Guntner.⁹ Huppé has suggested the subtitle *Godes bearn — Feondes bearn*, or *Son of God — Son of Satan*.¹⁰ Roberts was concerned that none of these titles takes into account the role of the speaker's teacher, putting forward *The Wise-Man*, or something similar.¹¹ *Vainglory* is, in fact, the best of all possible titles, as the poem is essentially a homily on inordinate pride. The 'inordinate' is important, since this is not simply 'A Warning Against Pride', but a warning against excessive and ultimately futile pride.

Several dissertations discussing *Vainglory* were presented in the early nineteen-sixties and seventies,¹² after which the poem experienced a brief surge in popularity. After Huppé's edition (1970) came Markwardt and Rosier's (1972)¹³ and Pickford's (1974).¹⁴ The poem was translated in Shippey's *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (1976),¹⁵ and, a couple of decades later, Rodrigues' *Anglo-Saxon Didactic Verse*.¹⁶ Troublingly, Rodrigues often appears to ignore the seventies critics. For instance, an assertion made by Krapp and Dobbie and disproved by numerous later editors that the poem's introductory lines 'seem to bear no organic relationship to the rest of the poem', is echoed by Rodrigues in his short introduction.¹⁷ Regan's (1970) article on the patristic memes drawn upon by the poem made an invaluable contribution to scholarship,¹⁸ but I argue here that *Vainglory*'s 'Germanic psychology' ought too to be acknowledged. Roberts' recent discussion of the poem has done much to collate

⁵ Ludwig Ettmüller, *Engla and Seaxna scôpas and bôceras: Anglosaxonum poëta atque scriptores prosaici, quorum partim integra opera, partim loca selecta collegit*, Bibliothek der gesammten deutschen national-literatur, 28 (Quedlinburg and Leipzig: Bassius, 1850), pp. 248–49.

⁶ Christian W. M. Grein, *Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Poesie*, ed. by Richard P. Wülker, 3 vols, vol. III ed. by Bruno Assmann (Kassel: Wigand, 1883–98), III, 144–45. As I have no German, I have not consulted Grein's translation, in his *Dichtungen der Angelsachsen stabreimend übersetzt*, 2 vols (Göttingen: Wigand, 1857–59), II, 153–55. For a detailed discussion of the poem's history and critical reception, see Jane Roberts, 'A Man "boca gleaw" and his Musings', in *Intertexts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Paul E. Szarmach*, ed. by Virginia Blanton and Helene Scheck, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 334/Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, 24 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007), pp. 119–37 (pp. 119–23).

⁷ *An Anglo-Saxon Book of Verse and Prose*, ed. by W. J. Sedgefield, Publications of the University of Manchester, English Series, 17/Publications of the University of Manchester, 186 (New York: AMS Press, 1928; repr. 1973), pp. 43–44.

⁸ W. S. Mackie, *The Exeter Book: Part 2*, Early English Text Society, o.s., 194 (London: Early English Text Society, 1934), pp. 10–15; J. C. Guntner, 'An Edition of Three Old English Poems: "A Warning Against Pride", "The Wonders of Creation", "A Prayer"' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1970), pp. 59–62.

⁹ *The Exeter Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), pp. 147–49.

¹⁰ Huppé, pp. 1–7.

¹¹ Roberts, pp. 120–21.

¹² I have been unable to access H. V. Lutton, 'Anglo-Saxon Poetics: Studies in the "Riddles", "Beowulf", "Juliana", and "Vainglory"' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1968); D. D. Short, 'Five Homiletic Poems from the Exeter Book, with an Edition of the Text, Introduction, Notes and Glossary' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, North Carolina State University at Raleigh, 1972).

¹³ Albert H. Markwardt and James L. Rosier, *Old English Language and Literature* (New York: Norton, 1972).

¹⁴ T. E. Pickford, 'An Edition of *Vainglory* by T. E. Pickford', *Parergon*, 10 (1974), 3–39.

¹⁵ Thomas A. Shippey (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer).

¹⁶ Louis J. Rodrigues (Felnfach: Llanerch, 1995).

¹⁷ Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. xl; Rodrigues, p. 25.

¹⁸ Catharine A. Regan., 'Patristic Psychology in the Old English *Vainglory*', *Traditio*, 26 (1970), 324–35.

the disparate scholarly opinions surrounding it.¹⁹ Before this, the latest article devoted to the poem was McKinnell's, published in 1991.²⁰ The comparative paucity of interest in the poem since the seventies has meant that no comprehensive edition exists which takes all of the work done by its editors into account. New ways of approaching the poem have been put forward, as part of wider studies, by Conner, Magennis and Mize.²¹ A reconsideration of the poem, which integrates these into its analysis, is needed.

The edition and translation which I present here are preceded by two essays investigating the connective tissue of the poem — those thematic ligaments which animate its framework. The first essay focuses on the transmission of knowledge from prophet to speaker and the nexus in which the *gyd* exists; the second on the poem's employment of satire and the psychomachia allegory, and its depiction of time and space. Both essays discuss *Vainglory's* conception of the word. *Vainglory* is frustrating and rewarding in equal measure for the same reason: the poem is essentially preoccupied with *perception* — especially the perception of truth in word — and, accordingly, is an exercise in perceptive and interpretative ability.

The Prophet and the Speaker

'The poem begins simply enough', claims Huppé.²² A perfunctory glance at the widely varying ways in which its first four lines have been translated proves him wrong. These lines provide the scaffold of authority on which the poem is constructed. They are by no means 'simple', and are in need of reconsideration. This essay aims to provide a plausible re-reading which removes the 'wise man' element, and asserts that there is just one authority figure — a prophet — who has imparted wisdom to the speaker. An elision of prophets in the recurrent noun *witega* (3b, 50b, 81b) will also suit my analysis. I hope to show here that *gealdre* (6a) probably has the same referent as the *gyd* (51b) the speaker later quotes. The *gyd* likely has a source in Luke 14.11, Luke 18.14, and ends at line 56. The prophet may well be John the Baptist; if there is another prophet, he may be Isaiah. This, in Roberts' words, is a text in which 'the reception, interiorization, and passing on of wisdom' is of great concern.²³ Audience or critic must, then, provide the next link in the chain of wisdom set in motion by the *witega*.

The poem's introductory lines are usually taken to mean that the teachings of some authority figure, 'witgan larum' (3b), have been passed on to the speaker by a wise man, or 'frod wita' (1a). A reading involving a wise man encounters difficulty at 81b: 'gif me se witega ne leag' (if the prophet did not lie to me). Line 81b asserts a direct transference of knowledge from the *witega* to the speaker, just as has been asserted in 1–2a. It is reasonable to assume that *witega* refers to the same figure throughout the poem. If this is the case, 81b begs the question, where did the wise man go? Roberts, following Pickford and Hansen, has approached this problem by suggesting that the roles of wise man and prophet are conflated in *witega* at 81b.²⁴ There need, however, be no wise man at all when *larum* is taken as an

¹⁹ Roberts, 'A Man "boca gleaw" and his Musings'.

²⁰ John S. McKinnell, 'A Farewell to Old English Elegy: The Case of *Vainglory*', *Parergon* 9.2 (1991), 67–89.

²¹ Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*; Hugh Magennis, *Images of Community in Old English Poetry*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Britt Mize, 'The Representation of the Mind as an Enclosure in Old English Poetry', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 35 (2006), 57–90.

²² Huppé, p. 9.

²³ Roberts, p. 128.

²⁴ Pickford, 5; Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry*, McMaster Old English Studies and Texts, 5 (London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 77, 80; Roberts, 128.

instrumental dative, modified by the genitive *witgan*, to form the phrase, ‘with the lore of a *witega*’. A man might, in present-day English, apply a bandage with the skills of a professional. He has not been instructed in applying the bandage by a professional: rather, he applies the bandage with the skills that are in accordance with the professional that he is. The phrase ‘*witgan larum*’ is attested once elsewhere, in *Exodus* (390b): Solomon builds a temple in accordance with ‘*witgan larum*’, the *witega* being David.²⁵ This opens up the further possibility that, in *Vainglory*, one *witega*, or prophet, is fulfilling the lore of another.

Three types of knowledge are referred to in the first four lines: ‘*sundorwundra fela*’ (many special portents [2b]), ‘*witgan larum*’ and ‘*bodan ærcwide*’ (4b). The *witega* is able to interpret portents; these may be a part of his lore. His lore could be based on what an earlier figure has said or prophesied the *witega* will do. This is transformed into ‘*bodan ærcwide*’. A *hapax legomenon*, *ærcwide* could feasibly mean either ‘foretelling’ or ‘early speech’.²⁶ Some translations have ‘ancient language’.²⁷ I incline towards the first interpretation, but I would also like to suggest that *ærcwide* is a pun, the secondary meaning of which is ‘early speech’, recalling the ‘*witgan larum*’ which has been utilized to produce the *ærcwide*. This is why ‘*bodan ærcwide*’ parallels ‘*witgan larum*’ in structure as genitive + dative, and is placed in such a way as to be taken either as appositive to *wordhord* or to ‘*witgan larum*’. As it is singular, I have translated it as appositive to *wordhord*, but have tried to preserve its secondary meaning with the addition of ‘long ago’. It is probable that *witega* functions, in *Vainglory*, much as it does in a sermon by Ælfric of Eynsham: ‘*þa heahfæderas and þa witegan þe embe þone Hælend cyddon, þa wæron þa sæderas þe seowon Godes lare*’ (‘the patriarchs and the prophets made announcements concerning the Saviour; they were the sowers who sowed God’s lore’).²⁸ ‘*Witgan larum*’ and ‘*bodan ærcwide*’ may refer, at the same time, to earlier and later knowledge. They affirm the genealogy of prophecy from which the poem can claim descent.

Hansen and Roberts share the opinion that, at 81b, the poem may question the reliability ‘of authors and authorities’, although neither think that the *witega* is false.²⁹ There is little, except the immediately apparent meaning of 81b, to substantiate this claim. The first four lines leave no doubt as to the *witega*’s credentials. *Wordhord*, as Mize has shown, refers to a ring-fenced repository of sapiential, ‘ethically positive’ discourse within the mind.³⁰ Further, the *witega* is said to be ‘*beorn boca gleaw*’ (4a). Drout, discussing the phrase’s appearance in *The Gifts of Men*, has made the point that *boca*, qualifying *gleaw*, further qualifies the man the phrase denotes, as a conveyor of monastic wisdom.³¹ A glance at the appearances of ‘*boca gleaw*’ in the corpus suggests a generalized meaning of ‘religious teacher’, similar to the circumlocution ‘man of the cloth’ for ‘priest’ in present-day English. The phrase also appears in *Elene* (1211a), *The Meters of Boethius* (Meter 1, line 52a) and *Aldhelm* (2a), referring respectively to Cyriacus, Boethius and Aldhelm.³² The figures who bear this epithet are all

²⁵ Cf., for a full discussion of the provenance of this phrase, J. R. Hall, ‘Old English *Exodus* 390b: *witgan larum*’, *Notes and Queries*, 53 (2006), 17–21.

²⁶ Muir, II, 538.

²⁷ Mackie, p. 11; Rodrigues, p. 83.

²⁸ ‘*Feria VI in Tertia Ebdomada Quadragesimae*’, in *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, ed. by J. C. Pope, Early English Text Society, 259–60, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1967–68), I, 286–302 (p. 299, lines 256–57).

²⁹ Roberts, p. 128; Hansen, p. 80.

³⁰ Mize, pp. 70–71.

³¹ Drout, p. 457.

³² *The Vercelli Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 2 (New York: Columbia University

agents of conversion, or ‘spreading the word’, especially about Christ. *Wordhord* proves that there can be nothing mendacious about the *witega* or his knowledge. ‘Beorn boca gleaw’ indicates that this knowledge will be sacred, and not secular. Line 81b is, in fact, an affirmation of the *witega*’s ultimate authority, to which the speaker defers. It is a didactic tool, the rhetorical employment of an element of doubt which paradoxically asserts validity; a vaguely aggressive challenge designed to provoke submission from a lesson’s recipient.

Gealdre (6a) is a word that has caused concern. Guntner states that *gealdor* is ‘always associated with pagan sorcery and out of place in a Christian sermon’.³³ Roberts has proven that this is not the case, but concludes that *gealdre* and the later *gyd* need not be equated.³⁴ I contest this with a few select examples, some referred to by Roberts. In *Christ a giedd* made by Job is related: ‘Bi þon giedd awræc Iob, | [...] ond hine fugel nemde, | þone Iudeas ongietan ne meahtan’ (‘about [Christ] Job made a prediction [...] and he named him “bird”, which the Jews could not understand’).³⁵ *Giedd* is functioning here in the same way that *gealdor* does in, for example, *Beowulf*: ‘Siððan hie Hygelaces horn ond byman, | gealdor ongeaton’ (‘after they heard the sound of Hygelac’s horn and trumpets’),³⁶ in Roberts’ own words, ‘heralding the arrival of a hero about to enter legend’.³⁷ In *Guthlac B*, *gealdor* refers again to a prediction: ‘nis ðe ende feor, | ðæs ðe ic on galdrum ongieten hæbbe’ (‘your end is not far; I have understood this in [your] divinations’).³⁸ Hrothgar calls the ‘sermon’ with which he exhorts Beowulf that he should *gumcyste ongit* (‘heed virtue’) a *gyd* (1723).³⁹ If it is acceptable, in *The Fates of the Apostles*, for Cynewulf to refer to the same poem with *giddes* (89a) and *galdres* (108a),⁴⁰ it is eminently possible that, in *Vainglory*, they have the same referent. *Gealdor*, prototypically magical, imbues *gyd* with supernatural reverberations.

Pickford, noticing the *ond* at 51b, has also concluded that *gealdor* and *gyd* are separate utterances.⁴¹ This all depends on how the *þæt* in 50b is to be taken. Twice in the poem so far, at 26a and 47b, *þæt* has referred to the devil’s child. Since 41b–51a, the lines immediately preceding ‘þæt se witga song’, were a description of the devil’s child, it is probable that the *þæt* of 50b is not referring to all that has come before, but the devil’s child: his ‘sort’. The devil’s child is not a delineated character in the text; rather, he is a gnomic *sum* ‘one sort’ (23b). *Singan* can take a direct object and still possess the implied preposition, ‘about’, as in the Old English Bede: ‘cwæð he: sing me frumsceaft’ (‘he said: “sing me creation”’).⁴² The two verbs *singan* and *awreccan* may denote the separate processes of composition and utterance, which is how I have them in my translation, *gearowyrdig* implying preparedness and readiness with

Press, 1932), p. 99; *The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius*, ed. by George Philip Krapp, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 5 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 154; *The Anglo Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 6 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1942), p. 97.

³³ Guntner, p. 13.

³⁴ Roberts, pp. 126–28.

³⁵ Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 20 (lines 633–37). Translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

³⁶ *Klaeber’s Beowulf and the Fight at Fimmsburg*, ed. by R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, 4th edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 58 (lines 2943–44a).

³⁷ Roberts, p. 127.

³⁸ Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 84 (lines 1206b–7).

³⁹ Klaeber, p. 100.

⁴⁰ Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, pp. 53, 54.

⁴¹ Pickford, 26.

⁴² *The Old English version of Bede’s ‘Ecclesiastical History of the English People’*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Miller, Early English Text Society, o. s., 95, 96, 110, 111, 2 vols (London: Trübner, 1890–1898), I, ch. XXV, p. 345 (line 2).

words; or they may both refer to either. In neither case need *ond* create a disparity between *gealdor* and *gyd*.

This utterance, however, may potentially remain obscure. Pickford has pointed out that the modifying adjective *sundor* and the noun *gescead* (8b) imply the interpretive processes of separation and distinction.⁴³ Words must be split, and truth extracted from them. I am in agreement with Hansen when she suggests that the poem's ellipsis 'may reflect the threat of chaos and meaninglessness that words at once control and reveal'.⁴⁴ The verb *ongietan* is notably present in all but one of the occurrences of *gyd* and *gealdor* given above. *Ongietan* denotes the processing of sensory information: seeing and hearing on the one hand, but also cognizance — perceiving and understanding — on the other. The verb possesses both connotations simultaneously in the instance of Hygelac's horn and trumpets. Further, when it is used in Hrothgar's *gyd*, it is imperative, implying that its audience may well come away having learned nothing of virtue. *Ongietan* is negative in *Christ*: the Jews cannot discern Christ's coming from the words of Job. Words, even prophetic ones, are fallible, potentially ineffectual media. This is felt with the insertion of *sodlice* 'truly' (5a), and indeed, *meahte* 'could' (5b) to *Vainglory*'s introductory lines. The truth present in the *gealdor*'s words has the potential to remain obscure: to be heard, but not heeded. Whereas a pronouncement on the fallibility of authorities is, Hansen cautiously accepts, 'more like something we would expect from Chaucer, at the earliest, than from an Old English poet',⁴⁵ numerous Anglo-Saxon texts express concern about the effective transmission of knowledge through word, *Riddle 47* (whose solution is 'bookworm') being the most obvious.⁴⁶

It is unlikely that the poet has made the *witega* up. *Vainglory* is part of a textual culture in which the imprinting of texts with the watermark of authority for the purposes of 'affiliation and validation' is of immense importance.⁴⁷ The *witega*, then, is probably designed to recall a known figure of authority. Regan and McKinnell identify the *witega* as the apostle John.⁴⁸ The former considers the poem to draw from 1 John 3. The latter suggests a commentary on 1 John 3, most likely Bede's *In Epistolas Septem Catholicas*, but concedes that *witega* does not ever refer to an apostle; it is most often an epithet for Old Testament prophets, is extant referring to John the Baptist, and, infrequently, to Christ.⁴⁹ Roberts puts forward Isaiah.⁵⁰ Huppé cannot name the prophet, but notes that patristic commentaries on the Vulgate Psalm 35:12 are in line with the poem's content as a whole.⁵¹ The most compelling argument for the poem's source material is provided by Trahern; this is taken as definitive by Fulk and Cain.⁵² Trahern puts forward as a main source Chapter I of *The Rule of Chrodegang*, which is based on Chapter 4 of St Caesarius of Arles' 'Sermo CCXXXIII'.⁵³ *Rule*, 'Sermo' and *Vainglory* (52–

⁴³ Pickford, 18, 19.

⁴⁴ Hansen, p. 77.

⁴⁵ Hansen, p. 80.

⁴⁶ Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 205.

⁴⁷ Mary Swan, 'Authorship and Anonymity', in *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture, 11 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 71–83 (pp. 77–78).

⁴⁸ Regan, p. 324, n. 1.

⁴⁹ McKinnell, 79.

⁵⁰ Roberts, p. 128.

⁵¹ Huppé, pp. 19–20, 24.

⁵² R. D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain, *A History of Old English Literature*, Blackwell Histories of Literature (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), p. 135.

⁵³ Joseph B. Trahern Jr., 'Caesarius, Chrodegang, and the Old English *Vainglory*', in *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Literatur*:

56) all distinguish God's child and the devil's by use of the quotation 'omnis qui se exaltat, humiliabitur, et qui se humiliat, exaltabitur' ('everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and everyone who humbles himself shall be exalted').⁵⁴ Trahern's argument is the springboard for my own.

I can find two instances in the Vulgate at which the exact verse appears: Luke 14.11, 18.14; in Matt 23.12, the tense is future perfect.⁵⁵ A West-Saxon Gospel uses similar vocabulary to *Vainglory*: 'for þam ælc þe hine up ahefð bið genyðerud; and se þe hine nyðerað, se bið up ahafen' (Luke 14.11).⁵⁶ The idea expressed by these verses is what Yamasaki calls 'the paradoxical truth: greatness in the Kingdom involves the opposite of what human wisdom would dictate.'⁵⁷ Luke 14.11 and 18.14 are sometimes taken by patristic writers to refer back to a prophecy made by Isaiah concerning the ministry of John the Baptist. Meanwhile, Luke 3.4–5 is perhaps alluded to in 'witgan larum':

Sicut scriptum est in libro sermonum Esaiae prophetae: vox clamantis in deserto: parate viam Domini rectas facite semitas eius. Omnis vallis implebitur; et omnis mons et collis humiliabitur; et erunt prava in directa; et aspera in vias planas.⁵⁸

As it was written in the book of the sayings of Isaiah the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough ways plain.

Caesarius quotes Luke 14.11 and 18.14 elsewhere, in chapter 4 of 'Sermo CCXVII'. Here, he considers only its first half, as does *Vainglory*. This, Caesarius asserts, is *quod alius* 'the same thing' as Is 40.4.⁵⁹

John the Baptist only repeats Is 40.3 (cf. Matt 3.3, John 1.23), but it is not unheard of for exegetes to put words into the mouths of prophets. Peter Chrysologus, for instance, holds an imagined conversation with John the Baptist in his 'Sermo CLXXIX'.⁶⁰ So too may *Vainglory*'s speaker be entering into a dialogue with John through the scriptures. Pickford has noted the apocalyptic resonance the speaker has added to lines 52–56.⁶¹ The first addition is 'in þa sliþnan tid' ('in that terrible hour' [52b]), amplified by a similar expression, and otherwise unattested form, *neosiþum* ('the ultimate journey'). It is tempting to suggest that *wyrmum* (56b) contains an echo of John's words to the Pharisees in Matthew 3.7: 'progenies viperarum

Beiträge Luitpold Wallach gewidmet, ed. by Karl Bosl, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 11 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1975), pp. 167–78 (p. 175).

⁵⁴ 'Sermo CXXXIIF, in *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis sermones*, ed. by D. Germani Morin, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 103–4, 2 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953), II, 925–31 (p. 927); *The Old English Version of the Enlarged rule of Chrodegang/Edited Together with the Latin Text and an English Translation*, ed. and trans. by Brigitte Langefeld, Münchener Universitätschriften: Texte und Untersuchungen zur englischen Philologie, 26 (Oxford: Lang, 2003), p. 172 (lines 1–2).

⁵⁵ All references to the Vulgate are taken from <<http://www.drbo.org/>>.

⁵⁶ James Bright, ed., *Euangelium secundum Lucam: The Gospel of Saint Luke in West-Saxon*, The Belles-lettres Series, Section 1 (New York: AMS Press, 1972).

⁵⁷ Gary Yamasaki, *John the Baptist in Life and Death: Audience-Oriented Criticism of Matthew's Narrative*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament, 167 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), p. 117.

⁵⁸ Cf. Is. 40.3–4.

⁵⁹ Morin, *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis sermones*, II, 861–64 (p. 863); 'Sermon 217', in *Saint Caesarius of Arles: Sermons*, trans. by Mary Magdaleine Mueller, The Fathers of the Church, 31, 47, 66, 3 vols (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1956–73), III, 120–24 (p. 123). All further mentions of this sermon are from this edition.

⁶⁰ Alexandre Olivar, 'Sermo CLXXIX', in *Sancti Petri Chrysologi Archiepiscopi sermones*, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 24, 24a, 24b, 3 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975–82), III, 1084–88 (pp. 1085–87; chs. 1–3).

⁶¹ Pickford, p. 26.

quis demonstravit vobis fugere a futura ira?' ('ye brood of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come?'). Caesarius' 'Sermo CCXVII' may have circulated in Anglo-Saxon England.⁶² Whether or not it did, however, it provides a useful demonstration of the exegetical nexus in which these verses exist. Caesarius explores the verses' apocalyptic implications: 'clamor iudicium comminatur' (the shout of judges threatens). The phrase 'veniet tempus' ('a time will come') is repeated. Caesarius' warning that 'Non semper iste, qui nunc est, humanae consuetudinis ordo servabitur' ('the order of man's condition will not always be kept the same as it is now'), parallels that of *Vainglory*: 'biþ þæs oþer swice' ('there will be another outcome' [31b]) to sinful behaviour.

Ælfric, in his 'Nativitas Sancti Iohannis Baptistae', equates Isaiah 4.3–44 with Luke 14.11 and 18.14 in a passage based on Gregory the Great's 'Homily XX'.⁶³ He makes two notable deviations from his source. The first is a possible recollection of Isaiah 57.15: 'on hwam gerest godes gæst buton on þam eadmodum?' ('in whom resteth the Spirit of God but in the humble?'), echoing *Vainglory*'s assertion that Christ shall be a *gæst gegæderad* 'spirit united' (80a) within the humble man.⁶⁴ The next deviation is of especial interest to this analysis:

ðwyrnyssa beoð gerihte þonne ðwyrlicra manna heortan þe beoð þurh unrihtwisnysse
hocum awegde, eft þurh regelsticcan þære soþan rihtwisnysse beoð geemnode.⁶⁵

Crookednesses shall be straight, when the hearts of perverse men, which are agitated
by the hooks of unrighteousness, are again made even by the ruling-rods of true
righteousness.

Ælfric employs the same unusual 'hooks' metaphor in another sermon: 'þa worldmen cunnon þa worldcundan snoternysse, and þa yfelan hocas þe se Hælend onscunað' ('those men of the world know secular wisdom, and those evil hooks which the Saviour rejects').⁶⁶ This appears between the deployment of two biblical verses, Luke 16.8 and Corinthians 3.9, both of which relate the paradoxical truth. The former asserts that the children of the world ('worlde bearn') are wiser in their generation than the children of the light ('leohtes bearn'), a similar delineation as that between God's child and the devil's. The latter verse states that worldly wisdom is foolishness to God.

Pope surmises that the hooks in 'Dominica X' may be 'something similar' to those in Thorpe's 'Nativitas'.⁶⁷ As far as I am aware, it has gone unnoticed that *Vainglory* may be using the same metaphor at lines 33b–34a: 'worn geþenceþ/ hinderhoca'. Immediately following this is a description, crucial to the psychomachia allegory, of missiles which assail the devil's child. Verbs denoting thought govern the metaphor both here and in 'Dominica X'. In 'Nativitas', hooks exist in the hearts of men. The 'hooks', then, are interior. In *Vainglory*, *geþenceþ*

⁶² Joseph B. Trahern, 'Caesarius of Arles and Old English Literature: Some Contributions and a Recapitulation', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 5 (1976), 105–19 (p. 116).

⁶³ All further mentions of this sermon correspond to the following page references: 'VIII Kalendas Iulii Nativitas Sancti Iohannis Baptistae', in *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series*, ed. by Peter Clemoes, Early English Text Society, s. s. 17 (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 379–88 (pp. 385–86). Identification of the sermon's source material, or lack thereof, is taken from Malcom Godden's *Ælfric's Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, Early English Text Society, s. s., 18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 208–9. Translations are taken from 'Nativitas Sci Iohannis Baptistae', in *The Sermones Catholici or Homilies of Ælfric*, ed. and trans. by Benjamin Thorpe, The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church, pt. 1, 2 vols (London: Ælfric Society, 1844–46; repr. London: Johnson, 1971), I, 351–64 (pp. 360, 362).

⁶⁴ 'VIII Kalendas Iulii Nativitas Sancti Iohannis Baptistae', lines 212–13.

⁶⁵ 'VIII Kalendas Iulii Nativitas Sancti Iohannis Baptistae', lines 213–15.

⁶⁶ 'Dominica X Post Pentecosten', in *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, ed. by J. C. Pope, Early English Text Society, o. s., 260 (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), II, 544–62 (p. 556, lines 218–19).

⁶⁷ Pope, II, 875.

is unusually rhymed with the verbs preceding it — ‘wrenceþ he ond blenceþ’ (‘he plots and deceives’ [33a]) — implying continuity between intention and action: the plotting and deception refer at the same time to conception and reification. Herein is a schema central to the poem and its employment of the psychomachia allegory: that of ‘mind as fortress’ and, simultaneously, ‘fortress as mind’. The hall is an extension of the mind of the devil’s child, so what occurs within his mind will also occur in the hall. Comprised in *hinderhoca* is a chain of knowledge — perception — action. The devil’s child plots against his Maker to let the devil into his mind. Rejecting the divine from his mind, and accepting Satan, his world-view becomes false: he plots against, and deceives, himself. This results in the devil’s child’s bad behavior in the hall, which will also involve plotting against, and deceiving, his fellow man.

Vainglory’s prophet has the ability to discern God’s child, and to separate him from the devil’s child. There is no prophet better equipped to relate both the sensory and cogitative information of God’s own child, implied by the verb *ongietan*, than the only prophet who, ‘Christum [...] videre meruit et tenere; atque pereunti mundo adsignare solus mundi meruit saluatorem’ (‘was counted worthy of both seeing and holding Christ [...] worthy of pointing out to a world that was perishing the Savior of the world’).⁶⁸ The prophet’s knowledge, in *Vainglory*, has, in part, been taken from the interpretation of portentous signs. The prophet has further absorbed earlier prophetic teachings into himself, to produce his own brand of lore. As Caesarius of Arles puts it: ‘Sanctus, inquam, Iohannes typum in se legis, quae longe Christum per signa et indicia monstrabat, ostendit’ (‘St John [...] represented in himself a type of the law, which pointed out Christ from afar by signs and evidence’).⁶⁹ In Ælfric’s ‘Nativitas’, John is called *Stemn* (‘Voice’), and Christ *Word*: ‘na swilc word swa menn sprecað, ac he is þæs fæder wisdom’ (‘not such a word as men speak, but he is the Wisdom of the Father’).⁷⁰ *Christ* was not such a word as men speak, because such words are fallible. *Vainglory*’s speaker challenges an audience to see, as he himself has perceived through John’s ministry, the lore sown in the ground of language and, in turn through this, the Word within the word.

This essay has aimed to clarify some of the poem’s central ambiguities. The poem contains one foundational quotation, a paraphrase of Luke 14.11 and 18.14. This is both *gealdor* and *gyd*, and expressive of the paradoxical truth. The quotation begins at line 52, and ends at line 56. It is passed from the prophet directly to the speaker, there being no ‘wise man’, although an earlier prophet’s lore may be present in the verse, likely Isaiah’s. The poet was probably inspired by the source material Trahern has suggested, but may also have had recourse to other texts which draw out the meaning of Luke 14.11 and 18.14. One prophet is especially associated with these verses: John the Baptist. They are further associated with the discernment of the proud versus the humble, God’s child versus the devil’s, and their fates at Judgment Day. These verses are also linked to the vernacular ‘hooks’ metaphor the speaker employs, which is inserted into exposition of the psychomachia allegory. The poet may have been influenced by Ælfric, or vice versa: it is impossible to say. Regardless, these ‘hooks’ seem to have a relationship with the paradoxical truth, and perhaps with the ministry of John the Baptist. What is more, this relationship seems to be an entirely Anglo-Saxon, vernacular

⁶⁸ Olivar, ‘Sermo CLXXIX’, III, ch. 6, p. 1088; ‘Sermon 179’, in *St Peter Chrysologus: Selected Sermons*, trans. by William B. Palardy, The Fathers of the Church, 17, 109, 110, 3 vols (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1953–2005), III, 354–58 (ch. 6, p. 358, lines 95–96).

⁶⁹ Morin, ‘Sermo CXVI in Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis sermones’, II, 858–61 (ch. 3, p. 860); Mueller, ‘Sermon 16’, in *Saint Caesarius of Arles*, III, 117–20 (ch. 3, p. 119).

⁷⁰ ‘VIII Kalendas Iulii Nativitas Sancti Iohannis Baptistae’, lines 190–91.

one. The placement of the poem in vernacular textual culture will be carried over into the next essay. So too will the next essay be informed by the psychic chain of knowledge — perception — action established here, present in *hinderhoca*. Also to be borne in mind is the poem's preoccupation with words. Like the 'special portents' the prophet interprets, words are veiled media, from which truth must be extracted.

The Mind, the Hall, and Heaven

This essay will explore the worlds of *Vainglory*: the cultural world from which it was born, and the interior worlds it contains. *Vainglory's* lens is in a state of contraction and expansion as it depicts in varying breadths enclosed spaces that are illustrative of the macrocosm. Here, I shall investigate how the spaces of mind, hall and heaven are integrated to produce a universal statement on the nature and outcome of vainglory: those who exalt themselves shall be humbled, and those who humble themselves shall be exalted. The first section of this essay will focus on lines 13–23b, the depiction of the feast before the devil's child is introduced, to argue that this set-piece is functioning as a figure of a world full of opaque speech; a world in which truth may only be perceived if one's interpretive capacities are fully honed. Next, I attempt to identify a satirical element in the poem, especially around the description of the devil's child at 23b–44a. In these lines the hall transforms into a diabolic amplification of the mind of the devil's child. Central to this is the verb *letan* (10a, 34b, 37b, 40b), which facilitates the psychomachia allegory within the poem illustrative of the psychic chain of knowledge — perception — action discussed in the previous essay, which unifies mind and hall. Finally, I shall discuss how the space of heaven is reflective of both the mind of the devil's child and the hall that that mind perceives, thus bringing together the poem's worlds in macrocosmic fulfilment.

Opinions vary as to whether the depiction of the feast in *Vainglory* is intended to be derogatory. Further, if the speaker intends to denounce the men at the feast, does this amount to a condemnation of feasting and the cultural practices associated with it? For Regan, the feast scene is an example of *ekphrasis*, a didactic tableau favored by patristic writers.⁷¹ Shippey remarks that the tone of the feast scene 'seems intentionally elegiac, even frustrated, rather than wicked', concluding that 'the poet is a trace equivocal in his attitude to the values of heroic society'.⁷² Hagen considers the speaker to suffer from no such 'regretful nostalgia'; the noise of the feast is offensive to him.⁷³ Markwardt and Rosier go as far as to compare the feast scene to Abraham's words on Sodom in lines 2408–18 of *Genesis A*.⁷⁴ A refreshing stance is taken by Magennis, who considers the feast scene to be a legitimately 'lively picture of warriors enjoying themselves'.⁷⁵ For Magennis, the feast is there to represent 'in heightened form the moral dangers which people must be on their guard against in the world'.⁷⁶ The central danger, I propose here, is the inability to perceive truth in word. This accords with Huppé's observation, built into a discussion on the unique form *mæþelhergendra* 'speech-

⁷¹ Regan, 325–26.

⁷² Shippey, p. 9.

⁷³ Ann Hagen, *A Second Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Food and Drink: Production and Distribution* (Hockwold cum Wilton, Norfolk: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1995), p. 239.

⁷⁴ Marckwardt and Rosier, p. 219.

⁷⁵ Magennis, p. 99.

⁷⁶ Magennis, p. 102.

praisers' (13b), that the poem is concerned with 'the real value of speech, which lies not in speech itself but in the perception of the truth in speech'.⁷⁷ The men in the hall, Huppé argues, worship 'speech itself', and are ignorant of its truth.⁷⁸

Mæpelhergendra is sometimes unnecessarily emended to the better attested form *mæpelhegend* 'holding conclave'. *Mæpelhegend* is attested three times: once in *Elene* (279a), to describe a gathering of the wisest people among the Jews, and twice in *Andreas*, first used of the angelic group of seafarers (262b); next of the cannibalistic warrior-council (1096b).⁷⁹ *Mæpelhergendra* may well be designed to recall *mæpelhegend*, so similar are the two forms: where men gather, speeches are praised. I follow Huppé in taking *mæpel-* as an implied direct object of *hergend*: 'those who praise speech'. It can also be taken as implied instrumental: 'those who praise *using* speech'. Markwardt and Rosier interpret this as 'boast-lovers'.⁸⁰ Pickford also suggests that the compound may refer to 'praising assemblies or speeches'; equally, it may denote 'assemblies for self-praising or boasting'.⁸¹ The poem is never so specific elsewhere. Although others have attempted to ascribe particular cultural practices to the speech in the hall, this can never go beyond speculation. Clover, for instance, has identified lines 13–44a as a description of a flyting.⁸² Lines 11–12, in which men, excited by wine, strive to find an *æscstede* ('battlefield' [17a]) in the hall, could refer to an argument, to actual violence, or to the innocuous recounting of past martial exploits.⁸³ The feast scene seems to have been designed not to depict certain cultural practices involving speech, but speech in general. Rather than denoting a specific ceremony, or to denigrate the men it describes, *mæpelhergendra* establishes instead a world in which speech, especially formalized speech, is revered. In such a world, it is essential to split words, and extract truth. *Mæpelhergendra* contains both an ethical and linguistic tension. The two are, in fact, the same thing: the tension between hearing and heeding.

There is no reason to assume that a Christian value-system is entirely absent from the hall. *Soðgied* 'truth-tales' (15b) is only attested here and in *The Seafarer* (1b) to describe the poem itself.⁸⁴ Just as with the *Seafarer*, so may the men in *Vainglory's* hall be reciting tales with both Christian and Germanic-heroic elements. The speech in the hall is the product of a collective social consciousness into which both Christian and Germanic-heroic values are integrated: a society in which heroic songs were sung at monastic feasts.⁸⁵ Amidst the clamor of this society it may be impossible to perceive Christ: the Word within the word. As such, the speech-making at the feast soon descends into a meaningless roar of competing voices: 'breahtem stigeð | cirm on corþre. Cwide scralletaþ, | missenlice' ('the noise mounts, the uproar in the throng. They call out, each with a speech of his own' [19b–21a]). The closest parallel to this occurs in *Guthlac B*, when the saint is assailed by a crowd of fiends: 'hwilum wedende swa wilde deor | cirmdon on corðre' ('at times the raving ones would cry out like wild beasts

⁷⁷ Huppé, p. 12.

⁷⁸ Huppé, p. 12.

⁷⁹ Krapp, *The Vercelli Book: Elene* p. 73; *Andreas* pp. 10, 33.

⁸⁰ Markwardt and Rosier, p. 221.

⁸¹ Pickford, 20.

⁸² Carol J. Clover, 'The Germanic Context of the Unferþ Episode', *Speculum*, 55 (1980), 444–68 (pp. 445–46, 448–49).

⁸³ Shippey, p. 128, n. 3.

⁸⁴ Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 143.

⁸⁵ Stephen Pollington, *The Mead Hall: The Feasting Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England* (Norfolk, England: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2003), p. 115.

in a pack’).⁸⁶ This is not to say that the noise being made at the feast is demonic; rather, it is as unintelligible as the roar of an animal or the ravings of a lunatic, or indeed, the sound of a harp, which the only other attestation of *scralletan* — *The Fortunes of Men* — describes.⁸⁷ The following assertion, that similarly, minds are divided into types (21b–22a) does not refer to the multiplicity of individual opinion present in the hall, but the contestation of voices there. Just as there are two types of men, equally, there are two types of speech, divine and worldly, but it is almost impossible to distinguish them in the hubbub. God’s child and the devil’s are made of flesh, and so too is worldly speech made of the same essential matter as divine speech: words.

The idea of the blurring of worldly and divine speech is touched upon by Pickford when he remarks that, amidst the cacophony of the feast, ‘it is almost as if the poet is demonstrating the need of an interpreter such as the *frod wita* by whom he was taught’.⁸⁸ The feast scene represents the mortal world; like the mortal world, it is a place in which truth may be lost in tale, in which perception must be honed. The devil’s child’s perception is fatally impaired. He is blind to the disdain of others: ‘þenceð þæt his wise welhwam þince l eal unforcuþ’ (‘he thinks that his behavior appears entirely reputable to everyone’ [30–31b]). Further, ‘he þa scylde ne wat l fæhþe gefremede’ (‘he does not know the guilt the enmity he has brought about’ [35b–36a]); the other men in the hall do not *like* the devil’s child. It is not that the devil’s child conforms to hall-culture, but that he *deforms* it. Lines 28b–29 provide the clearest indication of the speaker’s permissive attitude to hall-culture. This is the only instance in the poem in which the devil’s child and his opposite are said to perform the same action: here, the devil’s child ‘boð his sylfes l swiþor micle þonne se sella mon’ (‘talks himself up far more than the better one does’). ‘Swiþor micle’ suggests that ‘se sella mon’ does participate in boasting, but to a reasonable and permissible degree. This and the very fact that such a man is present in the hall at all indicate that feasting, and the common cultural practices associated with it, are not necessarily iniquitous to the speaker. The article preceding *sella* implies that this man is someone different from whom it is later said that the devil’s child hates, not ‘the’, but rather, ‘his’ better: ‘feoþ his betran’ (36b), which may be a reference to the lord of the hall functioning as a figure for God. This parallels the rebellious angels’ rejection of God, ‘their’ better: ‘forsawan hyra sellan’ (61a). Just as the angels attempt to subvert the macrocosmic order, so does the devil’s child overturn social order in the hall.

Conner has suggested that *Vainglory* is a satire recalling Carolingian models, the influence of which can especially be felt in the description of the devil’s child at 23b–44a.⁸⁹ Roberts dismisses this, partly due to the unsuccessful parallel Conner draws between the poem and Theodulf of Orléans’ portrait of Cadac-Andréas.⁹⁰ I do not wish to discount Conner’s argument altogether. Just because the parallel with Theodulf proves unworkable does not mean that *Vainglory* cannot possess a satirical element, although I can find no evidence to suggest that it is directly influenced by Carolingian satirical models. The poem, broadly speaking, conforms to both the Mediterranean-Christian and Anglo-Saxon notions of humor. These are not at odds. According to Shanzer, ‘Christian laughter’ in the early Latin West

⁸⁶ Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 75 (lines 907–8a).

⁸⁷ Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 156 (line 83b).

⁸⁸ Pickford, p. 6.

⁸⁹ Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, pp. 156–57.

⁹⁰ Roberts, 136; Cf. *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, ed. and trans. by Peter Godman (London: Duckworth, 1985), pp. 160–63, lines 209–34.

‘inverted the fate of derisor and derisee’.⁹¹ Shanzer gives the only two examples of *ridere* ‘to laugh’ in the New Testament (Luke 6.21, 25) as evidence for this.⁹² Both refer to the same variation on the paradoxical truth, that those who hunger shall be filled, and that those who weep shall laugh. This is strikingly similar, not only to the prophet’s *gyd*, but to Shippey’s definition of Anglo-Saxon humor: ‘often, indeed usually, *the laugh is on those who laugh*.’⁹³ In her analysis of medieval parody, Bayless defines satire ‘simply as any form of literature, in verse or prose, which ridicules vice or folly’.⁹⁴ *Vainglory* affords its audience a satirical laugh at the pride and folly of a man who is not aware of consequence, that ‘biþ þæs oþer swice’ (‘there will be another outcome of this’ [31b]). The audience knows what this end will be, and is invited to deride the devil’s child, confident that his pride will come before a fall.

Shippey claims that ‘a characteristic part of Anglo-Saxon humor is grim amusement from the wise at the expense of those who cannot understand words and do not share their vision of reality’.⁹⁵ Further, in Anglo-Saxon humor, ‘the joke turns on recognizing the enormous differences of meaning between barely perceptible or imperceptible differences of sound’.⁹⁶ *Laetan* is a brilliant illustration of this. The occurrence of the verb at 10a has perplexed editors. Lines 9–12 appear to say that anyone who lets drunkenness and lusts of the mind mar him in his thoughts can easily understand the *gealdor*. Usually, editors resolve this problem by placing a negative particle before *leteð* (10a). Huppé argues that emendation is not necessary, since conflated in *laetan* are two verbs with the separate meanings of ‘allow’ and ‘prevent’.⁹⁷ A closer examination of how *laetan* is working in the poem will prove him right. The deliberately obscure choice of verb at 10a is challenging the reader to tread carefully, to contest what he sees as immediately obvious and, instead, to look deeper. Men may easily understand the significance of the *gealdor* if they *prevent* inebriation and ‘modes gælsan’ (‘lusts of the mind’ [11b]) from impairing their faculties, when there are many ‘speech-praisers’ in the hall (9–14): men who, potentially, may take speech only at face-value. The devil’s child *leteð* forth a mind-dart (34b), *leteð* missiles penetrate God’s fortress (37b–39), and *leteð* out words, inebriated (40b–41). The alternative meaning contained within the verb here casts his actions into stark relief: it implies that God’s child withholds mind-darts, prevents missiles from penetrating God’s fortress and does not speak too loosely or drink too much. In this sense, God’s child and devil’s child, who, on the surface, look and sound the same, are both present within *laetan*.

According to Shippey, in Anglo-Saxon humor, ‘part of the joke is always on the fool who sees only the obvious meaning’,⁹⁸ in which case, the joke is certainly on the devil’s child, who has, figuratively, apprehended the verb of 10b and used it in exactly the opposite sense to how it is intended there. The joke here may also be on the reader, who takes this verb at face value. *Laetan* is a natural progression of *scyldum bescyredne* (8a): here the humble man’s opposite,

⁹¹ Donna Shanzer, ‘Laughter and Humour in the Early Medieval Latin West’, in *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Guy Halsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 25–47 (p. 47).

⁹² Shanzer, p. 29.

⁹³ Thomas A. Shippey, ‘“Grim Wordplay”: Folly and Wisdom in Anglo-Saxon Humor’, in *Humour in Anglo Saxon Literature*, ed. by Jonathan Wilcox (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), pp. 33–48 (p. 37).

⁹⁴ Martha Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition*, *Recentiores: Later Latin Texts and Contexts* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), p. 3.

⁹⁵ Shippey, ‘Grim Wordplay’, p. 48.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁹⁷ Huppé, p. 11. Cf. Stephen A. Barney, *Word-hoard: An Introduction to Old English Vocabulary*, with the assistance of Wertheimer and Stevens, 2ndedn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 46.

⁹⁸ Shippey, ‘Grim Wordplay’, p. 44.

'pone wacran' ('the weaker one' 7b) — is made deprived because of his sins; encoded in the phrase is the secondary meaning of 'deprived of shields'.⁹⁹ My translation, 'dispossessed', attempts to preserve this. The devil's child is first a sinner; this makes him spiritually 'deprived'; this, in turn, loses him the protection afforded by the ability to perceive divine truth. He might interpret 8a — another possibly deliberate linguistic pitfall — as has Mackie, to mean 'deprived of his sins', or, even more troublingly, as has Rodrigues, to mean 'shriven of his sins'.¹⁰⁰ One thing that can be stated with certainty is that *laetan* is central to the poem's connective tissue: here is the prophet's wisdom, the satirical element and, further, the psychomachia allegory, which Doubleday has identified as constituting 'a major part' of *Vainglory*.¹⁰¹ A patristic trope, psychomachia allegory depicts the soul as a fortress commended to man by God, besieged by the devil.

Mize makes the important point that the allegory in this instance does not so much entail the battle for man's soul as for his mind; *aefponca* (26a), for instance, is formed on the root *þanc*, denoting thought.¹⁰² Mize takes the *wigsteal* 'rampart' (39a), besieged by *inwitflan* 'missiles of deceit' (37b), to refer to the mind of the devil's child.¹⁰³ I shall argue here that just as mind is as fortress in the poem, so too is fortress as mind. McLuhan, in his *Understanding Media*, claims that 'tribal man' sees his house as 'a ritual extension of his body'.¹⁰⁴ A similar idea is expressed, specifically relating to Anglo-Saxon feudal identity, by Tom Saunders: quoting Marx, Saunders asserts that 'under feudalism landed property "appears as the inorganic body of its lord"'.¹⁰⁵ Hermann also considers Anglo-Saxon fortresses to be 'material equivalents of the barricaded self'.¹⁰⁶ *Vainglory* is reflective of this sort of cultural idea. The allegory begins, as Huppé has pointed out, at *æscstede*, which foreshadows, with *æsc* 'spear', the projectile imagery that is to come.¹⁰⁷ I follow Muir in my translation of lines 16b–18a in taking *inne* (17b) as 'within (=in their hearts/minds)'.¹⁰⁸ Free-flowing speech and free-flowing wine leave the men in the hall potentially exposed to the devil's missiles which will debilitate their perception, causing the hall to replicate the battlefield occurring in their minds. As such, when the devil's child is pointed out, the hall mutates into an extension of that man's mind. The *burg* element of the compound, *winburgum* (14b), denotes a fortified town, and perhaps the hapax legomenon *burgweal* (38a) has been created to refer back to this, implying that what is being taken over is not just the mind of the devil's child, but his environment.

⁹⁹ Huppé, p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ Mackie, p. 11; Rodrigues, p. 83.

¹⁰¹ James F. Doubleday, 'The Allegory of the Soul as Fortress in Old English Poetry', in *Anglia*, 88 (1970), 503–8 (p. 509).

¹⁰² Mize, p. 81, n. 69.

¹⁰³ Mize, p. 81.

¹⁰⁴ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, ed. by Gordon (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2003), p. 170.

¹⁰⁵ Tom Saunders, 'Class, Space and "Feudal" Identities in Early Medieval England', in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. by Frazer and Tyrrell, Studies in the Early History of Britain (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 209–32 (p. 215); Karl Marx, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', in *Marx: Early Writings*, trans. by Livingstone and Benton (London: New Left Review, 1975), p. 318.

¹⁰⁶ John P. Hermann, *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), p. 45.

¹⁰⁷ Huppé, p. 14.

¹⁰⁸ Muir, p. 539.

This is why, when he is assailed with projectiles, ‘one cannot tell, so to speak, whether the deadly shafts are coming in or going out’.¹⁰⁹ The devil’s child treacherously allows ‘feondes fligepilum’ (the devil’s flying arrows [27a]) into his mind. His ability to form thoughts and perceive reality is thus fatally impaired, causing him to obliviously commit offences, denoted by *hinderhoca*. The fortress that is an extension of the mind — the hall — then falls, through the *hygegar* ‘mind-dart’ (34b). The *inwitflan* assailing the fortress/mind is the culmination of this process: the man’s mind and his vision of the world are simultaneously compromised. In this way, the projectile imagery reproduces the psychic chain of knowledge — perception — action. This is not only realized in terms of battle, but those of hospitality. Regan notes the similarity between 6b–7a — ‘godes agen bearn, I wilgest on wicum’ (‘God’s own child, a welcome guest in the places men reside’) — and 79b–81a: ‘þam bið simle I gæst gegæderad godes agen bearn I wilsum in worlde’ (‘that one is always accompanied by a spirit: God’s own son, delightful in the world’). Regan asserts that ‘godes agen bearn’ is first ‘the virtuous man’, then Christ, for ‘the individual’, in the tradition of the Church Fathers, ‘is identified with the one whom he imitates.’¹¹⁰ If mind is seen as home, and home as mind, then this reading can be taken further. Lines 6b–7a may mean that the speaker is able to identify a virtuous man within dwellings; they can also be taken as an ability to discern Christ within a man’s mind or Christ within dwellings. At 79b–81a, all of these meanings are extricated. Christ, if he is present in the mind, shall be present *everywhere* on earth.

In opposition to this, the mind of the devil’s child, the hall he inhabits, the space of heaven parallel to this, and the universe itself can be seen as ‘anti-halls’. The term ‘anti-hall’, coined by Kathryn Hume, describes ‘a symbolic correlative for various states of misery’. Anti-halls subvert the imagery of a ‘real hall’, which is a place of protection, fellowship and joy.¹¹¹ Within *Vainglory*, hall becomes anti-hall and world becomes dystopia, as amplifications of a diabolically infiltrated mind. The protection that all these spaces afford is removed and they are rendered ‘scyldum bescyredne’: worthless, hollow and uninhabitable. Significantly, Hume goes on to claim that, in Christian texts, ‘we find the true hall as a figuration of heaven, the anti-hall for hell’. Although hell is not depicted as an anti-hall in the poem, a polluted heaven conforms to the model. The depiction of heaven in the poem is, further, a recollection of *fyrngeflit*, ‘the old strife’, traditionally employed in Anglo-Saxon poetry to identify ‘present spiritual conflict within a panoramic time span.’ The broken hall, then, becomes macrocosmic. *Fyrngeflit* serves to stimulate a ‘Christian warrior’s memory of past victories’, affirms ‘psychic and societal structure’, and discourages ‘destructive self-assertion’.¹¹² The description of the rebellion in heaven amplifies that of the hall: just as the devil’s child there, rejecting Christ, exalting himself and hating his better, uses that enclosure for his own ends, so do the rebellious angels wish to treacherously occupy heaven and overthrow their superior, God, ‘on hyra sylfra dom’ (‘in accordance with their own judgement’ [64b]). Line 64b also occurs in *The Battle of Maldon*, referring to Danish seamen who demand an amount of gold of their own choosing.¹¹³ *Dom* can also describe the judgment of God at the apocalypse, as in *Elene*: ‘ðonne dryhten sylf dom geseceð’ (‘when God Himself passes judgement’).¹¹⁴ My translation attempts to preserve

¹⁰⁹ Shippey, *Poems of Wisdom and Learning*, p. 8.

¹¹⁰ Regan, p. 335.

¹¹¹ Kathryn Hume, ‘The “Ruin-Motif” in Old English Poetry’, *Anglia*, 94 (1976), 339–60 (p. 359).

¹¹² Hermann, pp. 39–40.

¹¹³ Dobbie, *The Anglo Saxon Minor Poems*, p. 8 (line 38b).

¹¹⁴ Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, p. 101 (line 1280).

the dual meanings within *dom* of 'decision' and 'sentence'. The rebellious angels choose to act without God's jurisdiction; in so doing, it is inevitable that they *will* be judged. *Swice* (31b, 61b) means 'outcome' in its first instance and 'treachery' in its second: through the parallelism of the perverted hall and the perverted Kingdom, the outcome of treachery is exposed.

This is a social conflict: one who exalts himself is one who places himself above his station. The devil's child is set upon this earth and placed in the hall. He fails, however, to abide by the 'terms and conditions' required by both his community and by his Maker. Dynamic and assertive, the devil's child, like the rebellious angels, attempts to disrupt the order of things, as opposed to the man who lives in peace with folk (67–72a), and passively turns the other cheek when he is wronged, deferring to the authority of Matthew 18.21–22. The speaker sees no difference between the social order of the hall and the macrocosmic order of the Christian universe. This is where the satirical element comes into play. A destructive agent in society is 'named and shamed' in accordance with both the Christian and Germanic-heroic idea of humor. The psychomachia allegory works in conjunction with the satirical element, identifying the devil's child as the archetypal Anglo-Saxon and Mediterranean-Christian butt of a joke: a man who cannot perceive the truth, and will be humbled for his folly.

Conclusion

The devil's child is not just a proud man, but a vainglorious one, for his pride is futile. The *gyd*'s apocalyptic resonances denote a process without time, 'which can be said to have already been fulfilled as the consequences of the war in heaven show'.¹¹⁵ He who exalts himself has, then, *already* been humbled. This is an inherently paradoxical concept, one that would not appear to make sense in the mortal world of linear time. The crucial message of *Vainglory* is that truth is not self-evident: things are not as they seem. The poem practises what it preaches: its ellipsis puts an audience through its paces to demonstrate that words and bodies are ultimately signifiers. By holding the identity of the prophet in abeyance, the speaker strands his audience in an interpretive quagmire, and invites them to negotiate their way out using the skills that John the Baptist was born with. *Vainglory* might not appear particularly constructive; as Shippey remarks, it is difficult to ascertain from the poem 'any positive, useful idea of what we are supposed to *do*.'¹¹⁶ In fact, this is answered in the poem's final admonition to always keep God, our unsurpassable better, or 'þone selestan' in mind (82–84). In so doing, we will be afforded the ability to perceive the divine among the worldly, truth within word and Christ within man. To keep God in mind is to see his imprint on the world, and thus to see through the physical into the metaphysical. The devil's child, 'gode orfeormne' (bereft of God [49b]), cannot understand that the world is really a collection of shadows on a wall, cast by a macrocosmic reality.

¹¹⁵ Pickford, p. 26.

¹¹⁶ Shippey, p. 9.

Vainglory: edition

Hwæt! me frod wita on fyrndagum
 sægde, snottor ar, sundorwundra fela.
 Wordhord onwreah¹¹⁷ witgan larum
 beorn boca gleaw, bodan ærcwide,
 5 þæt ic soðlice siþþan meahte
 ongitan bi þam gealdre godes agen bearn,
 wilgest on wicum, ond þone wacran¹¹⁸ swa some,
 scyldum bescyredne, on gescead witan.¹¹⁹
 Þæt mæg æghwylc mon eaþe geþencan,
 10 se þe hine læteð on þas lænan tid
 amyrran his gemyndum modes gælsan¹²⁰
 ond on his dægrime druncen¹²¹ to rice,¹²²
 þonne monige beoð mæpelhergendra,
 wlonce wigsmiþas¹²³ winburgum in.
 15 Sittap æt symble, soðgied wrecað,¹²⁴
 wordum wrixlað. Witan fundiaþ
 hwylc æscstede inne in ræcede
 mid werum wunige, þonne win hweteð
 beornes breostsefan. Breahtem stigeð,
 20 cirm on corþre. Cwide scralletap
 missenlice. Swa beoþ modsefan
 dalum gedæled,¹²⁵ sindon dryhtguman
 ungelice. Sum on oferhygdo
 þrymme þringeð,¹²⁶ þrinteð him in innan
 25 ungedemad mod: sindan to monige þæt.
 Bið þæt æfþonca eal gefylled
 feondes fligepilum, facensearwum.
 Breodað he ond bælcæð; boð his sylfes
 swiþor micle þonne se sella mon.
 30 Þenceð þæt his wise welhwam þince
 eal unforcup. Biþ þæs oþer swice,
 þonne he þæs facnes fintan sceawað.

¹¹⁷ onwreah] MS *onwearh*.

¹¹⁸ wacran] Guntner, 'An Edition of Three Old English Poems', p. 74, posits that this may be for *wacoran* 'the watchful one', an epithet for Satan. Muir, *The Exeter Anthology*, p. 538, suggests that 'both meanings [of 'weaker' and 'watchful'] may have been intended simultaneously': unfortunately, a translation cannot reproduce this.

¹¹⁹ witan] MS *witon*.

¹²⁰ modes gælsan] This verse also occurs in *Juliana*, 366b.

¹²¹ druncen] MS *drucen*.

¹²² se þe hine læteð...druncen to rice] Following Huppé's formula (p. 11), albeit with some reshuffling for idiomatic purposes: prevents {lusts of the mind + too great a drunkenness} impairing-him. The verb *amyrran* takes the accusative, and thus governs *hine*.

¹²³ wlonce wigsmiþas] This verse also occurs in *The Battle of Brunanburh*, 72a.

¹²⁴ soðgied wrecað] This verse also occurs in *The Seafarer*, 1b.

¹²⁵ dalum gedæled] This verse also occurs in *Guthlac A*, 54a.

¹²⁶ þringeð] MS *þringe*.

Vainglory: translation

Listen! A wise and ancient witness, a clear-sighted emissary,
told me of many special portents in former days.
With the lore of a prophet, this religious teacher
unlocked his word-hoard, the long-ago foretelling of the herald,
so from then on I was truly able to perceive,
by that divine utterance, God's own child,
a welcome guest in the places people reside, and similarly distinguish
the weaker one, dispossessed by his sins.

Anyone might easily reflect on this,
who does not let lusts of the mind
in this frail existence, and too great a drunkenness
in his span of days, impair him in his thoughts,
when there are many speech-praisers:
proud war-makers within the winehalls.
They sit at feast, tell truth-tales,
bandy words. They desire to know
what battlefield might inwardly exist
among men in the hall, when wine whets
a man's heart. The noise mounts,
the uproar in the throng. They call out,
each with a speech of his own. So are minds
divided into types, for men are different.

One sort, in pride,
pushes himself forward forcefully; an unhumbled mind
swells within him: there are too many of that sort.
That sort is entirely filled
with the Fiend's flying shafts of malice, with treacherous wiles.
He bellows and shouts; talks himself up
far more than the better one does.
He thinks that his behaviour appears entirely reputable
to everyone. There will be another outcome of that,
when he beholds the consequence of such treacherous behaviour.

Wrenceþ he ond blenceþ, worn geþenceþ
 hinderhoca, hygegar leteð,
 35 scurum sceoteþ. He þa scylde ne wat
 fæhþe gefremede. Feoþ his betran:¹²⁷
 eorl fore æfstum læteð inwitfla
 brecaþ þone burgweal, þe him bebead meotud
 þæt he þæt wigsteal wergan sceolde.¹²⁸
 40 Siteþ symbelwlonc, searwum læteð
 wine gewæged word ut faran;
 þræfte þringan þrymme gebyrmed,
 æfæstum onæled, oferhygda ful,
 niþum nearowrencum.¹²⁹ Nu þu cunnan meaht,
 45 gif þu þyslicne þegn gemittest
 wunian in wicum. Wite þe be þissum
 feawum forðspellum þæt þæt biþ feondes bearn
 flæsce bifongen, hafað fræte lif,
 grundfusne gæst gode orfeormne,¹³⁰
 50 wuldorcyninge. Þæt se witga song,
 gearowrydig guma, ond þæt gyd awræc:
 ‘Se þe¹³¹ hine sylfne in þa sliþnan tid
 þurh oferhygda up ahlæneð,
 ahefeð heahmodne, se sceal hean wesan
 55 æfter neosiþum niþer gebiged,
 wunian witum fæst, wyrnum beþrunge.’
 Þæt wæs geara iu in godes rice
 þætte mid englum oferhygd astag:
 widmære gewin. Wroht ahofan,
 60 heardne heresiþ; heofon widledan;¹³²
 forsawan hyra sellan, þa hi to swice þohton
 ond þrymcyning þeodenstoles
 ricne beryfan, swa hit ryht ne wæs,
 ond þonne gesettan on hyra sylfra dom¹³³

¹²⁷ feoþ] MS *feoh*. Pickford has put forward a valiant argument for not emending this (pp. 15, 24). I have chosen to emend, following Mackie (p. 12), as a verb here causes the half-line to neatly parallel ‘forsawon hyra sellan’ (61a). Since there are many other parallels between the rebellion in heaven and the behavior of the devil’s child in the hall, it seems safe to assume that one is intended here.

¹²⁸ sceolde] MS *scealde*.

¹²⁹ nearowrencum] Uniquely attested, but the form *nearobregd* exists, defined by Bosworth and Toller (p. 712) as ‘a wile or trick that brings others into straits’. Cf. *Juliana* (302-304a) in which a fiend in the devil’s service explains that he used *nearobregdam* to delude Nero into executing the disciples, Peter and Paul.

¹³⁰ gode orfeormne] Shippey (p. 57) translates, ‘worthless to God’, Huppé (p. 5), ‘without sustenance of God’. The sense, however, seems more to be that God is entirely absent in the spirit of the devil’s child: I have thus followed the earlier interpretations of Thorpe (p. 316), who reads ‘of God devoid’, and Mackie (p. 13), who has ‘destitute of God’.

¹³¹ Se þe] MS *seþe*.

¹³² widledan] MS *wid lædan*.

¹³³ on hyra sylfra dom] This verse also occurs in *The Battle of Maldon*, 38b.

Rosemary Proctor

He plots and deceives, nurtures a great many
sinister hooks, lets fly a mind-dart,
hurls these in tempests. He does not know the guilt,
the enmity he has brought about. He hates his better;
the man, out of spite, lets missiles of deceit
shatter that city-wall which God commended to him
in order that he should defend that rampart.
He sits, ebullient with feasting; overcome with wine,
he artfully lets words go forth,
push pugnaciously, engorged with violence,
afire with spite, evils, treacherous tricks; full of pride.

Now you can recognise him,
if you meet such a man
dwelling in the places people reside. Know by these
few words of instruction that that one is the devil's child,
enclosed in flesh, and that he has a shameful life,
a spirit rushing to hell and bereft of God, the King of Glory.

About that sort, the prophet, a man ready with words,
composed a verse, and uttered that prediction:
'He who elevates himself through pride
in that terrible hour,
exalts himself, jubilant, shall be made lowly
after the ultimate journey, and, brought down,
shall live trapped in torments, encircled with serpents.'

It was long ago that, in the Kingdom of God,
pride arose among the angels:
a notorious struggle. They stirred up strife,
a violent campaign; they made heaven impure;
they scorned their better when they planned treachery,
and to rob the mighty and glorious King
of his throne, as was not right,
and then to establish, in accordance with their own judgement,

Rosemary Proctor

65 wuldres wynlond. Pæt him wige forstod
 fæder frumsceafta; wearð him seo feohte to grim.
 Ðonne bið þam oþrum ungelice,¹³⁴
 se þe her on eorþan eaðmod leofað,
 ond wiþ gesibbra gehwone simle healdeð
 70 freode on folce ond his freond lufað,
 þeah þe he him abylgnesse oft gefremede
 willum in þisse worulde.¹³⁵ Se mot wuldres dream
 in haligra hyht heonan astigan
 on engla eard.¹³⁶ Ne biþ þam oþrum swa,
 75 se þe on ofermedum eargum dædum
 leofaþ in leahtrum. Ne beoð þa lean gelic
 mid wuldorcýning. Wite þe be þissum,
 gif þu eaðmodne eorl gemete,
 þegn on þeode, þam bið simle
 80 gæst gegæderad: godes agen bearn
 wilsum in worlde, gif me se witega ne leag.
 Forþon we sculon a hycgende hælo rædes
 gemunan in mode mæla gehwylcum
 þone selestan sigora waldend. AMEN.

¹³⁴ Ðonne bið þam oþrum ungelice] This line also occurs in *Christ III*, 1262: there, however, it refers to the damned, separated from the virtuous at Judgment Day.

¹³⁵ ond his freond lufað ... willum in þisse worulde] Cf. Matt. 18: 21-22, 35.

¹³⁶ Se mot wuldres dream ... on engla eard] Editors sometimes add a preposition before *wuldres dream*, as prepositions precede *haligra hyht* and *engla eard*. The addition of an 'in' before *wuldres dream* is not necessary, as Pickford (p. 28) has pointed out, since *astigan* can take a direct object, in its meanings of 'board' and 'climb', for instance. Yet, the fact that there are prepositions for what, according to this logic, should be other direct objects, indicates that there is a sense of progression here. 73a and 74b have, therefore, been taken as adverbial phrases: by climbing the ecstasy of glory, the humble man may enter what the holy hope for – perhaps a reference to the separation of the virtuous from the sinful at Judgment Day – and then attain the Kingdom. 'To reach', in the translation, is an addition for fluency's sake. Cf. *Guthlac A*: the people worthy of going to heaven are 'oferwinnað þa awyrðdan gæstas, bigytað him wuldres ræste./ hwider sceal þæs monnes mod astigan' (those who triumph over cursed visitations, and attain for themselves a splendid repose, to where the mind of man must climb [25-26]).

Rosemary Proctor

a splendid land of delight. The Father of Creation
denied them that with war. The fight turned out too dire for them.

But it will be different for the other one,
who lives humble-minded here on earth
and, among folk, always keeps at peace
with every member of his kindred, and who loves his friend,
though his friend may often wilfully have done wrong
by him in this world. This one is able, from here,
to climb the ecstasy of glory, into the hope of the holy,
to reach the land of the angels.

It is not so for the other one who lives in the midst of arrogant, craven deeds,
in the midst of sins. Those rewards will not be alike
with the King of Glory. Know by these things,
if you meet a humble-minded man,
a man among the people, that one is always
accompanied by a spirit: God's own child,
desirable in the world — if the prophet did not lie to me.
So, we must always, resolving upon what is
needful for salvation, at all times keep
that greatest Lord of Victories in mind. AMEN.