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Notes

STAFFORDSHIRE HOARD ITEM NUMBER 550, A WARD AGAINST EVIL

ITEM number 550 of the Anglo-Saxon Staffordshire Hoard is, according to Kevin Leahy, a 'strip of gold with an inscription on both faces';[1] the inscription reads: 'surge d[omi]ne [et] disepentur inimici tui et fugent qui oderunt te a facie tua' ('Arise, O Lord, and let thy enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee, flee from before thy face'),[2] which derives from Numbers 10:35 in the Vulgate.[3] Only two inscribed items from Anglo-Saxon England are comparable for both their portability and inscriptions of biblical material: a wooden cross and a gold ring, both echoing the *agnus Dei* ('Lamb of God') of John 1:29.[4] In her preliminary analysis of the item, Elisabeth Okasha notes a parallel passage in Psalm 67:2, and suggests that 'although it is possible that the composer of the exemplum had the text from Numbers in mind, it is more likely that the version from the Psalms would be better known to him/her as the Psalms were chanted daily throughout the year in the monastic liturgy.'[5] The two verses may be compared as follows, including the *Romanum*, *Gallicanum*, and *Hebraicum* versions of the psalm:[6]

> Numbers 10:35: 'surge Domine et dissipentur inimici tui et fugiant qui oderunt te a facie tua' ('Arise, O Lord, and let thy enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee, flee from before thy face');
>
> Psalm 67:2 (*Romanum*):[7] 'exsurgat Deus et dissipentur inimici eius et fugiant a facie eius qui oderunt eum' ('Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: and let them flee from before his face that hate him');
>
> Psalm 67:2 (*Gallicanum* and *Hebraicum*): 'exsurgat Deus et dissipentur inimici eius et fugiant qui oderunt eum a facie eius' ('Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: and let them that hate him flee from before his face').

In addition to these versions of the passage, Old Latin variants reveal only slight departures, such as *dispergantur* in place of *dissipentur* and rendering the second half of the verse as 'et fugiant odientes eum, a facie ejus' ('and let them that hate him flee, from before his face').[8] The principle difference between the parallel passages is the use of the imperative verb in the reading from Numbers, but Latin translations of works by Greek authors represent alternatives to the Hieronymian versions. For example, the Latin translation of *Liturgica S. Basilii ex Coptico conversa* reads, 'exsurge, Domine Deus, et dissipentur inimici tui, et fugiant a facie tua omnes qui oderunt nomen tuum sanctum' ('Arise, O Lord God, and let thy enemies be scattered, and let flee from before thy face all who hate thy holy name');[9]

[1] 'Appendix 2: Hand List of Staffordshire Hoard', 2009, *The Staffordshire Hoard*, *http://www.staffordshirehoard.org.uk/*, accessed March 2010, pp. 3–104, at 71.

[2] 'The Staffordshire Hoard: Discovery and Initial Assessment', 2009, *Staffordshire Hoard*, p. 4; cf. Leahy, 'Hand List', p. 71.

[3] Unless otherwise noted, biblical references are to R. Weber (ed.), *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, 4th edn (Stuttgart, 2005); translations are from *The Holy Bible: Douay Version Translated from the Latin Vulgate* (London, 1956); psalm numbers follow the LXX and Vulgate in Weber, *Biblia sacra*.

[4] E. Okasha, *Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions* (Cambridge, 1971), nos. 17 and 33; see also *idem*, 'A Supplement to *Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions*', *ASE*, xi (1983), 83–118; *idem*, 'A Second Supplement to *Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions*', *ASE*, xxi (1992), 37–85; and *idem*, 'A Third Supplement to *Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions*', *ASE*, xxxiii (2004), 225–81. Only 11 extant items possess legible inscriptions with references to biblical material: nos. 17, 32, 33, 48, 89, 105, 107, 115, 167, 173 and 200.

[5] 'Appendix: Report on Inscription', 2009, *Staffordshire Hoard*, pp. 8–10, at 9.

[6] Translations of variants are modified from the *Douay Version* in order to signal differences.

[7] See R. Weber (ed.), *Le Psautier romain et les autres anciens psautiers latins*, Collectanea Biblica Latina 10 (Rome, 1953), p. 148.

[8] P. Sabatier (ed.), *Bibliorum sacrorum Latinae versiones antiquae, seu Vetus Italica*, 3 vols. (Rheims, 1743; repr. Turnhout, 1976), II, 130.

[9] PG 31.1660.

and Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Expositiones in Psalmos* reads, 'exsurge, Domine, et dissipentur inimici tui, et fugiant omnes qui oderunt te' ('Arise, O Lord, and let thy enemies be scattered, and let all that hate thee flee'), although the reading 'et fugiant a facie eius qui oderum eum' ('and let them flee before his face that hate him') also appears in his exposition.[10] Pseudo-Augustine materials also offer similar variants: in the *Liber de divinis scripturis*, 'exsurge, domine, et dispargantur inimici tui, et fugiant omnes qui oderunt te' ('Arise, O Lord, and let thy enemies be scattered, and let all that hate thee flee');[11] and in the *Soliloquia animae ad Deum*, 'exsurge, Domine Deus meus, fortis meus; et dissipentur inimici tui, et fugiant qui oderunt te a facie tua' ('Arise, my Lord God, my strong one; and let thy enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee, flee from before thy face').[12] These few examples illustrate the convergence in the Latin West of the two parallel verses from Numbers and Psalms.

In Anglo-Saxon England, we find a social context for the gold strip and its inscription in two saints' *vitae*. Throughout Athanasius's *Vita S. Antonii* (composed *c.* 357, translated into Latin by Evagrius *c.* 370),[13] Anthony uses psalms to repel demons, including one specific occasion in chapter 12 in which he uses Psalm 67:2: 'ille psallebat intrinsecus: Exsurgat Deus, et dissipentur inimici ejus, et fugiant qui oderunt eum a facie ejus' ('[he] chanted that psalm inwardly: Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered, and let them that hate him flee from before his face').[14] This *Vita*, in turn, influenced Felix's *Vita S. Guthlaci* (composed *c.* 730–49),[15] which relates that Guthlac 'velut prophetico ore sexagesimi septimi psalmi primum versum psallebat: *Exsurgat Deus*, et reliqua; quo audito, dicto velocius eodem momento omnes daemoniorum turmae velut fumus a facie eius evanuerunt' ('sang the first verse of the sixty-seventh psalm as if prophetically, "Let God arise", etc.: when they had heard this, at the same moment, quicker than words, all the hosts of demons vanished like smoke from his presence').[16] The Old English prose *Vita S. Guthlaci*, closely based on the Latin, is in fact the only Old English text that quotes the biblical passage from Numbers 10:35/Psalm 67:2:[17] Guthlac 'þone sealm sang: "*Exurgat deus et dissipentur, et reliqua*." Sona swa he þæt fyrmeste fers sang þæs sealmes, þa gewiton hi swa swa smic fram his ansyne' ('sang the psalm: "*Let God arise, and let them be scattered, and the rest*." As soon as he sang the first verse of the psalm, then they went like smoke from his sight').[18]

These hagiographic texts, then, present the psalm as a charm for warding off evil and achieving victory over the saints' enemies, in contrast to traditional patristic and Hiberno-Latin exegeses on this psalm verse, which provide typological interpretations—although

[10] L. De Coninck (ed.), *Theodori Mopsuesteni Expositionis in Psalmos, Iuliano Aeclanensi interprete in Latinum versae quae supersunt*, CCSL 88A (Turnhout, 1977), p. 245, lines 11–12 and 17. Thanks to Frederick M. Biggs for pointing out this variant.

[11] F. Weihrich (ed.), *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi liber qui appellatur speculum et liber de divinis scripturis sive speculum quod fertur s. Augustini*, CSEL 12 (Vienna, 1887), p. 456.

[12] PL 40.873; see J. J. Machielsen, *Clavis Patristica Pseudepigraphorum Medii Aevi*, 5 vols. (Turnhout, 1990–2004), IIB, 3071.

[13] PL 73.125–70. See E. G. Whatley, 'Antonius', *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture Volume 1: Abbo of Fleury, Abbo of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, and Acta Sanctorum*, ed. F. M. Biggs, T. D. Hill, P. E. Szarmach, and E. G. Whatley (Kalamazoo, 2001), pp. 84–7.

[14] PL 73.134; my translation. Thanks to Jane Roberts for first pointing out this use of psalms by Anthony, especially as an influence on Felix's *Vita S. Guthlaci* (personal correspondence, 25 October 2009).

[15] B. Colgrave (ed.), *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac* (Cambridge, 1956). See Whatley, 'Antonius', esp. 85; and 'Guthlacus', *Sources*, pp. 244–7.

[16] Colgrave, p. 110; trans. p. 111; see the notes, pp. 110 and 185–6.

[17] See entries for 'BS' in *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, *http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk*, accessed March 2010; and J. Roberts, 'The Sources of *Life of St Guthlac* (prose) (C.B.3.3.10)', 2002, *Fontes*, in which the source is given as from Numbers.

[18] P. Gonser (ed.), *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben des hl. Guthlac*, Anglistische Forschungen 27 (Heidelberg, 1909), pp. 136–7, lines 18–20; my translation.

they do so not in terms of spiritual warfare but by way of Christological readings and emphasizing the psalm's relevance for the Church and persecution.[19] The Old Testament verses refer specifically to the need of the Israelites and psalmist for protection in warfare, and although the enemies are demons in the two *vitae*, they characterize both spiritual and physical threats to the saints. This convergence between human military and demonic spiritual enemies is especially prominent in the *Vita S. Guthlaci*, in which Guthlac's youthful battles against the Mercians prefigure his later battles against demons. Likewise, although the exact nature of the gold strip is unclear, the cultural associations of the biblical passage point to a warrior's need for a protective charm. As Lea Olsan has observed, 'an incantation written on an amulet manifests the appropriation of the technology of writing for the purposes of a traditionally oral activity. Unlike epic poetry, riddles, or lyrics, charms are performed toward specific practical ends and their mode of operation is performative, so that uttering the incantation accomplishes a purpose.'[20] The biblical inscription takes on this task, transforming the oral prayer of Numbers 10:35/Psalm 67:2 into a written ward against evil. Furthermore, this psalm as a protective utterance in hagiographic materials may explain why the charm-like inscription relies on Numbers more closely than the psalm, as the former renders the verse into an imperative, that is, a cry to God in a time of need.

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[19] For examples of patristic exegesis, see D. E. Dekkers and J. Fraipont (eds), *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Enarrationes in Psalmos LI-C*, CCSL 39 (Turnhout, 1956), p. 870; D. G. Morin (ed.), *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri opera, pars II: Opera Homiletica*, CCSL 78 (Turnhout, 1958), p. 40; M. Adriaen (ed.), *Magni Aurelii Cassiodori Expositio Psalmorum I–LXX*, CCSL 97 (Turnhout, 1958), p. 585; and Ps-Rufinus *In commentarium in Psalmos LXXV*, PL 21.210. For examples of Hiberno-Latin exegesis, see the psalm headings in Ps-Jerome *Breviarium in Psalmos*, PL 26.1012; and the Cathach of Saint Columba in M. McNamara, *The Psalms in the Early Irish Church*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series 165 (Sheffield, 2000), p. 350. On Christological interpretations of this and other psalms, see McNamara, *passim*, esp. 378–416; one notable exception for Psalm 67:2 is the heading in Ps-Bede *Catalogus diapsalmatum*, PL 93.1099. On the Hiberno-Latin associations of these texts, see M. Lapidge and R. Sharpe, *A Bibliography of Celtic-Latin Literature 400–1200* (Dublin, 1985), nos. 343 and 506; and J. F. Kelly, 'A Catalogue of Early Medieval Hiberno-Latin Biblical Commentaries (I)', *Traditio*, xliv (1988), 537–71, nos. 42–4.

[20] 'The Inscription of Charms in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts', *Oral Tradition*, xiv (1999), 401–19, at 401. On Christian uses of charms, see also K. L. Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996); L. A. Garner, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms in Performance', *Oral Tradition*, xix (2004), 20–42; and R. M. Liuzza, 'Prayers and/or Charms Addressed to the Cross', *Cross and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies in honor of George Hardin Brown*, ed. K. L. Jolly, C. E. Karkov, and S. L. Keefer, Medieval European Studies 9 (Morgantown, WV, 2007), 276–321.

THREE *BEOWULF* CRUCES: *HEALGAMEN*, *FREMU*, *SIGEMUNDE*

AS early as the twelfth century, commentators on the skaldic poets could mistake unfamiliar kennings for the names of heroes, as when the author of the late twelfth-century Norwegian chronicle *Ágrip* invented a small biography for *skeiðarbrandr* 'ship's beak', which he took to be the name of a king.[1] Similarly, in his 1861 edition of *Beowulf*, Nikolaj Grundtvig exploited the repetition of an unusual adjective in order to endow the poem's dragon with the name *Stearcheort* 'Stoutheart', an identification which no modern editor now takes seriously.[2]

In a number of places, the most recent editors of *Beowulf* have emended or invented proper names, twice creating names never

[1] Roberta Frank, 'Snorri and the mead of poetry' in Ursula Dronke, *et al.* (eds), *Specvlvm Norroenvm* (Odense, 1981), 157–8. For similar errors committed by Snorri Sturluson, see the same chapter, *passim*.

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[2] Nikolaj F. S. Grundtvig, *Beowulfes Beorh, Eller, Bjovulfs-Drapen, Paa Grund-Sproget* (Copenhagen, 1861), ll. 4568 and 5096 (corresponding to *Klaeber 4* ll. 2288b and 2552a). So important did he consider fitting the dragon with a name that Grundtvig began his imaginative ten-canto collage of Beowulfiana by dubbing Beowulf *bona Stearcheortes* 'killer of Stoutheart' (iv, second line). See also the name entry at p. 207 and the notes on pp. 170–1 and 180.