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THE HARROWING OF HELL:

A STUDY OF ITS RECEPTION AND ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION

IN EARLY MEDIAEVAL EUROPEAN LITERATURE

by
A. Robert Bell

APPROVAL SHEET

Title of Thesis: The Harrowing of Hell: A Study of Its Reception and Artistic Interpretation in Early Mediaeval European Literature

Name of Candidate: A. Robert Bell
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George Fenwick Jones
Professor of German and
          Comparative Literature
Department of German

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ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: The Harrowing of Hell: A Study of its Reception and
Artistic Interpretation in Early Mediaeval Literature

A. Robert Bell, Doctor of Philosophy, 1971

Thesis Directed by: George Fenwick Jones, Ph.D., Professor of
German and Comparative Literature

The story of Christ's descent to Hell--including his harrowing of
Satan and his raising of those imprisoned--was a favorite religious
tale of the Western mediaeval period. Heretofore it was believed that
the original source for the episode was the Gospel of Nicodemus, an
apocryphal work created out of Old and New Testament materials and
patristic references from the period of the Early Church. Likewise, it
was assumed that mediaeval adaptations of this story were uninspired,
slavish vernacularizations without individuality or unique artistry. It
was the purpose of this dissertation to examine not only the origins of
the story, but to study the major examples of the story as it was re-
ceived and given an artistic interpretation in early mediaeval literature.

A search of the most important pagan and Judaeo-Christian descent
tales revealed that the "Harrowing of Hell" portions of the Gospel of
Nicodemus are ultimately derived from several sources: the Sumerian-
based resurrection myths connected to Inanna and Dumuzi and their
"successors"; the eschatological, messianic traditions of the Hebrews;
and the apocalyptic writings of the New Testament and the Church Fa-
thers. These various traditions were drawn together during the period
from the Council of Nicaea to the early years of the fifth century, and
they were expressed first in shortened form by the creeds, secondly by

hymnographers. By the time the first Greek versions of the Gospel appeared, the "truth" of the "Harrowing" was anachronistically verified by its own sources.

The "Harrowing of Hell" was promoted in the West through the enormously popular writings of S. Augustine and Gregory the Great. S. Augustine, first to accept the descent tale as canonical, interpreted it to say that Christ delivered sinners from Hell, and that those who died in service to the Church were spared the pains of Hell. Gregory expanded these ideas to include a Hell with various levels, and immediate deliverance for martyrdom. Gregory's missionary efforts enabled the Gospel to be disseminated throughout the West; his four-level system of biblical interpretation authorized the use of the Gospel by connecting its Christian teachings with pagan folk-literature.

Old English vernacular adaptations of the Gospel vary from a simple mention of the descent to a rather highly elaborate mediaevalized translation of the "Harrowing". Even though the English adaptations depended on the Latin I version (as did the other Western ones), there are signs that the story was amplified by patristic texts. The Cotton Vitellius A. xv MS prepared the way for the Gospel to be included in ecclesiastical cycle dramas. Irish variants combined the descent motif with hagiography to provide works which included Ss. Patrick and Brendan as viewers of the pains of Hell. The inventive Irish produced works which employed the "Harrowing" outside of the usual Passion narratives.

In Old High German, the commentaries of Augustine and Gregory on the Gospel take precedence over the text itself. The enigmatic Muspilli made an interesting political interpolation of the salvation of

martyrs fit the contemporary situation of Ludwig the German's machinations with the royal fisc, his brother, and the proprietary Church. This poem adapted the commentaries in such a way that they were used to threaten Ludwig: his behavior warranted correction because his actions appeared apocalyptic to the clergy.

The Song of Roland also employed the Gospel commentaries to show how Roland, Turpin, and others gained Paradise through martyrdom, and that the pagans were doomed to the hellish host.

Therefore, it appeared that the "Harrowing of Hell" is only a Christian variant of a pagan motif; that the mediaevalized versions cannot be attributed to a single, "unique" source; and that the early mediaeval literary versions are thoughtfully artistic.

DEDICATION

to

Alice B. Toklas

for three years' undeserved constant attention and devotion to me and my work before her untimely death.

I also wish to dedicate this work to those other concerned friends and teachers who did not live to share with me the satisfaction of seeing it completed: David J. Baron, Reuben Y. Carlson, M. M. Quinn, Jean Roland Barrette, Myra Louise Baseman-Anderson Merrick, Joan ten Brink Oettinger; Professors Leon P. Smith, Carl M. Selle, Walter Scott Mason, Natalie Grimes Lawrence; Miss Lena Dehn and Miss Agnes K. Jonas.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I

Marc Bloch, the late French mediaevalist, remarked quite astutely
that one cannot "fail to recognize in the fear of hell one of the great
social forces of the age."[1] Students usually understand this observation
as including, most naturally, the immediate impact of Dante's Inferno
on fourteenth-century European thought,[2] as well as recalling the dis-
mal tableaux of torments and punishments pictured on cathedral façades[3]
and dramatically rendered in countless manuscript illustrations.[4] For
those who are familiar with the sermon literature of mediaeval Chris-
tianity,[5] this fear is understood almost automatically as being formed
from an extension of the Seven Deadly Sins, one of the favorite topics
of the time:[6] these Sins could not have been preached so successfully
without an obvious reminder[7] of what terrors might come at the end of
each man's earthly life.[8] However, Bloch was not speaking only of the
period from the Renaissance of the 12th century onward; he was con-
sidering the total picture of Western theology from its missionary in-
ceptions in Europe through the end of the Proto-Renaissance in Eng-
land.[9] In spite of how Dantean and somewhat modern this fear may
seem, it is not a product of the Scholastics,[10] but a manifestation of the
beliefs instilled into the minds of the earliest European Christians
from that time when Christianity itself was extended beyond the limita-
tions of a Jewish cultus into a world religion. Bloch believed that the
foundations of such an important social force were established before
the papacy of Gregory the Great and that, shortly thereafter, they
became a well of sources used for teaching, exposition, commentary,

1

and interpretation during the next thousand years.[11]

As Bloch recognized in his encapsulated statement, the whole formulative process extended back at least 750 years before the High Middle Ages because the basic beliefs concerning Hell (even with the exception of Purgatory)[12] were considered <u>doctrinal</u> prior to the major Western missionary movements.[13] Until the German and English Reformations, all Christians--from the time of the Early Middle Ages-- were taught that:

(1) Hell exists as a subterranean place of punishment for the wicked, that it is governed by Satan, Prince of the fallen angels, and that it is maintained by a host of various hideous demons;[14]

(2) <u>all</u> souls before Christ went there to await his coming;[15]

(3) Christ descended to Hell after his crucifixion and redeemed the faithful after he defeated Satan and his host;[16]

(4) all sinners since Christ's descent reside in Hell while awaiting the Day of Doom;[17] and,

(5) at the Final Judgment, Hell will surrender up its occupants for either an eternity of damnation or a complete destruction of their being.[18]

Furthermore, in this rather well-integrated conception of Hell, every point was thought to be so logically tied to each other that to doubt any single portion was as heretical as denying Christ's divinity.[19]

To some modern scholars, this fear--as fostered by beliefs in a rather illogical amalgamation of sources and ideas--seems to be a primitive reaction which should have been dispelled by the sophisticated theological and scientific syntheses made by the Thomists.[20] They find

it almost incredible to believe that even the most highly educated Schol-

astics failed to understand that many of their sources were questionable,

if not corrupt, and that their theology based on such sources was logi-

cally invalid because it was untruthful to reality.[21] In their attempt to

postulate the impossible "Mind of the Middle Ages" from faulty prem-

ices, these critics have simply ignored the fact that faith in early West-

ern theology[22] was thought to be above discussion: theology was verified

by the Fathers and the New Testament, it was expressed by accepted

traditional dogma,[23] and, as a result, it was beyond being questioned.[24]

Rather than having attempted to chronicle the variant developments in

the history of an idea, these apologists consequently reverted to a con-

demnation of men in the Middle Ages for their ignorance[25] when they

themselves should have looked deeper into an analysis of the processes

of mediæval rhetoric and reasoning.[26] The persistence of this kind of

scholarly myopia helps to perpetuate the historical misnomer--"Dark

Ages"[27]and the rather rootless "Great Works"[28] theory of literature,

which tends to evaluate everything by a subjective analysis. Therefore,

in order to understand the origin of a powerful fear-force working with-

in mediæval society, it becomes necessary to re-analyze previous

scholarship and theory, as well as to reconsider the effect of long-

ignored source materials--without using the limiting partisan restric-

tions evident in some established schools of thought.

One of the most influential documents contributing to the social

background within Bloch's idea, was the Gospel of Nicodemus. Although

its relative importance in the formulation of Christian doctrine has been

reduced in our day to the status of a footnote used to explain some of the

more unusual beliefs of the Middle Ages,[29] its thesis was quite central

to the construction of portions of the Creed[30] and to the development of an all-pervasive Hell-centered theology. [31] Curiously enough, the rather dispassionate consideration given to the Gospel by a Jewish historian--Bloch--has never been fully appreciated by either the Christian theologians of the past three decades, or by those fragmented and compartmentalized literary historians who try to "reveal" the Middle Ages for modern students. [32] Because the Gospel is the only complete narrative source for beliefs #1 and #3 in the previous list, and because it amplifies, expands, or inspires parts of beliefs #1, #4, and #5, it can hardly be neglected presently in any simple overview or serious study of the Middle Ages as being worth no more than a passing reference. All too unfortunately, though, for students of the Middle Ages, the value of many sources has been assigned by the needs of our century[33] and not by the influence which they actually had during the early period; theologians are also as guilty of sanctioning this practice in their contemporaneous analyses as are the literary historians. [34]

As I have outlined in detail later, [35] even such repudiated sources of mediæval faith as the Gospel of Nicodemus are frequently subjected to the same biased evaluations as are the highly repudiated works of religion and literature. Even though there is now a movement to follow Bloch's example through employing the ethos of the Middle Ages in preparing evaluations, [36] some of the presently scientific-objective critical attitudes still respond to the demands of the "New School"[37] and logical positivism. [38] However useful this newer method may be, it has not lessened the persistent effect of outdated scholarship in reducing mediæval studies to unpopularity[39] and it has not diminished the effort of recent theologians to create a scriptural relevance by forcing the

Christian message to fit modern society.[40] Undetected as they may be
to students of any historical or literary period, the particular social
values of any time help to color and distort the scholarly viewing of
source materials, especially when the external problems of that parti-
cular time became so overwhelming.[41] Possibly the greatest irony in
the study of the transmission (and transience) of mediaeval belief is
found in this century's predicament of having to contend with the ideo-
logical separation of science and religion brought on by last century's
disputes[42] which were not relevant or even emergent in the Middle Ages
themselves;[43] yet, the controversy between what might be termed
"scientism" and "humanism"[44] which developed out of a scientific hypo-
thesis--inflicted all scholarship in such a way as to influence almost
all academic judgments well into this age.[45] The mediaevalist (as an
interpreter of an unpopular discipline and of a questionable religion)
must employ not only the most properly comprehensive methodology,
but must also seek out and use the most historically "neutral" relevant
textual materials[46] for his work, while not responding to any particular
vogues inherent in the ideological disputes of his own or past time.[47]

Although I have spent most of the past decade in accumulating ma-
terials to support a new study of the "Harrowing Hell", I saw that much
of the so-called serious secondary scholarship published in books, ar-
ticles, and in dissertation form was too often based on divisive schools
of thought propounded on ideologies which were extensions of 18th and
19th century viewpoints.[48] These schools co-influenced each other in
such a manner as to preclude original non-biased thought,[49] and they
insisted on perpetuating those earlier ideologies rather than formulating
rational, logical examinations of determinable facts.[50] On the other

hand, the most reliable information on the general subject of the Early Middle Ages came from the few theologians who escaped the Post-Voltarian and late Victorian controversies into textual studies,[51] and from those literary critics who avoided topical arguments in their contributions to our knowledge of language and historical linguistics.[52] However, the precision and clarity of their work was ill-appreciated during the following decades: already a great mass of influentially popular misinformation circulated in the form of highly erroneous, badly founded notions about the Middle Ages:

(a) the theology of the early and mediæval Church was badly formulated;[53]

(b) the sources for that theology were highly imitative, unoriginal, and greatly suspect copies of pagan beliefs;[54]

(c) the literature of the Early Middle Ages was "primitive" (in a pejorative sense);[55]

(d) the early literature always treated theological subjects slavishly and without imagination;[56]

(e) the purpose of literature was highly compartmentalized;[57] and that,

(f) secular religious literature showed few signs of having been affected by its time and place.[58]

Such notions had the net effect of invalidating mediæval Christian belief by negating all Christian faith, calling it a superstitious reliance upon an afterlife and its rewards or punishments.[59] Yet, this same essentially Christian subject of Hell is undergoing another process of readaptation[60] to our own age in a manner which is strangely reminiscent of ideas and techniques used by the early missionaries: probably the man

of today has as much fear of Hell as did the man of fourteen hundred years ago. Seemingly, the man of today has rejected the logical call for a cessation of belief in afterlife punishment, which was preached by the Vienna Positivist Circle in the 1920s,[61] and which became part of the existential philosophic outlook of Sartre and Camus during the period from World War II onward. Although positivism and existentialism in their purest forms must be atheistic,[62] the subject of Hell was constantly uppermost in these so-called non-theologies, as can be witnessed in Sartre's No Exit dictum that, "Hell is other people."[63] Even the Jungian psychological approach to personality theory recognized the importance of post-existence punishment as one of the archetypes of the unconscious.[64] Now, through some considerable theological legerdemain, Altizer--a recent popular prophet of the "God is Dead" school-- finds belief in Hell an appropriate enough subject for a new study pertinent to the 1970s.[65]

By subtle extensions, this "fear of Hell /as/ one of the great social forces" reappears in the foreground of our own times from the darker realms of mediaeval thought. Even though Christian eschatology is being recreated and restated in a "meaningful" contemporary manner,[66] it becomes impossible for us to disregard those sources and processes in the history of ideas by which this fear was originally made so important in the mediaeval world-view. It may remain, however, for students of the next century to decide whether or not the revised concept of Hell, if only partially founded on the Gospel of Nicodemus, perpetuated belief in the Christian exclusiveness to Truth, the validity of anti-Semitism,[67] the Saving Grace of Love,[68] and also failed again so miserably to cure our social ills.

II

As soon as biblical scholars began their textual studies of the Gospel of Nicodemus, it became apparent that the work really consisted of two separate but connected sections: that portion which dealt with the judgment of Christ by Pilate, and that section which told the story of Christ's descent into Hell.[69] In its total form, the Gospel is now frequently referred to as the Evangelium Nicodemi[70] and the two related segments called the Acta Pilati (Acts of Pilate)[71] and the Descensus ad Infernum (Descent to Hell or the "Harrowing of Hell").[72] Depending on the particular outlook of the critic, the sections and their names are somewhat interchangeable,[73] and the problem of exact nomenclature has not yet been settled. In addition to this confusing proliferation of titles, it has never been decided whether or not the total work belongs to the New Testament Apocrypha or to the Pseudepigrapha:[74] the first part of the Gospel is mostly a canonically based expansion[75] of the account of Christ's trial and crucifixion, with the notable additions of the Grail theme and the character of Longinus;[76] Part II, the major text for this dissertation, is only vaguely canonical[77] and it tells the story of Christ's descent to Hell, the "harrowing" of Satan and his host, and the subsequent salvation of all faithful souls. Since some undetermined time during the Renaissance,[78] the whole Gospel has been regarded as spurious; in this century, it has lost even more historical credibility.[79]

Even though St. Augustine and Pope Gregory the Great found the Gospel an unclear document needing serious explication, the most damning evidence against the entire Gospel's validity has appeared in recent years. Biblical manuscript scholars have tracked down every possible reference in the "original" Greek and Latin texts to find that the Gospel

is a derivative amplification of both Old and New Testament references to Christ's life,[80] and to discover that it was a suppositional forgery created to fill those gaps left open in canonical sources.[81] Classical scholars have remarked that the "Harrowing" might have been derived from interpretations of works by Homer, Ovid, and Virgil.[82] Researchers in Near Eastern studies have provided sufficient background materials to substantiate the Gospel's basic connection to long-standing Mediterranean legend-cycles attached to resurrection divinities,[83] and comparative religionists find in the "Harrowing" the ultimate Christian expression of the Hebrew Millennial predictions.[84] Students of New Testament theology see the Gospel of Nicodemus as both an adaptation of ideas expressed originally by the Early Church Fathers[85] and as an expansion of previous credal statements. Theologians know, therefore, that the idea of Christ's descent and "Harrowing of Hell" was a current belief in the Primitive Church and that, furthermore, by the time of the appearance of manuscript copies of the Gospel in the 5th century, the document must have been accepted without question as being authentic.[86] However, these same modern theologians are not in agreement as to whether or not the Gospel was originally intended to be religious propaganda, anti-Semitic, or an honest clarification of New Testament eschatology. It is a tenable theory that the Gospel of Nicodemus could have served several conflicting purposes: as a propagandistic document, it could verify the Synoptic message and thereby clarify Christology; it could have been an unfortunate leftover from the Roman persecution under Maximin; it could have been an embyronic beginning of Christian anti-Semitism; and it might have been used to defend Christianity from growing and popular heresies within the Church.[87] The consensus of

reliable opinion states that it was simply composed to clarify points in the then-current view of eschatology and to settle intellectual arguments from curious converts who wanted further explanation of what happened to Christ between the crucifixion and the resurrection.[88]

Despite the varying theological views which some critics in the 20th century have postulated as being maintained simultaneously during the 5th century, the transmission of ideas, themes, and motifs from the Gospel was certainly not impeded by current religious controversies and commentaries, but it was actually aided by them through additional controversies and commentaries of the 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries.[89] It is quite possible that the Irish monastic communities received the Gospel's ideas sometime between the missions of St. Patrick and St. Columba,[90] for shortly thereafter the descent story became attached to Patrick himself. In the Mediterranean region, the apocrypha was carefully studied by Augustine during the preparation of his eschatology,[91] and Augustine's interpretative observations were used directly by Gregory[92] in the writing of his many commentaries. Gregory's unfortunate creation and promulgation of Purgatory[93] also harked back to a reading of the Gospel; because he accepted Augustine's views, as well as clarified the text, he also provided papal authentication for belief in the "Harrowing" portions.[94]

From the time of Gregory's official sanction of the Gospel (ca. 600), it is not difficult to trace the immediate missionary dissemination of the text and its motifs throughout all of Western Christianity. In the following sections, which are devoted in some extent to a chronological and geographical study of the "Harrowing",[95] I have attempted to verify as many of the direct references to the appearance of the descent theme as

can be substantiated from the use of comparative parallel readings and structure drawn from the original manuscripts. Whenever possible, manuscript evidence has been preferred to a secondary use of the Augustinian and Gregorian commentaries alone;[96] however, when some doubt exists as to the existence of a manuscript tradition, I have cited appropriate passages from the commentaries and the Early Church Fathers, especially when that type of influence is better established and less open to question.[97] From our point in time, it is not possible to postulate an oral folklore transmission of this theme from region to region: with such a dearth of evidence remaining from the period, theorizing about oral lore would be overwhelmingly suppositional.[98]

Little space is devoted in the general discussion to postulating the reasons why the theme had such a popular impact on the literature of the Early Middle Ages because it may be just as unsupportable to re-create a psychological climate for a period so distant from us as to invent the content of its lost oral lore.[99] One cannot help but be amazed, all the same, at the ease with which the "Harrowing" theme was combined with remnants of earlier stories, or by its adaptability to the genres and cadres of mediaeval religion and literature. Elements of the descent story blended just as well with the epics as they did with didactic apocalyptic visions; the whole second half of the apocrypha maintained its basic message even through the most adumbrating vernacularization into Old English.[100] I can make only the partially educated guess that the essential meaning of the "Harrowing" confounded the existing theology of pagan beliefs,[101] and that, from the missionary point-of-view, the "Harrowing" could be used didactically in a multitude of ways. No doubt, too, much of its popularity depended upon the timely artistry

of the adaptor, more than upon the force of the original.[102]

Because mediaeval Christians were taught from the beginning to believe in the truth of the "Harrowing", it is not difficult to understand why the story later became an essential part of the ecclesiastical drama of the High Middle Ages:[103] any complete presentation of Christ's life had to contain scenes from his three-day trip to the Inferno; those scenes further assured that men were given the Saving Grace of Love through those divine actions which took place in Hell. In addition to being both spiritually refreshing[104] and frightfully portentous, these renditions of the "Harrowing" were simply good theatre.[105] By the time of the Cycles, almost all of the more inventive adaptations of the "Harrowing" had been made into the vernaculars, and these vernacular versions had begun to influence each other.[106] French, English, and German drama depended little upon the Latin text; the "original" text was no longer of prime importance in the construction of the scripts as were the more native versions. Once the variety of vernacular renditions of the Gospel became more readily available for use than the Latin originals, the history of how the theme was transmitted and adapted into mediaeval literature entered a new phase.[107] The cross-influence of translations is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

III

Any literary study of the Gospel of Nicodemus, whether or not it concerns thematic sources and influences, brings into focus for the mediaevalist questions which, at the outset, seem somewhat both anti-literary and basically dystopical. Within biblical criticism (a prerequisite study to this investigation), one of the most acute problems is

that of separating from the Canon those works which by their pious sincerity and devout sentiment purport to be explications of the Christian revelation, and which, also, by their inherent pagan coloring and inclusion of neo-Christian materials make them inherently suspect, in spite of the supposed knowledge and understanding which they have been assumed to supply to less critical generations of believers. Whereas the sophistical theology of the Weiss-Schweitzer school's search for the "historical Jesus"[108] and the Bultmannite's "demythologization" of the Synoptic Gospel narratives[109] have attempted to arrive at a somewhat more pristine New Testament historicity, the dichotomy between Christian Truth and manuscript validity normally obviates an essential consideration of the overwhelming influence which the now-doubtful works had upon the theological formulations of their age and upon their consequent development as ancillary, supporting proof of credal formulae. Our present contemporary gain in achieving a closer approximate understanding of what was the real kerygmatic message of the Apostles in actuality effects a misunderstanding of early mediaeval mentality and, unfortunately, implies that from our more "enlightened" point-of-view, Christian believers in the missionary Church were following only some form of degraded superstition which had little reference to original Christology. Therefore, in the process of gaining a closer, more accurate validating of the Synoptics, the preponderance of interpretations have bypassed those developmental processes wherein early Western theologians, out of a myriad of various necessities, accepted spurious pronouncements, and have, instead, promoted Christology as a private science of the present century: any additional enhancement of the supreme Truth inherent in Christ's resurrection

provided by post-Nicaean writings becomes for them ultimate proof of an uninformed ignorance[110] encouraged by overzealous missionary minds and, at the same time, a verification of their own contemporary methodological correctness.[111] In this process of searching for a more confirmed assuredness of Christian Truth, they hold a mistaken view of the reality which, for mediaeval man, surrounded Christ's resurrection and of the exigencies which helped to formulate mediaeval theology. By the anachronism of implying that men of the Early Middle Ages should have employed our kind of critical knowledge to their selection of materials, both the theologians and literary historians have used that same subjective analysis which influences even the most careful studies.[112] The critical means by which 20th century Christianity is received, interpreted, and amplified is definitely not identical with those means used in the Middle Ages.

Such concealed shortsightedness is not readily visible at the outset of any merely literary study because the average compounding of errors within one academic discipline seldom becomes the object of serious study for those outside that discipline; as in the instance of this consideration of the influence of an apocryphal gospel upon Western mediaeval literature, theological critics have infrequently looked upon the belles lettres as religious documents, and the literary historians have failed to understand the relevant influence of religious documents on the belles lettres from the early periods in vernacular literature. Too often it had been taken for granted, even by the comparatist, that the religionist's sphere of scholarship is free from the taint of cant because the "high seriousness" of biblical study was thought to preclude the existence of any opposing schools of analysis within textual study, or

that external bias could never influence the interpretation of manuscripts. Fortunately, it is when the subject of a literary discourse must rely upon a scant handful of secondary sources that such distortions can be detected; unfortunately, though, when the distortions of both literature and theology have counter-influenced each other for a century, the problem has to be reworked from the start, and whatever remains as the so-called empirical knowledge contributed by both sides must be carefully weighed and examined again and again. Far beyond an initial sophomoric awareness of the truism that "critics disagree", the heart of the matter lies in discovering what critics of one school influenced the supposedly objective critics of another discipline, and, beyond that, in going beneath this to discover what is the most truly objective and comprehensive interpretation of any work of art. Whatever primary set of principles must be formulated from this total reexamination, it must be requisite to postulate first the nature and content of the early mediaeval mentality and, secondly, to uncover materials and interpretations produced by it--not, as I have said, promoting the philosophic doctrines of any particular systems of methodology. Retrieving the real _ethos_ of the _Nicodemus_ legend cannot be the result of schools of thought; rather they deny the possibility of doing so through their set preconceptions.

Until long after the post-Reformation period, men of the past were assured that Christ's resurrection not only gave absolute proof of the truth of the Christian revelation, but guaranteed personal salvation through Christ's immediate "Harrowing of Hell" and his heavenly deliverance of the faithful from the Pit. Those things, hinted at in the canonical Old and New Testament, were confirmed by the _Gospel of_

Nicodemus. For the entire period prior to the Reformation, Christology and eschatology were dependent upon the truths revealed by this apocrypha, and every missionary in the West accepted it as a prime text for preaching or teaching in either its "original" or expanded forms. The wide circulation of the story and its extended interpretations attest to its continued popularity from its inception through the spiritual "purifications" of the German Reformation, Henry VIII's schism, and Cromwell's Protectorate, to Milton's Paradise Lost. It was only natural that converts should be provided with such a confirmation of Christian truth; it is quite unfortunate that many have seen fit to dismiss this practice as an initial step in the corruption of true Christianity as it is defined today.

Because of the theological redirections brought about by the post-Darwinians, Weiss-Schweitzer, Bultmann, the existentialists, and Altizer, little biblical analysis has been devoted to non-canonical works in general; few correlative studies approach the non-essential literature of Christianity: the ease of working within a 20th-century framework, wherein the needs for developing Christianity to contemporary relevancy are so great, has compounded the errors in seeing early mediaeval men as unenlightened pagans who wasted their time and energies expanding topics which should have been considered irrelevant. Yet, in spite of the general knowledge that this is an erroneous view, there is no discipline within theology which has as its special province the effect of religion upon literature, and, until recently, there was no literary discipline which devoted itself to the religious implications of literature. It is to be hoped that many discussions of the transmission and adaptation of themes will provide additional materials and methods for a new eval-

uation of the first era in mediaeval composition, and which will help to develop some principles toward a working system of criticism.

<div align="center">IV</div>

Because the basis of this study on the "Harrowing of Hell" depended heavily on a re-analysis of scholarship concerned with the topic, it is necessary to review and remark upon the worth of some of the major commentaries published since serious criticism first considered non-canonical materials. After the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the Gospel of Nicodemus was studied by some of the most respected biblical scholars; it was commented upon by eminent literary historians, and its folkloric elements were subjected to keen analysis by English and German researchers in many disciplines. The initial phase of manuscript study was initiated by Constantin von Tischendorff in his edition of the Apocrypha.[113] von Tischendorff's description and collation of the first Greek and Latin texts is usually considered to be the first authoritative compilation and naming of the sources which we now term "original". The broader and more inclusive gathering of manuscripts appeared shortly afterwards in Fr. Migne's massive project of the Patrologia Graeca and Patrologia Latina.[114] English translations of of the variants, based on von Tischendorff and Migne, are best represented by the James edition of the Apocrypha,[115] and by the American Ante-Nicaean and Post-Nicaean Fathers series.[116] In this past decade, through the co-operation of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies at the University of Toronto and the University of Louvain, a new examination and edition of the texts is slowly becoming available for international scholarship.[117] However, the apocrypha is yet to appear in

completed form. The latest addition to the list of sources was that of a late Armenian text printed in the Byzantine studies of the Dumbarton Oaks Papers.[118]

Those theological analyses which touch upon the Gospel, its "Harrowing", and the problems of the apocrypha are somewhat fewer in number and somewhat less contemporaneous than the manuscript studies, in spite of the fact that much modern circumferential work has been done on the subject. Nevertheless, these are frequently termed "standard" reference works and are, without question, basic to the study. R. H. Charles' edition of the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha[119] has not been surpassed for its brilliant analyses of those Old Testament sources and references which form the Hebrew antecedents of New Testament belief: no revision has been needed since 1913. Single-volume individual German critical studies are best represented by Kroll,[120] Loofs,[121] and Harnack,[122] although they belong mostly to the latter half of last century. The continuance of Charles' work (in addition to his own Studies in the Apocalypse[123] and The Resurrection of Man[124]) appears in Montague Rhodes James' Apocryphal New Testament.[125] James' particular approach, conditioned by both the necessity of avoiding controversy, and by sidestepping the then-contemporary theological vogues, produced a commendably unbiased and factual evaluation of his sources, especially when he departed from the usual manuscript redaction and collation and began his commentary.

In 1930 the Rev. J. A. MacCulloch published a uniquely comprehensive study, The Harrowing of Hell.[126] Making use of Charles' and James' work on the texts, as well as attempting to defend Christianity against post-Victorian scientific criticism, MacCulloch produced a

rather uncarefully considered diatribe against anthropological and archaeological folkloric theories, while providing at the same time a magnificently thorough catalogue of the extra-biblical sources. Strangely enough, MacCulloch's work is most frequently regarded as the standard reference of modern commentary on the Nicodemus apocrypha. Whereas his examination and treatment of the manuscripts are sound and his searching of the sources and analogues nearly exhaustive, his subjective refusal to accept the influence of non-Christian religions on the Gospel colors and distorts his original intentions.

Because of what might be termed the "uniqueness" of early Western vernacular versions of the Gospel of Nicodemus, there are few linguistic commentaries which deal directly with the text in its first mediaeval forms. Only the Old English versions appear before 1100; there are none in Old French or Old High German still extant. William Hulme edited and compared the two remaining Old English copies for PMLA at the turn of the century, and his prefatory remarks are limited to the scope and interest of advanced students. [127] Bright's Anglo-Saxon Reader, [128] the favorite Old English text, includes only one "Harrowing of Hell" from the Cotton Vitellius A xv manuscript. The other variant, Corpus Christi College Cambridge II. ll. ii, was made available separately in a limited student's edition by S. J. Crawford in 1928. [129] Neither Hulme, Bright, or Crawford devoted much space (if any) to the history and influence of the descent motif, and their bibliographical material was kept to the barest minimum; however, some reference in their editions to the carefully arranged articles on this apocrypha in Chambers Cyclopedia, [130] the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, [131] and the Catholic Encyclopedia[132] appear to relieve this

error.

The earliest--and possibly the most unusual--folklore studies on the "Harrowing of Hell" were products of two English antiquaries and clergymen of note in their own time. William Hone's Ancient Mysteries Described. . .[133] is a confused paralleling of the more legendary aspects of the "Harrowing" with its appearances in the ecclesiastical drama of the High Middle Ages. Hone's volume did have the merit of bringing new attention to the story after it had been neglected for the many years since its omission from the King James Version of the Bible. Conversely, the somewhat more sympathetic treatment given it by Sabine Baring-Gould in Curious Myths of the Middle Ages[134] was a product of that same revival of historical interest which fostered the birth of the Early English Text Society and later inspired the beginnings of anthropological folklore.[135] Rev. Baring-Gould's review of the "Harrowing" in the Patrick legend attempted, for the first time, to associate the descent motif with parallels in native literature. His comparisons were made on "safe" ground because the Gospel was then judged to be non-canonical, we well as "popish".[136]

By the end of the century, Baring-Gould's use of comparison between religion and literature became an accepted element in the methodology employed by Sir James G. Frazer in the Golden Bough[137] and in his Folklore of the Old Testament.[138] Sir James touched sometimes rather superficially and at great length upon more than a dozen "basic" folkloric practices in his Old Testament studies;[139] on the other hand, his 12-volume work on New Testament backgrounds in the Golden Bough was far more damning and damaging to orthodox Christianity than it was to Judiasm. The Golden Bough demonstrated the effects of a growing

anti-religious tradition which developed out of post-Darwinian philoso-
phies, and not only did his findings help to cause the direction which
many important theologians took during the next quarter century, but
his system also determined the pattern of many leading theories in
mythology and comparative religion.[140] Frazer was as scientifically
well-founded as possible for his time: he drew upon a great hoard of
evidence from missionaries throughout the world, from his own back-
ground in classical studies, and from recent scholarly advances in the
archæology and language of the biblical Near East. For its sheer or-
ganizational mass, his work has not been surpassed in magnitude or
influence. Unfortunately, the major schools of archæology, anthropol-
ogy, and folklore tended, through theories inspired by Frazer, to dis-
credit more and more of Christian theology beyond a limit of the apo-
cryphal works.[141] As a reaction to this, theologians at the beginning of
this century began retaliatory searches for either the "historical Jesus",
a "demythologized" New Testament, or for escape in such non-contro-
versial disciplines as manuscript studies.

More modern and contemporary commentators on matters of the
apocrypha have become aware of the fact that the mid- and late-Victorian
divorce of religion from science terminated in an unfortunate polariza-
tion of opinions. Reinforced by better translations of ancient texts,[142]
a new knowledge of Near Eastern studies,[143] and by the use of results
of Jungian psychological approach,[144] scholars of the past two decades
have begun to reevaluate their materials in order to attempt a better
approximation of the actual, historical development of religious beliefs.
The notable works of Oriental Institute researchers Heidel[145] and
Kramer[146] have shed considerable light on the origin of apocryphal New

Testament writings. E. R. Goodenough's[147] analytical gathering of non-literary symbols from the Jewish Alexandrian period has helped to provide a new basis for comprehending Pagan-Christian relationships; Werner Jaeger's[148] and Mircea Eliade's[149] comparative classical and New Testament parallels have reoriented our understanding of the processes by which Early Church theology developed.

Only one published study--which deals with a peripheral motif touching upon the Gospel of Nicodemus--has benefitted to a great degree from recent advances in inter-disciplinary scholarship. Eleanor Cassir Quinn's The Quest of Seth (1962)[150] treated in a most admirable fashion the "oil of mercy" theme from its Old Testament background, through the Gospel of Nicodemus, into the literature of the Middle Ages. In addition to this, the dissertations of Donald Sutherland[151] and Rhea Thomas Workman[152] discussed in part some aspects of the Gospel, but both were devoted to other Old and Middle English studies not particularly concerned with the apocrypha as their major subjects. The standard bibliographic sources did not reveal any comparative studies on the literary influence and adaptation of the "Harrowing of Hell".

V

Forty years' scholarship on the "Harrowing of Hell" has accumulated since the publication of MacCulloch's book; yet his pronouncements are still considered so completely authoritative that a corrective revision has never been deemed necessary. This lack of interest might be understood as stemming from a strictly internal matter, based directly on an evaluation of the original texts. Admittedly, the Gospel itself has never been a popular subject among specialists in biblical Higher Criticism

and the New Testament; also, the Gospel has never been lauded as a
fascinating example of classical literary art: it was written in poor
Greek and awkward Latin. [153] No contemporary theological apologist
would exhume a spurious work in order to explain it as a relevant
statement of Christian belief: it is an embarassing artifact left over
from the distant youth of the Church. Only by the wildest stretches of
the imagination could the "Harrowing of Hell" or the descent theme of
this Gospel be made into the authoritative account of what the creeds
left unsaid. However, the Gospel and its major theme have certainly
not been ignored in studies of wider, more external matters, because
scholarship is beginning to seek new ends through the use of better
methodologies.

This present study aims not so much to identify and correct some
of the more obvious errors in the judgments of previous scholars as to
approach and analyze the reception and artistic interpretation of the
text in early Western vernacular literature by means of a less restric-
tive synthesis of the work from many disciplines. MacCulloch's con-
tribution concluded without a discussion of where the Gospel story went
and why it became so important in the life of mediaeval man. The liter-
ary historians, who accepted MacCulloch's work as the sole repository
of all information on the subject, usually did not interest themselves in
more than a superficial discussion of sources and influences, and they
usually could not explain anything about the history of ideas actually
forming a particular world-view. Because of this tendency to reduce
living ideas and concepts to a series of footnote explanations of litera-
ture, one is often unable to discover what is "mediaeval" about the
Middle Ages. It is difficult to understand how the individual studies of

Ackerman, Jackson, and Greenfield could have employed at one time recent cross-cultural scholarship, and at other times--in the more well-developed handbooks--have cited MacCulloch[154] and an 1899 dissertation by Becker[155] as the ultimate in useful references.

Still, nearly a half-century of study has made it possible for the modern student to see the early mediaeval period in a new light; therefore, it becomes imperative in any consideration of the Gospel of Nicodemus to reconsider the present value of past pronouncements--especially since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947) and the addition of a new Armenian text. By amplifying our scope of mediaeval studies through the inclusion of scholarship in early Byzantine religion and literature,[156] our methodological approaches have necessarily been changing to comprehend the new evidence. "Settled" questions are frequently reopened to new examinations; likewise, "standard" works are sometimes reduced to mere artifacts in the history of secondary sources. Bloch's own approach to the history of ideas--already thirty years old--is finally becoming appreciated as an extremely comprehensive and co-operative means for associating the materials of texts and traditions.[157]

VI

Two things become evident from the summaries of the scholarship already completed on the "Harrowing of Hell" and from my analysis of the needs for additional work on the subject: first, that the manuscript and technical studies have never been synthesized adequately with the biblical and folklore researches; and, secondly, that almost no current work has been done to show the process of transmission and adaptation

of the story into early mediaeval literature. The "Harrowing" has never been examined carefully as one of the more important motifs used during the first vernacular periods of the West; whereas, by the High Middle Ages, it appeared as an element in a central social force, and it formed part of many important creative works which crossed the artificial national barriers of language and form.

One of the most reasonable, non-parochial methods for studying such a phenomena is the comparative thematological approach, because it enables the student to transcend the limitations of the usual static disciplines in order to examine all the evidence by any available and suitable means. Some precedence for such an approach has been provided by Raymond Trousson's work on the Don Juan legend[158] and by Elizabeth Frenzel's accretion of materials on the themes in world literature.[159] Trousson[160] and Ernst Robert Curtius have theorized at some length on the important contributions of this method, and Curtius' Latin Literature in the European Middle Ages[161] verifies its adaptability. Thematology can be an open-ended and inclusive discipline, ranging from the complex catalogues of many motifs, to such quite narrow individual studies as that done on the Dracula legend.[162] It has further proved itself in the invaluable systems for the study of folklore and folk-belief.[163]

By concentrating upon only the one theme of the "Harrowing of Hell", and by dealing with only one "original" manuscript source (with its variants), it is possible to attempt an in-depth survey of the more baroque permutations and combinations of this motif as it enters into and is disseminated by Western mediaeval literature. Some new perspectives can be gained by studying the history of an idea in opposition to studying

the more obtusely structured and ill-defined genres of the period. The thematological approach is enhanced by the folklorist's use of catalogue and evidence of geographical motif distribution; it is further established by the literary historian's source-studies of types. However, thematology in general is most useful when it draws materials and referents from all relevant sources and when it does not terminate in the mere listing of works and dates.[164]

Although the extant early vernacular literature from the Anglo-Saxon, Old High German, and Old French periods is quite limited, the following study is not intended to be an exhaustive enumeration of every approximate appearance of the "Harrowing of Hell" theme before 1100. Primary consideration is given to this theme as it was adapted directly into the major works, and to the social and political backgrounds of its analogues. A discussion--or even a listing--of each thematic usage would be a somewhat uselessly peripheral extension of the main idea because, in most cases, the "Harrowing" and its analogues were almost always not the directive force behind every work in question. The secondary uses of the theme fall into the general category of supporting materials used for theologically based surveys of Christian history, and are not direct expositions or variants of the theme itself. There is a considerable difference between the importance of an Anglo-Saxon version of the "Harrowing", for instance, and a chronicle reference-summary of the life of Christ which referred to the "Harrowing": the former represents an important version and change from the original source; the latter simply amplified credal statements in the shortest and most obvious way. Therefore, the importance of the "Harrowing" does not lie in its simply being mentioned; it lies in those literary adaptations

and transformations which made it a great social force.

One other consideration is basic to the use of a thematological approach: the original literature of Christianity throughout the Middle Ages was not written in a restrictive vernacular, but in Latin, the universal language of all educated clergy. Latin--the _living_ language--as is pointed out in the following discussion, promoted the dissemination of the theme without regard to vernaculars or national boundaries; it enabled information to circulate throughout the West in a manner which would not have been possible through the use of any other tongue. Because of this, the usual French comparative methods[165] (somewhat limited by an emphasis of one nation upon another) must be bypassed for a more pertinent system of study: nowhere in my researches was I able to discover any early cross-cultural influences which were restricted to the vernaculars; all literary sources of inspiration appear to have been based on Latin originals.[166]

Hopefully, I have confirmed in my analysis that each writer who used the "Harrowing" made it relevant for his age, and contributed something important to the development and impact of this theme on mediaeval society. Through the sincere desire of early authors to promulgate the Christian faith among the untaught, they attempted to make Christianity a living, contemporary religion--a religion of such applicable principles that it could supply inspired lessions for every circumstance. Even though we may question today the effectiveness of their use of themes, we cannot fail to recognize their inventiveness in transforming a good story into so many different forms which fit so many individual situations.

VII

Almost every student of the Early Middle Ages is further confronted at one time or another by the notion that the clerical authors of the greater part of the extant literature were almost always self-effacing "missionaries" for a cause far superior to that of establishing their own personal reputations. In fact, these authors are imagined to be so didactically pragmatic as never to appear personally in the narrative of any work.[167] This naturally Christian pious denial of the self does not mean, however, that they were merely slavish translators and adaptors, for they can be seen as acutely aware of the timely need for those religious themes which they employed in their imaginative writings. Beyond their successful transformation of the materials at hand into proofs of their beliefs, they have left for us an interesting secondary account of their own reading and interests,[168] as well as evidence toward a history of their own age.[169] With our contemporary methodologies and points-of-view, we can reexamine these works anew in order to obtain fresh insights into our knowledge of them and their social ethos, and we can rejudge their worth on the basis of their success or failure to meet the critical standards of their own times. "Faceless anonymity", therefore, no longer becomes an insurmountable barrier to explication.

I have, therefore, employed elements of an ethico-historical critical system[170] in this thematological study because I am firmly convinced that literature is the product of its time: it represents the personal reaction of individuals to their ethos, and it was created to fulfill needs which have a determinable time, place, and purpose. The patent absurdity of critical systems which remove the works from their authors, periods, and backgrounds becomes more profoundly evident as the

systems canonize their nominees for the "Great Works" by sending them into some Empyrean Sphere where they attain a sacro-sanctity above further study. [171] And, in keeping with Plato's system of Ideas, they believe that each work "appeared to men when 'its time had come'". Unfortunately, this systematization of evidence usually ignores the historical facts of classical and mediaeval literary criticism which remind us that literature was considered to be an art or craft governed by specific principles, purposes, and rules. [172] They conceive of literature as being an aery art; in truth, it is infinitely closer to being more useful and entertaining than they could ever admit.

St. Maurus' Day, 1970
Seal Beach, California

FOOTNOTES

See the General Bibliography for a complete citation of those works used frequently.

[1]Marc Bloch, Feudal Society, tr. by L. A. Manion (Chicago, University of Chicago Press), 1960, vol. I, p. 240.

[2]Not only was Dante regarded henceforth as the Italian who explained Christianity to men of the Middle Ages, he was elevated to the position of being Italy's great modern poet--something which he himself predicted. Less than fifty years after his death in 1321, a chair in Dante studies was created at Bologna; it was occupied by Boccaccio. From the time of Petrarch, Dante's influence on lay theological interpretation was felt as far as England, as can be detected in the writings of Geoffrey Chaucer.

[3]Iconographic sources and adaptations are not discussed in the text of this dissertation; however, for an introduction to the scenes of Hell in mediaeval art, see Joan Evans' Medieval France (Oxford University Press, all editions), as well as the following specialized works: William Waezoldt, Dürer and His Times (New York, Phaidon Publishers), 1951, plate 74; Erwin Panofsky, Albrecht Dürer (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press), 1948, 3rd ed., 2 vols.; Albert Boeckler, Deutsche Buchmalerei Vorgotischer Zeit (Karl Robert Langweische Nachfolger, Hans Köster Königstein im Taunus), 1959, p. 66; Albert Boeckler, Deutsche Buchmalerei der Gotik (Karl Robert Langweische Nachfolger, Hans Köster Königstein im Taunus), 1959, p. 61; Margaret Rickert, Painting in Britain: The Middle Ages (Baltimore, Md., Penguin Books), 1954; Adolphe Napoleon Didron, Christian Iconography; or,

The History of Christian Art in the Middle Ages, ed. and tr. by Margaret Stokes (London, Bell and Sons), 1907, vol. II, pp. 153-173, "Iconography of Death"; E. Baldwin Smith, Early Christian Iconography and a School of Ivory Carvers in Provence, Princeton University Monographs in Art and Archaeology VI (Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press), 1918; E. Balwin Smith, Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages, Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology XXX (Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press), 1956; Sir Edward Sullivan, The Book of Kells (New York, Studio Publications, Inc.), 1952; Dr. Peter Metz, The Golden Gospels of Echternach, Codex Aureus Epternacensis (New York, Frederick A. Prager), 1957; Thomas Wright, A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art (London, Chatto and Windus), 1875; Louis Reau, Iconographie de L'Art Chrétien (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France), 1957, vol. II, part 2, section v, Chapter I, pp. 531-537, "La Descente aux Limbes".

[4]No collected work has been done on the subject of Hell as pictured in mediaeval manuscript illustrations. However, there are some rather interesting presentation in those manuscripts from the High Middle Ages onward. Their iconographic form usually follows the standard format, with demons pictured inside the mouth of the Devil. This large Devil's head may be either a copy of the iconography already done in stone or it may have been taken from the sets used in the ecclesiastical drama. The cross-influence in design has not as yet been traced out, and it has not been possible to determine whether the first appearance of the scene appeared in illustration, carving, or drama. A major introduction to this problem may be found in Adolph Katzenellenbogen's The Scriptural Programs of Chartres Cathedral and The Vices and Virtues

in Medieval Art (Baltimore, Md., The Johns Hopkins University Press), all editions.

[5]G. R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Mediaeval England (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 1933, cf. references to "Sin".

[6]Morton Bloomfield, The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature (Lansing, Michigan, Michigan State College Press), 1952, p. 115 and p. 222.

[7]Ibid., Chapters III and V.

[8]The prototype of the "Hell-fire and brimstone" sermon of the contemporary evangelists may stem from the vision of St. Brendan in the hagiographic Voyage of St. Brendan, discussed in Chapter IV.

[9]Bloch, op. cit., p. 210.

[10]Cf. Dom David Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought (New York, Vintage Books), 1962.

[11]At the beginning of the 16th century the Gospel of Nicodemus was still very much in vogue: Bishop Lattimer preached a sermon on its themes to Edward VI; Erasmus' visit to England and Sir Thomas More was celebrated with a window in Canterbury Cathedral (on the subject of the "Harrowing of Hell") and a copy of the Gospel under it dedicated to his honor. See William Hone, Ancient Mysteries Described . . . (London, William Reeves), 1823, pp. 128-129; Caspar Rene Gregory, Canon and Text of the New Testament (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons), 1907, p. 252.

[12]Purgatory dates from the papacy of Gregory the Great (d. 603), and the concept was ill-received and ill-understood in many of the works which accepted the themes and story of the Gospel of Nicodemus; how-

ever, by the time of the cycle plays it appears to have taken hold. In the Early Middle Ages, Hell's pains and torments seemed to have been purgation enough and there were no levels and divisions of Hell mentioned in the works which used the "Harrowing". Dante's use of Purgatory in the Commedia verifies its application in literature (ca. 1300); but, as a teaching device, it certainly was not as powerful as the fear of Hell itself because eternal punishment was always more threatening.

[13]Both Workman and Sutherland and the mythographers agree that Hell in the pagan and Christian teachings was a powerful force from the beginning. The Christian concept of an eternal world of punishment was transformed from the Hebrew ones by the 3rd century (Cf. J. C. F. Brandon, "Christianity" in The Judgment of the Dead), and the concept of Heaven became more highly developed.

[14]Christian demonology, derived from an extension of the old Babylonian system which was taken over by the Hebrews, became impressed on Christian thought during the times when Roman Mithraic religion was so powerful. For a rather complete discussion of this, see: F. Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra and R. H. Charles, Eschatology.

[15]From the "Harrowing of Hell".

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid.; The Augustinian and Gregorian commentaries on the Gospel (discussed in Chapter II) helped to amplify this somewhat.

[18]There has been a division of thought within theological New Testament interpretation as to whether or not unrepentant souls will be given eternal punishment at the time of the Last Judgment, or whether they will be extingueshed completely--with the consequent Eternal Life

being only a Heavenly experience with God. A further discussion of the problems involved is found in Chapter II.

[19]Heresy, in this sense, indicates disbelief in the system of theology called doctrinal by Rome; given an accepted premise, all things which were logically derived from it had to be valid, of necessity. To counter such a logical argument, one had to show that the extensions were wrongly constructed, or to go beyond this to deny the truth of the premise. In the Hell-centered system, this meant denying the existence of Hell. The validity of the Canonical Gospels was supported by the writings of the Early Church Fathers, as well as by the traditions "verified" in the martyrologies and hagiographies.

[20]Knowles, p. 255ff.

[21]Frequently the terms "true" and "valid" are confused in the criticism of logical systems. "Valid" is that term which indicates that a syllogism of an enthymeme is logically constructed from the premise. "Validity" does not necessarily indicate that the logical conclusion can be demonstrated by proof. "Truth" usually relates to a conclusion based on observed facts. It can be said that it is "true" that water is a liquid; however, it cannot be demonstrated that "Wapstitches are corkled at night". The logical positivists claim that the existence of a Supreme Being cannot be demonstrated; therefore, a Supreme Being does not exist. If the sources for theology are proved to be divorced from reality, then the logical conclusions based on these sources (although "valid") are just as un-true.

[22]Catholic Encyclopedia, "Faith".

[23]Ibid., "Dogma"; Harnack, History of Dogma.

[24]Studies in the history of early Christianity (Chadwick, Deansley)

indicate that the number of major disputes over dogma were few; yet, if we consider the reasons for the early Church Councils, it becomes apparent that a number of concepts were argued among the clergy and that the Councils attempted rather successfully to stamp out beliefs which did not coincide with accepted faith. In the case of the Gospel of Nicodemus, Christ's descent to Hell was "settled" by the Council of Nicaea in 325, and the later creeds verified it as dogma. Cf. ODCC.

[25]Throughout this dissertation I refer to the "Victorian" school of criticism. This rather all-encompassing title includes the post-Darwinian scientific thinkers who condemned the principles of the Church (Anglican and Roman), the folklorists of the Frazer group who wanted to provide a mythic background for Christianity, and those Anglican and Protestant clergymen who desired to cast doubts on the validity of Roman doctrines.

[26]An interesting introduction to mediaeval rhetoric is found in Corbett's Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student. One of the more important texts has been translated and annotated by McGarry in his Metalogicon of John of Salisbury: a Twelfth-Century Defense of the Verbal and Logical Arts of the Trivium (Berkeley, University of California Press), 1962.

[27]Ker's Dark Ages sets the tone for much historical literary interpretation at the beginning of this century. In more recent publications, the terms "Roman, Early, High, and Late" are attached to the 1,000-year period from 476 to 1476. For those Victorian classical historians who dealt with the Late Latin matters, the first mediaeval period looked very dark, indeed. Since the publication of such synthesis of scholarship as the Oxford and Cambridge Mediaeval History,

the term "Dark Ages" no longer serves any useful purpose for either history or literature.

[28]Although the "Great Works" approach to literature is helpful in the selection of anthology materials on the basis of the work's appeal or relevance today, it does not account for the importance of works in their own time. In the Encyclopedia Britannica edition of the Great Books, the Middle Ages are represented by selections from Dante and Chaucer. The Harvard Classics' choice is even more limited and over-weighted with 19th and 20th century works. The more familiar survey texts of Western European Literature, influenced by the "Great Works" theory, are notably disproportionate. Beowulf, the "Great English Epic", had a rather small audience and a limited influence on Old English literature; yet its emergence in this century as one of the "Great Works" was certainly not based on its impact on the Middle Ages themselves.

[29]See, for example, S. B. Greenfield's Critical History of Old English Literature.

[30]Sir Peter King, The History of the Apostles Creed: With Critical Observations on its Several Articles (London, Jonathan Robinson), 1703, p. 224.

[31]Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church) refers to the rather interesting (but seemingly unsubstantiated) fact that the Gospel was present among the holy books used by the Nicaean Council. (See p. 180.) The manuscript studies do not permit us to postulate such an early composition date for the "original".

[32]Legouis and Cazamian's History of English Literature is rather parochial and nationalistic in its approach to Old and Middle English

Literature: French models and French sources are always identified; even the most recent editions are notably lacking in revised bibliographic entries on the Old English versions of the Descent.

[33]Christian Century and the Jewish publication Commentary frequently devote their issues to contemporary vogues in theology; the major recent concerns have been the "God is Dead" theological attack on religion. The essential Gregorian concept of making Christianity fit the situation has become a pragmatic adjustment of Pauline interpretation to fit each age.

[34]In a survey of the critical materials written on the literature of the Early Middle Ages, it becomes obvious that little space has been given to the critical reception of early mediæval works in their own time. One exception is Doris Stenton's The Audience of Beowulf.

[35]See Chapters I and II; Conclusion.

[36]Cf. George F. Jones, The Ethos of the Song of Roland.

[37]Although the works of I. A. Richards, Allen Tate, and John Crow Ransome have helped to turn critical inquiry back to the texts themselves, there has been the unfortunate tendency to discard useful and highly relevant external matters which impinge on the "meaning" of the work. The result of this extension produces the notion that each work exists outside of the normal time and space relationships and that works are beyond the control of their authors. The new study of film criticism dwells on the "social significance" of early sound films-- not for their significance when they were made, but for their "message" today. In this respect, "New School" critics see literature as "being written for all time".

[38]Positivist attitudes are exceptionally limited because they do not

accept religious or metaphysical interpretation, and they disallow the theorizing of Freudian or Jungian analysis. In the pure form of positivism there is no way to determine the Zeitgeist.

[39]At the founding of the Medieval Society of the Pacific (held at the University of California, Davis, 1965), several forum speakers lamented the lack of American University concern for programs in mediaeval studies. Almost all major schools have eliminated the Latin requirements for the B.A., and Greek studies departments have barely enough students to maintain themselves. At the 1969 classical studies conference held at Berkeley only two faculty positions were available for more than 150 applicants.

[40]Cf. Thomas J. J. Altizer, The Descent into Hell (New York, Lippincott), 1970; Peter L. Berger, A Rumor of Angels (New York, Doubleday & Co., Inc.), 1970; and Maxie D. Dunnham, Be Your Whole Self (Los Angeles, California, Revell), 1970.

[41]Each time the Church has been faced with severely Rationalistic criticism (Protestant and English Reformations, Neo-Classical Voltairianism, Post-Darwinianism, and Existentialism), it has reacted to the demands of the "modernists" and changed theological practices in order to bring them into line with the contemporary world. Protestant observers at the end of the Victorian age also attempted to bring about a purification of the English Church. Cf. Conybeare's The Origins of Christianity; Legge's Rivals and Forerunners of Christianity.

[42]Ibid., Conybeare and Legge.

[43]See Knowles, pp. 73, 74; 173; 204. In the study of the trivium-quadrivium, all knowledge was thought to extend from God and to reveal His existence to the world. Each discipline contributed to the notion of

an ordered universe, governed by its Creator.

[44]For a contemporary continuation of this controversy, see: The Times Literary Supplement (London), issues of May 1970.

[45]See Chapter II; MacCulloch, The Harrowing of Hell.

[46]A major advance in mediaeval Western hagiography-historiography has been made through the study of "administrative history". See Chapter V and the General Bibliography.

[47]Alexander Heidel's Babylonian Genesis (Chicago, University of Chicago Press), 1960, is a heavy-handed approach to the subject of pagan influences on the Old Testament Genesis narrative. Heidel's work establishes sufficient evidence of folklore appearing in the story; but it seems that, because of his research support from the Lutheran church, he distorted the conclusions.

[48]Cf. Renan's Histoire des Origines du Christianisme; Nietzsche's Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik.

[49]MacCulloch, Chapter III, argues strongly against the intrusion of folklore into the "Harrowing". Rather than having used the available studies in Sumerian religious texts, he basis his thesis on the materials provided by followers of Frazer. MacCulloch represents the High Church Anglican divine who sees the Early Church as being pure; Frazer's followers saw it as corrupt. This conflict in ideologies could only have been terminated through the use of better source materials.

[50]Much new material in Near Eastern studies has been contributed to biblical criticism by monographs published under the sponsorship of Princeton University, the University of Chicago Oriental Institute, and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. Since 1930, the Babylonian and Assyriological researchers have helped to revise many of their

former "folkloric" attitudes through textual studies and the translation

of new tablets. Several citations from these publications appear in

Chapter I.

[51]See Introduction, Part II.

[52]For instance: Bloomfield's Linguistics, Sturdevant's Introduction

to Lingustic Science, Hymes' Lexicostatistics, and Meillet's Introduc-

tion à l'Étude Comparative des Langues Indo-Européenes.

[53]Conybeare, p. 357.

[54]Legge, pp. 201f.

[55]Ker, p. 103.

[56]Cf. Becker, The Gospel of Nicodemus.

[57]That is, a work could not serve more than one purpose.

[58]Cf. Hulme's article in PMLA on the Old English versions of the

Gospel of Nicodemus.

[59]Conybeare, pp. 286ff; the introductions to the chapters on 20th-

century thought in Walter Kaufmann's Existentialism from Dostoyevsky

to Sartre are interesting.

[60]Cf. Altizer, Descent.

[61]Kaufmann, citations on "Logical Positivism".

[62]One of the cardinal principles of existential thought is that exis-

tence precedes essence; this is a violation of Catholic dogma and a

complete rejection of Original Sin, among other concepts. The recent

attempts to postulate Christian existentialism (Maritain) are not sanc-

tioned by the Church.

[63]Jean-Paul Sartre, No Exit and Other Plays, Act I, Scene II.

[64]Carl Gustav Jung, The Collected Works of Carl Jung: Symbols of

Transformation, tr. by R. F. C. Hull (New York, Pantheon Books), 1956,

Chapter III.

[65]Altizer, op. cit.

[66]Charles, op. cit.; recent citations are listed at the end of the Introduction.

[67]The Acta Pilati portions of the Gospel accent the guilt of the Jews for their crucifixion of Christ. Individuals, as well as the Sanhedrin, are condemned by the author of the work. In the "Harrowing" portions, the telling of the story proves to the Jews that they have been in error; furthermore, the "Letter of Pilate" appended to the "Harrowing" gives Pilate's official condemnation of the Jewish action. The guilt of Pilate is not stressed in either entry. (See Chapter II for more commentary on Pilate.) During the High Middle Ages, it was an accepted fact that Jews often sacrificed Christian children in their rites. Jewish guilt was confirmed by their loss of a homeland and their wandering--giving rise to other folkloric motifs.

[68]The essential "meaning" in the Descent is Christ's love and sacrifice for mankind. The proof of Christ's divinity was in his ressurection; the proof of God's love came with Christ's saving of the damned in Hell.

[69]This division is apparent in the Latin and Greek MSS. See Chapter II for a further discussion.

[70]The Introduction to the work assigns it to Nicodemus; however, the "Harrowing" reduces Nicodemus to a minor character. The presence of another author is felt more in the narrative. See Chapter II.

[71]The Acts of Pilate comes closer to describing the action of the story: the first part of the manuscript deals with the judgment and crucifixion of Christ through Pilate's actions.

[72]The "Harrowing of Hell" is a rather Englished term for the second part; yet it does help to distinguish this section from the text of the descent sections in credal statements.

[73]There is no established way to decide which title is the most appropriately authentic; therefore, references to the work may be indexed in at least eight different ways.

[74]The term "Apocrypha" normally meant those religious works which were too _sacred_ or _secret_ to be revealed to outsiders; it has become a catch-all term for texts considered spurious. "Pseudepigraphal" is simply "falsely entitled". Neither classification fits.

[75]See Chapters I and II.

[76]The Grail and Longinus legends are not discussed in this dissertation; neither one figures in the "Harrowing" portions under study.

[77]See Chapter II.

[78]I have not been able to determine when and by what authority the _Gospel of Nicodemus_ was removed from the Canon. It appears as one of the earliest printed books in England; yet it is not included in the King James Version a century later.

[79]One of the major folkloric parallels with Christ's Descent is the Sumerian "Descent of Inanna to the Nether World". It has now been connected with the more current and pervasive Adonis myth by Kramer. See Chapter I.

[80]MacCulloch, Chapter II.

[81]Ibid.

[82]See Chapter I.

[83]Ibid.

[84]Ibid.

[85]Ibid.

[86]Without what might be termed a "central authority" of the Church--beyond the early Councils--legendary beliefs were sometimes considered as authentic as the Gospels. Bloch, op. cit., has some rather interesting discussions of the mediaeval mind in his sections on historiography in vol. II.

[87]See a further discussion of these theories in Chapters I and II.

[88]Until the appearance of the Gospel of Nicodemus, the full account of Christ's descent to Hell was not available. New Testament hints and excerpts from the Fathers were not complete enough to provide a detailed accounting of what happened to Christ during the three days.

[89]See Chapters III, IV, V, and VI.

[90]A.D. 389?-461 and 521-597, or approximately during the period when the text was supposedly written. See Chapter II.

[91]See Chapter II.

[92]Ibid.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Chapters III, IV, and VI.

[96]During the period of the Chanson de Roland, the "Harrowing" was accepted through the interpretations of the commentaries: direct deliverance to Heaven through martyrdom was preached by Archbishop Turpin and Roland's death "proved" it. See Chapters III and VI.

[97]See Chapters III through V.

[98]To date, there is no evidence that any descent motif from the non-Christian native traditions can be detected in the vernacular adap-

tations of the "Harrowing". Precious little which can be called "native" remains from the Early Middle Ages; oral literature was seldom committed to writing.

[99]Several interesting studies have been written about the "lost" literature of mediæval Europe, but these have been based on the catalogue of titles mentioned by writers from the period. Items in library lists and references in theological texts to lost works tell us something about the readings of the clergy, but nothing about the content of the works. Reconstructions on this basis are tenuous.

[100]The Old English version is approximately 1/3rd shorter than the Latin II "original" and shows a reorganization of characters and events. See Chapter IV, Part I.

[101]From the time of Gregory the Great, Christian theology became more and more organized. Its more complete and comprehensive dogma explained, or helped to explain, phenomena which might not have been included in native systems. Paganism was never a unified religion, nor was it in any way universal; Christianity had greater force.

[102]In the instance of the German adaptation, the theme was made a personal reminder to the king; in its Anglo-Saxon transformation it was made "mediæval" and contemporary. See Chapters IV through VI.

[103]The concept of cycle drama was based on presenting the most important events in the life of Christ. The three-day Descent was made dramatic shortly after the Anglo-Saxon version, and the French poems on the Passion provided writers with the necessary script materials. In the cycle dramas of England, Germany, and France the "Harrowing" holds an important position. See Chapter IV.

[104]The use of the term "refreshing" in Christian religion goes back

to the Egyptian religions which stressed the fact that the believer would receive cool water in the hereafter. Within the Christian concept of Hell as a place of fiery punishment, the idea of a place of relief (refreshment) fits appropriately.

[105]See Chapter IV.

[106]French influence on English drama became more important as a source for the scripts than the Latin versions. See Chapter IV.

[107]Tracing out the sources of mediaeval drama has been done in the EETS editions of the plays.

[108]J. Weiss, Die Predigt Jesu vom Reich Gottes (Göttingen), 1900, is expanded by Albert Schweitzer's The Mystery of the Kingdom of God, tr. by Walter Lowrie (New York), 1901, and The Quest for the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Remarius to Wrede, tr. by W. Montgomery (London), 1906.

[109]Rudolph Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons), 1958.

[110]Conybeare, op. cit.

[111]Reginald H. Fuller, The New Testament in Current Study (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons), 1962.

[112]Thomas J. J. Altizer, Oriental Mysticism and Biblical Eschatology (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press), 1961, pp. 93ff.

[113]Constantin von Tischendorff, Evangelia Apocrypha sive de Evangeliorum Apocryphorum Origine et Usu (The Hague, Thierry and Mensing), 1851.

[114]Jacques-Paul Migne, Patrologiæ cursus completus (Series latina) sive, Bibliotheca universalis, integra, uniformus, commoda œconomica, omnium ss. patrum, doctorum scriptorumque ecclesiasti-

corum (Ecclesiae latinae) qui ab aevo apostolico ad usque Innocentii III

tempora floruerunt (Paris, Migne), 1855-1882, 221 vols. The Greek

Fathers are in a separate edition.

[115]Montague Rhodes James, The Apocryphal New Testament (Ox-

ford, The Clarendon Press), 1924.

[116]The Ante-Nicene Fathers; Translations of the Writings of the

Fathers down to A.D. 325, ed. by Rev. Alexander Roberts and James

Donaldson; American Reprint of the Edinburgh edition rev. and ed. by

A. Cleveland Coxe (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Erdmans Pub-

lishing Co.), 1951, 12 vols.

[117]Announcement of this edition was made at the annual meeting of

the Mediaeval Society of the Pacific (Davis, California) in 1967.

[118]Sirarpie der Nersessian, "An Armenian Version of the Homilies

on the Harrowing of Hell", Dumbarton Oaks Papers, No. 8 (Cambridge,

Mass., Harvard University Press), 1954, pp. 201-224.

[119]R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old

Testament (Oxford, The Clarendon Press), 1913, 2 vols.

[120]J. Kroll, Gott and Hölle (Leipzig/Berlin), 1932.

[121]A. Harnack, A History of Dogma (New York), 3rd ed., 1961.

[122]F. Loofs, "Descent to Hades (Christ's)", Encyclopedia of Re-

ligion and Ethics, ed. by J. Hastings (Edinburgh), 1911, vol. iv.

[123]Edinburgh, 1913.

[124]New York, 1929.

[125]Op. cit.

[126]Op. cit.

[127]"The Old English Version of the Gospel of Nicodemus", PMLA,

vol. xiii (Fall 1898), pp. 457-542.

[128]Bright's Anglo-Saxon Reader, ed. by James R. Hulbert (Chicago, University of Chicago Press), 1961.

[129]The Gospel of Nicodemus, ed. by S. J. Crawford, The Awle Ryale Series (Edinburgh, J. B. Hutchen), 1927.

[130]See: "Apocrypha (N. T.)", "Gospel of Nicodemus", "Hell".

[131]Ibid.

[132]Ibid.

[133]Op. cit.

[134]See references to the St. Patrick legend in Chapter IV.

[135]Among the antiquarians listed as founding-subscribers of the Early English Text Society was Alfred Lord Tennyson, one of the great popularizers of the Middle Ages.

[136]Humphrey Prideaux, D.D., Dean of Norwich, The Old and New Testament connected, in the History of the Jews and Neighboring Nations; from the Declension of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, to the Time of Christ (New York, Harper and Brothers), fifteenth American from the twentieth London edition, 1855, vol. II, pp. 3-10.

[137](London, The Macmillan Co.), 1915-1922, 12 vols. and supp.

[138](London, The Macmillan Co.), 1903, 3 vols.

[139]His listing of folkloric parallels opened many stories to serious questioning. Heidel's work on Genesis, op. cit., is an outgrowth of this early investigation.

[140]Richard M. Dorson, "The Eclipse of Solar Mythology", in The Study of Folklore, ed. by Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, Inc.), 1965.

[141]Dundes, op. cit., Fitzroy Richard Somerset, Forth Baron Lord Raglan, "The Hero of Tradition".

[142] James B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press), 1955.

[143] For example, see the articles in: Journal of Cuneiform Studies, Orentalia, Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts, Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, Keilschriftliche Bibliothek, Orientalistische Literaturzeitzung, and Altorientalische Texte zum alten Testament.

[144] Op. cit. A list of the most appropriate Jungian citations appears in the General Bibliography.

[145] Op. cit. See also his The Epic of Gilgamesh and Old Testament Parallels (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press), 1963.

[146] Lamentation Over the Destruction of Ur (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press), 1940; Sumerian Mythology (New York, American Philosophical Society), 1944; Mythologies of the Ancient World (New York, Doubleday and Co.), 1961.

[147] By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism (New York, Yale University Press), 1935; Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period ((New York, Pantheon Books), 1958, 8 vols.

[148] Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture, tr. from the second German ed. by Gilbert Highet (New York, Columbia University Press), 1945.

[149] Cosmos and History: the Myth of the Eternal Return, tr. by Willard R. Trask (New York, Harper and Brothers), 1959; The Myth of the Eternal Return (New York, Pantheon Books), 1954.

[150] Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

[151] "Medieval English Conceptions of Hell as Developed from

Biblical, Patristic, and N:tive Germanic Influences" (unpublished dissertation, University of Kentucky), 1953.

[152]"The Concept of Hell in Anglo-Saxon Poetry before 850 A.D." (unpublished dissertation, University of South Carolina), 1960.

[153]James, op. cit., "Introduction" to his translation of the texts of the Gospel of Nicodemus.

[154]See the studies of Ackerman, Greenfield, and Jackson listed in the General Bibliography.

[155]Op. cit.

[156]Deno Geanakoplos, Byzantine East & Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (New York, Harper), 1966; Basil Dmytryshyn, Medieval Russia: A Sourcebook, 900-1700 (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.), 1967.

[157]Cf. George Henderson, Gothic (Baltimore, Md., Penguin Books), 1967; Rocco Montano, "Dante's Style and Gothic Aesthetic," in A Dante Symposium, pp. 11-33.

[158]Raymond Trousson, Un problème de littérature comparée: les études de thèmes (essai de méthodologie), Situation, No. 7 (Paris, M. J. Minard: Lettres Modernes), 1965.

[159]Elizabeth Frenzel, Stoffe der Weltliteratur (Stuttgart), 1962.

[160]Raymond Trousson, Le thème de Prométhée dans la littérature européenne (Genève, Droz), 1962, 2 vols.

[161](New York, Harper), 1963.

[162]Grigore Nandris, "The Historical Dracula", Comparative Literature Studies (College Park, Md., The University of Maryland Press), Vol. 3, No. 4 (1966), pp. 367-396.

[163]Stith Thompson, Motif-Index of Folk-Literature (Bloomington,

Indiana, Indiana University Press), all eds., 6 vols. pr. in 3.

[164]See Trousson's remarks on Frenzel in his _Études_, op. cit.

[165]Rene Welleck and Austin Warren, _The Theory of Literature_ (New York, Harcourt, Brace and World), 1956, pp. 47-48.

[166]See Chapters III, IV, and V.

[167]Turold might be the one exception to the rule; however, it has been argued both ways that he was either the author _or_ the transcriber of the epic.

[168]The most fascinating account of this appears in the compilation of Jack David Angus Ogilvy, _Books Known to Anglo-Latin Writers from Aldhelm to Alcuin_ (Cambridge, Mass., Mediaeval Academy of America), 1936.

[169]We can not only determine many of the books which were read and accepted for mediaeval authors but also see how these books were viewed at that time. Insights into the mediaeval aesthetic of literature provide invaluable assistance in formulating the _ethos_ of each work.

[170]The "ethico-historical" system is not sociological in that it does not postulate anything about _group_ behavior; rather, it extends _from_ the work _into_ its setting.

[171]One is reminded of the canonization of T. S. Eliot's poetry in the 1940s and 1950s. Karl Shapiro's penetrating examination of this process changes the course of critical opinion on Eliot for the next decade away from the "New School" approach.

[172]Corbett, _op. cit._

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Christian Church[1] preaches that the salvation of mankind is guaranteed[2] by Christ's descent to Hell[3] and Resurrection:[4] not only did early ecclesiastics[5] cite the usual canonical[6] references to these events from the New Testament,[7] for more than a millennium they further certified the truth of this belief by using the "Harrowing of Hell"[8] from the Gospel of Nicodemus.[9] With the development of more perceptive critical methods[10] in the later Middle Ages,[11] the Nicodemus lost favor as an authoritative document,[12] and it was eventually consigned to the Apocrypha of the New Testament;[13] however, the belief in Christ's descent has remained one of the articles of the faith,[14] as attested to by both the Nicaean[15] and Athanasian Creeds.[16]

Since the end of the Second World War, New Testament scholarship has undergone a revolution[17] and a minor renaissance[18] brought about by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947,[19] supplemented by additional archaeological finds in the Near East,[20] and a revision of many of the basic principles of biblical Higher Criticism.[21] The notable contributions of Samuel Noah Kramer,[22], Cyrus H. Gordon,[23] E. O. James,[24] Fr. Hugh Rahner,[25] and S. G. F. Brandon[26] have helped to modernize the Graff-Wellhausen theory[27] of textual analysis by verifying the de-mythologization of Rudolph Bultmann[28] through a transformation of the entire corpus of archaeo-historical materials[29] from scattered data into a more completely synthesized body of tradition.[30] As a result of these changes, many Testament textual matters which were once thought settled after the first third of this century are now being

reconsidered seriously[31] and, consequently, the Apocrypha is under-going a thorough reexamination and reevaluation.[32] Most importantly-- for a discussion of the "Harrowing of Hell"--the problem of thematology has been given new relevancy.[33]

Modern scholarship has verified that the "descent to Hell" theme is an extremely ancient and pervasive one in the history of written lit-erature,[34] and one which found its way into the Christian tradition[35] in spite of its pagan origins and nature.[36] This theme has undergone con-siderable recent study[37] and it has become the center of a seemingly unending controversy:[38] because it appears well-developed in the earliest of Western cultures,[39] and also provides an essential element in Christian doctrinal theology,[40] it has been necessary to establish valid relationships (or the lack of them) between Christian dogma and pagan belief[41] in order to isolate the unique "Truth" of the Church.[42] Although this matter of "Truth" is not the central purpose of the follow-ing discussion, it becomes central to an understanding of the background and ethos[43] of the apocrypha. It is no longer possible to hold the opin-ion that the New Testament was created ex nihilo[44] in Hellenistic Alexandria,[45] as it is popularly believed in non-orthodox, impression-istic religions;[46] what it is now possible to comprehend is the growth and development of the New Testament out of its Near Eastern setting:[47] it absorbed and transformed pagan thought and theology[48] despite later proof which has been submitted for its essential purity and refined phi-losophy.[49] In the particular case of the "Harrowing", scholars have discovered facts which point toward what might be termed an early Christian attempt at œcumenism[50] confounded by a lack of historical knowledge and perspective.[51] More pointedly, the "Harrowing" may

represent only one additional document in the history of the ever-popular descent motif,[52] without regard to the fact that the "Harrowing's" acceptance throughout the Middle Ages verified the Creed by providing a complete narrative account which corroborated the canonical references to Christ's Passion and Resurrection.[53] Furthermore, we can no longer be certain that the author of the work was completely unaware of the descent motif[54] and composed his work by using only authorized Christian materials for his story.[55] Whatever original purpose he had in mind for the "Harrowing" was lost to Christians after the Late Classical Period, when pagan traditions were almost completely assimilated into or destroyed by Christianity.[56]

It is, therefore, the purpose of this introductory chapter to survey the most recent criticism of this theme in ancient literature so as to determine which pre-Christian elements from it were transmitted to the "Harrowing of Hell"[57] and which elements from it were to impinge upon the transmission of the "Harrowing" into mediaeval literature.[58] The chapter is divided into gradually narrowing discussions of the descent theme from its beginnings in Sumerian literature to its appearance in New Testament materials. First, there is a general survey of the descent-to-hell motif in Near Eastern literature, with special emphasis on those stories which relate directly to the "Original" and to the later "Harrowing". Secondly, there follows a discussion of the theme in the materials associated with the Judaeo-Christian literary tradition. Finally, there is an analysis of the currency of the belief in all descent stories at the time of the Christian revelation and the composition of the New Testament.

Because the body of criticism on Near Eastern and Old Testament

studies has grown by geometric proportions to the point where it is possible to mention only the highlights in the accompanying notes, I have attempted to facilitate the discussion of relevant parallels by providing the reader with specialized bibliographies following the notes.[59]

A. Ancient Near Eastern Literature

Slightly over a century ago,[60] the first evidences of a descent to Hell story were translated[61] from Babylonian cuneiform tablets discovered by German archaeologists[62] working toward the Mesopotamian history of the Old Testament.[63] The story of the goddess Ištar and her lover Tammuz[64] was gradually pieced together from fragments which had become widely separated into Western museum collections.[65] The myth was almost immediately identified with the descent in the New Testament[66] and the Gospel of Nicodemus,[67] although in a facile, tentative manner.[68] Concurrent finds also disclosed other cuneiform and epigraphic[69] evidence of inscriptions[70] which were older than the Babylonian and which eventually provided scholars with their first knowledge[71] of the pre-Babylonian Sumerian-Akkadian civilization--the conquered teachers of the Babylonians.[72] Once Sumerian literary tablets were able to be translated, it was found that the Ištar-Tammuz tale was a variant of the "original" myth of Inanna and Dumuzi.[73] In 1968 Samuel Noah Kramer, Clark Professor of Assyriology at the University of Pennsylvania, revealed that the concluding tablets of the Sumerian indicate that the Babylonian version is a metaphrase at some considerable variance with the earlier form.[74] His most careful examinations and translations of both sets[75] of tablets now prevent scholars from making a direct identification of the whole myth with the "Harrowing of Hell",

but they have shed considerable new light on many elements of the descent to hell motif which appear in all versions.[76]

Two additional myth-sequences from the Sumerian literature of the second millennium B.C.[77] have helped to show the considerable influence which this civilization's beliefs had on the religious writings of all Mesopotamian societies.[78] Outside of some other descent elements, discussed later, we find that the Sumerian creation epic Enuma Elish[79] ("When Above") probably provided Old Testament writers with the sequence involved in the creation of earth and man,[80] the character of Adam,[81] and the pattern for Judaic demonology.[82] In addition, the Epic of Gilgameš[83] gave us the first Deluge,[84] Noah,[85] and the motif of the search for eternal life.[86] By using materials from all three Sumerian tales, the modern mythographers have been able to identify and interpret many themes from the Old Testament[87] which were previously thought to have originated in Hebrew monotheistic theology.[88]

"Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld"[89] is the earliest written source for coordinating a number of important Sumerian concepts:

1. Heaven is above, the Earth in the middle, and "Hell" below (90)
2. "Hell" is governed by a "fallen" goddess who is surrounded by "demons"; she has the power of judgment and punishment (such as crucifixion) (91)
3. "Resurrection" was accomplished through the use of the "bread" and "water" of life; it was made complete by the substitution of a surrogate to take the place of the divinity resurrected (92)
4. The descent and resurrection took three days. (93)

However, it must be noted that the Sumerian version does not state whatsoever that Inanna descended to save the life of her son-lover-husband Dumuzi;[94] in a contrary fashion, it is Inanna who has to be saved and who, upon her return to Earth, sends Dumuzi to take her place--even though his sister volunteers herself.[95] In the later

Babylonian versions--probably the most influential in Old Testament and New Testament times[96]-it appears that Tammuz needs to be resurrected through Ištar's intercession.[97] The Old Testament records women weeping for Tammuz[98] in and around the vicinity of Ur of the Chaldees,[99] the home of Abraham[100] and the city sacred to Inanna's worship.[101] Ancient as the cult of the goddess is, worship of the divine pair (as Ištar-Tammuz) remained alive in the Near East from the second millennium through the early Christian centuries.[102]

Midway between the Mesopotamian Sumerian civilizations and the Egyptian was that of the Canaanites.[103] Ugaritic[104] mythology also contains a descent to Hell tale in the Baal-Mot Cycle,[105] but more importantly, it supplies Near Eastern belief with the characters of Leviathan,[106] Rahab (in various forms),[107] and the evil Baal-Zebub, prince of darkness.[108] We find that the Ugaritic myths do not propose a solution to the problem of good and evil,[109] and the conflict between these two forces remains undecided in an eternal confrontation.[110] Between 1957 and 1962 Professor Gordon of Brandeis published a series of works on the identification of Minoan Linear A tablets from Crete as being Semitic,[111] thus providing a Near Eastern linguistic base for pre-Olympian Hellenic myth.[112] This major breakthrough has now validated earlier assumptions by classical writers[113] that the outward similarities between Creto-Hellenic divinities and those of the Near East permitted them to be equated and worshipped as one-and-the-same.[114]

Contiguous to the development[115] of the Inanna-Dumuzi cycle was that of the Egyptian religious pair, Isis-Osiris.[116] The Old Kingdom Period (through the IVth Dynasty)--not noted for an impressively well-developed eschatology[117]-does record our earliest mention of Osiris as

a funereal divinity.[118] In what James Henry Breasted refers to as the gradual "Osirinization" of Egyptian religion,[119] we find that Osiris became attached to the life-hereafter, and that his worship guaranteed the believer an eternity where before he had none.[120] As with the early Mesopotamian divinities, Osiris, too, descends to the Netherworld after his untimely murder[121] and is resuscitated through the efforts of Isis.[122] His son Horus undertakes retributive action against Set (the murderer)[123] in a manner somewhat parallel to that of Dumuzi's sister.[124] The afterlife cult of Isis-Osiris spread throughout the ancient world and survived as late as the fourth Christian century.[125]

B. Hellenic-Hellenistic-Roman Religions

Very little of the "original" religious beliefs of the Hellenic peoples remains in the cycles of myths which we now call Greek:[126] the overpowering migrations from the east,[127] north,[128] and south (primarily Hittite and Cretan)[129] produced profound changes in the character of Greek religion.[130] And, as the Greeks extended their influence into the Mediterranean, they incorporated many external beliefs into their own.[131] By the time of Athen's Golden Age, Greek religion was extremely eclectic while,[132] at the same time, uncodified.[133] Its influence on Roman thought might be due most possibly to its infinite adaptability.[134] In the two hundred-year period from the last pagan century through the first Christian one,[135] Greeks and Romans worshipped not only the imported religions of Ištar-Tammuz,[136] Isis-Osiris,[137] and the Phrygian Attis-Cybele,[138] but the "native" descent pairs Dionysus-Semele,[139] Orpheus-Eurydice,[140] and Aphrodite-Adonis[141] as Olympian.[142] Furthermore, they also honored the descending individuals

Heracles,[143] Odysseus,[144] and Aeneas.[145]

As has been noted here, the greater part of our knowledge of Greek myths, and most especially those incorporating the descent motif, comes from writings produced after the sixth century B.C.[146] Because of this fact, the lack of earlier evidence,[147] and the inability to handle Hittite[148] and Minoan Linear B inscriptions,[149] scholarship has been hampered in the creation of an acceptable theory of mythological inter-dependence throughout the entire ancient world.[150] However, matters become somewhat clearer after the period of Pisistratus and Solon[151] due to Greek historical interest in religion:[152] with the notable excep-tion of their silence on the content of the various Mysteries,[153] we have substantial proof of Greek attempts to unify the divergent elements of afterlife and underworld beliefs[154]—even to the point of providing an Hellenic origin for the Egyptian gods,[155] tempering the whole process with rational philosophy.[156] Unfortunately, these movements were never pursued by the Romans[157] and their compounding of religious mistakes[158] permitted the state religion to grow stale and decay.[159]

Recent studies by Martin P. Nillson,[160] Fr. Rahner, and Robert Graves[161] have helped to identify the descent aspects of Greek myth with later developments in either the Inanna-Dumuzi/Isis-Osiris reli-gions,[162] or both;[163] consequently, scholars now interpret the apparent diversity of belief not as dis-unified and multi-faceted evidence of the Greek inability to create a pervasive eschatology,[164] but as evidence of a deeper psychological understanding of life and death beliefs[165] as they were conditioned by the individual's ethos.[166] Even though the Greek religions never developed an ethical monotheism of the type approaching that of the Hebrews,[167] they did tend toward an internalization of

principles as can be seen through the growth of the Mysteries[168] and a universalization of belief in salvation through basic œcumenism.[169] Their maturation processes were held back by the personifying[170] and allegorizing[171] tendencies in each faith. In spite of the many draw-backs preventing philosophical monotheism, the most important Greek religions later centered on gods and goddesses whose descent to Hell and resurrection assured the believer of his own eternity.[172]

C. Hebrew Religion

The canon of the Old Testament was not established until some-time in the first Christian century;[173] therefore, it is erroneous to conceive of the limitations of Alexandrian belief as being the same as those of today.[174] Although many of the religious writings of the Jews have not been consigned to either the Apocrypha,[175] Pseudepigrapha,[176] or the Talmud,[177] we must deal with the situation of knowledge as it was and not as it is after nearly two millennia of purification.[178] Be-fore the Christian revelation, three basic Hebrew traditions impinged directly on the composition of the "Harrowing of Hell"[179] and provided it with essential elements: (1) the demonologic incorporations from the Near East,[180] (2) the Messianic necessities of the Hasmonian con-flicts,[181] and (3) the Apocalyptic retributions against Greco-Roman political and religious supremacy.[182] In addition to the canonical re-ferences to these, examples can also be isolated in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs[183] and the Sibylline Oracles.[184] All of the writings combined to provide a basis for Judaic traditional belief which was further extrapolated by Christian interpreters.[185]

The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, ca. 109 B.C.,[186]

another Alexandrine pseudepigraphal apocalypse,[187] is most notable for its inclusion of the figure of Beliar (Baal) as chief of Hell[188] and as the primary opponent of the Messiah.[189] Beliar was later interpreted as the Antichrist.[190] Through the successful descent of the Messiah into the kingdom of Beliar,[191] the Messiah was able to take captives from him[192] and see to their ascent into a heavenly hereafter.[193] Furthermore, those saved include the risen saints of the Old Testament.[194] Many of these harrowing aspects are attested to by the Sibylline Oracles,[195] but it must be noted that a number of critics have identified first-century Christian revisions in the received text of the Oracles.[196] These two documents do, nevertheless, help to formulate the Hebrew solution to their despair of not succeeding in establishing the kingdom of Yahweh on earth by postulating a future time of judgment when he will save his devotees and destroy their enemies.[197] It is only natural that these works enjoyed continued popularity, and a revival of religious interpretation in the time of Josephus.[198]

It is most curious that the historical success of Christianity appears not due at all to its contributions to ethical and social behavior, derived from a unique eschatology,[199] as it is to the substitution of an historical personage within human memory[200] for mythologic hero-gods: the collective desire personified by Christ does not owe its success as much to any novel contribution to man's understanding of his relation to the cosmos as it does to the external failures of religio-political systems in their attempts to become universal.[201] When Hellenistic Alexandria became the natural focal point for the pan-sacrementalism of nascent Christianity,[202] the principles of divine

theodicy had been syncretized through earlier epistemological systems, and multifarious ecclesiastical movements had established an insuperable ethico-spiritual purview of Hasmonian anticipations and eschatological considerations.[203]

D. Christian Sources[204]

By far the largest number of possible sources and analogues of the "Harrowing of Hell" survives in Jedaeo-Christian[205] and early Christian literature[206] written before the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.[207] The canonic[208] and Synoptic[209] references represent only a small portion of the total: over ten apocryphal documents[210] contain parallels of varying degrees of importance,[211] and twenty-six patristic writings[212] echo,[213] supplement,[214] or contribute[215] to the story as it appears in the "Harrowing". Unfortunately, because religious scholarship must depend on the extant corrupt[216] and fragmentary texts,[217] or later copies,[218] it is not possible to propose more than a highly tentative manuscript tradition[219] for the "Harrowing" which would settle many of the major problems involved in its composition.[220] Previous editors of the Nicodemus--Tischendorff,[221] Migne,[222] James,[223] and Coxe[224] have chosen not to postulate any morphological theories, even though the body of material is so great.

However, it must be noted that a chronological arrangement of materials,[225] although methodologically artificial and somewhat synthetic, does provide some insights into the apparent moulding and blending of elements[226] into the larger Christian descent theme. From this arraying of the apocryphal,[227] patristic,[228] and canonic,[229] three things can be observed: (1) the writings before the Council of

Nicaea depend mostly on Hebrew and canonical Christian sources,[230] and they add very little to the narrative as it appears in the "Harrowing".[231] The details of the descent are known,[232] but the sequence of events is not firmly established;[233] Christ's preaching in Hell[234] and his destruction of Hell[235] have become the favorite ideas borrowed from the Old and New Testaments; hagiology[236] and martyrology[237] have begun to be incorporated in the motif; and an additional "proof" of the Harrowing was supplied by the mention of resurrected men appearing on earth after their salvation.[238]

(2) Even though the Council of Nicaea accepted the descent by adding it to their discussion[239] as a simple statement without details,[240] this permitted wider latitude for interpreting the descent through patristic commentaries.[241] A verification of this magnitude, no doubt based on a desire to propagandize messianic success[242] and a wish to continue the Pauline widening of soteriology,[243] transformed the Jewish apocalyptic traditions into one of Christian immediacy,[244] while simultaneously incorporating much from pagan demonology.[245] By the time of the final triumph of the Creed in the seventh century,[246] the materials drawn from it were used in turn--anachronistically--to support its truth.[247]

(3) Post-Nicaean Fathers,[248] writers,[249] and commentators[250] after A. D. 325 began to include things which cannot be traced to either canonical sources or Nicaean and Ante-Nicaean documents.[251] At least by A. D. 350,[252] and no later than the end of the fourth century,[253] we find that the narrative sequence has been established,[254] dialogues in Hell are mentioned,[255] and Enoch, Elias,[256] and Eve[257] make their appearance in the descent story. In what might be termed a positive

identification of the dating of the "Harrowing of Hell" from parallels in the Hymns of Ephrem Syrus,[258] all of the divergent elements have been assembled in their formal mode.[259] Furthermore, it is interesting that these Post-Nicaean sources and analogues were originated mostly in Mesopotamia or Egypt,[260] as were the Ante-Nicaean ones.[261]
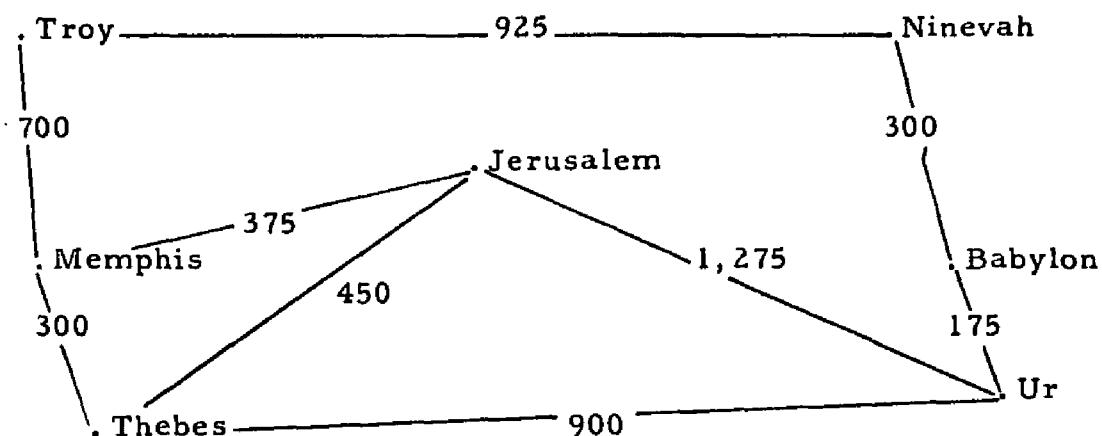
Ephrem Syrus and Firmicus Maternus,[262] the two most important fourth-century contributors to the descent motif,[263] may help directly in the dating and analyzing process[264] because their works tend to create a frame around the "Harrowing": Ephrem's Hymns (#35-41)[265] state in a somewhat disordered pattern that a voice makes the proclamation to Hell,[266] Sin and Hades are terrified,[267] Enoch and Elias are there,[268] and that Adam is saved.[269] Ephrem's Necrosima[270] adds that the gates of Tartarus are broken[271] and Christ carries the cross into Hades.[272] Eve, too, is saved, according to the Homily on our Lord.[273] Acquainting Eve with the Tree of Life in the same homily may be further evidence of his Mesopotamian background.[274] On the other hand, Firmicus' De Errore Profamarum Religionum[275] is so paraphrastic[276] that it would seem he were writing a digest of a Greek "Harrowing" manuscript placed in front of him;[277] The Errore takes the form of a patristic commentary which explains or illuminates a text long regarded as an essentially authentic article of the faith.[278] It is most curious that many authorities also identify him as the author of a text on Egyptian and Babylonian folklore.[279]

The immediate antecedents of the "Harrowing" were not only produced at the time when there was a serious conflict between Christianity and the pagan religions,[280] but they were written primarily by Oriental Christians who were schooled in the Greek system[281] and

worked in the Near East.[282] It would not be suprising to find that, in their attempts to fill in the gaps in Gospel narratives,[283] they provided a needless pagan setting for Christology[284] and confused the problem of universalizing its philosophy[285] with their desires to prove that Christ was a superior chthonic deity because he fulfilled the empty eschatological aspirations held by all other current religions.[286]

E. CHARTS AND TABLES

1. Geographical Considerations: The Ancient World

Distances are given in miles; the area, minus sections covered by water, is equal in square miles to the state of Alaska, or approximately 586,400 square miles.

2. Chronology of the Ancient and Early Christian World

EGYPT		MESOPOTAMIA	
Date	Event	Date	Event
3100-2000	Unification of Upper and Lower Egypt		Sumer, Kish
	Old Kingdom III-IV Dynasties		Ur
		2300	Akkad
		2100	Sumerian Revival
2000-1500	Middle Kingdom		III Dynasty of Ur
		1850	1st Babylonian Dynasty
		1750	Hammurabi; Abraham
			Patriarchs in Egypt
1550-1200	New Kingdom		
1400	Amenophia IV-Akhnaton and the "monotheistic" efforts		
		1230	Exodus; Moses

65

Date	Event	Date	Event
		1125	Judges V; Deborah, the oldest poem in the Bible
1100	Egypt declines in power		
	GREECE		MESOPOTAMIA
1184-1174	Troy		
		1030	tribal sections of the Pentateuch
		1000	I Samuel; Psalms
		905	Proverbs
		875	Elijah
775	Homer (?)		Isaiah
700	Written form of <u>Iliad</u>		Proverbs
		650	Jeremiah, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings
		600	Ezekiel
539	Cyrus takes Babylon		
490	Battle of Marathon		
480	Battle of Salamis; Persian Wars and Delian League		
450	Pericles in Athens		Job
431-404	Peloponnesian Wars		
404-336	Rise of Macedon; Alcibiades		
323	Alexander dies in Babylon		
	404-371 Sparta 371-362 Thebes 362-338 Madedon		
334-146	Hellenistic Kingdoms		
250	264-241/218-201 Punic Wars 265-133 Internal development		Pentateuch translated into Greek as Septuagint (LXX)
150	Roman expansion in East		II Maccabees
129	Asia as a Roman province		
100	(133-130) Republic decays		I Maccabees
		50	Judith; Wisdom written in Alexandria
44	Julius Caesar murdered		
30	Egypt a Roman province; Anthony dead		
27	Caesar Augustus; Virgil active		

Date	Roman Event	Date	Christian Event
14	Augustus dies		
14-37	Tiberius — Julio-Claudian		Jesus Christ
37-41	Caligula		
41-54	Claudius		
54-68	Nero		Revelation of St. John the Divine
69-79	Verpasian — Flavian		
79-81	Titus		
81-96	Domitian		Canon of the Old Testament fixed
96-98	Nerva		
98-117	Trajan		Canonic and Synoptic Gospels
117-138	Hadrian — Adoptive		
138-161	Antoninus Pius		
161-180	Marcus Aurelius		
180-285	Despotism and Anarchy		
180-193	Commodus		
193-197	Civil War		
197-211	Severus		Canon of the New Testament fixed
270-275	Aurelian		
285-305	Diocletian		
305-324	Civil Wars	311-312	Christianity allowed to exist
324-337	Constantine	325	Council of Nicaea
361-363	Julian the Apostate		Firmicus Maternus
379-395	Theodosius and the split of Eastern and Western Empires		Gospel of Nicodemus "Harrowing of Hell"
393	Paganism illegal		Christianity official religion
420	Jerome dies (Vulgate)		
476	Rome falls		Mediaeval Church

3. Chronological Table of Contributors

(A) Apocryphal or pseudepigraphal source
(C) Canonic source
(P) Patristic source

Old Testament (C)

> Isaiah
> Psalms
> Hosea
> Habacuc
> Micah
> Exodus

Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (ca. 109 B.C.) (A)

Odes of Solomon (ca. 1st century B.C.) (A)

Sibylline Oracles (Judaeo-Christian) (A)

New Testament (C)

> Matthew
> Mark
> Luke
> John
> Revelation (ca. A.D. 65) (C and A)
> I Thessalonians
> 2 Corinthians
> Ephesians
> Romans

Justin Martyr (100-165) (P)

Gospel of Peter (150) (A)

Epistles of the Apostles (A)

Irenaeus (ca. 177) (P)

Clement of Alexandria (150-220) (P)

Ignatius (late 1st century) (P)

Polycarp (69-155) (P)

Marcion (2nd century) (P; Gnostic)

Tertullian (160-230)

Ascension of Isaiah (2nd century) (A)

S. Cyprian (d. 258)

to 1st century

1st and 2nd century

Hippolytus (3rd century) (P)

Acts of Thaddeus (3rd century) (A)

Origen (185-254) (P)

S. Gregory Thaumaturgos (213-270) (P)

Acts of Thomas (200-250) (A)

S. Athanasius (293-373) (P)

Eusebius (260-340) (P)

Ephrem Syrus (306-373) (P)

Aphraates (ca. 343-344) (P)

Prudentius (348-410) (P)

Synesius (ca. 410) (P)

Firmicus Maternus (4th century) (P)

S. Ambrose (340-397) (P)

S. Augustine (354-430) (P)

S. Jerome (340-420) (P)

S. Hilary of Poitiers (d. 367) (P)

S. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386) (P)

S. Cyril of Alexandria (376-444) (P)

Venantius Fortunatus (530-610) (P)

Acts of the Martyrs (5th century) (P and A)

Anaphora of Pilate (5th century) (A)

Questions of Bartholomew (5th century) (A)

Book of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ by Bartholomew
     the Apostle (5th century) (A)

Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew (5th century) (A)

4. Chart of Contributions: Gospel

Canonical Old and New Testament citations found in the Greek and Latin MSS of the "Harrowing of Hell" in the order in which they are found:

(X) indicates passages cited in the Greek; there is no essential difference in the citations used in the Latin I and Latin II versions.

(X) Psalm xxiv. 7, 8. (open the gates)

Psalm lxvii. 18 (in the LXX)

Psalm cvii. 15-17 (bronze gates, iron bars)

(X) Isaiah xxvi. 19 (dead come alive, new birth)

(X) Hosea xiii. 14 as echoed in I Corinthians xv. 55 (Death is swallowed up; O Death where is thy sting?)

Psalm cii. 19-20 (Yahweh down from the heights)

(X) compare Isaiah ix. 2 as echoed in Luke i. 79 (give light to those in darkness)

Psalm xxx. 1-6 (sheol; pit)

Psalm xcviii. 1, 2 (Yahweh a new song; marvels)

Habacuc iii. 13 (marched to save people)

Psalm cxviii. 26, 27 (blessings, procession)

Micah vii. 18-20 (God pardons crimes)

Psalm xlviii. 14 (God is leader)

(X) Revelation xi. 3-12 (two witnesses; command of God; destruction and fire)

(X) Thessalonians I. iv. 17 (rising of Christ and souls)

Luke xxiii. 42-43 (robber's request to be remembered)

Exodus xxv. 10 (ark of wood)

Patristic original citations to elements of the descent-theme, including cross-references to canonical and apocryphal materials used to support and/or amplify doctrines set forth:

Ignatius (bishop of Antioch)

Epistle to the Magnesians, c. 9
Epistle to the Philadelphians, c. 5
Epistle to the Tralians, c. 9

Polycarp (bishop of Smyrna)
Epistle to the Philadelphians cites Acts ii. 24

Justin Martyr (Roman philosopher and martyr)
Dialogue with Trypho, c. 72, 99, 138 reflect on the book
of Jeremiah and suggests I Peter iii. 19

The Shepherd of Hermas (A)
Simil. ix. 15, 16 reflect on I Peter iii. 19 and I Peter iv. 6;
some of the words are also found in Ephesians iv. 9

Marcion (Gnostic; heretic)
Against Heresies i. 27. 3 uses Matthew xi. 23; Clement's
Adumbrations (against Marcion) cites Jude 7

Irenaeus (bishop of Lyon)
Against Heresies, iii. 22. 4; iv. 27. 1; iv. 31. 2; iv. 32. 1;
iv. 22. 1; v. 31; v. 33. 1; cites Luke xv. 4, Matthew xii.
40, Ephesians iv. 9, and Psalm lxxxvi. 13; also uses
Justin's Dialogue with Trypho; the Justin citation also
appears in Irenaeus' Epideixis, c. 78.
Epideixis, c. 78 uses the language of Matthew xxvii. 52,
I Peter iii. 19; iv. 6; Daniel xii. 2; Matthew xxvii. 52
and Matthew iii. 17; also Romans iii. 20; John iv. 35;
and Matthew xxvi. 27-29.

Tertullian (a Montanist from Carthage)
de Resurrection Carnis, 43 cites Luke xvi. 19
de Anima, 7; 55; 58 refer to the vision of S. Perpetua
adv. Marcionem, iv. 34
de Res., 44 cires Isaiah xlv. 2 and Psalms cvii. 10, 14, 16
de Penit., 12

S. Cyprian (bishop of Carthage)
Testimonia adv. Judaeos, ii. 24, 25, 27 cite Psalms xxx.
3, xv. 10, iii. 5; I Peter iv. 6, iii. 18, and Exodus xix.
10, 11

Hippolytus (bishop of Rome)
de Antichr., cc. 26, 45
Holy Pasch cites Job xxviii. 22, Deuteronomy iv. 12; I Pe-
ter iii. 19, and the Odes of Solomon xxii

S. Clement of Alexandria
Miscellanies uses the Shepherd of Hermas and Isaiah xlix. 9
Strom., vi. 6; ii. 9; vi. 14; vii. 10, 12, 6 all use I Peter iii. 19
Admb. on I Peter iii. 18; on Jude vv. 6, 7; on Jude uses Mat-
thew xi. 23, and Luke x. 12, 13

Origen (Alexandrian father)
    Homilies use Psalms lxviii. 18; lxxvii. 16; Hosea xiii. 14
    2nd Homily on I Samuel cites the Witch of Endor story
    in Luc. Hom, 24; xii. 119f
    de Princ., ii. 11. 6
    in Exod. Hom., vi. 6
    contra Celsum, ii. 43, 56
    in Rom., v uses I Corinthians xv. 26; vi. 10
    in Matt., xvi. 10
    in Ps., lxxxviii. 23
    Hom. xv in Gen., 5
    in Ev. Joan., frag. 79
    de Princip., ii. 5. 3 cites I Peter iii. 19
    Comm. in Joan., frag. 79 cites Mark i. 7; Psalms xvi. 10
        and I Peter iii. 19
    Sel. in Ps., ix. 18

S. Gregory Thaumaturgos (bishop of Neocaesarea)
    Sermon in Theophania

S. Athanasius (Patriarch of Alexandria)
    de Epic., lix. 5 uses I Peter iii. 18
    de Incar. cont. Apollin., i. 13; ii. 8 cite I Peter iii. 19
    contra Arianos, iii. 29. 56 cites Job xxviii. 17 (LXX)
    in Lucam, x. 22
    de Salut. Advent, 9
    de Pass et Cruce Domini, 25f cites Psalms lxviii. 25 and
        cxxvi

Eusebius of Caesarea (historian)
    Demonstratio Evangelica, iv. 12; viii. 1; xi. 8 use Hosea
        xiii. 14 and Psalms xxii. 11f (in a manner which in-
        dicates the use of Origin)

Ephrem Syrus (Mesopotamian)
    Hymns, 35-41, 52ff
    Necrosima, 29
    Homily on our Lord uses Matthew xxvii. 52

Aphraates
    Homilies
    Hymn for Epiph.
    Odes, xlii, xxiv, xxxi use Hosea xiii. 14 and I Corinthians
        xv. 55; I Samuel ii. 61; Deuteronomy xxxii. 39, and
        Isaiah xxvi. 19

Prudentius (Latin poet in Spain)
    Hymn for All Hours in his Cathoemerinon, ix uses Mat-
        thew xxvii. 53

Synesius (Neoplatonist bishop of Ptolemais)
    Hymn ix

Firmicus Maternus (converted Roman Senator and layman ?)
    ‾de Error e Profanarum Religionum

S. Ambrose (bishop of Milan)
    de Fide, iii. 4. 27, 28 and 14. 111; also iv. i. 1f cite I Peter
        iii. 19, Acts ii. 24, and Psalms xxiv
    Commentary on Ephesians, c. 14
    Commentary on Romans, c. 10 cites Romans x. 6 and I
        Peter iv. 6
    de Myst. Pasch, ii, ser. 35. c. 4 cites I Corinthians xv.
        55
    Enar. in Ps., xxxv §3
    Epist., v. 19

FOOTNOTES

[1]Throughout all of the following discussion, only the Western Church is meant. Eastern Christians usually accepted the doctrine of Hell from canonical references (See Stanley, Eastern Orthodoxy, for a discussion of this) and refused to accept the Gospel of Nicodemus as authentic, or treated the subject in a much more enlightened way, according to Timothy Ware, The Orthodox Church, pp. 265ff.

[2]Cf. "Salvation: in the Catholic Encyclopedia, Chambers Cyclopedia, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.

[3]Specific references to the Christian sources for this concept as listed in Section C of this chapter, and in Chapter II.

[4]"Resurrection" in CE, CC, and ERE; also ODCC.

[5]Specific references to the Ante-Nicaean, Nicaean, and the Post-Nicaean Fathers are given in Section D of this chapter.

[6]Canonical references are given as those accepted by the inter-denominational Jerusalem Bible of 1966.

[7]Specifically the Synoptic Gospels and John; references in Section D of this chapter.

[8]Beginning with the excursus of Augustine and the amplifications of Gregory the Great, to the exclusion of the Gospel of Nicodemus from the King James Version of 1611, some 1100 years of interpretation pass. During the High and Late Middle Ages, the Gospel was used in Dante's Inferno (Canto IV, Hell), Langland's Piers Ploughman (Book XVIII), Bishop Lattimer's sermon to Henry IV, and in Erasmus' Colloquies (Brome ed., 1670 (?), p. 211). Interestingly, when Erasmus' visit to Thomas More was celebrated in England, a "Harrowing" win-

dow at Canterbury was dedicated to him and a copy of the Gospel chain-
ed to the pillar below. See: Hone, p. 123; Gregory, p. 252.

[9]According to James, ANT, p. 95, the "Harrowing" becomes part
of the Acta Pilati ca. the fifth century. After that time it is reasonable
to speak of the Gospel as containing both parts. Cf. "Introduction" to
this dissertation and Chapter II for a more complete discussion of the
manuscript problems.

[10]For the influence of the scholastic method on biblical criticism
of the later Middle Ages, see Dom David Knowles, The Evolution of
Medieval Thought, Parts IV and V; Brian Tierny, The Crisis of Church
and State 1050-1300; and A. B. Myers, England in the Late Middle
Ages, Part III (1471-1536), ¶ I B, "Religious and Educational Changes",
pp. 236ff.

[11]The most obvious effect of changes in criticism produced the Re-
formation. For more particular discussions of this matter, see: Owen
Chadwick, The Reformation, pp. 218ff, "The Study of the Fathers";
G. Constant, The Reformation in England: The English Schism and
Henry VIII, 1509-1547, Chapter I, "Preliminaries and Causes of the
Schism".

[12]Although the Gospel was omitted from the KJV, Milton made re-
ference to the "Harrowing" in Paradise Lost (Patterson ed., Vol. II,
Part I, ll. 254-265). The Gospel has not been included in any major
translation since then.

[13]See James, ANT, pp. xiiiff for a discussion of the New Testa-
ment Apocrypha; compare with Charles, APOT, Vol. I, pp. viiff, for
and Old Testament Apocrypha.

[14]Appended to the Anglican Book of Common Prayer as one of the

Thirty-Nine Articles; see also "Descent to Hell" in the <u>CE</u>.

[15]". . . He descended into Hell; on the third day He arose again . . . ."

[16]MacCulloch, p. 73, cites the <u>Quincunque Vult</u> of the fifth century as already containing the <u>descendid ad infernos</u>, "or more probably ad inferna". See also n. 2, <u>Ibid</u>.

[17]Outside of a popular revival of the "God is Dead" school of theology, we have the influential works of Hugh J. Schonfield, <u>The Passover Plot</u> and John M. Allegro, <u>The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross</u>, as examples of revolutionary criticism written by recognized New Testament scholars. Professor Schonfield employs a reading of non-canonical materials for his interpretation, and Mrs. Allegro uses a philological analysis.

[18]The introductory chapters to H. H. Rowley's <u>The Old Testament and Modern Study</u> and the Albright <u>Festschrift</u>, <u>The Bible and the Ancient Near East</u>, are quite revealing on this point of a scholarly renaissance. Many of the more contemporary theories are reflected in Francis Bayard Rhein's <u>An Analytical Approach to the New Testament</u>.

[19]J. M. Allegro, <u>The Dead Sea Scrolls</u>, is the most important popular and informative introduction to the archaeological background of the scrolls. More critical analysis of the findings may be found in the various publications of the Jewish Text Society and in <u>ANET</u>.

[20]Jack Finegan's <u>The Archaeology of the New Testament</u> (Oxford, 1970) is the most recent survey of the findings. <u>ANET</u> is very helpful in paralleling the findings with religious traditions outside of the Judaeo-Christian ones. See also the works by Nelson Glueck and E.

R. Goodenough listed in the General Bibliography.

[21]The Bible and the Ancient Near East, John Bright, "Modern Study of Old Testament Literature", pp. 13-31.

[22]For a relevant bibliography of Kramer, see the General Bibliography at the end of this work. The author has benefited from a rather extensive correspondence with Professor Kramer; however, all citations are to his published works.

[23]Gordon's more important contributions are: Evidence for the Minoan Language, The Ancient Near East, The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations, and Ugarit and Minoan Crete.

[24]E. O. James, Professor Emeritis of the History of Religion in the University of London, is the most prolific of the modern biblical critics. The summary of most of his thinking appears in the 1960 edition of The Ancient Gods: The History and Diffusion of Religion in the Mediterranean. See the General Bibliography and Chapter I.

[25]Especially Greek Myths and Christian Mystery, 1957 and 1963.

[26]The Judgment of the Dead, 1967. See the bibliographies for Chapter I for additional references to his relevant publications.

[27]The Graf-Wellhausen theory is expressed in Geschichte Israels, I, (Berlin, 1878), reprinted in English as Prolegomena to the History of Israel in 1957. For nearly half a century it remained as the single most authoritative work on dating in the Hexateuch problem.

[28]Bultmann's concept of myth is expressed in Kerygma and Myth, p. 10: "Mythology is the use of imagery to express the other-worldly in terms of this world and the divine in terms of human life, the other side in terms of this side". His work on the New Testament is summarized in Jesus Christ and Mythology; the most objective and

comprehensive analysis of Bultmann's concept of history may be found in H. Ott, Geschichte und Heilsgeschichte in der Theologie Rudolph Bultmanns, 1955. Although this author accepts Bultmann's argument for de-mythologizing the Testaments, he does not see its developement into existential history.

[29]One of the most profound transformations, other than those listed in Kramer, et al, is the monumental twelve-volume work by E. R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period (to 1970). Professor Goodenough of Yale has contributed greatly to the revision of Hebrew historical materials through his study of epigraphic Near Eastern evidence.

[30]Cf. ANET; publications of the Oriental Institute, the University of Chicago; C. K. Barrett, ed., The New Testament Background: Selected Documents; M. S. Enslin, Christian Beginnings, and The Literature of the Christian Movement; John Gray, Archaeology and the Old Testament World; H. H. Rowley, The Growth of the Old Testament; George Adam Smith, The Historical Geography of the Holy Land; and D. Winton Thomas, Documents from Old Testament Times.

[31]No less than seven distinct problems must be reworked because of recent criticism: (1) the Hexateuch Problem of dating the J, E, D, and P versions (see n. 27) based on the developmental idea of monotheism as the result of the process from animism to polydaemonism, and then to henotheism; (2) the Milieu Problem, which takes into consideration archaeology, dispenses with polydaemonism and henotheism, and gives new importance to the tribal league or amphictyonic approach of H. Gunkel and H. Gressman (in which Wellhausenism ceases to exist); (3) the Debate over the Documentary Hypothesis, which postulates

a Tetrateuch approach and/or the existence of a Deuteronomic Corpus;
(4) Higher Criticism, from Pederson's isolation of documents not in
chronological sequence, to the Uppsala School (S. Mowinckel on the
Psalms and I. Engnell's "law of iteration" on oral transmission); (5)
the Traditional Approach (W. F. Albright on linguistic and archaeolog-
ical data to define the Sitz im Leben and G. E. Mendenhall on covenant
forms) which pushes back the dating of many documents into earlier
times; (6) the History of Traditions, developed out of #5, with the work
of E. VonRad on cultic credos and M. Noth on the five major themes of
the Pentateuch; (7) Contemporary Criticism, which examines the es-
chatology and messianism of the Prophetic books and proposes sweep-
ing changes in the interpretations of the Psalms. See the General
Bibliography for appropriate citations.

[32]Compare, for instance, E. C. Quinn's The Quest of Seth for the
Oil of Mercy as a recent consideration of apocryphal materials in a
sympathetic, scholarly treatment.

[33]Raymond Trousson, Les etudes de themes; his exhaustive Le
theme de Promethee dans la litterature europeenne. See also: E.
Frenzel, Stoff-, Motif- und Symbolforschung, and the encyclopedic
Stoffe der Weltliteratur; Charles Dedeyan, Le theme de Fause dans la
litterature europeenne. Professor Dedeyan has been most helpful to
this author through personal conversations. Through the generous aid
of Professor R. A. Vitale, this author has secured the rights to a new
and English translation of M. Trousson's essay.

[34]See Section A of Chapter I. Not only have the dates of the Old
Testament materials been pushed back (cf. n. 3, #5), but the art of
writing literature itself is suprisingly early: Kramer, Scientific

American, "The Sumerians"; History Begins at Sumer.

[35]See Chapter I, Sections A, B, and C. There can be no problem in postulating the influence of the descent theme in Christian literature because the evidence of the dates cannot be disputed; however, Alexander Heidel, in The Babylonian Genesis, persists on denying the great influence of the Babylonian texts on the Old Testament by insisting on the existence of an earlier source for both (pp. 139ff). Kramer has written that this is a "heavy handed treatment" of facts; and, in this author's opinion, it is supposed that his findings are conditioned by the nature of Heidel's research grant from the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church. Heidel's conclusions are ignored by most contemporary serious scholars, although un-revised paperback editions of the creation poem are still being reprinted. The weight of evidence for a pagan origin of the Christian story is so overwhelming that the problem is not from whence the motif came as much as it is what did it become.

[36]See Sections A and B of Chapter I, and notes. In a full examination of the descent thematology, it would become necessary to study the conditions under which the theme was transformed in each literature and in each rendition. Although some explanation has been proffered of the documentary sources and their ethos, space does not permit any consideration of oral transmission beyond the geographical considerations given in the Charts and Tables of this chapter. What must be kept in mind is the very small area and the very long time involved in the transmission of the motif from its "original" home.

[37]T. J. J. Altizer, The Harrowing of Hell (1970) is the newest Christian interpretation of the theme; however, Altizer's conclusions are no more than a re-working of the rationalizations in the last

chapter of MacCulloch, The Harrowing of Hell (1930).

[38]Ibid. What becomes curious is not so much the continued discussions of the pagan origins of the theme as the continued desire to make something worthwhile and Christian out of it. In recent study, the "Harrowing of Hell" becomes existential.

[39]Section A, Chapter I. At least, the theme appears as one of the earliest writings in the first society to "invent" writing; E. O. James might see it as appearing earlier in the statuary evidence of pre-literate groups. Cf. his The Mother Goddess.

[40]In the Synoptics (cited in Section D of Chapter I), we can observe the descent as a necessary element in the "proof" of the Resurrection: the Old Testament and its Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha also provided the assumption of Moses and Elijah (both bearing directly on the Christian Gospel), but for the success of Christianity, it was mandatory that the Messiah fulfill the various prophecies by defeating death and conquering Hell.

[41]Both MacCulloch and Altizer are really arguing against theories established in the nineteenth century by such notable agnostics as Ernest Renan (The Hibbert Lectures, 1880), and Francis Legge (Rivals and Forerunners of Christianity). Legge sees the Christian Church as successful paganism in another form; Renan views it as the corrupt produce of Christ's teaching created by Peter and Paul. Most modern interpretations grow out of such bias and benefit from the search for the "historical" Jesus (cf. Weiss-Schweitzer in the Introduction).

[42]Bultmann, ops. cit. and General Bibliography. Once myth has been removed from the Testaments, it is necessary to come to some conclusion about what Christianity is or is not. In defining its

particular "uniqueness", theologians find that: (a) "true" Christianity is relevant to modern times; (b) it does or does not provide man with a pragmatic system os morality; and (c) that it does or does not have to be made "relevant" in order to function. The more traditional interpretations retain the aspects of religion and faith in Christianity, whereas the existential interpretations change Christianity into an ethical and moral system. De-mythologization and archaeo-historical interpretation find a better reception in the doctrines of less orthodox theologians and cause fewer problems for them to interpret. Orthodox explanations of the same evidence frequently become metaphysical, but Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger are notable exceptions to this.

[43]<u>Ethos</u>, in the sense that it is used herein, refers to all materials which are incorporated into the historical setting of any given work of literature at the time in which it was composed. If and when it is possible, the ethico-historical approach seeks to widen the basis of literary interpretation. (Cf. Introduction).

[44]The Divine Inspiration theories range from (a) the belief that the Bible was divinely dictated to transcribers, and (b) the notion that it was written with the direct aid of God, to (c) the relatively liberal concept that the writers were inspired by God. Most explanations of the success of Judaism and Christianity depend upon some degree of belief in either one or some combination of all of the above reasons. Renan, on the other hand, may have been the first critic to see Christianity's triumph as being the result of a political quirk (see Chapter V for the citation). Archaeo-historical evidence—especially in the study of manuscript traditions—has fairly well dispelled (a) and (b), but there is no way of judging (c) without taking an atheistic approach. But

even those who hold to (c) must accept facts.

[45]The Alexandrian setting and origins of Christianity are set forth in numerous texts. Among the most interesting are Arthur Darby Nock, Early Gentile Christianity; F. Cornwallis Conybeare, The Origins of Christianity; Roland Bainton, Early and Mediaeval Christianity; G. H. Box, Judaism in the Greek Period; and The Legacy of Israel. Of special consideration and importance on the Greek mystery religions are those cited in the General Bibliography.

[46]Between August 17 and 21, 1970, the Los Angeles Times printed a number of articles on the Convention of the Southern Baptists' condemnation of their own Sunday school's publications which did not emphasize the divine creation of biblical texts. Mormons interpret the references to Christ's preaching after his crucifixion as showing that he appeared in the Americas (Hell?) to enlighten the Indian population; no other possible interpretation is allowed, according to Bishop Reed Campbell of the LDS.

[47]More particularly for this discussion, it is possible to see the growth of the Gospel of Nicodemus out of its Near Eastern setting, considering that it was thought to be part of the canon for such a long period of time. In Section B of this chapter, many of the notes provide time and geographical references for the patristic sources of the text.

[48]See: From Orpheus to Paul and Werner Jaeger's Paideia. Some aspects of the Mystery religions are discussed in Brandon, op. cit. and Rahner, op. cit. See also: Eranos Jahrbuch #4, The Mysteries, and #6, Spiritual Disciplines for a more detailed examination of the various aspects of the influence of later Greek religion on Early Christianity.

[49]The concluding chapter of MacCulloch, op. cit., attempts to come to terms with the evidence of pagan origins for the "Harrowing", but his conclusions are vitiated by the author's own discussions in the first four chapters.

[50]See: "The Conflict of Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century", Chapter ten in The Early Church. Some of the scholastic attempts to adjust Christian belief to pagan philosophy begins during the period of Augustine and Boethius, but this went unrecognized by mediaeval theologians. The debt which Christianity owes to the ancient world is summarized in The Legacy of the Ancient World, The Legacy of Islam, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, and Early Gentile Christianity.

[51]Ware, op. cit., and Chadwick, The Early Church. This lack of historical perspective works in both directions, as can be noted in the abortive attempts of Julian the Apostate to reconstitute paganism during the fourth century. Franz Cumont's Oriental Religions in Greco-Roman Paganism is a lively recounting of the lack of Roman historical thinking (as well as foresight) in permitting foreign religions from the outposts of the Empire to exist within the sacred confines of the capitol. The most popular fictional recountings of these happenings--Robert Graves' I Claduius and Claudius the God, and Gore Vidal's Julian--draw heavily on Cumont's various works. In no instance do they make the fictionalization any more absurd a recounting than the actual historical evidence.

[52]The modern mythographer and thematologist tries to avoid tempering his examination of literary evidence by coloring the evidence with his own particular religious bias. The Renaissance theologians were wise enough four hundred years ago to dispose of the Gospel

without apology; yet, in our time, the evidence of folk-belief in the Testaments has been deemed evidence of the contamination of all biblical materials. Evidence of this bias can be detected in even the most highly regarded works: Sir James G. Frazer's Folk-Lore in the Old Testament is myopically unbalanced; F. Max Müeller's Sacred Books of the Near East suffers greatly from the author's desire to adjust the evidence to fit his theory of solar mythology. Conversly, MacCulloch denies all outside influence on the construction of the Gospel "Harrowing" by attaching it to the canonical references without admitting that the canon was influenced. The most objective thematological accounts—Howard Roland Patch's The Other World and Morton W. Bloomfield's The Seven Deadly Sins—use a more scientific approach in interpreting religious works.

[53]See Chapter I, § D for a discussion of how this affects the Creed. Literary critics sometimes fail to understand that without an accepted canon of the New Testament, anything was considered authentic and authoritative, if it were not too absurd. In mediaeval theology, one source was often played against another in order to demonstrate the validity of both. This concept of authority works well if all parties agree that the older writers knew more about the subject than the modern ones because they were either witnesses to a specific event, or they had first-hand knowledge of the event through reliable sources. This is the principle behind the canonization of the Gospels and the acceptance of the patristic writings. Modern historiography and textual analysis has taught us much about the errors of accepting too much of this reliance on authority; however, it can be noted that the mediaevalist must accept mediaeval methodology and not interpose modern

judgmental interpretations. One has only to examine the reception of Gregory's Moralia and Dialogi to see how this process operates.

[54]See Chapter I, §D for a more extended discussion of this. In view of the preponderance of "contributors" to the Christian descent motif coming from Near Eastern backgrounds, it would be naive to assume that they were totally unaware of the religious beliefs around them which they rejected in favor of Christianity. At a time when the Roman state religion bored itself to death (see Cumont, Oriental Religions), the most active faiths were those which preached salvations through the intercession of descent divinities. In order to give Christianity authority, it was necessary to meet these religions on their own ground. An apt parallel can be drawn between the Christian process and that of the Hebrews to philosophize Judaism. See: The Text of the Old Testament and the General Bibliography for additional citations.

[55]See Chapter I, §D, and Chapter II for an analysis of the Gospel sources. In particular, the messianism of the Gospel depends on the framework established by the Old Testament literature and the historical records of the Jewish revolt in the time of Josephus. In the Pauline widening or universalizing of Christianity from a Jewish cultus into the True Church, Christianity had to prove itself through a fulfilment of the Old Testament and a conquest of paganism. This brought about the Early Church's concept of the Old Testament as a preparation for the New, and the necessity for the continual production of additional explanatory materials of the Nicodemus type.

[56]Cf. Ware, The Early Church. Paganism was very much alive in the fourth century, although its death knell was sounded by the Edict of Constantine at the beginning of the century. Between 400 and 476 (the

classic date for the "fall" of Rome), Christianity began to develop its own educational system, apart from the traditional and, in many cases, in opposition to it. Julian forbade the Christians to teach the classics and, a century later, the Christians forbad the learning of them. Because of this, some very uncritical attitudes were perpetuated in the new religion. Without historical reference, it became impossible to judge the truth or falsity of any religious writing.

[57]Chapter I, § A, B, C, and Chapter II.

[58]Chapter III, on the transmission of the Gospel, depends upon an amalgamation of the sources and analogues mentioned previously. The "aesthetic distance" of the pagan Western mythology tended to diminish faith in the gods and goddesses because they were thought to exist outside of time and, for the most part, were divorced from human experience. (See: H. R. Ellis Davidson, Gods and Myths.) The narratives of the New Testament are, by title, personal, evidentual reports of the interaction between God and man, therefore more immediate and attractive. It is not possible to discount the influence which Christ's warlike triumph over Satan had on the tribal societies of the West, any more than it is to underestimate the success of the epic-boast and challenge to Hell in the "Harrowing". These commonplaces, among others, were inherited from pagan literature and seemed to hold the interest of both the ancient and mediaeval audiences.

[59]See the Table of Abbreviations for frequently used annotations. In a discussion of the folk-motifs and myths, the Graves and Thompson systems are employed. Thompson numbers refer to his Motif-Index of Folk-Literature; Graves numbers to Greek Myths, Vols. I and II. Unless otherwise indicated, all numbers prefixed with alphabetical

indicators are Thompson ones.

[60]The key to Babylonian translations was provided by the discovery

of the Rosetta Stone; however, untranslated cuneiform inscriptions and

tablets have been collected (even as curiosities) since before the time

of Schliemann's discoveries. For a number of years after 1860, it was

believed that all cuneiform writing was a product of the Babylonians be-

cause they figured so importantly in the Old Testament. See: ANET;

Kramer, The Sumerians.

[61]Most of the early translations of Babylonian and Sumerian texts

have been reworked in the last twenty-five years. Contemporary As-

syriologists warn readers to use extreme caution in employing older

translations and commentary in any literary analysis due to the faulty

and conjectural assumptions of antiquarian scholarship. (Cf. Kramer,

The Sacred Marriage.) MacCulloch, as editor of Mythologies of the

Ancient World, depended on the work of Stephen Langdon (now regarded

as unreliable), and postulated many of his conclusions on unreliable

"evidence" therefrom.

[62]Inspired by Schliemann's triumph in Troy, German scholars

formed the vanguard in archæological research, continuing the wider

philological researches into ethnology begun by the Grimms. Most no-

table among the Testament scholars was Constantin von Tischendorff,

one of the major editors of the Apocrypha. Schliemann hated the Jews

and yet borrowed the majority of his excavation funds from them; Tis-

chendorff hated the Russians and stole precious manuscripts from their

monasteries. See: ODCC.

[63]One of the over-riding interests in German scholarship was the

desire to revise New Testament and Early Church materials in order

to validate the Protestant point-of-view. This sectarian interest in archaeology opened more disputes than it settled.

[64]Gaston Camile Charles Maspero, The Dawn of Civilization (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), 1894, p. 696.

[65]Beginning with Lord Elgin's rape of the Parthenon, even the joint university excavations practiced a "finders-keepers" procedure. Although laws and regulations now prevent larger and more valuable discoveries from being removed from their native countries (excepting the case of the Dead Sea Scrolls), it is not unusual for sections of a text to be provided from three or more Western locations. Kramer's recounting of the Inanna myth is proof of this. See: ANET.

[66]Morris Jastrow, Jr., The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria (London, J. B. Lippincott), 1915.

[67]Hulme, EETS, O.S. 100, "Introduction" and notes.

[68]Kramer, Sacred Marriage, notes.

[69]Kramer, The Sumerians, Chapter I.

[70]Thomas B. Jones, The Sumerian Problem (London, John Wiley and Sons, Inc.), 1969, p. 10.

[71]Ibid., Chapter I; Kramer, Sumerians, Chapter I.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Kramer, ANET.

[74]Kramer, Sacred Marriage.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid., p. 133, says:

> From Mesopotamia, the theme of the dead Dumuzi and his resurrection spread to Palestine, and it is not suprising to find the women of Jerusalem bewailing Tammuz in one of the gates of the Jerusalem Temple. Nor is it at all impossible that the myth of Dumuzi's

death and his resurrection left its mark on the Christ
story, in spite of the profound spiritual gulf between
them. Several motifs in the Christ story that may go
back to Sumerian prototypes have been known for some
time: the resurrection of a deity after three days and
nights in the Nether World; the notion of thirty shekels,
the sum received by Judas for betraying his master,
as a term of contempt and disdain; the epithets "shep-
herd," "anointed," and perhaps even "carpenter";
the not unimportant fact that one of the gods with whom
Dumuzi came to be identified was Damu, "the physici-
an," to whom his mother Ninisinna "the great physician
of the black-heads," entrusted the art of healing by
exorcising demons. To all these can now be added the
torturing suffered by Dumuzi at the hands of the cruel
galla, reminiscent to some extent of the agony of Christ:
he was bound and pinioned; was forced to undress and
run naked; was scourged and beaten. Above all, as we
now know, Dumuzi, not unlike Christ, played the role
of vicarious substitute for mankind; had he not taken
the place of Inanna, the goddess of love, procreation,
and fertility, in the Nether World, all life on earth
would have come to an end. Admittedly the differences
between the two were more marked and significant than
the resemblances—Dumuzi was no Messiah preaching
the kingdom of God on earth. But the Christ story cer-
tainly did not originate and evolve in a vacuum; it must
have had its forerunners and prototypes, and one of the
most venerable and influential of these was no doubt the
mournful tale of the shepherd-god Dumuzi and his mel-
ancholy fate, a myth that had been current throughout
the ancient Near East for over two millennia.

See also his notes 48-54.

[77]Kramer, History Begins at Sumer, Chapters 16, 17, 18, and 19.

[78]Dr. S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old

Testament (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons), 1898, p. 505; James

Henry Breasted, Dawn of Civilization (New York, Charles Scribner's

Sons), 1935, pp. 14, 340, 347, 336-338.

[79]Alexander Heidel, Babylonian Genesis, 1942, repr. 1963.

[80]Ibid., pp. 118-119.

[81]Ibid., p 119.

[82]Ibid., pp. 102-114; Brandon, Judgment, Chapter III.

[83]N. K. Sandars, The Epic of Gilgamesh (Baltimore, Md., Penguin Books), 1967; Alexander Heidel, Epic of Gilgamesh (Chicago, University of Chicago Press), 1959/repr. See also texts in ANET.

[84]Kramer, History, Chapter 20.

[85]Ibid.; Heidel, Gilgamesh, notes.

[86]Ibid.; Kramer, Sumerian, notes; Sandars, "Introduction".

[87]Breasted, Dawn; see parallels in Chapter II, Charts and Tables.

[88]Compare, for instance, T. J. J. Altizer, Oriental Mysticism and Biblical Eschatology (Philadelphia, Westminster Press), 1961, Chapter II, "The Prophets and the Old Testament"; see above, n. 31.

[89]ANET, p. 52.

[90]Ibid.; compare Kramer, Sumerian Mythology (Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society), 1944, pp. 73-74; Kramer, History, Chapter 21.

[91]Ibid.

[92]Ibid.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid.; Kramer, SM, Chapter VI.

[95]Ibid.

[96]The Sumerian culture was taken over en bloc; cf. Kramer, Lamentation, p. viii.

[97]Maspero, p. 696.

[98]Breasted, Dawn; Albert Ten Eyck Olmstead, History of Assyria (Chicago, University of Chicago Press), 1960, p. 379; Jeremiah 7:17ff; 44:15ff; cf. II Kings 21:5 and Ezekiel 8:14.

[99]Kramer, Lamentation, "Introduction".

[100]Genesis 11:31; Eva Strommenger, Ur (München, Hirmer Ver-

lag), 1964.

[101]Kramer, _Lamentation_, loc. cit.

[102]See Chapter II, Charts and Tables.

[103]Gordon, _MAW_, pp. 183ff.

[104]Ugaritic mythology, e. g. Canaanite, includes Hebrew, Phœnician, Edomite, Moabite, and Ammonite as dialectical divisions. The name "Ugaritic" comes from the major excavation cite of the tablets at Ugarit. _MAW_, p. 183.

[105]Cyrus H. Gordon, "Canaanite Mythology", _MAW_, pp. 183-215.

[106]_Ibid._, p. 210. Ugaritic tablets date from the 14th century B. C. The Old Testament references to Leviathan (Job 3:8) are considerably later by approximately one-thousand years.

[107]_Ibid._, pp. 201ff.

[108]_Ibid._, p. 202. Compare II Kings 1:2, 3, 6, 16 and Matthew 12: 24. Charles' "Introduction" to the _Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs_ (_APOT_, Vol. II) is worth noting, too.

[109]_Ibid._, pp. 210ff.

[110]_Ibid._

[111]_Evidence for the Minoan Language_, 1962.

[112]Parallel literary evidence for this can be found in Graves, _GM_, Vols. I and II. Although not all Greek myths can be traced to Crete, it is possible to detect the Near Eastern influence on Greek religion in later Post-Minoan Crete. See Section B, Chapter I.

[113]See Section B, Chapter I for specific references to Greek historians; also the General Bibliography.

[114]This phenomenon is most interesting when it appears in the Mystery religions which surround divine descent-apirs. See Section B

of Chapter I.

[115]By the time of the Semitic Dynasty of Akkad (ca. 2300 B.C.),

the Old Kingdom of Egypt had passed through the IVth Dynasty. See:

"Chronology" in M.-J. Stève, The Living World of the Bible: Illustra-

tion and Research in Old Testament History, pp. 219ff.

[116]"Osiris", Egyptian Mythology, pp. 54-63; James Henry Breast-

ed, The Dawn of Conscience, pp. 14ff; Breasted, Development of Re-

ligion and Thought in Ancient Egypt, pp. 25ff.

> Osiris, which is the Greek rendering of the Egyptian Usire, was identified by the Greeks with several of their own gods, but principally with Dionysus and Hades. At first Osiris was a nature god and embodied the spirit of vegetation which dies with the harvest to be reborn when the grain sprouts. Afterwards he was worshipped throughout Egypt as god of the dead and, in this capacity, became the most important god in the Egyptian pantheon.
>
> Heiroglyphic texts contain numerous allusions to the life and deeds of Osiris during his sojourn on earth; but it is above all thanks to Plutarch that we know his legend so well.
>
> The first son of Geb and Nut, Osiris was born in Thebes in Upper Egypt. At his birth a loud, mysterious voice proclaimed the coming of the "Universal Lord", which gave rise to shouts of gladness, soon followed by tears and lamentations when it was learned what misfortunes awaited him. Ra rejoiced at the news of his birth in spite of the curse he had pronounced against Nut; and, having Osiris brought into his presence, he recognized his great-grandson as heir to his throne.
>
> Osiris was handsome in countenance, dark-skinned and taller than all other men. When Geb, his father, retired to the heavens, Osiris succeeded him as king of Egypt and took Isis, his sister, as queen. The first care of the new sovereign was to abolish cannibalism. He taught them how to produce grain and grapes for man's nourishment in the form of bread, wine and beer. The cult of the gods did not yet exist, according to Heliopolitan belief, and Osiris instituted it. He built the first temples and sculpted the first divine images. He laid down the rules governing religious practice and even invented the two kinds of flute which should accompany ceremonial song. (The Memphite doctrine was, as has been said, that Ptah himself instituted religious practices and created the first images.)
>
> After he built towns and gave his people just laws,

thus meriting the name Onnophris--"the Good One"--by
which, as the fourth divine pharoah, he was known.

Not satisfied with having civilised Egypt, Osiris
wished to spread the benefits of his rule throughout the
whole world. He left the regency to Isis and set forth
on the conquest of Asia, accompanied by Thoth, his
grand vizier, and his lieutenants Anubis and Upuaut.
Osiris was the enemy of all violence, and it was by
gentleness alone that he subjected country after country,
winning and disarming their inhabitants by songs and
the playing of various musical instruments. He returned
to Egypt only after he had travelled the whole earth and
spread civilization everywhere. This part of the story
bears such strong resemblances to the stories of Dion-
ysus and Orpheus, that we may be entitled to wonder
whether this is not an interpolation by Plutarch rather
than the true Egyptian myth.

As Plutarch continued the story, Osiris found on his
return to his kingdom that everything was in perfect
order, for Isis had governed wisely in his absence. But
it was not long before he became the victim of a plot
organised by his brother Set, who was jealous of his
power. Farther on we shall relate in detail how on the
17th Athyr, in the twenty-eighth year of his reign,
Osiris "the Good One" fell under the blows of the con-
spirators and how his faithful wife found his body and
bore it back to Egypt. Isis, thanks to her powers of
sorcery and the aid of Thoth, Anubis and Horus, suc-
ceeded in bringing her husband's dead body back to life.
Osiris soon answered Set's accusations and vindicated
himself before the tribunal of gods, presided over by
Geb.

Resurrected and thenceforward secure from the
threat of death, Osiris could have regained his throne
and continued to reign over the living. But he preferred
to depart from this earth and retire to the "Elysian
Fields" where he warmly welcomed the souls of the just
and reigned over the dead.

This was one version of the legend of Osiris. There
seem, however, to have been many versions of the
story. Perhaps more than in the case of any other god,
the legend of Osiris underwent great changes through
the course of history. In early times, certainly, he
was a subsidiary god; some have even suggested that,
except perhaps in the form related above, his myth did
not originally belong to the systems of any of the great
cosmogonies, but was subordinated at a late stage to the
family of gods venerated at Heliopolis, Hermopolis,
Memphis and Thebes, because the priests of those cen-
tres were anxious that the Osiris cult should not entirely
swamp their own. As Osiris in this powerful and univer-
sal form does not properly belong to early Egyptian
religious systems, we shall leave a full consideration of

the cult to a later section.

It seems that the form of the Osiris myth related here may derive from the reign of a real king, for the name Usire means "the seat of the Eye" and the Eye was the symbol of royal power in Egypt. The customary form of the legend is rather different and will be recounted when we discuss Isis and Set. It is a far more complicated myth and explains why Osiris became universalised as a god of the dead and how he was able to become so particularly associated with the well-being of the royal house.

Here, we shall only indicate briefly the many cosmic interpretations which the myth of Osiris was given.

As a vegetation spirit that dies and is ceaselessly reborn, Osiris represents the corn, the vine and the trees. He is also the Nile, which rises and falls every year; and the light of the sun, which vanishes in the shadows every evening to reappear more brilliantly at dawn. The struggle between the two brothers, Set and Osiris, is the war between the desert and the fertile earth, between the drying wind and the vegetation, between aridity and fecundity and between darkness and light.

But it as a god of the dead that Osiris enjoyed his greatest popularity: though he seems to have begun his mythic career as a rather frightened spirit of the Underworld, he ultimately came to represent for his devotees the hope of an eternally happy life in another world ruled over by a just and good king.

He was worshipped throughout Egypt in company with his wife Isis and Horus, his posthumous son, who formed with him a trinity. But he was particularly venerated at Abydos, where priests showed his tomb to the innumerable pilgrims who came to visit it. Happy were the favoured ones who were buried in the shadows of the august sanctuary, or who at least had a stela erected near by in their name to assure the benevolence of Osiris in after life!

[117]Brandon, op. cit., "Egypt", pp. 6ff.

[118]Ibid., pp. 9ff. "The Pyramid Texts also indicate the existence of what may have been a tradition concerning a post-mortem judgment which stemmed from the Osirian mortuary cultus."

[119]This term, coined by Breasted, Development, refers to the growing importance of the Osiris cult in Egypt. For additional details on this, see: John A. Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt, pp. 267-268.

Considerable work has been done on Osiris in various issues of the

Journal of Egyptian Archaeology.

[120]Compare the religious beliefs held during the Old Kingdom

(Breasted, Development) with the highly refined concepts of the four

later periods (given in Brandon, op. cit.).

[121]See n. 115.

[122]Ibid.

[123]J. Gwyn Griffiths, The Conflict of Horus and Set (Liverpool

University Press, 1960), is the most detailed accounting of all of the

Horus-Set conflict stories. This continuation of the Isis-Osiris story

is dated as early as 2340 B.C. (p. 1).

[124]Kramer, Sacred Marriage, pp. 170ff, and his notes.

[125]Cumont, Oriental Religions, "Isis". Interestingly, Cumont gives

additional evidence of the survival of Isis worship in France as being

much later than in Rome: Notre Dame Cathedral, for instance, was

built on the site of a Serapeum.

[126]For an introduction to this problem, see: Martin P. Nillson,

Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology, pp. 1-34; E. O. James, The

Ancient Gods, pp. 292-320; and Robert Graves, GM, pp. 9-23.

[127]Indo-European, before 2500 B.C.

[128]Dorians, after 1250 B.C., bringing the "Dark Ages".

[129]Ab. 1800 B.C. and after. Both Nilsson and Gordon, opp. citt.,

have demonstrated the influence of Mycenae and Crete on Greek myth.

[130]Jane Harrison, Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion,

in particular, her discussions of the Anthesteria, anthropomorphism,

and the Thesmophoria. Gilbert Murray's Five Stages of Greek Re-

ligion, once regarded as a classic explanation, must be tempered with

newer research. See: MAW, pp. 275-276.

[131]The source-notes in Graves, GM, are particularly enlightening on this point. Wherever possible, they are included in the following discussions of the Greek descent-pairs.

[132]Rahner, op. cit., pp. 3-45.

[133]James Shiel, Greek Thought and the Rise of Christianity, pp. 18ff.

[134]Cf. Cumont, Afterlife in Roman Paganism. Several of the essays in Eranos Jahrbuch #4, The Mysteries, deal with the process of adaptability of Greek religion in Christianity. Cumont, Oriental, treats the inter-pagan relationships.

[135]The most important influences of paganism were felt on the Hebrews just before the advent of Christianity, and upon the Christians during their first century. See: Edwyn R. Bevan, "Hellenistic Judaism" and F. C. Burkett, "The Debt of Christianity to Judaism" in The Legacy of Israel.

[136]GM 11.1, 24.11, 29.2, 51.5, 73.7, 103.2, and 118.2 identify Ištar as the ancestor of Aphrodite and Ashtaroth of Paphos; both are bearers of the pomegranate of death and the underworld. Entrance to her heavenly court is achieved through ascent on the back of an eagle. As a prophetess, her oracles have been identified with the passage on Jehovah's acacia in I Chronicles 14:15; as a destroyer, she takes part in the story of Marduk (Rahab) in Isaiah 51:9 and Job 9:13 and 26:12. The battle of Bel-Baal-Marduk with the Monster Ti-amat in the Gilgameš is parallel to the Labors of Heracles. Adonis ("lord") is Tammuz: 18.6, 7; 24.5, 27.10, and 91.4; both are killed by a boar, partake of the sacred tree and pomegranate emblems, and have an

annual mourning performed for their resuscitation. In Crete, the sac-
rifice to the Minataur originates in the sacrifice to Tammuz.

[137]GM 18.3, 21.2, 22.7, 41.3, 42.1, 56b, 58.4, 73.4, 83.2, 89.
2, 123.3, 134.4, and 138.1 provide is with the information that the
Child Apollo and Horus are synonomous, with Isis becoming Leto. The
horned altars of Isis are overthrown in I Kings 2:28. In late Greek myth,
Isis becomes Danĥe and finally Semele in the cycle of the stories of
Dionysus. Osiris, 7.1, 18.3, .7; 36.1, 38.11, 41.3, 42.1, 73.4; 83.2,
.3; 116b, .6; 123.3, 126.1, 133.8; 134.2, .4; and 138.1, parallel the
similarities between the bewailings for Cronos and Osiris as barley-
gods. In late myth, Osiris is called a Colchan (sorcerer ?), and he
becomes identified with Dionysus in the Mysteries.

[138]Attis-Osiris, GM, 79.1, 105.6; 18.3; 21e, f! 29.3, 801, and
158.4, are the most brutal of the descent-pairs. The horrors of priestly
castration in honor of the pair is related in detail by Cumont, Oriental,
and condemned in I Kings 15:12 and II Kings 23.7 Effects of the sodo-
mite priesthood appear in the Zeus-Ganymede stories. Both the
Greeks and the Romans had many difficulties in adjusting such uncivili-
zed worship to their pantheon.

[139]Dionysus, GM, 14 passim, 27 passim, 38.3, 70.4, 88.7, and
134 passim, is the twice-born sacred king, who descents to Hell and
ascends to heaven. He is involved in Deucalion's Flood (another ver-
sion of the Babylonian deluge myth), and gave the Greeks the vital civ-
ilizing Delphic cult to substitute for the ritual murder of kings. See:
Kramer, Sacred Marriage, His ithyphallic symbol may be paralleled
to Osiris' missing phallus (swallowed by the oxyrhyncus fish). In the
late Delphic Mysteries, Isis and Osiris are identical with Dionysus-

Semele. Dionysus saves Semele from Hell.

[140]Orpheus, GM, 28 passim, 103.1, and 170 passim, also equated with Dionysus, descends to Hell and harrows it to save Eurydice. The victim causes her own destruction by looking back. Eurydice, as another version of the moon goddess, is celebrated with human sacrifice (early) and is identified with the symbol of the serpent around the apple tree.

[141]Aphrodite, GM, 6.6, 11 passim, 65.1, is the goddess of love whose birth parallels a Hittite myth which reflects the story of Ištar. In one version of her stories (as given on Paphos), there is a sacred substitution of bodies. This substitution of the teraphim is retold in I Samuel 19:13. Her love for Adonis (among many others) causes his resurrection from Hell. Adonis, GM, 18 passim; 24.4, .11; 134.2, and 141.3, finally ends up sepnding half of the year in Hell and the other half with Aphrodite, after he has been killed by a boar. His festival, the Adonia, is a later development of the Hellenized Tammuz worship. In the Mysteries, Aphrodite-Adonis=Isis-Osiris=Dionysus-Semele. Adonis' attempts to escape death are aided by Apollo's sister, Artemis, who prodives him with a cave of safety; this is a parallel to the Dumuzi sections of the Sumerian myth. See: Kramer, Sacred Marriage, Chapter VI.

[142]By attaching the foreign stories to the established Olympian gods and their children, the Greeks saw them as nothing more than additional evidences of the universality of their gods.

[143]Heracles, GM, 134c, in his Twelfth Labor, descends to Hell and harrows it with the aid of Athene and Hermes.

[144]Odysseus, GM, 170 passim, calls upon Hell for information,

sees his friends, speaks to them, and returns to the upper world un-
harmed. His name, 67.2, is an acient name of the moon goddess.

[145]Aeneis, Aeneid, Book VI, takes the Golden Bough "key" to
Hell and gains valuable information; he returns unharmed.

[146]For instance, the sources to three sets of descent-pairs illus-
trate the lateness of the accounts. Dionysus-Semele: Hesiod, Theogony;
Apollodorus; Aristophanes, Birds; Servius on Virgil's Aeneid; Homeric
Hymn to Apollo; Hyginus, Fabula; Aelian, Varia Historia; Thucydides;
Strabo; Diodorus Siculus; Scholiast on Pindar's Pythian Odes; Orphic
Fragment; Plutarch, Symposiacs; Apollonius Rhodius; and Pausanias.

[147]Cedric H. Whitman, Homer and the Heroic Tradition, pp. 17ff.

[148]Kurt W. Marek, The Secret of the Hittites (New York, Knopf),
1956, Chapter II, § 6, pp. 96-118; O. R. Gurney, The Hittites (Balti-
more, Md., Penguin Books, Inc.), "Introduction".

[149]Ibid.

[150]James, Ancient Gods, pp. 292ff.

[151]Whitman, pp. 65ff.

[152]Especially in the works of Plutarch: his Moralia.

[153]We can read something between the lines in Apulieus' Golden
Ass (Metamorphoses), about the Mysteries, but not enough to provide
a complete pattern of their content. Scholars sometimes have to work
from the Christian backwards to the Greek. See: Vittorio D. Macchioro,
From Orpheus to Paul, pp. 186ff; "The Divine Kingship" in E. O.
James' Christian Myth and Ritual; "Christian Mysteries and Pagan
Mysteries" in Fr. Hugo Rahner's Greek Myths and Christian Mystery;
and the papers by Walter F. Otto, Walter Willi, and Paul Schmitt in
The Mysteries, Eranos Jahrbuch #4.

[154]Note the blending of the myths in the Delphic Cult, n. 140.

[155]GM, 56b, relates the story of how the goddess Io wandered on various excursions throughout the Mediterranean and eventually founded the worship of Isis in Egypt. The sources for her wanderings are exceptionally late: Callimachus, On Birds, Fr. 100; Apolodorus, ii. I. 3; Hyginus, Fabula 145; Suidas sub Io; Lucan, Dialogues of the Gods 3; Moschus, Idyll ii. 59; Herodotus, i. I and ii. 41; Aeschylus, Promethius Bound 705ff, and Suppliants 547ff; Euripides, Iphigenia Among the Taurians 382; Tzetzes, On Lycophron 835ff.

[156]Graves' discussion of philosophy in GM, 29. 3, is most revealing on the causes of adding philosophical interpretations to the myth-religions. It is doubtful that many scholars will accept his viewpoint that the movement was that humanized.

[157]Cf. Cumont, Oriental Religions.

[158]Ibid. His section on the introduction of the Magna Mater cult into Rome is delightful. See also: Chadwick, pp. 154ff.

[159]Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra, Chapter III. Robert Graves dramatizes the insanity of a "perfect ritual" after Augustus' death in I Claudius.

[160]"La Mythologie" in Histoire generale des religions, II, Grece-Rome (Paris, 1948), pp. 150-289.

[161]The White Goddess.

[162]S. G. F. Brandon, Man and His Destiny in the Great Religions, also employs this thesis.

[163]Cf. the notes to James, Ancient Gods, Chapter X.

[164]Moses Hadas, The Greek Ideal and Its Survival, Chapter III, "The Supernatural", pp. 34ff.

[165]Walter Wili, "The Orphic Mysteries and the Greek Spirit", in The Mysteries, Eranos Jahrbuch #4, 1955, pp. 64-92.

[166]The conditioning of Greek mythology by its time and place runs throughout the notes in GM; some additional discussion of the ethos appears in Sidney Spenser, Mysticism in World Religion, pp. 123ff.

[167]Cf. The Very Rev. Sir George Adam Smith, "The Hebrew Genius as Exhibited in the Old Testament", in The Legacy of Israel.

[168]Brandon, Judgment, pp. 88ff.

[169]James, Ancient Gods.

[170]GM, Vol. I, p. 10.

[171]Jane Harrison, "The World Egg", in Chapter III of Prolegomena, pp. 625ff.

[172]Orphism and the Delphic cult of Dionysus are the most frequently cited sources of much mysticism in Early Christianity. See Section D, Chapter I and Chapter II for additional references.

[173]Ernst Würthwein, The Text of the Old Testament . . ., p. 12.

[174]According to Rabbi Joshua Trachtenberg, Christian readers must understand that the Old Testament has never been "concluded" in Hebrew belief, but that it must be read and interpreted in conjunction with rabbinical commentaries. Each age, therefore, sees in the canonical writings something of value to that age.

[175]R. H. Charles, APOT, Vol. I.

[176]Ibid., Vol. II.

[177]Editions in the publications of the Jewish Text Society.

[178]See "The Masoretic Text" in Würthwein, pp. 9ff.

[179]Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. XVII, p. 353.

[180]Compare notes 105-107, incl., and notes 180-193.

[181]A. H. Silver, A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel, "Introduction" and refs. to the Hasmonians.

[182]J. Bloch, On the Apocalyptic in Judaism, pp. 80ff.

[183]APOT, Vol. II., pp. 282-367.

[184]Ibid., pp. 368-406.

[185]See notes for Section D, Chapter I, and Chapter II.

[186]Ibid., p. 282.

[187]Ibid.

[188]Ibid., pp. 292-294.

[189]Ibid.

[190]Ibid.; see "Antichrist" in Chapter V; Testament of Daniel v. 6.

[191]Ibid., Testament of Reuben vi. 12.

[192]Ibid., Testament of Lev. xviii. 10.

[193]Ibid., Testament of Lev. xviii. 11.

[194]Ibid., T. Benj. x. 8 This includes Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[195]Ibid., pp. 377ff.

[196]Ibid., pp. 372-373.

[197]Ibid., "Introduction" to both books.

[198]Ibid.; see also the appropriate references in Josephus, The Jewish War.

[199]Brandon, Judgment, p. 135, and R. H. Charles, Eschatology, pp. 401ff and 437ff.

[200]C. G. Jung, "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass", pp. 274-336, in The Mysteries.

[201]Brandon, Judgment, Chapter III, "Christianity: The Problem of Relating a Saviour God to a Jewish Eschatology".

[202]See n. 45; Charles, Eschatology, pp. 304ff.

[203]George Wesley Buchanan, "Introduction" to Charles' Eschatology, pp. xxff.

[204]Much of the groundwork for this section was done by Mac-Culloch in 1930, but it must be noted that his book cannot be considered more than a framework today. Other than its overweening natural bias (he was a Canon of the Church of England), one must consider that his sources have not only grown out-of-date, but were sometimes considered faulty when he used them. It is most disturbing to the modern researcher to discover that MacCulloch prefered to use antiquarian editions of texts when scholarly ones were available to him, or that he misinterpreted his folklore sources when he was the general editor of one of the largest comparative folklore studies ever printed. Furthermore, his comparative study of the descent motif in the first four chapters of the book includes irrelevant information more than appropriate parallels. And, his apologia is a non sequitur.

[205]Late Hebrew and Early Christian documents overlap, as in the case of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Sibylline Oracles; therefore, it is not possible to speak of the documents as belonging to either one or the other with absolute certainty. Many items were reworked to show their foreshadowing of Christianity.

[206]By Early Christian literature, only those sources which can be considered predominantly New Testament are meant.

[207]J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds, p. 370, provides a discussion of the Council. See also p. 290 for a review of the Fourth Formula of Sirmium.

[208]As accepted by the Jerusalem Bible.

[209] Matthew, Mark, and Luke's Gospels.

[210] The Odes of Solomon, the Gospel of Peter, Epistles of the Apostles, the Ascension of Isaiah, Acts of Thaddeus, Acts of Thomas, the Anaphora of Pilate (Discussed in Chapter II), Questions of Bartholomew, etc., etc.

[211] See "Chart of Contributions".

[212] By Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Ignatius, Polycarp, Marcion, Tertullian, S. Cyprian, Hippolytus, Origen, S. Gregory Thaumaturgos, S. Athanasius, Eusebius, Ephrem Syrus, Aphraates, Prudentius, Synesius, Firmicus Maternus, S. Ambrose, S. Augustine, S. Jerone, S. Hilary of Poitiers, S. Cyril of Jerusalem, S. Cyril of Alexandria, Venantius Fortunatus, and the Acts of the Martyrs.

[213] E. g. those which use Old Testament references most.

[214] E. g. those which add to the New Testament and extra-biblical references.

[215] E. g. those which add to the "Harrowing" or derive their content from early manuscript texts of it.

[216] See the discussion of the Gospel texts, for instance in Chapter II.

[217] ANT, pp. 217ff, and APOT.

[218] Ibid. ; see notes for Chapter II.

[219] Most editors agree that the original "Harrowing" appeared in Greek first, with the Latin translations appearing later. See n. 217.

[220] Earlier editions and commentaries on the Nicodemus (MacCulloch) postulate a rather full-blown version of the "Harrowing" story in circulation during the first Christian centuries; whereas,

later and more careful scholars rely on manuscript evidence first. In recent critical views, it seems to be regarded that the "Harrowing" is probably a product of the fourth century, appended to the Acta Pilati sometime not before the fifth century. (ANT, p. 95.) Also it has not been determined exactly why the "Harrowing" was composed, other than the usual reason given that it filled in the Gospel narratives. With the manuscript evidence so unreliable, even the influences are postulated rather than proved.

[221]Constantin von Tischendorff, Evangelia Apocrypha . . ., 1851.

[222]PL and PG, 1876.

[223]ANT, 1924.

[224]A-NF, repr. 1966.

[225]See: "Chronological Table" at the end of the chapter.

[226]Ibid.

[227]Ibid., marked (A).

[228]Ibid., marked (P).

[229]Ibid., marked (C).

[230]Ibid., source citations are given where appropriate.

[231]Compare with the "Harrowing" summary given in the notes to Chapter II.

[232]Christ descended into Hell, did various things, and ascended. His preaching and saving of the Fathers is not established.

[233]Not all writers deal with the gate scene, preaching, carrying the cross, defeating Satan, saving the Fathers, and ascending in the same sequence; nor do they include any or all of these elements in any set order.

[234]Appears as early as Ignatius in the first century. See Table.

[235]Reinforced in Hippolytus in the 3rd century. See Table.

[236]In Tertullian, specifically.

[237]In Irenaeus. See Chapter II Charts and Tables.

[238]Ibid.

[239]Kelly, op. cit.

[240]Ibid.

[241]The number of interpretations and the variety increases greatly following the Council. See Table.

[242]Rudolph Bultmann, The Presence of Eternity, pp. 151-155.

[243]See: H. J. Schoeps, Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History, 1961.

[244]Ibid.

[245]Conybeare, The Origins, pp. 235ff.

[246]Kelly, p. 378.

[247]See Chapters III and IV.

[248]See Charts and Tables.

[249]Ibid. Those not known to have taken orders in the Church.

[250]Ibid. Known only by documentary evidence, not biography.

[251]For a complete discussion of the motifs, see Chapter II.

[252]Dated from the Hymns of Ephrem Syrus.

[253]Dated from the writings of Firmicus Maternus.

[254]Compare with Digest in Chapter II.

[255]Separate conversations are mentioned in Firmicus; see n. 258.

[256]See Table.

[257]Ibid.; see Chapter II for a discussion of Eve.

[258]N & P-NF, ser. ii, vol. xiii. 193.

[259]See Digest in Chapter II.

[260]See Table.

[261]Ibid.

[262]Chadwick, The Early Church, p. 153, has interesting insights into the life and work of Firmicus during the fourth century.

[263]In terms of what they have to say about the descent motif, they are most influential: their references are greater in number than any of the other writers, and they are more detailed.

[264]Biographical information on them is verified.

[265]N & P-NF, op. cit.

[266]Ibid., Hymn #35.

[267]Ibid.

[268]Ibid., Hymn #36.

[269]Ibid., Necrosima 29.

[270]Ephrem, Opera, vi. 29.

[271]Ibid.

[272]MacCulloch, p. 114.

[273]Ibid.

[274]Compare Quinn, The Quest of Seth, references to "Eve and Seth" and "Adam and Eve".

[275]MacCulloch, pp. 118-119.

[276]About the only thing which remains un-condensed is the famous "O Death, where is thy sting?" and "Lift up your gates . . .".

[277]One curious change made by Firmicus is the addition of Christ's entering the gates of Hell in a chariot of victory. Perhaps, conditioned by his ethos, Firmicus pictured this as the triumphant entry of a caesar into Rome.

[278]His commentary is not too distant in form from the early me-

diæval exemplum found in Old English versions. See Chapter IV.

[279]"Firmicus Maternus" in Webster's Biographical Dictionary, in Chadwick, and in ODCC.

[280]Arthur Darby Nock, Early Gentile Christianity, pp. 142ff, and similar discussions of the fourth century in Chadwick, James, Rahner, Hadas, Legge, and Conybeare, opp. citt. For comparative documentary evidence, see Shiel, pp. 72ff and commentary.

[281]Chadwick, pp. 154ff.

[282]Antioch, Carthage, Alexandria, Caesarea, Neocaesarea, central Mesopotamia, and Ptolemais. What would now be Turkey, Syria, North Africa, Upper and Lower Egypt, and Israel.

[283]Another cycle of apocryphal works centers around the need to provide information on the infancy and youth of Christ.

[284]One of the chief problems of the Early Church was defending itself against the charge that it was nothing more than another form of the same old paganism. Eusebius speaks of this in his passage on the circulation of false Acts of Pilate during the reign of Emperor Maximin. See Chapter II. The spiritualization of the Church is evident in the language of the creeds; unfortunately, there was a non-philosophical desire for more personal narratives, as can be seen in the large number of late apocryphal works which appeared in the fourth and fifth centuries. Cf. Chapter III for a further discussion of this.

[285]Renan, Chapter I, "Peter and Paul".

[286]Gregory's directives to the missionaries continued this, as is outlines in Chapter III.

CHAPTER II

A STUDY OF THE LATIN AND GREEK VERSIONS OF THE "HARROWING OF HELL" AS THE MAJOR SOURCE OF THE DESCENT TO HELL DOCTRINE IN MEDIAEVAL LITERATURE

In the previous chapter it was suggested that three important things must be considered in any study of the "Harrowing of Hell": that the descent-motif was in current circulation in the major religions at the time when the Christian canonic Gospels were created;[1] that the idea of a Christian descent, which was suggested in the New Testament, was greatly amplified and extended by apocryphal and patristic writings;[2] and that, as paganism was gradually overshadowed by Christianity in the first four centuries of the Church, the descent idea grew in popularity to the point where post-Nicaean Christians could draw from more than fifty additional accepted sources for their knowledge of Christ's supposed trip to Hell.[3] It is not particularly surprising, then, to find that many of these divergent writings would be accumulated eventually into a more complete narrative of the story and then be circulated as an actual eye-witness account: the pseudepigraphal story became attached naturally to the Gospel of Nicodemus.[4] Conversely, it would have been quite difficult for early Christians not to have accepted a full narrative version in the face of such impressive ecclesiastical evidence for it because the concept had undergone not only a continual process of refinement since the first Christian century, it was also never questioned as un-authentic in its basic form.[5]

However, it must be noted that in the two-hundred-year period between the end of the Roman Empire and the rise of the monastic communities before Bede, the early mediaeval Church benefited more from

the "Harrowing of Hell" than it did from the canon. By the weight of manuscript evidence, we find that the "Harrowing" survives in a larger number of Greek and Latin copies than most of the patristic writings, and that it appears to have had a much wider circulation than any of the similar post-Nicaean accounts. [6] This is no doubt due to the fact that none of the canonical, non-canonical, apocryphal, or patristic render- ings provide a complete retelling of the entire story, nor do they supply as compelling a narrative as that presented in the "Harrowing of Hell". The "Harrowing" became one of the major documents for the Augus- tinian and Gregorian commentaries--which permitted literary adapta- tions of the story--as well as the most important source for mediaeval interpretations. [7]

In order for this discussion to concentrate on the most outstanding of the mediaeval adaptations, it becomes necessary to examine the texts of the "Harrowing" as they appear in their Greek and Latin forms. Unlike the well-preserved Masoretic authentic texts of the Old Testa- ment, [8] the Gospel makes its way into the West in three forms of vary- ing importance and "completeness"; we can actually see the "Harrowing" becoming more and more literary in the fourth and fifth century texts, but not more influential as it is refined. [9] The mythological elements from earlier pagan faiths are also preserved, inadvertently, in the Gospel, and they can be traced in the same growth and transmission pattern as the basic story. By dividing the Gospel's "Harrowing" into its basic elements, it becomes possible to identify a basic manuscript tradition, and discover some of the reasons why later scholars and commentators became confused in their interpretations of the influence which this story had on the literature of the mediaeval period.

A. Manuscripts

No definitive redaction and study of all of the Greek and Latin manuscripts of the "Harrowing of Hell" has been attempted since the highly regarded collations of Constantin von Tischendorff were accepted as workable by later scholars.[10] Although there are twelve MSS of the Gospel, only two or three of them give the "Harrowing" as a connected part of the first or Acta Pilati section; there are no copies in the early Church languages of Coptic and Syriac.[11] The Greek MSS show no notable variants, so it is that most concern has rested with the Latin because there are two distinct versions. Tischendorff,[12] Coxe,[13] and James[14] use three MSS for the First Latin Version, and three for the Second Latin Version (identified by Tischendorff as D^{abc}: the Fabricius, the Codex Einsidlensis, and the Codex bibliothecae principis Corsini).[15] Until recently it was thought that no Armenian copy of the "Harrowing" ever existed, but this has now changed with the discovery and editing of a work through the Dumbarton Oaks Foundation.[16] All translations are based on composites made from closely related MSS within these groups.

In the following analysis I have remained within the pattern established by the earlier editors in formulating my digest and commentary on the "Harrowing". An individual section (Part IV) will cover the Armenian text.

B. Dating

Tischendorff dated the earliest versions of the "Harrowing" as having been produced during the second century of the Christian Era,

although most other editors prefer to state that the legend was only beginning to be formed at that time. [17] Maury and Renan feel that the earliest possible time is between 405-420, and some believe that it could have been as late as 439. [18] Coxe indicates that a number of commentators place it at the end of the third century, [19] but external evidence from Firmicus' use of the materials would put the initial appearance of the MS sometime before the end of the fourth century. [20] James does not believe that it became an actual part of the Gospel until sometime in the fifth century. [21] Every critic who has handled the Greek and Latin texts has agreed that the Latin versions (First and Second) are derived from the Greek and were done by a weak Greek scholar. [22] This may account, in part, for late dates assigned on the basis of the Latin MSS. Not much can be deduced from an hypothesized author because he was either an Hellenistic Jew or a Christian imbued with Judaic or Gnostic beliefs [23] which leads nowhere. Generally, no one now postulates a date much before the Council of Nicaea.

C. Order

A study of the composite redactions of the versions places the Greek as the shortest and the Second Latin as the longest and most recent type. Although all three versions give a complete version of the story (of the variety passing into the mediaeval West), the Greek is a shortened account, containing fewer characters, dialogues, and descriptions of the actions in Hell. The Second Latin includes the greatest number of characters and descriptions, adds additional folk-motifs, and is the best rendition as "literature". Between them, the Latin First Version appears to be the medium of ornamentation, with the

story related in a straightforward fashion: there are some clarifica-
tions over the Greek, but not to the extent of expanding the story, as in
the Second Latin.[24] The Second Latin changes the sequence of events
of the first two.[25]

D. Style

All three versions work around the same frame: the Jews who
crucified Christ learn that men known to them have risen from the dead
and are seen on earth. After locating the Jews these men tell their
tale of dying, seeing Christ harrow hell, save men from the Devil.
Once the stories have been told, the risen ones return to heaven. The
form is essentially dramatic, with an exposition, rising action, climax,
falling action, and conclusion provided by elements of the narration.
Speakers either identify themselves or are identified by the writer out-
side of the narrative. Within the frame the style moves from exposi-
tory to that of internal dialogue. There are both references to time
and place, as well as to a logical beginning and ending of the story.
The level of language is not unlike that found later in many of the early
mediaeval hagiographies.[26] As has been mentioned, the supposed
author is familiar with Christian belief and documents from both the
New and Old Testament; however, he appears to be more at ease when
citing New Testament references.[27] This colors his personal report
in part because it tends to weigh the "Harrowing" with an almost un-
necessary condemnation of the Jews for the crucifixion, whereas the
major story reports the descent.

E. Narrative

In the opening and closing sections of the "Harrowing" the narrator assumes an omnicient point-of-view: he has knowledge of all of the action, even to the point of adding descriptions between the dialogues in Hell--outside of the ones provided by the narrators of the frame story. Once inside of the frame most of the narrative is handled through various dialogues and monologues recited by residents of the underworld. The dialogues themselves range in length from very simple descriptions of the scene to complex conversations bordering on stichomythia.[28] Throughout the frame sections dialogues are interwoven with description in order to add to the suspense of the story and hold off the climactic harrowing scene. In those MSS which include a section of the scenes in heaven the dialogues furnish the reader with the reason why the risen men have returned to earth. The narrative plan seems to be one of rather skillful gradation[29] and intensification,[30] with a logical order and complete rationality.

F. Sophistication

The entire work is on a level of high-seriousness: there is no indication that the author was making a simple pastiche of earlier and non-canonical works because he has formulated a unified work with the result that his sources are arranged in a more artistic sequence than had previously been attempted, and because he extends his personality into the work through a well-defined plan.[31] Furthermore, the author seems to feel that he is fulfilling the necessary duty of providing Christian readers with one cogent, comprehensive retelling of the various things which were known--but scattered--about the descent of

Christ into Hell. His intimate knowledge of the source materials (as indicated in the Digest) allows him to select from several "originals" and to editorialize when necessary. In the First and Second Latin versions when the personality of the Greek author is being changed through the translation process, we can see other skilled ecclesiasts at work, but ecclesiasts who embellish the story rather than improve on it. Paraphrasing MacCulloch, it may be said that the author:

> . . . is a late writer, a plagiarist, using
> materials found in /patristic/ writers. . . ,
> he is a plagiarist of genius who knew what to
> take and what to leave, a writer of fiction who
> has selected his materials with a view to a
> clear and concise story. [32]

G. MSS Commentary

Although Eusebius mentions in his <u>Ecclesiastical History</u> that pagan <u>Acts of Pilate</u> were in circulation during his time, [33] it is not possible to consider any of the versions of the "Harrowing of Hell" to be pagan forgeries used against the Christians. The care with which it was constructed in the Greek versions and the completeness of both the Greek and Latin point to a definite Christian authorship and purpose: it bespeaks verisimilitude and seriousness in such a way that its apocryphal nature was not detected for more than a thousand years by men who studied it. However, the <u>Anaphora</u>, which is not discussed at length here, is a late and naive addition to the "Harrowing", not in keeping with the tone of the "Harrowing", although appended to it in a number of MSS. [34]

The following sections of this chapter will consider the elements of the "Harrowing" and their relation to both the sources from which it was constructed and the motifs from it which were to influence the

mediaeval literature drawn from it. Whenever possible, the notes will cite the appropriate references from the writers and documents mentioned in Chapter I.

H. Source Analysis

In the Digest of the "Harrowing of Hell" which follows I have combined the forms used by James, MacCulloch, and Coxe in their editions of the work. Column A, The Greek Version, Column B, The First Latin Version, and Column C, The Second Latin Version, are based on the collations and redactions of Tischendorff. Line numbers are those of Tischendorff and James.

The Source Parallels are appended in the division immediately following the Digest.

1. Digest of the "Harrowing of Hell"

Chapter §/¶	GREEK VERSION	FIRST LATIN VERSION	SECOND LATIN VERSION
1 (17)	Joseph tells the story of the risen men; they are located (Simeon's sons); they are given paper on which to write their story.	Joseph tells of the empty tombs at Arimathea; find Karinus and Leucius; they are given paper on which to write their story.	Three rabbis see risen men; Joseph and Nicodemus find them; 12,000 are risen from the dead; Karinus and Leucius give reports; they are asked to write them out; when this is done, they return to their sepulchres; the first report is then read.
2 (18)	Light is seen in Hell; Abraham speaks; Hesias speaks; John the Baptist speaks.	Light is seen in Hell; Esaias speaks; Simeon speaks; John the Baptist speaks.	Light is seen in Hell; a Voice is heard the first time; Satan orders the gates closed.
3 (19)	Adam and Seth tell the story of the Oil of Mercy; 5,500 years have passed.	Adam's and Seth's story; 5,500 years.	Satan and Hades converse; Lazarus.
4 (20)	Satan and Hades converse; Lazarus.	Satan and Hades converse; Tartarus speaks; Lazarus	Adam's and Seth's story; many generations discussed.
5 (21)	Voice is heard; Hell is secured; Hesias (in words from the LXX) speaks; Voice is heard 2nd time.	Voice is heard; Patriarchs and Prophets reproach; David speaks; Esias tells of Doomsday; Voice is heard the second time; David speaks; Christ appears.	Isaias speaks; John speaks; Adam offers an alleluia.
6 (22)	Hades cries; Satan bound by angels.	Hades and Death tremble, and question Christ; Satan seized and delivered to Hades by Christ; Christ draws Adam near.	Isaias, David, Jeremiah, all cry out.

7 (23)	Lament by Hades	Hades reviles Satan; Christ trades Satan for Adam and the "just ones".	Voice is heard the 2nd time; Robber appears to forewarn; Satan lets him in; David cries to open the gates; Voice is heard for the 3rd time.
8 (24)	Adam raised; all sing.	All revived; Adam is first; Adam prays for salvation; David, Habacuc, Micah cry out.	Christ enters and binds Satan with chains; throws him to Tartarus (with foot on throat); given to Hades; all plunge to abyss.
9 (25)	Adam to Michael the Archangel; Enoch and Elias the Thesbite speak; Antichrist discussion (3 days).	Adam to Michael; Enoch and Elias (fiery chariot); Antichrist discussion (3 days); assumption and the divine signs	Christ greets Adam; Adam prays; Eve prays; Christ binds Hades and throws him in; leads some to the upper world.
10 (26)	Robber and his story.	Robber and his story.	Christ places Cross in Hell; Karinus and Leucius are sent to the upper world.
11 (27)	Close of report; go to Jordan for baptism, disappear.	Karinus and Leucius say that Michael ordered their return, were baptized; give writings to those questioning Jews; are transformed into Heaven; Joseph and Nicodemus give writings to Pilate.	All weep upon hearing the report; 3-day fast; when Leucius' report is read, it is found to be identical with the first one.
12 (28)	None	Pilate to Temple; sworn testimony; Annas and Caiaphas; 5500 year calculation made.	None
13 (29)	No Greek Letter (Anaphora).	Pilate dictates letter to Tiberius Caesar.	Letter of Pontius Pilate attached to some manuscripts as a separate part.

Cast of Characters   * Unique Appearance

Greek Version	First Latin Version	Second Latin Version
Joseph	Joseph	3 Rabbis*
Simeon's sons (unnamed)	Karinus & Leucius/Annas & Caiaphas	Joseph and Nicodemus
		Annas and Caiaphas
Abraham*	Simeon*	
Hesias	Esaias	Isaias
John the Baptist	John the Baptist	John the Baptist
Adam	David	
Seth	Tartarus*	Jeremiah*
Satan	Satan	Satan
Hades	Hades	Hades
Lazarus	Adam & Seth	Adam and Seth
Michael	Death*	David
Enoch & Elias	Habacuc*	Robber
Robber	Micah*	Eve
	Michael	
	Nicodemus	
	Enoch & Elias	
	Robber	

Given in order of appearance

2. Character Analysis[35]

Joseph of Arimathea	Rich councilor; accepted the body of Christ after the Crucifixion; connected in the later legend of the Holy Grail
Simeon	Devout Jerusalemite; saw Jesus in the Temple
Karinus and Leu(t)icus	Sons of Simeon; died before the Crucifixion; witnesses to the descent and Christ's "Harrowing"
Abraham	Father of the Hebrew people; the father of Isaac
Isaiah	Major Hebrew Prophet; known for his vision and prophesy
Adam	Father of mankind (see Rom. 5 and I Cor. 15)
Seth	Son of Adam; figures in ancient legend of "The Quest of Seth for the oil of Mercy"
Satan	Fallen angel-prince; concept differs between Old and New Testaments
Hades	Hell (personified in "Harrowing")
Lazarus	Brother of Mary and Martha who was raised from the dead by Christ; considered the only one to have escaped from the pains of Hell before the descent and Christ's "Harrowing"
Tartarus	Hell; the infernal regions (personified in the "Harrowing"); idea from Babylonian mythology
Hell	Infernal region (personified in the "Harrowing")
David	King of Israel and national hero
John the Baptist	Precursor of Christ; Luke calls him the kinsman of Jesus
Jeremiah	Prophet of pessimism; second major prophet to call for repentance; foresaw the return from Babylon

Habacuc	Minor Prophet
Micah	Minor Prophet; spoke of the era of righteousness and predicted the coming of the Messiah
Michael	Archangel; cf. Book of Enoch
Enoch	Patriarch of the Hebrews; father of Metheusela (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5) and son of Cain (Jude 14-15)
Elias	Variant form of Elijah; in legend, his soul was embodied in John the Baptist; was supposed to have ascended without tasting death
Eve	Mother of mankind
Robber	Christ's crucifixion companion; name given as either Dysmas or Gestas in apocryphal documents
Nicodemus	Council member and friend to Jesus; called by name in only the non-synoptic Gospel of John
Antichrist	Epitome of evil (personified) and its final force; called "man of sin" in II Thess. 2:3; his imperial regime is that of Rome under Nero in Revelation
Annas (Hanan)	High Priest; his son was Joseph Caiphas
Caiphas	High Priest; son of Annas; one of the conspirators to crucify Christ
Pontius Pilate	Governor; although later taken to be the cause of Christ's crucifixion, he was regarded by the Early Church (and the present Ethiopic one) as without blame; canonized as a saint in Ethiopia, with wife Procula, as a convert to the faith after the crucifixion

3. Motif Analysis

Thompson Motifs for the "Harrowing of Hell":

E 177	Resuscitated man relates visions of the beyond.
E 752. 1. 2. 1	Devils amuse themselves by playing with souls in Hell.
E 754. 1. 6	Condemned soul released by Christ.
E 755. 2. 8	Dialogue between Christ and souls in Hell.
F 80	Journey to the Lower World (darkness).
F 81	Descent to the Lower World
G 303. 8. 3	Devil in Hell.
H 1270	Quests to the Lower World
V 211. 7	Christ's descent to Hell.
V 211. 7. 1	Harrowing of Hell.
V 211. 7. 2	Dialogue (debate) between Christ and Satan.
V 211. 7. 3	Three bolts on Hell.
V 511. 2	Visions of the Lower World.

The relevant motifs of the "Harrowing of Hell" have been listed in the Motif-Index of Folk-Literature[36] (covering ancient and mediaeval literature) and in the Cross Motif-Index of Early Irish Literature;[37] both indexes reveal a number of interesting parallels between the non-Christian and biblical precursors of the Nicodemus, and a like number of parallels between the "Harrowing" and its analogues. In the broad, general categories of the descent to the Lower World (F 80, F 81, H 1270, and V 211. 7) we find that by far the largest number of characters who visit the infernal regions are divinities of some sort, or those who have divine ancestors (with the exception of Heracles);[38] they are

distinguished only in the matter of the purposes of their descent: reasons as yet undisclosed, a task assigned to gain additional knowledge, or the desire to rescue a loved one. In spite of the rather artificial category established for Christ's descent (probably based on the then current regard for biblical literature) it is possible to regard the V 211.7 story under H 1270 as a variant of the Orpheus myth, for instance. Orpheus' release of Eurydice is similar to that of Christ's release of a captive soul (E 754.1.6) and Christ's dialogue with the souls in Hell differs little in motif-form from the many dialogues between the descent-figure and the souls in such tales as those of Odysseus, Aeneas, Heracles, and Dionysus, outlined in the footnotes to the first chapter. The establishment of separate Christian categories depends more upon the analogues drawn from the Christian story than it does upon its source parallels: in the history of a motif, the Christian becomes a variant rather than an original citation.

The E 177 motif of a resuscitated man relating visions of the beyond is also not a Christian theme because, in the latter portions of the Epic of Gilgameš, we find that Enkidu--after being brought back from the realm of the dead by Gilgameš--recites the dismal terrors of "life" in the Land of No Return;[39] echoes of this are also found in the "Descent of Inanna to the Nether World".[40] The most notable Christian reworking of this theme, after the reports found in the "Harrowing" establish it as Christian, is the story related by Bede in his History of the English Church and People (covered in Chapter IV). In each case the E 752.1.2.1 motif of devils amusing themselves by playing with souls in Hell figures predominantly in the relation of the vision by either the resuscitated man or the simple visionary.[41] Pagan and

Christian stories also describe devils as continuing their torment of the dead even after their ascent to the earth or to the realm of the gods: Inanna is followed by a number of bogeys and harpies after her escape from the Nether World,[42] and in La Chanson de Roland the pagans (considered both dead because of their religion and hell-bound) are seen captured by gleeful demons as they fall.[43] Some of the devils' own punishment is inflicted by Christ on Satan in the versions of the "Harrowing", even to the point of echoing Zeus' condemnation of Cronos to Tartarus (mentioned in the Latin "Harrowing" MSS) after the castration scene.[44] The most lengthy Christian rendering of the punishments of Hell comes in the Irish Voyage of St. Brendan, although this falls into a parallel sub-category under V 511.2, the visions of the Lower World.[45]

The V 211.7.2 dialogue between Christ and Satan is found as early as Inanna's conversation with the Gatekeeper of the Nether World and his mistress, Ereshkigal (sometimes considered a fallen divinity).[46] In other Christian renderings, this becomes a debate between the visionary (Brendan, Patrick) and Satan, the infernal guide.[47] There are also more literary and less mythological evidences of this in Dante,[48] but he was certainly not the first writer to use this device for didactic purposes.

Thompson's motif of the three bolts on Hell (V 211.7.3) is a direct reference to the "Harrowing" tale taken from Satan's charge to fortify his domain in preparation for the coming of Christ. In the literal Anglo-Saxon rendition of the bolting of Hell the demons bind it with iron and close it off in a manner which can only be described as in keeping with the redactor's mediaeval ethos.[49] It would not be surprising to

discover that the present epithet, "hot as the hinges of Hell", is ultimately derived from the "Harrowing" MSS. In all cases of a description of Hell the domain of the underworld divinity has gates of various types. In Virgil these gates have another, more specifically symbolic significance; however, many explanations have been offered for the Gate of Ivory and the Gate of Horn which tend to draw away from the original intent.[50]

One of the most important motifs which encompasses the "Harrowing" is the V 511.2, visions of the Lower World. Even though it can act as a catch-all for the various pagan stories in their most elemental form, it becomes the via trita, via tuta for both the early and late mediaeval tales of Purgatory and Hell: in a generalized Christian way this motif is large enough to include the canonical Revelation of St. John the Divine and large numbers of hagiographic accounts at the same time. It also appears in patristics (the vision of St. Perpetua[51]) as one of the precursors of the Christian descent motif. The most detailed discussion of visions appears in Chapter IV.

Outside of the Thompson list there exists a number of motifs which also connect the pagan stories with the Christian "Harrowing":

1. the "charge to the Gatekeeper" of Hell
2. the 3-day descent
3. the exchange of captives in Hell
4. devils and the personification of Hell
5. the bread and water of life
6. the salvation of the descender
7. the fates of the resuscitated

One curious phrase from "Inanna's Descent" seems to be preserved from the Sumerian into the Akkadian "Ištar's Descent", and then in the Psalms. From its appearance in the Old Testament it is used in the Nicodemus apocrypha and is recited by the Voice in the Old English

version of the <u>Gospel</u>:

Sumerian:	Open the house, gatekeeper, open the house, Open the house, Neti, open the house, all alone would I enter.[52]
Akkadian:	O Gatekeeper, open the gate. Open the gate that I may enter.[53]
Psalm 24:	Attollite portas, principes, uestras, et elevamini, portas aeternales, et introibit rex gloriae.[54]
"Harrowing":	Remove, O Princes, your gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.[55]
Old English:	You elders lift up the gates and heaven, the everlasting gate, so that your King, the kinsman who has everlasting glory, may go in.[56]

This is not really a notable instance of borrowing, as can be seen from the studies begun by Breasted on the Egyptian sources of the Old Testament Psalms,[57] and continued through contemporary scholarship,[58] but it does aid the mythographer in establishing a sequence of events for those stories which have a similar theme. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Akkadian descent, the Egyptian parallels, the Psalm use, and the apocryphal application existed simultaneously in pagan, Hebrew, and Christian religion during the fourth century of the Christian Era.

The three-day descent, derived from lunar observations--and a possible aetiological myth--appears first in the Sumerian accounts, is frequently a part of the Greek cycles, and finds expression in the ca-nonical Gospels. Folklorists have discussed this time-period as one of the more frequently used commonplaces in those mythologies which employ a solar and lunar system of calculation;[59] theologians tend to interpret its incorporation into the canon as a possible echo of the Gnostic

ideas in circulation at the time of the early Church, and many note that there is a direct connection between this time-period and the desire of some Christians to picture Christ as the descending god of light--a form of either the Ahura Mazda-Zoroaster-Mithra godhead, the patriarchal form of Ištar, or a Christianized version of the descending Mystery divinities.[60] The wide circulation of this belief can be traced in Graves, and the recent New Testament critical literature on its transmission to Christianity is quite convincing.[61] Older attempts to account for a unique Christian reasoning for its inclusion in the Gospels; to call the period symbolic is to ignore the impressive evidence in the other direction.

Early reference to an exchange of captives in the Nether World is a recent addition to the list of possible parallels from pagan literature because the final translations of the Inanna myths have only just been completed by Kramer in his Sacred Marriage.[62] It might have been possible to postulate the existence of such a motif in Akkadian or Sumerian literature by working backwards from the Greek cycles which include a partial, semi-annual return to life from the infernal regions, but this would be highly suppositional without textual evidence to give it full support. Now, though, we have proof that Inanna's resurrection would be guaranteed if she could find a substitute to take her place in the Nether World. In two instances within the Christian tradition do we find reference to something similar: the Gospel writer asks the rhetorical question, "Who will ransom Christ?", considering that he has been crucified, and is dead and buried.[63] Within Trinitarian thought and belief, Christ-as-God is capable of carrying through the descent and resurrection under his own Will; however, there is an implication within

the Gospel itself that Christ will be "rescued" through the efforts of God, God as a being outside the personality of Christ. This, of course, verges on non-canonical belief, and the question is not answered, nor is the thought pursued at any length in the rest of the canon; yet, it became a central issue of many of the early Church councils. In the Second Latin Version of the "Harrowing", we find Christ saying to Hell: "Satan the prince shall be in thy power unto all ages in the stead of Adam and his children, even those that are my righteous ones." (Chapt. 7/23) This indicates that there is an exchange of prisoners, with Satan acting as a replacement for all those who died before Christ; in addition, it also indicates that Christ, physical son of Adam, is exchanged for Satan. Both traditions suggest that the redeemed one will return after a certain period of time: the cycle will be made complete with the Second Coming.

The subject of biblical demonology is an extremely complex one in the study of the comparative integration of Near Eastern religious beliefs. Portions of this have been covered in the Introduction and Chapter I, but it might be noted that Christianity also benefited from a rather well-organized system of demonology espoused by the Mithraic religions: Ahriman, the opposite of Mithra and the embodiment of all evil (and darkness), was aided in his eternal battle against the forces of good (and light) by a host of demons, devils, and other hideous creatures of darkness.[64] Mithraism, a direct descendant of the Babylonian religions, refined its demonology; on a parallel with this is the development of Old Testament (now mostly Talmudic) angelology and demonology: not only were these creatures thought of as being descendants of Cain, the ancient myth of Lilith tells us that they were born of a union between Satan

and Lilith when Lilith (Adam's <u>first</u> wife) consorted with him after

leaving Adam. The most obvious recall of these extra-biblical narra-

tives comes in <u>Beowulf</u> when the lineage of Grendel is given. [65] And as

for the personification of Hell, Tartarus, Death, and other sub-divini-

ties, we can find ample evidence of this in the mythological cycles of

Greek stories which deal with the Olympians. The Hellenized sections

of the Old Testament reflect the influence of both Near Eastern and

Greek thought, and scholars have long recognized that very little of

Hebrew eschatology can be termed original thinking. [66] Hellenistic

Christianity, too, makes great usage of Greek mystic and philosophic

thought in order to express ideas and concepts which extend into the

metaphysical. [67]

Christians think of the bread and wine as being essential elements

of the physical celebration of the eucharist, symbols of the Last Supper

celebrated by Christ before the crucifixion; yet, they are also interpre-

tations of the nearly universal belief in heavenly <u>manna</u>, or foods of the

gods. The Sumerian interpretation of the bread and water included

their use in the resurrection process, and they appear in the same sym-

bolic form within Christian ceremonial resurrection ideology, from

Christ's baptism through his descent. [68] Ritual cleansing in Hebrew

theology is extended by the New Testament into the work of John the

Baptist: faithful Jews could understand the Baptist's methods because

they were an accepted practice in orthodox life. [69] The symbol of water

as spiritual refreshment extends back into ancient Near Eastern life and

grew up from early burial practices; through the refinements of Chris-

tian philosophy, the <u>Logos</u> becomes refreshing, whereas it simply indi-

cated a drink of water given to the parched spirit who had departed to an

eternity of heat and dust in the desert climates of Mesopotamia. Rather curiously, though, the use of bread and water for resurrection (or the second-birth of the soul) appears most pointedly in only the Sumerian and Christian traditions.

The Epic of Gilgameš is built around the theme of the search for eternal life: Gilgameš realizes that he will not live forever and he has this terrifying fact made real for him by the loss of Enkidu, his closest friend. In learning of Utnapishtim's eternal life Gilgameš searches him out to learn his secret; in spite of the gift which the gods have granted him, Utnapishtim's eternity is a terrestrial one and not a heavenly sharing with the gods. Similarly, Inanna achieves an earthly eternity, as do most of the descent-pairs in eclectic Greek mythology. Some strange hints of a Christian parallel to this are found in the late Latin Second Version of the "Harrowing" and in a number of patristic writings when large numbers of the risen are seen on earth. [71] The Christian sources are notably silent on the final disposition of those returned to earth immediately after the "Harrowing". Graves has noted that the fates of the characters form an essential part of motif-analysis because the fate normally expresses the raison d'être for the myth. [72] It is inconceivable that such a host should go undetected or uncared-for until the Second Coming, but their fates are not mentioned by either the Fathers or any of the versions of the "Harrowing", although it might be assumed that they also were taken into heaven at the same time as those characters who relate the descent story. In all cases the ones who descend are aided in some way by a higher power--the personification of Wisdom, a related god-parent, or an interested divinity--and they are granted a type of release from the pains of the underworld. In times

when only the gods enjoyed the heavens the released souls were returned to the earth; in later religions when man was allowed to partake of the heavenly kingdom, those released were given paradise as a boon. All the stories indicate that there was a reward at the end of their descents.

It may therefore be noted that the "Harrowing of Hell" also preserves and transmits as many motifs from pagan folk-literature and religion as it does motifs from within the Christian literature which gave it birth. Although there is no conscious attempt to perpetuate pagan belief in any of the sources or the "Harrowing" itself, it can be said that the late Latin translators responsible for the First and Second versions display their knowledge of classical writings in such a way that it would seem that they are trying to impress their non-Christian friends with the high level of philosophy in their new religion.[73] However, the literary success of the Second Latin version did not achieve the immortality of mediaeval imitation because it was too complex in its permutation and combination of characters and dialogues; the more simple First version had the greatest influence on adaptors after the seventh century.[74]

The two additional charts, The Cast of Characters and Character Analysis, help to supply an overview of the construction of the three versions: in each instance the characters are selected either for their direct connection with the descent (as conspirators)[75] or as patriarchal and prophetic harbingers of the Messiah. Moreover, by the process of intensification, it appears that, by adding even the minor prophets Habacuc and Micah, the First Latin translator feels that he gives necessary verification absent from the Greek texts. He also clarifies the

tale somewhat by adding Karinus' and Leucius' names in place of the rather neutral "Simeon's sons". Quite in contrast to the logical sequence of character presentation in the Greek and First Latin collations the author of the Second Latin text "improves" the narrative by introducing and disposing of the risen pair before their stories are told, probably in order to concentrate on the more important harrowing scenes. However, he inserts the Robber in Hell as an announcer of Christ's impending arrival, contradicting the notion the Christ will remember him when he comes into his kingdom--not when Christ enters Hell. Furthermore, he includes Eve in a fashion which could be considered an afterthought. Although his attempts help this version of the "Harrowing" to become a more refined product, there is a notable loss of interest at the conclusion because he has no characters left to close the frame story and bring the narrative to a natural end.

4. An Armenian "Harrowing"

In 1954 Sirarpie Der Nersessian discovered and published the text of an early Armenian homiletic version of the "Harrowing of Hell" supposedly taken from works attributed to the fifth-century commentator Eusebius of Alexandria.[76] Although the manuscript was produced in the Crimea in 1363 from works which exist now in eighth or ninth-century copies, the language has been identified as that type of Armenian used during the fifth and sixth centuries,[77] or approximately at the time when James postulates that the "Harrowing" was joined with the Gospel of Nicodemus as its second part.[78] Its title in the Crimean MS is: History of John, son of Zacharias, concerning the destruction of hell and concerning Satan, How the Lord captured the incorporeal en-

emy and freed those who had been imprisoned by him.[79]

Using La Piana's parallel[80] work on the homilies of Eusebius,
which suggested that they were drawn from a text derived from the
Gospel of Nicodemus and existing apocryphal sources, Der Nersessian
translated the History in a manner which indicated all the passages
derived from the Latin, Slavonic, Arabic, and Greek versions of the
Eusebian homilies. By this method, he discovered that the Armenian
was clearer than the eighth-century MSS and that it was closer to the
Gospel of Nicodemus.[81] Therefore, he concluded, the Armenian may
be an earlier translation of a more original MS than those known in the
West during the Middle Ages.[82] Because of these discoveries, it is pos-
sible to look upon the Armenian version of the "Harrowing" as one of
the first evidences of the Gospel's being transformed to fit the needs of
the Eastern Church as it transformed Greek and Latin writings to its
own system.

Cast in the form of a report on the "Harrowing" by John the Bap-
tist, the story runs as follows:

1. The Archangel Gabriel appears to the priest
   Zacharias and tells him that he will have a son
   who will be a forerunner of the Son of God.
2. This prophecy comes true; John then summarizes
   the events of his life and death to the point where
   he is in Hell, preaching Christ's imminent appear-
   ance.
3. There is a discussion among the damned as to
   whether or not Christ will come.
4. Adam speaks of Christ's words to him and the
   promise which Adam received of salvation, after
   Christ's descent and harrowing of Hell.
5. Moses and David appear and speak of their former
   prophecies of a Messiah.
6. John and David exchange questions, and John tells
   of Christ's miracles.
7. The Master of Hell asks who John is and Satan
   tells him that he is John--adding some details
   about his family and life.
8. There continues a conversation between the Master

and Satan over the nature of Christ; it is
announced that Christ is a man and that the
Jews must be stirred up against him.
9. This conversation informs us that Christ
caused Lazarus to rise like and eagle, and
that he also raised the daughter of Jairus.
10. The Master tells Satan not to bring him down,
but we are told that Annas and Caiphas are in
league with the Devil (as is Judas); Satan goes
up to earth to cause the crucifixion.
11. Satan witnesses the crucifixion and the signs;
he realizes that Christ will harrow Hell and
he flees to the underworld.
12. Satan orders the gates to barred (he is called
the three-headed Beelzebub).
13. Christ enters Hell triumphantly; "Lift up your
gates" and "Who is this King?" are heard
from the voices.
14. Christ breaks the gates and ties Satan; the
prophets mock their enemies and praise God.
15. Adam makes his plea and is sent to see Enoch
and Elias in heaven; the remainder are raised
to Heaven; all sing an alleluia.[83]

The differences between this rendition and the Greek and Latin ver-

sions of the "Harrowing" are most notable; however, Der Nersessian

has found that the Armenian text is at some considerable variance with

the supposed homeletic "sources" in that it is a continuous narrative

without the preaching and didactic overtones found in the homilies, and

that the lively dialogues heighten its dramatic intensity through speedy

action.[84] The result is that we have an Armenian variant of the Gospel

set in a different frame: the story of John the Baptist takes the place of

the Karinus and Leuticus episodes; there is an economy of character-

ization; and there is more emphasis placed on Adam (even without the

Seth story). Der Nersessian reasons that the concern with Adam is a

natural outgrowth of the numerous apocryphal stories about Adam which

enjoyed great popularity in Armenian versions at the same time when

the History was written; he cites several which could have provided

such changes as the sixth day of the 6000th year for 5,500 years,

Christ's promise of salvation for Adam before the "Harrowing", and the inclusion of the "water of life" motif for salvation.[85] It is quite possible that much of this came from the Testament of Adam imported to Armenia in 591, or to Ethiopic and Arabic sources.[86] Christ's tramping on Satan's throat and his casting him to Tartarus come directly from the Gospel in Latin.

One additional thing is worth mentioning: there are Armenian versions of the Anaphora of Pilate which mention the appearance of men with luminous apparel who proclaim the resurrection.[87] It is quite possible that the Armenians who translated the Gospel into their own language were also mystified enough about the fates of the 12,000 who had risen (and were forgotten) in the Gospel, that they solved this problem by including them at the end of the story--in the form of nearly transfigured spirits. Furthermore, the existence of Armenian copies of the Anaphora might point to the possibility of a full version of the Gospel "Harrowing" in that language because the Anaphora has no reason for being without the story which goes before it.

I. Remarks

There is no single, authoritative "original" text of the "Harrowing of Hell" extant today and it appears that whatever text appeared in the fifth and sixth centuries was taken to be authentic by Christian translators and adaptors.[88] It is therefore impossible to speak of the influence of the "Harrowing" on subsequent literary productions, but more appropriate to use the terms "Harrowing sequence", "First Latin 'Harrowing' Sequence", or the "Armenian Sequence" when tracing the use of this story in mediaeval writing. However, as I have indicated in the following chapters, the First Latin Version enjoyed more

popularity than either of the others. Sometimes the First Latin Version was used alone for the unique source; at other times it was used in conjunction with patristic writings, when they were available to the translator. As the story of Christ's descent undergoes commentary by Augustine and Gregory, and as it becomesa frequent theme in homiletic literature, its widespread transmission to the West is assured. The next chapter will suggest a number of channels by which the "Harrowing" was made canonical and brought to the attention of mediaeval Christians.

J. Charts and Tables: Contributions of
Ideas from the Patristic Writings
(before the 5th century) to the Greek
and Latin MSS of the "Harrowing"

Date A.D.	Contributor and List of Contributions[89]	
		(X) Indicates a special idea or concept expressed in the "Harrowing"
1st cent.	IGNATIUS	
	(X)	1. Christ saved those waiting for him (dead)
	(X)	2. Prophets proclaimed the Gospel and were saved
	(X)	3. Christ preached in Hell
	(X)	4. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were raised
69-155	POLYCARP	
		1. implies the descent of Christ
100-165	JUSTIN MARTYR	
		1. The Lord descended to Hell to preach to those who were dead
		2. Noah was a type of baptism
	(X)	3. The Jews were mistaken to believe that Christ would remain in Hades
ca. 125	THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS	
		1. Christ preached to the souls in Hell
		2. Christ gave baptism to the dead
		3. The dead arose again

2nd cent.	**MARCION** 1. Christ descended to Hades to deliver souls 2. Abel, Enoch, Elias, Noah, and all the patriarchs and prophets did not partake in the salvation 3. The men of Sodom were saved
ca. 177	**S. IRENAEUS** 1. All in Hades were given Christ's preaching 2. Patriarchs and prophets told of his coming (X) 3. Christ was in Hell for three days as was Jonah in the Whale's belly for the same time 4. Purpose of the descent was to save the damned 5. Those who lived before the Incarnation must share in the Gospel (X) 6. Adam was regenerated (first-born of the dead) (X) 7. Risen men were seen in their bodies
160-230	**TERTULLIAN** (X) 1. Christ emptied Hades not true (X) 2. All the faithful should not go there at death; only martyrs are excepted (X) 3. Abraham's Bosom is a higher part of Hades (X) 4. There are punishments in Hades (X) 5. St. Perpetua saw only martyrs in heaven (X) 6. Christ shattered the gates and doors (X) 7. Adam was regenerated
d. 258	**S. CYPRIAN** 1. Christ arose from the dead 2. Old Testament saints benefitted from the descent (X) 3. Moses was a procurer of Christ's appearance in Hell
3rd cent.	**HIPPOLYTUS** 1. Christ descended to preach (X) 2. John the Baptist was a forerunner of Christ (X) 3. Christ ransomed the souls in Hell (X) 4. A voice was heard in Hell (X) 5. The devils trembled (X) 6. Christ broke the gates of Hell (X) 7. Souls are detained in various parts of Hades according to a time determined by God

155-220	S. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA
	(X) 1. Righteous pagans receive the preaching
	(X) 2. Hades and Destruction have a dialogue over hearing the voice
	(X) 3. Baptism is like the Descent
	(X) 4. Sodom and Gomorrah were saved

185-254   ORIGEN

1. Christ descended to Hell
2. Patriarchs and prophets were there
(X)   3. Moses and Samuel and St. John the Baptist preached of his coming
(X)   4. Fiery baptism enables one to pass to Paradise
5. Christ's descent was not mythical (as were the classical heroes' descents only fables)
(X)   6. At the end of the world, the Enemy will be destroyed
(X)   7. Christ trod on Death and spoiled Hades

213-270   S. GREGORY THAUMATURGOS

(X)   1. Christ indicated at his baptism that he would descend to Hell
(X)   2. Death is trodden underfoot
(X)   3. Martyrs disport themselves in Death's presence
(X)   4. Adam was delivered

293-373   S. ATHANASIUS

1. Christ descended to Hell
(X)   2. The gatekeepers shuddered before him
3. The saints were saved
4. There was terror among the janitors of Hades
(X)   5. Satan was cast out of Hades (at the gates)
(X)   6. Abraham was saved
(X)   7. All rejoiced in song

260-340   EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA

1. Christ descended to Hades, burst the gates, summoned the souls, saved them
(X)   2. The prophets reviled death
(X)   3. The devils fled

306-373   EPHREM SYRUS

(X)   1. Death, Satan, and Hades have dialogues
(X)   2. Voice makes proclamation
(X)   3. Devils lament

	(X)	4. Death councils Judas to betray Christ
	(X)	5. Christ saves all except Enoch and Elijah, who have already been delivered to Paradise
		6. Ezekiel is quickened
	(X)	7. Christ trod on Death and chained him
		8. Adam is restored
	(X)	9. The descent takes three days
	(X)	10. Christ carries the sign of the cross
	(X)	11. Christ saves Eve
		12. Christ made a bridge over Sheol

ca. 343-344   **APHRAATES**

1. Includes all of the usual descent features, references to the major ideas, including Enoch and Elijah

348-410   **PRUDENTIUS**

1. Bolts of Hades were shattered; includes the major motifs of the story

ca. 410   **SYNESIUS**

1. Speaks of Tartarus, devouring dog, powers of the Air, Aether, Venus, the horned moon, gods of night, Titan, and the rising sun

ca. 470   **FIRMICUS MATERNUS**

(X)   1. Almost a complete "Harrowing" parallel to the MSS in Greek and Latin

FOOTNOTES

[1]See Chapter I, § A and B.

[2]See Chapter I, the discussions of the Christian sources.

[3]See Chapter I, Charts and Tables, for a list of the sources.

[4]James, ANT, "Introduction" to the texts of the Gospel of Nicodemus. One of the most important reasons for the "Harrowing" becoming attached to the Gospel (as the former Acta Pilati) was the crossover of the character of Nicodemus from the Acta into the "Harrowing". Although Nicodemus is of more importance to the Passion narrative, he does figure as one of the men who delivers the scrolls to Pilate at the end of the "Harrowing". In addition to this, the "Harrowing" picks up naturally where the first part comes to an end and the canonical sources from the Synoptics terminate in influence.

[5]Even in the fifth century---and in the sixth---when S. Augustine and Pope Gregory the Great made their commentaries, the only discussion which received any noteworthy controversy was over the depths to which Christ descended to preach to the souls. Gregory was also concerned over the types of souls received by Christ after the "Harrowing". There was no doubt expressed by either of them that Christ went to Hell. See Chapter III for an extended discussion of their work on the Gospel.

[6]See Chapter III for a discussion of the transmission of the motif into Western Christianity after the fall of Rome.

[7]With the authority given to the Gospel by these commentaries, it did gain what one might term "canonical respect", bringing it to a par with other books of the Old and New Testaments. In the uses of the Gospel (discussed in Chapters V, VI, and VII), it appears that the full

Gospel was employed in place of the patristic citations and the discussions given it in the commentaries.

[8]See the discussion of the Masoretic texts of the Old Testament in the "Introduction" to Ernst Würthwein, The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to Kittel-Kahle's Bibla Hebraica.

[9]One of the curious developments comes with the appearance of the Latin II text, the most complete and elaborate of the Gospel narratives: this text represents a complete revision of the Greek form, with changes in the sequence of events, the characters, and the focus of the story. Even though it represents a slightly more interesting version of the tale as it was "originally" told, it does not appear to have been used by the early mediæval writers in their versions of the story in the vernaculars. It might be that it was too complex or complicated for use in a missionary rendering.

[10]James, ANT, for instance, bases his translations on Tischendorff, as does Coxe in the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. VIII. He is still highly regarded for his work by the editors of the ODCC; however, his notes are rather dated and must be taken with caution.

[11]James, ANT, pp. 92ff.

[12]Constantin von Tischendorff, Evangelia Apocrypha sive de Evangeliorum Apocryphorum Origine et Usu.

[13]The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, ser. ii, vol. viii.

[14]ANT.

[15]Op. cit., "Introduction" to the texts of the Gospel of Nicodemus.

[16]Sirarpie der Nersessian, "An Armenian Version of the Homilies on the Harrowing of Hell", Dumbarton Oaks Papers (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press), No. VIII, pp. 201-224.

[17]James, ANT, "Introduction" to the Gospel of Nicodemus.

[18]Coxe, "Introduction" to the Gospel of Nicodemus.

[19]Ibid., ; James, op. cit.

[20]See Tables and Charts.

[21]James, op. cit.

[22]James, p. 92.

[23]Ibid. The identity of the author does not aid in the investigation of the Gospel as we have it; however, from my study of what remains of Gnostic belief (repeated from non-Gnostic refutations), it does not appear that the Gospel itself was really created to promote anything which could be considered uniquely Gnostic. There are indications in the writings of Origen, for instance, which indicate (see Chapter I) that the descent of Christ's spirit (rather than the spirit and the body) might be Gnostic in conception. See Chapter III for a discussion of this.

[24]See the Charts and Tables at the end of this chapter.

[25]Ibid.

[26]The credulity of the author and the credulity of the Jews assembled to listen to the reading of the stories of Karinus and Leuticus is most interesting in this respect. Echoes of this willing-to-believe are found in Gregory's Dialogi, of course, in Bede's Ecclesiastical History, and in the Voyage of St. Brendan, all discussed in later chapters.

[27]There appears to be a greater concentration of New Testament citations in the Greek and Latin versions of the Gospel. The characters from the Old Testament are represented because they are conceived of as being precursers of Christ and prophets of his descent to Hell.

[28]The conversations between Satan and his assistant devils are more or less in this form. Later, in the Anglo-Saxon versions, we find

these conversations made shorter and more "realistic" exchanges. However, in the vernacular versions, this might be the result of another external cause: see Chapter V for a more complete discussion of this.

[29]The idea of anxiety in Hell is well worked-out through the sudden appearance of light and the thrice-heard sound of the voice from above.

[30]As the devils prepare for the eventual "war" with Christ upon his descent, we find the narration becoming more tense and the dialogues much more short.

[31]Rather than tell the story as it is found in the more extended patristic versions (such as those of Fabricus and Ephrem), the author of the so-called "original" Greek form gives it a frame-story with external and internal dialogue, with even the possibility of a post-script in the form of the Anaphora of Pilate, if it is possible to consider this as part of the original plan. It has a unity and purpose which all the others lack.

[32]See MacCulloch, Chapter III.

[33]Isaac Boyle, tr., The Ecclesiastical History of Esuebius Pamphilis (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott and Co.), 1869, p. 55.

[34]James, ANT, pp. 92ff.

[35]The Character Analysis is based on citations from Hugh Schonfield, The Dictionary of the Bible, and the ODCC; remarks are also included from the notes in the Jerusalem Bible.

[36]Stith Thompson, Motif-Index of Folk-Literature (Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press), 1956, and all following editions.

[37]Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index of Irish Literature (Chicago, University of Chicago Press), 1959.

[38]See Chapter I for citation from GM on Heracles.

[39]Sandars, Epic of Gilgamesh; Heidel, Epic of Gilgamesh.

[40]Kramer, _SM_, Chapter VI; Cf. text in _ANET_.

[41]Elizabeth Willson, _Middle English Versions of the Other World_ (Chicago, University of Chicago Libraries), 1917.

[42]Kramer, _SM_, Chapter VI.

[43]Cf. Chapter VI, "Some Notes on the _Song of Roland_".

[44]See Chapter I for citations of this myth.

[45]Discussed at length in Chapter V, Part II.

[46]Kramer, _SM_, Chapter VI.

[47]Cf. Chapter V, Part II; compare Kramer, _SM_, Chapter VI; _ANET_.

[48]Dante's conversations between the characters in Hell, his guide Virgil, and his _persona_ could hardly be called "folklore" in the strictest sense, although Dante-the-poet makes great use of folkloric motifs.

[49]See Chapter V, Part I for a discussion of the Anglo-Saxon version of the _Gospel of Nicodemus'_ "Harrowing of Hell".

[50]There is a considerable body of scholarly discussion about the meaning of the Gate of Ivory and the Gate of Horn in the _Aeneid_. See the General Bibliography for citations on this point. Dante uses the gates as entrances into the upper world, not as entrances to Heaven, however.

[51]See Chapter I for the citation on this point; compare Omer Engelbert's _Lives of the Saints_ for the story and legend of S. Perpetua.

[52]Kramer, _MAW_, "Sumerian Mythology".

[53]James Bennett Pritchard, ed., _Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament_ (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press), 1955.

[54]Karl Young, _The Drama of the Mediaeval Church_ (Oxford, The Clarendon Press), 1955.

[55]See Chapter V, Part I for the complete text of the Old English.

[56]Hardin Craig, English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages (Oxford, The Clarendon Press), 1955.

[57]Compare the Breasted citation in Chapter I.

[58]See Chapter I, n. 31 for modern scholarship being done on the Psalms.

[59]Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return, tr. from the French by Willard R. Trask (New York, Harper and Brothers), 1959, pp. 88-89.

[60]See The Mysteries; compare also Cumont, Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism; also E. R. Goodenough, By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism.

[61]See citations of Graves, GM, in Chapter I; also the General Bibliography for citations on "Christianity".

[62]His chapter VI is of special note.

[63]See Chapters I and III for the use of this idea.

[64]Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra, has an extended discussion of this.

[65]Cf. Chapter V, Part I, for a discussion of Beowulf.

[66]R. H. Charles, Eschatology; also the citations on the eschatology of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Sibylline Oracles in APOT, given as citations in Chapter I.

[67]Take, for instance, the parallels given in Kramer, SM, Chapter VI, and the citations in the ODCC.

[68]Hugh Schonfield, The Passover Plot; "Baptism" in ODCC; also the folklore of the ritual washings given in Rabbi Joshua Trachtenberg, Hebrew Folklore. Pilate's ritual washing of his hands also falls into

this same category as it is an expiation of guilt.

[69]The editions of Sandars and Heidel are the most modern translations; the technical versions of the text are in ANET.

[70]Cf. Charts and Tables in Chapter I and those for this chapter.

[71]Graves, GM, vol. I, "Introduction".

[72]One of the most interesting sidelights to this is the number of times the characters and the region of Hell are related in terms of Greek mythology: Hades, Tartarus, Styx, rivers of blood, etc. It would be quite interesting to trace the influence of Greek terminology and Roman myth from Virgil on these expressions of the Christian versions of the Gospel.

[74]Outside of one long passage given to John the Baptist and to the River Jordan in the Old English versions of the story, there is little indication that the Latin II version ever enjoyed any popularity in the early mediaeval Church.

[74]In adding members of the Sanhedram, the redactor of the Latin II version attempts to make the story into a legal hearing of the scrolls of the risen pair. He gathers together all of those whom he feels were the men responsible for Christ's crucifixion.

[75]Der Nersessian, p. 206.

[76]Ibid., pp. 221ff.

[77]James, ANT, p. 92.

[78]Der Nersessian, p. 206.

[79]G. La Piana, Le rappresentatazione sacre nella letteratura bizantina delle origini al sec. IX (Grottaferrata, 1912), pp. 80-82, as cited by Der Nersessian, p. 204.

[80]Der Nersessian, pp. 211ff.

[81]Ibid., pp. 221ff.

[82]Ibid., pp. 206-211.

[83]Ibid., p. 211.

[84]Ibid., pp. 214ff.

[85]Ibid., p. 216.

[86]Texts of the Anaphora of Pilate are given following the Gospel of Nicodemus' "Harrowing of Hell" in James, ANT.

[87]It might also be indicated that it is impossible to state that any use of the "Harrowing of Hell" theme in mediaeval literature can be attributed to the unique Gospel of Nicodemus because there was no one single authorized version of this apocryphon, and it seems that there never was one.

[88]This list is based on the citations of works given in Chapter I, Charts and Tables.

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE "HARROWING OF HELL" THEME
TO THE WEST

Even though the descent-to-Hell theme was expressed in an expanded narrative form by at least the fifth century, [1] its appearance in Christian manuscript literature did not insure its natural transmission into the West[2] or guarantee its acceptance as an authoritative document which adumbrated a dogma of the Church. [3] It might be possible, for instance, to see the appearance of this theme in early mediaeval writing as merely an echo of the three major New Testament canonical sources of the story (Matthew xxvii. 52ff, Luke xxiii. 43, and I Peter iii. 18ff) or as a borrowing from the patristics of the Ante-Nicaean, Nicaean, and Post-Nicaean Fathers, [4] without direct reference to the story as it is found in the Gospel of Nicodemus. There might also be the notion that the descent-motif was better known from the various creeds of the Church than it was from the apocrypha. [5] However, it is because of the fact that the Gospel establishes a sequence of events and characters[6] for the descent-motif that a manuscript tradition takes precedence over the rather fragmentary sources cited previously. By concentrating on the earliest of the Anglo-Latin writers, [7] we can postulate various methods by which the "Harrowing" became accepted and by which it was disseminated throughout the missionary Church. The following discussion will trace the movement of this theme through (a) the reception of the patristics, (b) the Councils and creeds of the Early Church, (c) the catechism, and (d) theological commentaries, with echoes in historical literature.

149

A. Patristics

Of the various Fathers of the Church who contributed elements to the descent-motif in their writings, there were no references to the works of Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, the Shepherd of Hermas, Marcion, Irenæus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, S. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, S. Gregory Thaumaturgos, Ephrem Syrus, Aphraates, Synesius, or Firmicus Maternus[8] in the surviving literature written by Anglo-Latin scholars before 804 A.D.[9] And, although the Anglo-Latins knew of S. Cyprian, S. Athanasius, Eusebius of Cæsarea (in translation), Prudentius, and Ambrose, we find that the important sequence in Ephrem and Firmicus[10] is not present in their writings. Bede uses Cyprian's Testimonia contra Judaeos, III, 3 in his In Actus Apostolorum Retractationis Liber, 4, c. 1009C, thus indicating that he was familiar with one of the major documents; however, Cyprian's primary discussion of the descent appears in Book ii, where he mentions the resurrection and the preaching in Hell, the raising of the saints, and reflects on Moses as a forerunner of Christ. Alcuin uses S. Athanasius' Epistola ad Epictetum four times in his works,[11] but this epistle cites only I Peter iii. 18f, and provides only the comment that Christ descended to preach in Hell with the Logos not parted from him. Bede adopts Athanasius' De Incarnatione contra Arios, No. 16 as a possible source for his Super Epistolas Catholicas Expositio, I Peter iii; yet it is only in No. 3 that we find the Sirmium, Nike, and Constantinople creeds used to aid an explanation of the Hell gatekeeper's fear, the rising of the dead, and the fear of Death at the sight of Christ. Bede knew of Eusebius' Demonstratio Evangelica in a third-hand way through

the Jerome translation of Rufinius' Historia Ecclesiastica.[12] The
Demonstratio gives reference to the descent, bursting of the gates,
raising of the saints, and the reviling of Death by the released souls--
but not in any solid order--and not in sections used by Bede in De Tem-
porum Ratione, 9, c. 338A and In Esdram et Nehemiam Prophetas Al-
legorica Expositio, 16, c. 885D. Prudentius' Cathœmerinon, IV, 74,
and V, 156 appear in Bede's Miracula Sancti Cuthberti, 48, 27 and 25,
3; again, however, it is section IX of this work which contains the de-
scent, gates, raising of the saints, and the resurrection. Finally, Al-
cuin knew S. Ambrose's de Fide Catholica because he refers to owning
a copy of it in his own Epistola 193.[13] The only descent citation in
Ambrose is the normal expansion of I Peter iii. 19 and Acts ii. 24, with
an indication that the "substance" of Christ was present in the Under-
world.[14] Therefore, it can be said of the five Fathers known in Europe
before the first vernacular translation of the Nicodemus, very little ad-
ditional material over and above the canonical citations of the New
Testament was made available from before the fifth century.[15] One
important fact must be added: all of the Fathers cited by the Anglo-
Latins were concerned with the spiritual and bodily descent of Christ,
frequently using the terms "Logos", "substance", or citing credal
formulae.

B. Councils and Creeds

Patristic reference to specialized ecclesiastical vocabulary is not
coincidental with either their mentioning of the descent theme or to its
appearance in the Gospel form because the Gospel is a further verifica-
tion of the important "Homoousion"[16] or dual-divine nature of Christ as

both man and God. In the six General Councils of the Church, between 325 and 681, [17] all non-doctrinal interpretation of Homoousion was condemned as heresy: the First Council of Nicaea, 325, met to condemn Arianism (which denied the divinity of Christ); [18] the First Council of Constantinople, 381, condemned Apollinarianism (which stated that Christ was not a complete man); [19] the Council of Ephesus, 431, disclaimed Nestorianism (Christ is two persons: one divine, one human); [20] the Council of Chalcedon, 451, denied Eutychianism (Christ is only divine); [21] the Second Council of Constantinople, 553, attacked the Monophysite Eutychianism and Nestorianism; [22] and the Third Council of Constantinople, 680-681, attempted to erase Monothelitic belief in the one-willed Christ. [23] In each case orthodox affirmation was stated in a form of the Nicaean Creed [24] (Apostles [25] or Athanasian [26]) which included a reiteration of the descent belief and included additional anathemas against the heresies. [27] Statements made in the Gospel about Christ's descent and harrowing confirm it as an acceptable work for Christian use because it "proves" dogma. Whereas Eusebius speaks of spurious Acts of Pilate being circulated against the Christians during the time of the Emperor Maximin (ca. 312 A.D.), [28] we now find that the later additions to the Acts (or Gospel of Nicodemus) are in actuality reverse propaganda for Christians who support the faith against heresies. [29] In all of the Greek and Latin versions of the Gospel [30] we find that it is Christ as God and man, spirit and soul, who descends to the underworld after suffering the pains of the crucifixion, to defeat Hell and save the souls of men. By no means is it possible to interpret the Gospel "Harrowing" as a late Gnostic document condemning all matter as evil because it does not carry the destruction of Hell into the apocalyptic, nor

does it state that the forces of evil are consumed totally after Christ's resurrection.[31] To claim its Gnostic truth would deny the actuality of the world in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary: evil remains and the end of the world has not happened. Or as J. N. D. Kelly states: "If it is legitimate to seek polemical motives for its interpolation, the only heresy envisaged is its Docetism"[32] and even that is doubted by Hugh Schonfield in his analysis of Christian teaching.[33]

Shortly after the First General Council of Nicaea, the Fourth Formula of Sirmium (359) gave official recognition to the "Descent to Hell" as part of that creed.[34] As an outgrowth of the writings of S. Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, it is interesting to note that the descent "never caught on in the East as a clause in official creeds, /and/ it is extremely likely that the West admitted it to its formularies under /the/ Eastern influence"[35] of these men. Furthermore, it could conjoin the prophecies of Matthew xii. 39f, Romans x. 7, Colossians 1. 8, and Acts 2. 27-31 as proof of its truth. As early as 1737 King stated that there was a long tradition of belief that the insertion of the descent had an Anti-Apollinarian basis,[36] even though Apollinarianism was not officially condemned until some twenty-two years later at Constantinople. Kelly sees this inclusion as one of the primary indications of the transformation of Christian eschatology as the Church became Petrine in concept:

> If it secured admittance first in a Syrian-speaking locality, it was no doubt regarded initially as no more than a colorful equivalent of DEAD and BURIED. But when it travelled Westwards, it may have been welcomed for several distinct reasons. The imagination of Christians delighted to dwell on the Savior's experiences in the underworld, as we can see from the numerous and often fantastic attempts to portray them in art. The clause, moreover, provided the creed with something

which had hitherto been lacking and of which the need
may have been keenly, if inarticulately, felt, a men-
tion of the act of redemption wrought by Christ. It
is significant that, as has already been hinted, about
the time when the Descent was beginning to appear in
creeds, the ancient notions of Christ's mission to
the patriarchs was fading more and more into the
background, and the doctrine was coming to be inter-
preted as symbolizing His triumph over Satan and
death, and, consequently, the salvation of mankind
as a whole.[37]

Such creeds, with their descents, would enable the Church to face the

struggle of Christianity to maintain the upper hand over a barbarian

rule which was usually pagan or Arian, and convert the barbarians to

baptism or to Catholic orthodoxy.[38] This was extremely important in

the period from 451 to 490 when the Eastern Church was strong in the

Balkans, Asia Minor, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia;[39] it

may be part of the reasoning behind the inclusion of the descent in the

Spanish creeds of the sixth century, and in the Gallician creeds of the

seventh and eighth centuries.[40]

C. Catechism

At some time before the First Council of Constantinople and his

death in 386, S. Cyril of Jerusalem published the Catechetical Lectures,

our earliest record of the descent to Hell as an integral part of Chris-

tian doctrine.[41] Cyril's rhetorical use of the descent in his instruc-

tional methodology is interesting:

> Wouldst thou not wish those who from the time of Adam
> had been long imprisoned, to have now obtained deli-
> verance? Wouldst thou not wish Him to go down and
> redeem His herald Isaiah? David, Samuel, and the
> prophets are there, S. John Baptist who said by his
> messengers: "Art Thou He that should come?" Wouldst
> thou not wish that He should descend and redeem them
> also? . . . Wherefore O ye porters of Hades, were ye

> not afraid when ye saw Him? What was the unusual
> fear which struck you? Death fled, and his flight be-
> trayed his cowardice. The prophets ran to Him, with
> Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Samuel,
> Isaiah, and John the Baptist. All the righteous whom
> Death had swallowed were ransomed, for it was fit-
> ting that the King whom they had heralded should be-
> come the redeemer of His noble heralds. Then each
> of the righteous said: "O Death, where is Thy sting?
> O Grave, where is thy victory?"[42]

Cyril also notes that the Robber achieved Paradise before Abraham and that Jonah in the Whale is a type of descent when he comments on the passage from Isaiah lxiii. 11.[43]

S. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) devotes his lessons to the Paschal Homilies--written before the denial of Nestorianism at the General Council of Ephesus--and to his defense of orthodoxy in de Recta Fide (v. 2.173), wherein he discussed the divinity of Christ as being united to his soul as he descended to Hell. Cyril uses the gate, preaching, harrowing, and resurrection themes in Homilies 6, 7, 11, 12, and 20, but he does not establish the sequence of the Nicodemus or add the dialogues and characterization from it in them. Bede and Alcuin were familiar with his writings because both cite him at various times,[44] yet they seem to be more familiar with his letters and the more important treatise ad Nestorium de Excommunications: Anathemas.[45] Both catechists were involved in combining the teaching of converts with their condemnation of important contemporary heresies.

Venantius Fortunatus (535-600), although best known as a Latin poet to the first centuries of the mediaeval Church, was one of the most frequently quoted teachers of the Anglo-Latin writers. J. D. A. Ogilvy stated that Alcuin's own poems "show parallels far too numerous to list"[46] and he adds that citations are found also in Bede, Aldhelm,

Boniface, Lul, and Koaena of York.[47] In a manner so typical of the early patristic writers Fortunatus pleads to Christ:

> Set free the chained shades of the infernal prison; re-
> call whatever sinks to the depths. Tartarus is van-
> quished and cannot retain its possessions. The ruler
> of the Underworld, opening his jaws, becomes Thy
> prey, though he was ever the spoiler. Thou didst
> rescue a countless host from Death's prison, and they
> follow their Leader whither He goeth. The monster
> in terror vomits the multitude whom he had swallowed
> and the Lamb withdraws the flock from the jaws of the
> wolf. Then seeking again the grave and having re-
> sumed Thy flesh, Thou didst carry back to the Heavens
> Thy trophies like a triumphant soldier.[48]

Countering the heretical doctrines, he calls Christ "the spoiler" who terrifies Satan, vanquishes Tartarus, and carries back trophies "like a triumphant soldier", thus combining the dual wills and dual persons of Jesus.

Without doubt the most impressive Post-Nicaean catechist before Augustine is S. Jerome, the great biblical scholar and teacher: no less than five of his descent studies were used by the Anglo-Latins. We find that:

> His epistles and controversial tracts were widely read,
> and, together with the rest of his works, were probably
> very largely responsible for the clear, unaffected, and
> occasionally Ciceronian style which so pleasantly dis-
> tinguishes the writings of Northumbrian scholars from
> the writings of Aldhelm and from the more florid efforts
> of Lul and Boniface.[49]

Aldhelm and Bede used In Danielem,[50] in which Jerome pictures souls as awaiting Christ in a Hell without burning or injuries (lib. 1. c. 3); Aldhelm may have cited In Oseam,[51] where Jerome said that Christ freed the souls in Hell; Alcuin and Bede employed In Zachariam (1. 9)[52] for the knowledge of Adam's salvation from death; Alcuin alone cites In Ephesios (lib. ii. c. 4)[53] for a passage on the appearance of the risen

saints appearing on earth and for their salvation; and all three, Bede, Aldhelm, and Alcuin had reference to In Matthaeum (xii. 29)[54] for the binding of Satan in Tartarus after Christ bruised him with his foot. This borrowing process only furthers the already high reputation of Jerome's Vulgate in Western Europe.

Therefore, it seems quite proper to assume that a knowledge of the major motifs of the "Harrowing of Hell" by early Continental writers could have come from sources other than MS copies of the Gospel in Latin and Greek. The earliest of the patristic writers helped to amplify an idea which was accepted in the canon of the New Testament, but, as far as we can trace the influence of their works, they added only disconnected sections of what could be termed the narrative sequence, and they contributed almost nothing in the way of the Gospel's monologues and dialogues[55] to later literature. Those other early works which almost duplicate the Gospel in their adumbrated forms were not available to writers in the early missionary Church;[56] it is only through the transmission of a fully-developed descent story that we can attribute the greater majority of the vernacular renditions which appear before 1100 A.D.

D. Theological Commentaries

It is only natural that after the descent idea had been accepted by the Fathers, included in most of the creeds, used against the unorthodox heresies, and taught as dogma, that it should have been recognized, commented upon, explicated, and interpreted by the most important Doctors of the Church; and so it was in the highly influential works of S. Augustine of Hippo and Pope Gregory the Great. Until the appearance

of their writings, the most extensive expansions of the descent appears only in the Gospel itself; after their interpolations the Gospel's "Harrowing" was transformed into a repository for the widest possible eschatological excursions, and the contents of the whole work "verified" by the patristic writers as being suitable and respectable for Christian belief. Because the writings of these two men received the favored attention of early mediaeval churchmen,[57] it would be useful to consider their work on the "Harrowing" at some length: without their contributions the "fear of Hell" which became such a social force in the West[58] would not be intelligible and the literary applications of the descent story would be mis-interpreted. We cannot forget that Augustine was "regarded by Europeans as second only to the Scriptures in authority and as equalled only by. . .Gregory the Great. . . ."[59] No less than seventy of his works and thirteen of Gregory's became the guidebooks for missionary conversions before the end of the Carolingian Empire.[60]

1. Augustine

Of the eight of Augustine's ninety-nine works[61] which contain the major statements on Christian eschatology relevant to an exposition of the descent-to-Hell theme, only the De moribus ecclesiae Catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum (388 A. D.) was not known in the West until after 800.[62] Although this work refers to the dangerous Origenism of the eventual re-establishment of the primeval order at the end of the world, it was retracted by Augustine and did not achieve undeserved circulation to counter his more positive and orthodox pronouncements found in the Confessions, the De civitate Dei, and other allied works which were so frequently cited by the Anglo-Latins. The seven

remaining texts deal in depth with the problems of the existence of Hell as a place and a place of punishment, the descent of Christ into Hell, the nature of Purgatory, the salvation of those in Hell, and the fate of martyrs.

According to the great French Jesuit scholar Eugène Portalié, S. Augustine sets forth all the beliefs he could think about Hell in De civitate Dei (XXI, 17-27):[63] the actual existence of Hell--through a discussion of almsgiving as preventing harm after death--is given a thorough examination. There is no doubt here that the canonical references to Hell indicate a place where souls go after death and where they will reside until the Second Coming. Of particular interest is Chapter 26 of this book because there he discusses the various pains inflicted on the sinner in Hell, ending with repeated references to fire:

> But if it be said that in the interval of time between the death of the body and that last day of judgment and retribution which shall follow the resurrection, the bodies of the dead shall be exposed to a fire of such a nature that it shall not affect those who have not in this life indulged in such pleasures and pursuits as shall be consumed like wood, hay, stubble, but shall affect those who have carried with them structures of that kind; if it be said that such worldliness, being venial, shall be consumed in the fire of tribulation either here only, or here and hereafter both, or here that it may not be hereafter--this I do not contradict, because possibly it is true.[64]

Thus, he allows not only for the purifying effects of the hell-fire, but continues toward the position that certain earthly events will act as part of the purgation process. If we combine this idea with the notes in De praedestinatione sanctorum ad Prosperum et Hilarium, XII, 24, where he states that, "Immediately after death the eternal destiny is fixed. Guilty souls are enclosed in a place of torture; the just in regions of repose and happiness",[65] we have a conception of Hell which includes the

Old Testament "Abraham's Bosom" and the <u>Nicodemus'</u> "pit" in one
sweeping multi-layered non-heavenly underworld. Just as the Fathers
before Augustine were uncertain as to the nature of Hell, and the var-
ious Latin and Greek versions of the <u>Gospel of Nicodemus</u> undecided
about it, Augustine creates a compromise wherein the degree of sinful-
ness equates with the depth and intensity of retributive punishment as-
signed to the soul after death. For this reason Augustine is regarded
as the first of the Fathers to formulate in a precise way the teaching on
Purgatory suggested by earlier writers.[66] This gives validity to the
mention of punishments and chains of the devils in the "Harrowing",
and allows for an interpretation of why even the Old Testament saints
remained in Hell until Christ's descent.

However, Augustine is quite clear that there are some who never
tasted the punishments of Hell, some who never will, and some who
were able to bypass it. For instance, the <u>Nicodemus</u> includes a scene
in heaven where the Robber appears to the risen patriarchs and pro-
phets to tell them that he was delivered there through the special Grace
of Christ.[67] Augustine (<u>Epistolae</u> 164, 3, 8) says: "Therefore at that
time he was already in paradise and the bosom of Abraham through His
beatifying presence and in hell through His judicial powers."[68] Augus-
tine's initial suggestion (in <u>Sermo</u> 280) that "the souls of the saints en-
joy the beatific vision at the present moment"[69] is extended to cover
the martyrs:

> There is a great banquet where the viands are the Lord
> of the table Himself. No one else feeds the banqueters
> of himself, but Christ the Lord does this; He is the
> Host; He the food and drink. . . .O happy ones. . . .
> They have completed their sorrows and received their
> rewards. (<u>Confessions</u> 329, 1-2)[70]

Lastly, we find approval of a principle which caused great abuses in the Catholic Church: "In particular, almsgiving and the intercession of the saints can bring it about that a soul not merit hell." (De civitate Dei, XXI, 27, 6.)[71] From the immediate ascension of the Robber, the presence of Enoch and Elias in heaven, and the possible assumption of Moses,[72] Augustine extends the authority of the Nicodemus to cover some ways in which it is possible for mortals to avoid the terrors of Death and punishment. One has only to read Dante to discover what literary ends this conception can reach; it was echoed earlier in both the Old High German Muspilli and the Song of Roland.[73]

As for the most important central theme in the Nicodemus, Christ's harrowing of Hell, Augustine has no doubts whatsoever that this event actually happened. Portalié understates Augustine's interest in the problem of I Peter 3:18-21 by terming it a "vivid fascination";[74] it becomes a constant interest in his Epistolae and Commentaries. We find that he agrees that Christ descended to Hell in order to preach to those waiting there and Christ also saved the souls of the unbelievers. (Literal Commentary on Genesis)[75] Twice in the Epistola 164 does he affirm the descent story, adding that Christ descended not only into the limbo of the just, but into the "hell of the damned" (1, 1; 3, 8)[76] to carry out the souls of those who heard and believed. By this he aids the notion that not all of those who heard were saved, a concept which was to become part of Gregory's theology and subsequent interpretation; Augustine's acceptance of the "specialized" harrowing reflects the widening of the Church's membership to include gentiles--found in many passages of the patristic descent sources.[77]

Augustine's contributions to the popularity of the Gospel of

Nicodemus in the mediaeval period are many because he used it as the basis for theological formulations. The descent became an article of faith; his particular conception of Hell became the standard for the mediaeval Hells in literature;[78] and his belief that martyrs are released by their actions from the pains of Hell is considered doctrinal even today.[79] The only thing which remained for the Church to do was to codify these beliefs and make them (and Augustine's writings) part of the works which missionaries were required to take into the barbarian outposts of the Church.

2. Gregory the Great

Gregory's short pontificate (590-604) was one of the most brilliant in the history of the early papacy;[80] however, even if the very earliest of the British writers would have had him as the patron saint,[81] Bishop J. W. C. Wand cautions that Gregory's particular view of the scriptures should be accepted with much caution:

> Gregory was not interested in the great speculative questions which absorbed Augustine, nor in the literary issues that claimed so much of the attention of Jerome. Even more than Ambrose, he was interested in trying to map out the uncharted territory beyond the grave. It was he who really started the doctrine of purgatory on its long and somewhat embarassing development. Details with regards to demons and angels, miraculous stories about the wonders performed by the relics of saints, make a Roman Catholic commentator say that some of his writings read more like fairy tales than serious theology. Add to this an interpretation of the scriptures that could make the Book of Job contain in itself the whole theory of the Christian Church and Sacraments, and a type of exegesis that could make names, numbers, and even syllables pregnant with all kinds of mysterious meanings, and then you have the method characteristic of Gregory.[82]

Whereas the writings of Augustine were disseminated to the West

through Gregory's missionary efforts,[83] Gregory emended many of the earlier writer's ideas on Christ's descent to Hell. Augustine's view that Christ had descended into the nether regions of Hell to preach to the infidels was not accepted by Gregory, who preferred to have Christ appear only in the limbo of the saints. Explicating the work of Philaster, Gregory agrees that:

> They are heretics who say that the Lord descended into hell, and announced himself after death to all who were already there, so that in acknowledging Him there they might be saved. . . .that the Lord in descending into hell rescued from infernal durance those only whom while living in the flesh He preserved in faith and good conduct. (Epistola vii. 15)[84]

Twice more, in the Moralia xii. 15 and Homiliae in Evangelia 22§6 does he attest to the fact that there was a limited redemption for those in Hell.[85]

On the other hand Gregory is most emphatic about the Old Testament saints being set free through the harrowing. Five times in the Moralia (iv. 56, xii. 13, xiii. 49, xx. 66, and xxix. 23)[86] and twice more in the Homiliae in Evangelia (19§4 and 22§6)[87] does he mention that they were delivered from the pains of the damned and granted eternal life and bliss in Paradise. Both the limited salvation and the raising of the saints agrees with Gregory's conception of Purgatory, which he established as dogma ("ought to be believed").[88] There are many citations by Bede, Aldhelm, and Alcuin of the Moralia and Homiliae;[89] the works themselves were supposed to have been brought to England as early as the mission of Augustine in 597.[90]

One of Gregory's contemporaries and fast friends was the historian Gregory of Tours (d. 594 in France).[91] A missionary in his own right, Gregory admired the writings of his pope to the point of composing an

Easter verse reflecting some of the teachings from the Nicodemus which appeared in his works.

> Rise now, O Lord, from the grade and cast
>   off the shroud that enrapped Thee:
> Thou art sufficient for us: nothing without
>   Thee exists.
>
> Jesus has harrowed hell: He has led captivity
>   captive:
> Darkness and chaos and death flee from the
>   face of the light.[91]

And so the idea of the harrowing (rastrum) makes its way into the literature of the Middle Ages.

Outside of the works already mentioned Gregory's Dialogi and Pastoral Care enjoyed an enormous popularity throughout the whole of the Middle Ages; a major English vernacular translation of the Care was done under the sponsorship of Alfred the Great in the ninth century.[92] Nearly a hundred years before, one of the longest Passion poems in Old English represented the first extant rendering of Gregory into a Germanic language: Cynewulf's Christ,[93] a work of 1,664 lines, is based on Homily 29 for the second half.[94] Most important to this discussion is the fact that Christ contains a fully-developed paraphrase of the "Harrowing of Hell" from the Gospel of Nicodemus.[95] Through the writings of Gregory and his missionary triumphs, it is possible to detect the first major movement of the theme from its Alexandrian birthplace into its Western home.

E. CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Date	Event in Western History
406	Invasion of Gaul by German raiders
410	Sack of Rome by the Visigoths under Alaric
411-532	Burgundian Kingdom in upper Rhone valley
412-415	Visigoths in southern Gaul
415-419	Visigoths invade Spain, drive Vandals out and establish kingdom in Spain and southern Gaul
ca. 420	End of Roman government in Britain
429-439	Vandal conquest of North Africa
430	Death of S. Augustine
432	Mission of S. Patrick to Ireland
440-461	Pope Leo I, the Great
ca. 450	Anglo-Saxon invasion of England began
451	Council of Chalcedon; Leo the Great secured the acceptance of his definition of Christological doctrine
451	Defeat of Atilla the Hun by Roman and Visigothic forces in Gaul (Battle of the Catalaunian field)
452	Huns invade Italy; retreated from Rome after Pope Leo's embassy
453	Death of Atilla; breakup of Hunnic empire
455	Vandal sack of Rome
461	Death of S. Patrick
476	Deposition of Romulus Augustulus, last Roman Emperor of the West
481-511	Clovis, King of the Franks, establishes his Merovingian dynasty
486	Clovis defeated the Roman ruler of Northern Gaul; annexed area to French/Frankish kingdom

493-526	Theodoric the Ostrogoth established Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy
496	Clovis and Franks converted to Christianity (Catholic) after successfully battling against Alemanni
500	Clovis defeated the Burgundians, made their kingdom tributary
507	Clovis defeated the Visigoths, annexed part of southern Gaul
524	Death of Boethius, the philosopher
527-565	Justinian, Roman Emperor in the East
ca. 529	S. Benedict wrote his monastic Rule
533-534	Justinian reconquered Africa; destroyed the Vandal kingdom
535-554	Long wars in Italy between Byzantines and Ostrogoths; destruction of Ostrogothic kingdom, annexation of most of Italy to East Roman Empire
561	Death of the last of Clovis' sons; division of Frankish kingdom into Neustria and Austrasia, break-away of marginal areas
568	Lombard invasion of Italy; prolongues fighting with Byzantine forces
590-604	Pope Gregory the Great
594	Death of Gregory of Tours, historian of the Franks
597	Mission of S. Augustine to England
615	Death of S. Columban, Irish missionary to Europe
632	Death of Mohammed; beginning of rapid Arab expansion
664	Synod of Whitby in England decided in favor of Roman as against Irish Christianity
687	Pepin of Heristal, Mayor of the Palace in Austrasia, defeated Neustrian forces, and began to reunite the Frankish kingdom
711-718	Arab conquest of Spain; destruction of the Visigothic kingdom
714-741	Charles Martel, Frankish Mayor of the Palace,

re-established single control over all the Frankish kingdom; the Austrasian invasion

732	Battle of Tours: defeat of the Arabs by Charles Martel
735	Death of Bede, the scholar-writer
741	Pepin the Short succeded his father, Charles Martel, as Mayor of the Palace.
753	Death of S. Boniface, "apostle to the Germans"
754	Pepin consecrated King by the Pope; alliance between the papacy and Frankish kingdom
756	Pepin established Papal States in central Italy after two campaigns against Lombards
768	Death of Pepin; accession of Charlemagne
772-804	Charlemagne campaigned against Saxons; conquered and Christianized them after hard fighting
774	Charlemagne conquered Lombards; assumed Iron Crown of Lombardy
796	Destruction of Avar power by Frankish army
800	Charlemagne crowned Emperor by Pope Leo III; in theory a revival of Roman Empire in the West
804	Death of Alcuin, scholar and head of Charlemagne's palace school
814	Death of Charlemagne

FOOTNOTES

[1] This dating is discussed at length in Chapter II.

[2] For the promulgation of dogma, see: Adolph Harnack, A History of Dogma, Vol. I, and the citations in ODCC.

[3] Although Raymond Carter Sutherland, Medieval English Conceptions of Hell as Developed from Biblical, Patristic, and Native Germanic Influences, p. 2, suggests that "it was the oral apostolic paradosis or body of teaching which was more important than the written sources", there was certainly no guarantee that any of the writings would fare any better than the oral reports after five hundred years. Just because a writing is religious, this does not mean that it will become popular or find an audience continually.

[4] Cf. the Charts and Tables in Chapter II.

[5] J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds, frequently points out, however, that the creeds were not always accepted universally by the Church, and they were promoted with great difficulty during the times when the East and West differed in theology.

[6] Cf. Chapter II, Charts and Tables.

[7] Especially the citations listed in J. D. A. Ogilvy, Books Known to Anglo-Latin Writers from Aldhelm to Alcuin (760-804). All citations not specifically noted refer to his edition and bibliography. See also the work of Whitney French Bolton, A History of Anglo-Latin Literature, 597-1066 (Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press), 1967, Vol. I, 597-740.

[8] The specific contributions of these writers are listed in Chapter II.

[9] Ogilvy, op. cit.

[10]See Chapter II.

[11]Ogilvy, pp. 12-13.

[12]Ibid., p. 37 and cross-references.

[13]In Alcuin's Epistle 193 we find that he asks for his copy of the De Fide Catholica to be returned to Saint Martin's.

[14]See Charts and Tables in Chapter II·

[15]The reception of the story was so limited that it would be very difficult to say that anymore than the notion of a descent element was transmitted here: the various elements of the story in the Gospel do not constitute anything more than elements of minor elaborations.

[16]See "Homoousion" in ODCC; the basic study of this concept is in J. F. Bethune-Baker's The Meaning of Homoousios in the Constantinopolitan Creed (Cambridge University Press), 1901, Texts and Studies VII, No. 1.

[17]Cf. ODCC for a discussion and bibliography.

[18]"Nicaea" in ODCC; in Henry E. W. Turner, The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study in the Relations between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church (London, A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd.), 1954; in Philip Hughes, The Church in Crisis: A History of the Twenty Great Councils (London, Burns and Oates), 1961, pp. 11-25.

[19]"Constantinople" in ODCC; Turner, pp. 33, 78; Highes, 25-32.

[20]"Ephesis" in ODCC; Turner, pp. 34, 474-475; Hughes, 33-52.

[21]"Chalcedon" in ODCC; Turner, pp. 12, 331, 477; Hughes, 53-75.

[22]"2nd Constantinople" in ODCC; Turner, pp. 11, 219, 476; Hughes, 76-100.

[23]"3rd Constantinople" in ODCC; Turner on apocryphal New Testament literature, p. 176; Hughes, 101-122.

[24]See the citations under "Nicaean Creed" in ODCC.

[25]Kelly, op. cit., has an enlarged discussion of the Apostles' Creed.

[26]A. E. Burn, The Athanasian Creed (Oxford University Press), 1912.

[27]The credal use of anathemas is sometimes very subtle: "begotten not made" is an example of the anathematic contradiction included in a phrase. In many of the early creeds and discussions of the creeds, these anathemas were quite lengthy. Cf. Kelly.

[28]Isaac Boyle, tr., The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilis (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott and Co.), 1869, p. 40.

[29]In accepting and interpreting Christ's descent to the lower section of Hell, Augustine fell into error. See Eugène Portalié, A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine, tr. by Ralph J. Bastian and intro. by Vernon J. Bourke (Chicago, Henry Regenry & Co.), 1960, pp. 289ff.

[30]Cf. Charts and Tables in Chapter II.

[31]Ibid. In each edition, the world and Satan remain at the conclusion of the Gospel.

[32]Kelly, pp. 382-383.

[33]The Passover Plot, pp. 136-150.

[34]Kelly, p. 290.

[35]Ibid., p. 379.

[36]King on the Creed, pp. 169ff.

[37]Kelly, p. 383.

[38]Margaret Deansley, A History of the Mediaeval Church: 590-1500, pp. 4-5.

[39]Ibid., p. 2.

[40]Kelly, p. 378.

[41]MacCulloch, Harrowing, p. 126.

[42]Catechical Lectures, iv. 11; xiv. 18, 19.

[43]Ibid., xiv. 19.

[44]Ogilvy, p. 33.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid., p. 38.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ante-Nicene Christian Library, xxii, 223.

[49]Ogilvy, p. 49.

[50]Ibid., p. 50.

[51]Ibid., p. 53.

[52]Ibid., p. 55.

[53]Ibid., p. 50.

[54]Ibid., p. 53.

[55]Not only do the monologues and disalogues figure importantly in the narrative of the Gospel of Nicodemus, they are used in the Western vernacular versions in the same sequence. Without the use of the Gospel it is impossible to derive the source(s) from which the poets took their knowledge of the speeches.

[56]Without Firmicus Maternus and Ephrem Syrus' works known to the Anglo-Latins, the dialogues and sequence would have to come from either the Gospel or a later patristic writer, such as Gregory.

[57]Ogilvy lists a great number of citations; See Chapters IV, V, VI.

[58]Marc Bloch, Feudal Society, Vol. I, p. 240.

[59]Ogilvy, p. 13.

[60]By counting the known works listed in Ogilvy, pp. 14-20.

[61] In the list given by Portalie, pp. 331-333.

[62] Here I am using the agrument from silence; there might be a missing reference to this work in the list of lost literature from the Middle Ages, but considering the general popularity of Augustine, someone else might have cited it. No one else did.

[63] PL 41, 731-752.

[64] Whitney J. Oates, The Basic Writing of Saint Augustine (New York, Random House), 1948, Vol. II, p. 602.

[65] PL 44, 977-978.

[66] Portalié, p. 295.

[67] Cf. Chapter II Charts and Tables.

[68] PL 33, 712/a.

[69] Ibid.; PL 38, 1455.

[70] Portalié, p. 293.

[71] PL 41, 740.

[72] Cf. Chapter II Charts and Tables.

[73] This is discussed later in Chapters V and VI.

[74] Portalié, p. 301/ff.

[75] Ibid.

[76] PL 33, 709; 33, 712.

[77] See Chapter II for a discussion of this.

[78] Morton W. Bloomfield, The Seven Deadly Sins, p. 14.

[79] Portalié, p. xxxvi.

[80] Cf. Horace K. Mann, The Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages, Vol. I, pp. 1-250 for a detailed account of Gregory's work.

[81] Ogilvy, p. 40.

[82] John William Charles Wand, The Latin Doctors, pp. 84-85.

[83]Holmes Dudden, Gregory the Great: His Place in History (New York, Russell and Russell), 1905, repr. 1967, Vol. II, p. 468 for the list of references of Augustine's influence on Gregory.

[84]Dudden, p. 347; The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Ser. ii, Vol. XII, p. 217.

[85]Dudden, p. 347.

[86]Ibid.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Ibid., pp. 427-428.

[89]See Ogilvy for a complete listing of Bede, Aldhelm, and Alcuin's citations of the Moralia and Homilies.

[90]Ogilvy, p. 43; Dudden, Vol. I, pp. 72, 222, 243.

[91]Deansley, p. 14.

[92]See the "Introduction" to EETS, O.S. 45, Part I.

[93]Exeter Book, Part I, EETS, O.S. 104.

[94]Ogilvy, p. 41.

[95]EETS, O.S. 104, ll. 558-599; see discussion of this poem in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

THE RECEPTION AND ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION
OF THE "HARROWING OF HELL" IN EARLY
MEDIAEVAL LITERATURE

A. English Thematic Variants

In The Conversion of Western Europe, 350-750, J. N. Hillgarth

says that:

> One of the traits of their religion which Christians
> emphasized from the first was that it was a revolt
> "against the old ways." Against the extreme conser-
> vatism of pagan intellectuals of the fourth century,
> who held, in Macrobius' words, that "antiquity is al-
> ways to be adored," against Symmachus' plea to re-
> spect the religion under which Rome had grown to
> greatness, Christians exulted in the inevitable over-
> throw of the old and corrupt by the new, in the radical
> changes Christianity was bringing about. (p. 16)

However "radical" these changes may have been in their original in-

tent, the old traditions remained entrenched among the inhabitants of

the British Isles long after the Norman Conquest when the English were

supposed to be more than just nominal Christians. In spite of the early

missionary efforts under Germanus of Auxerre and Lupus of Troyes in

430,[1] and the concentrated efforts of Augustine on the south-east cor-

ner of England in 597,[2] it was not until the English and Irish Churches

joined at Whitby in 664[3] that it can be said that any real progress was

being made in converting the heathen to the new religion. Whereas the

Romans brought new territories to the Empire by conquest of arms,

the Church attempted to do it by the conquest of ideas: many of our

poetic records act as historical records of this method.

As has been mentioned before in the previous chapter, one of Pope

Gregory the Great's most notable contributions to the conversion of the

West was his success at developing not only a missionary system but a program of spiritual discipline and biblical exegesis which was wide enough in its latitude to permit almost any important pagan work to be given a Christian interpretation.[4] Not over a half-century after his pontificate ended, Gregory's concern with the "Harrowing of Hell" (in the Dialogi iii:19; v:15, and the Moralia, iv:56; xii:13; xii:49) was given an early mediaeval Latin rendering in Aldhelm's De laudibus virginium,[5] a work which is more of a martyrology than a Passion sequence. Furthermore, even the Venerable Bede--one of the greatest English Church historians of all time--manages to allude twice to the story: once as part of his life of St. Cuthbert and once as a vision reported by a Northumbrian man returned from the grave to give his report of the pains of Hell.[6] This does not indicate, however, that the society which produced both Bede and Beowulf was anywhere near being transformed by Christianity.

Dorothy Whitelock, one of the most noted contemporary British historians, has outlined a number of parallels[7] between Tacitus' first-century work, the Germania, and Beowulf. Miss Whitelock, like many other scholars, uses the Beowulf not solely for its literary value but for its historical importance: that is, to show how, by means of an analysis of the governmental and historical terms of the poem, the Germanic civilization of Britain was firmly entrenched through the ninth century. Although she is not primarily concerned with the transmission of folkloric elements into the poem, she notes that there is evidence to show that the symbols for the nearly forgotten German fertility goddess (Isis?) were used by the Anglo-Saxons even while they espoused an early form of Christianity.[8] Where once upon a time the symbol was used

for its generative efficacy, it was employed on helmets for its magical

protective powers. The <u>Beowulf</u>-poet describes this decoration:

> as the weapon-smith made it in former days,
> adorned it wonderously, encompassed it with
> boar figures, so that afterwards no sword or
> battle-blade could pierce it. [9]

Other evidence also demonstrates that the Germanic mythology had

found some acceptance in the Isles. The twenty-second letter of the

Anglo-Saxon runic alphabet, "Ing", corresponds roughly with the story

of one of the tribes Tacitus describes. The wandering Ingvaeones sup-

plied the natives with a name for the letter. [10] And the rather obscure

<u>Nine Herbs Charm</u> makes mention of Wotan's name, as do a number of

place-names: <u>Wodenslawe</u> and <u>Wodensfeld</u>. [11]

The sacred groves which Tacitus describes[12] are to be found in

England, too. Archaeological evidence bears out his statements: the

murky moors and fetid fens out of which Grendel, the shadow-walker,

stalks are held in great reverence by the Geats of the poem. In fact a

great deal of <u>Beowulf</u> "is devoted to the freeing of human habitations

from the ravages of supernatural creatures that inhabit the dens and

from a dragon residing in a prehistoric burial mound."[13] Curiously

enough, this is also brought out in another way with the recent arch-

aeological diggings in search of remains of what might be termed the

"Historical Arthur": in 1968 researchers were again covering the

southern moors. [14]

But what about the men themselves and their customs? We read

that the tribes arranged themselves into governing groups called "hun-

dreds". [15] Although this term later became a rather artificial method

for determining land holdings, it persisted in English legal terminology

well into the days of the Domesday Survey, where it was employed by

William's panel juries. The name "hundred rolls" signified the tax
lists which were used for collecting the king's due and for indicating
the method by which the Domesday Book was constructed, even if some
scholars are in disagreement as to whether or not it was actually used
for this purpose.[16] Tacitus describes some of the social procedures
in the Germania. Approval of a measure was accomplished by sword
rattling. The meeting of armed men took the name, in Old English, of
"wapentake". Later it was the place where men gathered not only for
approval of measures but for the joint defense of an area. These de-
fendable areas correspond to the modern English "shires" or shares of
land.[17] The advanced system of "social security" Tacitus mentioned--
money payment for death by arms--was the "geld". Hrothgar, speaking
of and to Beowulf, tells a story of how he ended a feud by composing a
payment which he sent by water to the battling warrior's homeland.[18]
Within a few hundred years this payment became the king's property
tax, which was collected each year until well past the time of Henry II.

It might well be noted here that tangential to collecting the tax
(geld) in money came the standardization of weights. A known weight
of the early times was the "amber". In spite of the fact that during
Tacitus' time the collecting of amber for the Germans' own decorative
purposes was unimportant, it was an item of trade and barter.[19] In
lieu of the lack of relics (of the type found in the hilt of Roland's
sword),[20] it may be assumed that the Anglo-Saxons used it for armor-
ial decoration only. However, it was important enough in some way to
leave its traces in a weight-name.

From the very beginning of the Beowulf we are told of the emphasis
placed on battle-valor and on the place of tribute and toll in war: the

kingship of a man depended upon his ability to win and to share with his comrades the winnings of the war-games. Through the pledges and promises of these leader-kings the ur-state was kept in order and rule was achieved. The lordly Scyldingas were ruled by a man who was described of as "firm in wisdom and fierce in war",[21] a democratically primitive chieftan.

Five-hundred years after Tacitus, the Anglo-Saxons had improved on their construction methods: the rather dreary picture Tacitus presents for us is in direct contrast to the description of the great Heorot hall in which Grendel so grimly grinds in ghastly gore. Although not a picture of loveliness, the Hall of the Hart was adorned with golden tapestries--a feature which Tacitus had seen during his travels[22]and the outside was plated with golden shingles.[23] Some Scandanavian churches remaining from the very early Christian periods there bear a resemblance to the design created well over a thousand years ago.[24] With the exception of Grendel or Grendel's dam disturbing the peace of the hall the men of Beowulf busied themselves with their usual pleasures of wine, women, and song. Hrothgar tells of his men before a fight:

> Full often my warriors over their ale-cups
> Boldly boasted, when full of beer,
> They would bide in the beer-hall the coming of battle,[25]

which bears out the observations of Tacitus that the Germans were inordinately fond of drink and were slothful when they were literally in their cups.[26] However, no matter how "the din of revelry rang through the hall",[27] the men took patience to listen to the "sound of the harp, and the scop's sweet song".[28] The King himself frequently took up the harp and intoned a lai. With the discovery of the great Sutton Hoo

Treasure and the reconstruction of the harp found in it, it is now possible to approximate some of the tonal structures of the music sung during the sixth century.[29]

Anglo-Saxon reverence for women did not degenerate during the years since Tacitus' time: the poem quite frequently states what king's child was married to what great war-lord. Inter-tribal marriages were not only made for the usual political alliances but, so it would appear, for the real love and respect for a certain woman.[30] Indeed, it was a signal honor to be welcomed to Hart Hall by being served by the queen or by the king's daughter.[31] Even the importance of a woman's fury is taken into consideration because it was Grendel's mother who took up the battle after her son had been maimed by Beowulf. We may have to take Tacitus' observation on the treatment of women as a tongue-in-cheek aside to his Roman readers, but his subtle psychology was well-understood by the Germans.

When the men had recovered from their mead hangovers, they would bring themselves to the governing of their tribe, although having too much to drink made them an easy prey for both monsters in Beowulf. Great weight was placed on the council and the interchange of opinions among men. The poet tells us that during the planning stages for a battle the retainers "viewed the omens, and urged [the King] on".[32] We find mention of the casting of lots in the Germania X and v. 204 of Beowulf. Whenever a problem involved the entire community, the council of elders would meet with the king to decide the issues at hand. Their importance is seen in the Anglo-Saxon word "ealdorman" and in our modern political equivalent of "alderman".

One final point in this presentation of the poem's ethos is worth

mentioning: in the Germania XXVII Tacitus gives us an amazingly famil-
iar recounting of a funeral among the Germans which is later echoed in
what was once considered the mythological funeral of Beowulf.[33] With
the discovery of the Sutton Hoo Treasure and the knowledge of similar
ship-burials in the Scandanavian countries we find that both accounts
are as nearly an accurate picture of Germanic life as we could wish for.

*   *   *

Morton Bloomfield has noted that: "Anglo-Saxon literature deals
frequently, in many aspects, with hell, the Day of Doom, and the body
and soul theme",[34] but there is a distinct problem of interpretation ex-
pressed here because, as has been mentioned, the society itself was
basically Germanic and this might indicate that the descent-to-hell
themes which we find in the poetry are pagan in origin and not at all the
same Christian ones found in the Gospel. Rhea Thomas Workman's
study of the concept of hell in Anglo-Saxon poetry presents this point of
view:

> But the elements of hell which the poets chose to
> develop or expatiate upon were either from the Teu-
> tonic tradition or treated from the Teutonic point of
> view. The most prevalent elements in these poems
> are the character of Satan, the word hel, the Soul
> Journey, exile, confinement, death, and hell as a
> place.
> As a result, the concept of hell in non-Cynewulfian
> poetry is strongly Teutonic.[35]

However right Mrs. Workman may be about the Teutonic point-of-view
coloring the picture of hell presented in the early Anglo-Saxon poetry,
it is quite doubtful that the poems containing any form of the "Harrow-
ing" are from the Teutonic tradition; that is to say that these poems
give us an accurate picture of the folklore of the Germanic peoples.

Each of what she considers to be the "prevalent elements" were expressed in the Judaeo-Christian tradition from the time of the Old Testament, as has been outlined in the first two chapters; the use of the word hel to describe the infernal regions is probably nothing more than a convenient missionary adaptation of an extant term which would serve the purpose of a translation into the vernacular from Latin.

In studying the various versions of hell in the Early Church, Raymond Carter Sutherland has clarified this linguistic matter:

> The Old Testament has been considered under two headings: (1) Non-Devotional writings, and (2) Devotional writings, the Psalms. The first section, the overwhelmingly greater part of the Old Testament, makes a careful use of sheol to mean the abode of the dead, or death. There are passages that emphasize the penal aspect of Sheol; however, when these passages were read in lections, the existence of two distinct hells would have been apparent to people who were used to the precise vocabulary and distinctions of the more frequently read New Testament lections. The New Testament makes a careful distinction between the state of the dead and eternal punishment. The former is called ᾅδυσ in the Greek Septuagint, from the Hebrew sheol. In the Vulgate sheol is always carefully translated as infernus. The Hebrew gehenna is called γεεννα in the Greek New Testament and is always translated gehenna in the Vulgate Novum Testamentum. The careful distinctions of New Testament Greek were carefully preserved by St. Jerome.
>
> In the Vulgate translation of the psalms (and in the Old Latin translations) there is a less exact usage of words (because there is a less exact use in the original) than in the rest of the Old Testament as in the New Testament. The psalms seem, at times, to confuse Sheol and Gehenna. Since both states are included under a single term, the translator had no chance to distinguish. The Breviary Psalter (which may be thought of as the psalms with added material) was constantly used in the Middle Ages and was, consequently, of great influence in fixing ideas. To the many clergymen of the mediaeval period, who were not New Testament scholars but who were constant readers of the offices, the "devotional picture" of the afterworld in the psalter must have had a powerful influence. Thus, there is the possibility of two distinct mediaeval attitudes toward the afterworld, that of the careful scholar

like Jerome, and that of the uncritical user of the office. [36]

What then may be mistakenly taken as Teutonic/Germanic in concept is probably only a Christian confusion which was usefully interpreted by a missionary copywriter: there is ample reason to associate or parallel the Christian idea of the inferno with the folkloric hel. And one must always be reminded that whatever evidences we have of the ancient folk-beliefs of the northern Europeans comes down to us through ecclesiastical scribal hands and not from the pagans themselves.

The Germanic tribes were not without views about a place for the departed spirits, in the North even the idea of punishment having developed. And when Christianity made its advent with its doctrine of Hell, the Germanic tribes did not find it difficult to assimilate the new ideas, while the old name was kept. In Old English the term is hel (1), Old Frisian helle, hille, Old Saxon hellja, hella, Old High German hella, Old Norse hel, Gothic halja, all from the Teutonic stem haljā, literally the coverer up or hider. The Old Norse ideas of hel in the extant writings are clearer than those of the other peoples. There we meet also Hel, daughter of Loki and a giantess, as the goddess of the infernal regions. [37] However, the Eddas are productions from a much later period when Christianity had more years in which to take a firm foothold in the Scandanavian countries. [38] It is possible that the concept of Hell which some would like to see as part of the original beliefs of the Germanic peoples is, in reality, nothing more than the Christian one half-submerged. Albert Keiser, in his The Influence of Christianity on the Vocabulary of Old English Poetry, finds a similar case of this cross-influence with the various words for "devil" derived from the Greek and Hebrew. [39] Much of this can be demonstrated by an examination of the

Beowulf and its "Harrowing" episode.

1. Beowulf

The poem of Beowulf is the oldest of the mediaeval epics and, in retrospection, one of the most theologically involved of the major early works discussed. It is not difficult to understand why this work should demonstrate a heavy religious handling of death and the theme of death and the "Harrowing" because its early date of composition places it at the very beginning of expanded Christian missionary work in the British Isles. English Christianity had only come into its own since the Synod of Whitby in 664, when the Irish and Roman communions were once again united and the English Church took up the work established--but not pursued completely--by the almost legendary Saints Patrick and Columba. Beowulf itself could almost be a part of the literary tradition inspired by the chief leader of the new missionary movement, Gregory, because it follows the pattern he established in his Commentaries on the Book of Job.[40] That is, it was all right to make the most for Christianity by the interpretation of Old Testament and pagan stories. However, to the magnificient credit of the Beowulf-poet goes the unchallenged honor of not getting in the way of his tale by overinterpreting it. What the poet did accomplish was a subtle blending of the important theological points of Christianity with an exciting story of heroic virtue. He did this in such a way that Christianity took on the manly right, honor, and glory of the long-established Anglo-Saxon precepts of conduct, while co-operating with the desire of the missionaries to teach the Christian spirit of the Gospel.

It may not be an overstatement of the fact to call Beowulf a piece

of didactic literature rather than classifying it in more standard categories; however, it was not beyond the clerically trained mind of the early centuries of English Christianity to make the best use of well-known tales for teaching purposes. Of the more than 30,000 lines of Old English writing still extant much of it is literary paraphrase of one kind or another: sermons, biblical allegories, riddles, curses, homilies, and, of course, bestiaries.[41] One of the glories of the Beowulf is that it can be interpreted in several ways and to see didactic elements in it does not detract considerably from the total greatness of the poem. Rather, finding such elements only adds to the merit of the work, provided that the pronouncements on death and the "Harrowing"--which I consider to be didactic--are not misunderstood to be the central argument of the work.

What, then, does the Beowulf-poet have to say about death in his work? Overall, there are two basic attitudes to merit attention: first, that all men must die (Klaeber, vv. 26-27; vv. 104-107)--albeit whether they are good or evil; (Klaeber, vv. 1060-1062) and, secondly, that evil must be sought out and destroyed--whether or not that evil is a natural element of human society (because it is human and not divine) and whether or not that evil has been inherited by mankind from the time of the Garden of Eden and the time of Original Sin (Klaeber, vv. 104-107). Not only must evil be destroyed in whatever form it is found, but it becomes in the hands of the poet-theologian a manly, honorable, and subtly Christian duty to do it. Beowulf, from an honored line of good men, seeks out his duty to kill Grendel and his dam not only because it is part of his ethical duty to do so, but quite possibly because these monsters must be removed by reason of their descent from Cain. At the end of

the poem Beowulf himself dies because he has reached the end of the normal human span of life and not because he had done a great wrong to his people: Beowulf is human and all humans are fated to die because of the sin of Adam and Eve and the sin of Cain. The poet does not make a prognostication of what the future might bring in a world where sin does not exist because Christianity may triumph; he works within the limitations of his own ethos--"sphere of influence"--and seeks to explain to men why things exist as they do. If the poet had wished to continue explaining the precepts of Christianity from the basis of the story in Beowulf, he at least established some good parallels between Beowulf and Christ. The basic principles of the religion are alluded to in the poem: the divinity and omnipotence of God, the Creation and Fall of man, sin, heaven, hell, and salvation. From these basics he could fill in the details where needed, depending on how much his audicence could accept at any given time. Sin and death--always a mysterious pair in any civilization--seem to be one of the major themes in literature from the time of the Sumerians (in the Epic of Gilgamesh discussed in earlier chapters) onward. Eschatological considerations are fascinating excursions for almost all religious interpreters.

In seeing things as they are the poet has frequent enough occasion to spend short asides discussing the concept of wyrd--a concept closely associated with death and the death theme. The word itself is of indeterminate origin and has been interpreted in many ways: fate, destiny, fortune, luck, predestination, future, the way things were planned (vv. 455, 477, 572, 734, 1205, 2420, 2526, 2574, 2814, 1506, 1233, 3030; also p. xlviii). For in the dozen times in which the word appears in the poem we find that fate (wyrd) is synonomous with "unfortunate and/

or untimely death" four times (vv. 477, 1205, 2420, 2814), "general outcome of things" twice (vv. 1056, 1233), "strange" once (v. 3030), "luck" once (v. 734), and the general concept of predestination four times (vv. 455, 572, 2526, 2574). At least one of these last uses (v. 572) can be interpreted as a cliche or old saying about military preparedness. Therefore, we are left with three more-or-less theological uses of wyrd in terms of a religious application (vv. 455, 2526, 2574).

In the first of these uses (v. 455) Beowulf states that "Fate must decide" the outcome of the battle with Grendel; secondly (v. 2526), "fate, the master of us all, must decide the issue" in the fight with the Worm; and, thirdly (v. 2574), "fate refused to grant it /life/ to him" and Beowulf dies after the battle. Twice Beowulf becomes an interpreter of fate's role in deciding a battle against monsters and once the poet interjects his own opinion as to why Beowulf did not succeed in battle. Nowhere do we find a strictly pagan use or interpretation of the concept without having adequate Christian preparation for interpreting it appearing in previous passages.

This preparation does not come in a direct theological discourse; it comes, as a matter of simple fact, in a description of the typical chain-of-command known to the Anglo-Saxon audience. The poet has already stated that all things were ordered at Creation and that in the due course of time certain rights became part of the lawful demesne of kings, and others were reserved for the realm of God.[42] The rightful taking of human life was reserved in the beginning by God and God, therefore, commands this meaning of wyrd. When the situation at hand is indeterminate (such as in fights with monsters), the decision, the outcome, is always in the hands of God. Unfortunate as it may be for

those who remain, the lament is not for the soul of the departed, but for the vacuum his loss creates among those left. Because God is in complete control of <u>wyrd</u>, <u>wyrd</u> is beyond human comprehension and deserves comment only when the action is past and the poet can look upon it in retrospect. Interestingly enough, in terms of the poet's artistry, Beowulf's death balances the poem and helps to make it become more believable: not only has his greatness been assured, but his actions have set an example for others because Beowulf becomes mortal by dying. He may not have become explicitly Christian, yet his battle virtues against anti-Christian monsters are worthy of emulation. The subtle lesson to be learned here is that one's greatness becomes enhanced by acting rightly within the moral concepts of one's own society <u>and</u> acting to promote the spiritual betterment of the community.

Beowulf's <u>charisma</u> comes from such a combination of the moral and spiritual concepts interjected by the poet. In theory no one could possible have accomplished the destruction of the Grendel monsters except Beowulf because Hrothgar's people had not been converted permanently: the poet tells us quite clearly that they had lapsed into pagan practices when their valor seemed to fail them (v. 175f.). Beowulf was already on God's side by killing giants (v. 420f.) and his actions parallel and supposedly "antidate" the actions of Christ in his descent into the Inferno to save sinners--for additional didactic use. Whatever lesson we can gain from Beowulf's submersion certainly finds enough parallels in other fine didactic neo-Biblical literature current at the time. The Christian message--which might naturally follow the recitation of the tale--would be prepared for by the story itself. This is not to say that one can postulate that <u>Beowulf</u> was written or redacted to conform

identically with the Christian Gospels; yet no one can deny that considering the far-fetched parallels of the bestiaries and other parables Beowulf lends itself to interpretation on another, more sacred level--. a level approved for missionary use by Gregory.

There is some indication that the interpretation of the death theme is involved in the manuscript tradition of Beowulf. The unique Cotton Vitellius A. xv manuscript was later coupled with at least two other apocryphal and pseudepigraphal narratives--The Gospel of Nicodemus and Judith--which retell the Christian descent story and the last part of the Old Testament tale of Judith's beheading of Holofernes.[43] Both ancillary stories deal with monsters, battles, death, salvation of the right, and the valor of religious warfare. For the Beowulf-poet to have seen something worth keeping in the older "pagan" story is to assume from this point that the elements were worth a Christian interpretation because of their closeness to the Gospel narratives. An explication of the poem need not have continued in verse, or by necessity have been written down at all, for that could have been left for an ex tempore presentation at the end of the recitation or at a later time convenient to the teller, although this may be contrary to the whole scop tradition.

Further examination of the death theme allows support for the above case. Death in just combat, in war, death at the hands of an enemy, or death in face-to-face action is always taken as coming naturally from the fact of being overpowered by an equally-matched yet stronger foe. On the other hand any indication that the odds were unequal pointed out the lack of virtue in the situation and made the death due to treachery and murder. Grendel's crimes are more serious because he has no rightful motive for killing men: his argument is with

God and not with the world in general. Likewise, all those who are al-
so condemned in the poem violate the neo-Christian ethic that required
a fight to the death remain on equal ground (vv. 1061-1062). Unferth is
said to be condemned to Hell for killing his brothers (vv. 588ff and vv.
1165ff) in one of the passages most difficult to interpret in the whole
poem. Yet, by comparing his actions (which may have been an innocent
"neglect of duty" in modern terms) with the condemnation of Haethcyn
for accidentally shooting Herebald (vv. 2437ff), one might assume that
Unferth's actions or motivations were actually "pure" and that his care-
lessness might have condemned him in Beowulf's eyes. The actual de-
cision of his guilt, however, was beyond temporal judgment and Hroth-
gar, at least, gave him the benefit of the doubt by holding him in an
honored position. However, on the other hand, when there is no doubt
about the motivation to kill, murderers are called murderers. Among
those condemned for their vile actions are Ingeld (Hrothgar's son-in-
law, v. 2064), Sigemund (v. 875), Heremod (v. 901; v. 1709), the Danes
of future history as known to the poet (vv. 1018-1019), Finn's men (v.
1068), Hygelac (vv. 1202f), Thryth (vv. 1933ff), Heathobards in general
(vv. 2039ff), and feuding Swedes and Geats (vv. 2472ff).

But retaliatory murder--death through revenge--is permitted to
right the wrongs done against the good men: both parts of the poem deal
with this as the major plot line. Hnaef was finally avenged by the des-
truction of Finn's men (vv. 1068ff) by Hengst (vv. 1127ff); Beowulf
avenges the killing of King Heardred (vv. 2391ff) to become a king him-
self; and Wiglaf essentially avenges the Worm's slaughter of his lord
Beowulf (vv. 2602ff). By reverse logic, not making murder or making
attempts at murder brings glory to leaders: Hrothgar, as has been

mentioned, pays blood-money to settle a feud (vv. 470f) and pledges

his daughter to keep the peace between the Danes and the Heathobards

(vv. 2027-2029); even Beowulf is given additional prestige in his death

because he was said not to have slain any of his drinking companions

(v. 2179) and did not murder his kin (vv. 2741-2743)! Giants (v. 420),

monsters (vv. 553-555), and Worms (v. 897) are, however, fair game

because they are not human and are members of the race of devils and

demons.

The poet becomes very careful in his avoidance of complicated the-

ological explanations of who will go to the realm of God after death and

who will be swallowed into the Inferno. Exceptional heroes enter the

care of God (Scyld, vv. 26-27) and Beowulf's soul "left his body to seek

the reward of the just" (v. 2820).[44] He is additionally cautious about

judging even the just (or the unjust Grendel) when he has Beowulf com-

ment that it is necessary to "wait for the last judgment, and the sen-

tence of almighty God" (vv. 977-979). Even the ideal of the separation

of the body and soul at death appears at least four times (vv. 1002ff,

1122-1124, 1746-1747, 2819-2820), but nowhere does he indicate that

there is any definite heavenly reward gained by anyone by being achieved

through their good deeds.

The preponderance of evidence tells us that the poet's use of death

and the theme of death is a traditionally orthodox treatment, nowhere

overstating the rewards of the good life and nowhere picturing the world

as changing considerably by the work of great leaders. Although he is

not particularly pessimistic about life and death, he says that evil

exists and will be seen and experienced frequently on this earth (vv.

1060-1062); he makes the matter-of-fact statement that life is hard

(vv. 2247-2266) but not hopeless because God will prevent it from becoming unendurable (vv. 2291-2293). Death is inevitable (vv. 1002-1003, 1753-1755) and not easy to endure when it comes (vv. 2590-2591); however, God makes the decision when to take life and protects his own (vv. 2858-2859). Those who gain honorable fame by fighting evil should have a better chance than those who fall prey to it: ordinary battle valor perishes with the body (vv. 1124; 1753-1755), but the merits of the soul are known eternally to God.

In fits xxii and xxiii of the poem there are additional parallels to be made between Beowulf's fight with Grendel's dam and Christ's descent and harrowing of Hell. Not only are both places underground grottoes of some sorts (Grendel's is a "hall"), but it takes some time to reach them: Christ's trip was announced thrice by a voice, indicating a space of indefinite time, while Beowulf's descent takes the better part of a day. In both cases the area contains more monsters than the main antagonists of the stories: Beowulf is attacked by swarms of weird beasts and Christ is surrounded by the demons. The motif of light filling the infernal regions is part of each tale, but the light appears to announce Christ, whereas it appears after Beowulf has slain the dam. In the fight we find the adversary trampled by the hero and the habitation freed from terrible creatures. Symbolically, the ninth-hour motif is employed by the poet when he described Hrothgar returning home from the lake, thinking that Beowulf had given up his ghost. Unlike Christ's single victory over the forces of evil, we find that God brings about the victory over Grendel's dam: in the true spirit of a missionary poet, we are told that this proves that "He is the true God" (v. 1611). The episode ends with the "harrowing" celebrated at Heorot by the warriors drinking to

their "salvation" on earth: "a fearful and prodigious spectacle" which could have been made into a fine Christian sermon.

2. The Seventh Blickling Homily: Easter Day

Whereas the poet of Beowulf appears to be mingling a somewhat superficial Christianity with the Germanic political system of the comitatus, the Blickling homilist is preaching to a congregation much more aware of the "revolutionary" precepts of the new religion. However a "motley collection"[45] of sermons these may represent as the type of preaching known before Aelfric's day, it is interesting to note that the incidents which they relate are "often of an extremely lurid tone and. . . are given as facts with absolute assurance and no qualification."[46] This is most evident when the homilist attempts to retell the "Harrowing of Hell" from memory: his desire to inform his audience is surpassed by his deeper desire to frighten them.

> Then is this time of all times, the highest and most sacred: and at this time we should have divine and worldly bliss, because for our example the Lord arose from the dead after his Passion, after the bonds of death, and after the bonds of Hell's darkness; and he laid upon the prince of devils eternal torment and vengeance, and delivered mankind, as the prophet David prophesied of this period, thus saying, "Our Lord delivered us," and hath fulfilled what he had long threatened the accursed spirits: and he hath made known to all men at this present time all things that were ever before prophesied by the prophets concerning his Passion, his Resurrection, and his Harrowing of Hell, and concerning his many miracles which were previously foretold. All that he hath fulfilled. Now let us hear and consider what he did, and by what means he made us free. He was not by any necessity compelled, but of his own free will descended upon earth, and here suffered many afflictions and sorrows from the Jews and the wicked scribes; and when at last he permitted his body to be fastened with nails to the cross, and suffered death for us, because he would give us everlasting life; and then sent his glorious spirit into the abyss of hell and there bound and humbled the prince of all darkness and of eternal death, and exceedingly troubled his

confederates, and brake in pieces hell-gates and their
iron bolts, and from thence brought out all his elect;
and he overcame the darkness of the devil's with his
shining light. They were then exceedingly terrified
and exclaimed, thus saying, Whence is this man thus
strong, thus glorious, and thus terrible? The world
was long previously subject to us, and death yielded to
us much tribute. Never before has it happened to us
that death was thus been put to an end, nor ever before
has such terror befallen to us and to Hell. Oh, now, who
is that fearless enters our confines, and not only does
not dread punishment from us but will also release
others from our bonds? This we guess to be whom we
thought that through his death all the world should be
subject to us? Hearest thou, our chief? This is the
same for whose death thou hast long striven. And thou
didst promise us with thy support much spoil at least.
But now wilt thou now do with respect to him? and how
mayest thou now overthrow him? Now he hath put all
thy darkness to flight through his brightness, and hath
broken all thy prison in pieces; and all those whom thou
previously held captive he hath set free, and their life
he hath turned to joy; and those now mock us who pre-
viously sighed under our bonds. Why bringest thou
hither this man who by his coming hath turned all his
chosen to their ancient bliss? Though they were pre-
viously despairing of eternal life, they are now very
joyful. There is now no weeping nor lamentation heard
here, as was previously wont to be, in this place of
torment. Oh, now, our chief, those riches that thou
obtainest in the beginning through the boldness and the
disobedience of the first man and the forfeiture of
Paradise--all those he hath now seized, and through
Christ's cross all thy bliss is turned to grief. When
thou didst wish that thou didst know (should come to
pass), that Christ should be crucified, thou didst not
know how many problems at his death should come upon
us all. Thou wouldst ever defile him, in whom thou
didst know there was no sin. Wherefore broughtest
thou hither this free and innocent man? Now by his
coming hither he hath condemned and humiliated all
the guilty.

Then immediately after, the impious voice of Hell's
host was heard, and their lamentation. Then it happen-
ed without any delay that, on account of the coming of
the Lord's kingdom, that all the iron bolts of Hell's
locks were broken; and forthwith the innumerable host
of sanctified souls who previously were held captive
did obeisance to the Saviour, and with weeping and
supplication prayed to him, thus saying: "Thou didst
come to us as the redeemer of the world. Thou didst
come to us--the hope of heaven and earth's hosts, and
also our hope--for of yore the prophets foretold of thy
coming, and we hoped and trusted in thy coming hither;

thou didst give on earth *forgiveness of sins to men.*
Set us free from Hell's power and from Hell's bondage.
Now, since for us thou didst descend into Hell's abyss,
leave us not now to dwell in torment when thou turnest
to thy kingdom on high. Thou didst set the sign of thy
glory in the world, set now the token of thy glory in
Hell."

Without delay this prayer was at once heard, and
immediately the innumerable host of holy souls, at the
Lord's bidding, were raised out of the fiery sulphur,
and He felled down the old devil and cast him bound in-
to Hell's abyss. Then the holy souls with ineffable joy
cried to the Lord, thus saying: "Ascend up now, Lord
Jesus Christ, now thou hast spoiled Hell, and hast
bound the prince of death in these torments; manifest
now bliss to all the world that thy chosen may rejoice
and trust in thy ascension."

Adam and Eve, as yet, had not been set free, but
were held in bonds; Adam then with weeping and with
piteous voice cried to the Lord, and said, "Have mercy
upon me, O Lord, have mercy upon me, for thy great
mercy, and blot out my unrighteousness, because I
have sinned against thee alone and have done great sin
before thee. I have erred as the sheep that perishes.
Visit not thy servant, O Lord, for thy hands have made
and fashioned me; leave not my soul with Hell's hosts,
but show thy mercy upon me, and bring me out of these
bonds, and from this prison-house, and from the shad-
ow of death." The Lord Jesus had mercy upon Adam,
and at once his bonds were unloosed, and having em-
braced the Saviour's knees, he said, "My soul shall
bless the Lord, and all that is within me shall bless
his holy name. Thou thyself hast become merciful to
all my unrighteousness, thou thyself didst heal my in-
firmities, and didst deliver my soul from eternal per-
dition, and didst satisfy my longing with good things."

Eve as yet continued in bonds and in weeping. She
said, "Thou, O Lord, art just and thy judgments are
right, therefore, deservedly I suffer these torments.
In Paradise I was in honor and I did not perceive it; I
became perverse and like to foolish brutes. But thou
Lord, shield of my youth and me, be not mindful of
my folly, nor turn from me thy presence nor thy mercy,
and turn not in anger from thy servant. Hear, O gra-
cious God, my voice with which I, poor one, cry unto
thee, for my life and my years have been consumed in
sorrow and lamentation. Thou knowest my fashioning,
that I am dust and ashes, if thou beholdest my unright-
eousness. I entreat thee now, Lord, for the sake of
thy servant Saint Mary, whom thou hast honored with
heavenly glory. Thou didst fill her womb for nine
months with the prize of all the world. Thou knowest
that thou, O Lord, didst spring from my daughter,

> that her flesh is of my flesh and her bone of my bone.
> Have mercy upon me, most wretched of all women,
> and pity me and deliver me from the bonds of this
> death." The Lord Jesus then had mercy upon Eve,
> and immediately her bonds were unloosed. She then
> cried out, thus saying, "Let thy name, O Lord, be
> blessed in the world, because thy mercy is great
> towards me. Now thou hast delivered my soul from
> the nether hell."
>
> Then the patriarch Abraham, with all the holy
> souls that from the beginning of the world had been
> held captive, cried out with joyful voice and said,
> "We confess thee, O Lord, and we praise thee be-
> cause thou hast delivered us from the author of death,
> and thou hast made us joyful through thy coming."
>
> Then the Lord, with the spoil that he had taken
> from Hell, immediately went living from the tomb,
> raised by his own power, and afterwards clothed him-
> self with his unspotted body, and showed himself to
> all his followers, because he wished to put away every
> doubt from their hearts.[47]

Curiously enough, almost half of this homily on the "Harrowing of

Hell" is devoted to the fear and terror of the demons and Satan; it is al-

most a complete revision of the intent of the Latin and Greek versions

of the Gospel of Nicodemus in that the important pronouncements by the

Old Testament characters are reduced to a mere mention. The homi-

list is so excited at the beginning of the work that he has the demons

saying that they are defeated even before the arrival of Christ, and his

appearance in the passage seems to be an afterthought. The action is

so arranged that it appears the dwellers in Hell have cried to Christ to

come and deliver them from the pains of the Inferno; whereas, in the

Gospel we find that they await Christ's coming with great anticipation

and receive him once he has harrowed Satan.[48]

The episode with Adam and Eve is of importance. The entire story

of Seth's trip to Paradise for the Oil of Mercy is missing from the be-

ginning of the tale; in place of it we have a lengthened version of Adam's

prayer for salvation to Christ. Eve's plea for deliverance (as the ulti-

mate ancestor of Saint Mary) was more than likely borrowed from pa-
tristic sources,[49] rather than the Latin II version of the Gospel, because
the shortening of the story indicates the use of the Latin I sequence as
the basis of the homily (the Latin II order could not give the same in-
ternal structure).[50] The homilist seems to feel that the efficacy of
Christ's harrowing can be best illustrated through the salvation of the
original pair of sinners: if it were possible for them to receive a right
to enter the heavenly kingdom, then all of those whose sins are less
have the same opportunity at the Last Judgment.[51]

It is also rather obvious that this homily eliminates many elements
of the Gospel because they are of no didactic use in the lesson: gone is
the complete frame of the "Harrowing" story, with the risen pair telling
their story to the faithful Jews. The long prophetic statements of the
various patriarchs are reduced to a mention, and the scenes outside of
Hell are dropped completely. It is not necessary to include Enoch and
Elias in such a foreshortened account, as it is not useful to dwell on
the nature and character of the robber delivered to Heaven in advance
of the souls from Hell. The homilist has been exceptionally selective
in his manner of telling the story as something essential to the faith;
his failing seems to be a lack of focus on any exact point and a failure
to organize the chronology of the story which he has recalled. But most
of the Anglo-Saxon prose treatments of the "Harrowing" fare no better
than the Blickling rendition, and many of them are very curious:

> He is called Saviour for he healed mankind of the
> deathly venom that the old devil blew into Adam and
> Eve and all their offspring, so that their five-fold
> powers were all taken from them; that is, their
> hearing, their sight, their blowing (breathing), their
> smelling, and their feeling were all poisoned, but
> he healed them with his five holy wounds when he

suffered for us on the cross, and gave everlasting free-
dom to as many as would receive it. He is his only
Son, not adopted, but begotten; for He begot Him as the
sun generates light, which he spreads abroad into all
this wide world. [52]

3. Cynewulf's Christ

One of the most colorful mediaevalizations of the "Harrowing" ap-

pears in the Cynewulfian narrative of the life of Christ, done in the al-

literative verse of the late eighth century. The poet captures the in-

stant between the completion of the "Harrowing" and the ascension into

heaven in less than thirty lines; yet he comes alive with an excitement

and entheusiasm which is almost totally lacking from the dry and some-

what pathetic account of the homilies.

> Now hath the holy One despoiled Hell of all the
> tribute that in ancient days is basely gorged within
> that place of strife. Now are they quelled, the devil's
> champions, in living torture humbled and held bound,
> bereft of prowess, in hell's abyss: the hostile foes
> might not speed in battle with weapon-thrusts, when
> He, the King of Glory, the Healm of heaven's realm,
> waged war, with his sole might, against his ancient
> foes. Then drew He forth from durance the best
> spoil, a folk unnumbered from the burgh of fiends,
> this very band which ye gaze on here. Now will he
> visit the spirit's throne of grace the proper Child of
> God, Savior of souls, after the war-play. Now ye
> know right well what Lord is He that leadeth this
> company; now boldly go ye forward to meet friends,
> joyful in spirit. Open, O ye gates! the Lord of all,
> the King, creation's Source, will lead through you into
> the city, unto the joy of joys, with host not small,
> the folk which from the devil He hath reft, through
> his own victory. Peace shall be shared by angels
> and by men henceforth evermore to all eternity:
> 'twixt God and man there is a covenant, a ghastly
> pledge,--love, and life's hope, and joy of all the
> light. [53]

The terminology of this poem is made understandable to the common

man because the essential elements of the story are given in quasimili-

tary terms rather than in theological concepts. Those who dwelt in Hell

are called the "tribute of ancient days", as though they were sent to Satan as hostages; the demons who are defeated by Christ are not mere warriors, they are his "champions", men who fight in face-to-face combat with "prowess" (which they have now lost). The action of the demons is stopped because they cannot attack Christ with "weapon-thrusts", and Christ, as war-lord, is the invincible "Healm" of heaven's "realm". In return for winning the battle Christ receives the "spoil" in the form of a "band" taken from the "burgh" of Hell. As a result of this "war-play", the "company" of men are lead into the heavenly city as visible proof of the "covenant, a ghastly /spiritual/ pledge" which exists between God and the rest of mankind. Here we have the comita-tus ethic and ethos used as the basis for transforming the Latin Gospel into something able to be understood by the new converts.

This technique is also pursued in such poems as Elene (ll. 179-182; 293-297; 905-913), The Phoenix (ll. 417-423); Guthlac (ll. 1074-1077), The Panther (ll. 55-64), and the exceptionally long "Harrowing" pas-sage in Christ and Satan (ll. 366-664). However, there exists one sepa-rate Old English poem from the Exeter Book which treats the subject in a highly personal way not apparent in the other examples.

4. The Harrowing of Hell

> At dawn the noble women began
> to make ready for their journey. The men, met in
>   assembly,
> knew that the body of the Prince was hidden in a
>   grave.
> The disconsolate women would for a while
> lament the death of the Prince with weeping,
> Bewail it bitterly. His resting-place had grown
>   cold;
> hard had been his journey hence, Valiant heroes
> were those whom they found at the hill rejoicing.

The mournful Mary came at day-break;
she bade another noble lady go with her.
The sorrowing women looked to find the victorious
     Son of God
alone within the grave where they knew
that certain of the Jews had buried him.
They thought that He must have remained alone
in that hill on that Easter night. Undoubtedly the
     women
knew not else when they went away;
for at dawn there had come a host of angels,
a peerless band surrounded the Savior's stronghold.
Open was the grave; the Prince's body
had received the breath of life; the earth trembled;
the dwellers in hell laughed with joy. The young man
     awoke;
He arose in his majesty from the ground, valiant,
victorious and wise. John said,
and the valiant hero laughed as he spoke to the
     dwellers in hell,
to the multitudes of them, about his kinsman's
     journey;
"Our Savior, when He would send me
on my journey here, had promised me
that He, the Prince of every people, would come for
     me
after six months, that time has now passed;
I most assuredly expect and account it certain
that today the Lord himself,
the victorious Son of God, will come for us."
     Then the Lord of mankind made haste on his
        journey;
the Protector of the heavens, the sternest of all
     kings,
would break down and lay low the walls of hell,
would begin to dismantle the strength of that
     fortress.
At that battle He did not require warriors,
nor would He lead armed men
to the fortress-gates, but the bolts and bars
fell away from those forts, and the King rode in;
the Prince of all the peoples hastened on,
the glorious Lord of hosts. The exiles thronged
     forward
to see if they could look upon the victorious Son.
There were Adam and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
many a valiant earl, Moses and David,
Isaiah and Zacharias, ...
many patriarchs, as also a concourse of heroes,
the band of prophets, a throng of women,
many maidens, a countless number of people.
     Then John saw the victorious Son of God
enter hell in royal majesty;

the sad-hearted man perceived that God himself had
     come;
he saw the doors of hell shine clearly,
which before had long been locked
and enveloped in darkness. Thane was joyful;
leader of those dwelling there, he then spoke out
     boldly
and valiantly before the multitude, and addressed
     his kinsmen,
and greeted then as follows the welcome guest:
"To thee, our Prince, be thanks
that thou wouldest come to us in this our sorrow,
while we . . . . . wait in these bonds;
since (the devil) . . . . binds
many a brotherless exile--he is hated far and wide.
But none is so closely and severely
bound in grevious confinement under baleful bonds
but that he can the more easily take courage,
that He will redeem him from those bonds,
as we all believe that Thou wilt,
my dear Lord. I have endured much
since the time when Thou didst once come to me,
when Thou didst give me sword and corselet,
helm and armor, which I have ever since held,
and Thou didst assure me, peerless majesty,
that Thou wouldst be protection to my people.
Hail, Gabriel! How prudent and acute thou art,
how mild and gracious and gentle,
wise in thy wit and sage in thy speech,
as thou didst show, when thou didst bring to us
that child in Bethlehem. We waited long for him,
sat sorrowful, longing for peace
with glad expectations, until we heard
the word of God from His own mouth.
Hail, Mary! to how valiant a king
thou didst give birth, when thou didst bring to us
that child in Bethlehem. Trembling with fear,
we had greviously to remain in bonds
under the gates of hell. Our slayer rejoiced in his
     deed;
our old enemies were all joyful
when they heard how we, sorrowing,
mournfully lamented our kindred,
until (Thou) . . . . , God, victorious Lord,
didst confound . . . .
. . . . of all times
. . . . now the man proudly . . . . . us,
who gave it to us from our youth. But our covetous-
     ness
we betrayed ourselves; therefore we bear
those sins to the hands of our slayer,
and must also beg for peace from our foes.
Hail, Jerusalem, among the Jews!

How thou hast remained undisturbed in thy peace:
all who live and dwell upon earth,
who sing thy praise, might not pass through thee.
Hail, Jordan, among the Jews! How thou hast remained
     undisturbed in thy peace:
if thou mightest flow among the dwellers on earth,
they might gladly enjoy thy water.
Now, Savior, I earnestly implore thee
with boldness (Thou art Christ the Lord)
that Thou have mercy upon us, Creator of mankind.
In Thy love for men, Thou thyself didst seek
Thy mother's bosom, Lord God of victories,
not because of Thy need, Ruler of peoples,
but because of the mercies that Thou hast often
     shown
to mankind, when they had need of grace.
Thou couldest encompass all the habitations of the
     peoples,
just as thou couldest count, mighty Lord,
best of all Kings, the grains of sand by the sea.
Likewise I implore thee, our Savior,
by thy childhood, best of Kings,
and by thy wound, Lord of hosts,
and by thy Resurrection, peerless Prince,
and by thy mother, whose name is Mary,
whom all we who dwell in Hell extol and praise;
and by thy angels who surround Thee,
whom thou hast let sit on the right hand,
when thou wouldst, through Thy own might,
come to us in this our exile, Lord of hosts;
and by Jerusalem, among the Jews
--that city must now still await
Thy return, dear Prince--;
and by Jordan, among the Jews
--we two bathed together in that stream--;
that thou wouldest sprinkle with its water, Lord of
     hosts,
in gladness of heart, all who dwell in this
     stronghold,
even as thou and I in Jordan
by baptism brought good hope
to all this world--for that be ever thanks to God. "[54]

The mediaevalization of this text drawn from the "Harrowing of

Hell" as it is found in the Gospel of Nicodemus combines part of the

Passion narrative from the Synoptics as part of the frame for the begin-

ning of the story: rather than present the introduction in the form of the

risen pair repeating the tale of what happened in Hell, we have the

Virgin Mary arriving at the empty tomb to discover men rejoicing over

the risen Christ, the "Prince" of a "peerless band". Although there is no scriptural authority for the poet to assume that those who arrived at the tomb knew then that Christ had descended to Hell in order to harrow it, he does switch the scene immediately to Hell where John the Baptist prepares to greet his "kinsman". Hell is described as a "fortress" with "walls" and "fortress-gates" whose bolts and bars fell from the "fort". Those who awaited Christ are described for the first time as "exiles" in much the same sense as the Wanderer or the Seafarer of Anglo-Saxon verse of the "survivor's lament". Not only does the poet list the Old Testament characters from the Gospel, but he adds to their number a "concourse" of heroes, a "band" of prophets, and women and maidens--probably out of respect to Mary whom he praises later on.

The poet announces that the joyful John was a "Thane", a leader of those dwelling in Hell; Jesus, of course, is addressed as a "Prince" because he was the son of the great King, God. John continues the military language by referring to his charge from Christ as being certified by receiving the "sword and corselet, helm and armor". After this point, however, the Gospel source gives way to the homiletic form found in the Armenian version,[55] and John apostrophizes Gabriel, Mary, and the Jordan. John's point-of-view is interesting because he begins his address as one of those awaiting the arrival and triumph of Christ in Hell, and he continues--anachronistically--by speaking as one who is privy to the whole future of New Testament history after the Resurrection. It is not impossible to think of the author of this poem as working from an oral tradition of Anglo-Saxon versions of the homilies as well as the Gospel of Nicodemus.

5. The Old English Gospel of Nicodemus

In all probability the translation of the Gospel into Old English was prompted by a popular desire to hear the "official" Latin words[56] as they were written down for the priests to read, and by a desire on the part of the priests to use the Gospel for teaching purposes. No story is quite as good as when it comes directly from the source which was, in this case, the Latin I redaction done from the Greek.[57] Through a close examination of the Latin and Old English texts it is possible to see that the Old English version has been made to fit the mediaeval ethos as closely as possible. In addition to this it appears that the translator had other purposes in mind for the vernacular version.

a. Text of the Old English Gospel of Nicodemus

This translation is based on the collation of the Cotton Vitellius A. xv and Corpus Christi College Cambridge II. ii. 11 MSS as edited by William H. Hulme, "The Old English Version of The Gospel of Nicodemus", Publication of the Modern Language Association, Vol. 13 (Fall 1898), pp. 457-542.

> "Behold that we were with all of the other fathers in
> that hellish dimness when suddenly we were all illumi-
> nated and made happy. There was suddenly becoming a
> presence that the glorious sun was set on fire and il-
> luminated all that was around us."
> Satan, then, and that cruel host were afraid and
> said: "What is this light that suddenly shineth over us
> here?"
> Then soon were all those human kind made happy:
> Adam, our father, and all the prophets with this mighty
> brightness. They then said, "This light is the Lord,
> the everlasting light, the King that was predicted to
> come to us, the everlasting light sent into the world."
> Isaiah the prophet said, exclaiming, "This is that
> light of the Father, which is God's Son--all of which I
> predicted while I was upon earth. I told this to the land

of Zion, and to the land of Neptune, and to the River
Jordan, and to the people who lived in the gloomy
kingdom that they should see this light of glory. I
foretold that this light should be forthcoming, and
now it is come as the only gift into death's darkness.
Let us all make bliss over it."

All the people rejoiced to the prophet father Simeon,
and he rejoicing said unto us: "Glorify then Christ,
God's Son, Him that I bore on my arms into the
temple and thus there said: "Thou art the light and con-
solation for all people, and thou art the glorious rev-
erence for all the people of Israel." Simeon then
this to them spoke, all those men, those saints that
wore such blessedness.

And after him came such sounds of thunder so that
those sainted ones went inquiring and asking, "Who
art thou?" Those people were answered by a man
who said, "I am John, the highest prophet, and I am
come before Him that I should prepare his way, in-
creasing the saved ones among his people."

Adam was then hearing this, and spoke to his son
Seth, saying: "Then explain to all my children and
the patriarchs all the things that you heard from
Michael the Archangel; those things which were sent
to you from Paradise Gate: that the Prince died and
that he will descend with his angel and anoint those of
my infirm brethren who pledge mildheartedness to
him."

Seth, Adam's son, then approached the sainted
patriarchs and said, "When I was bidding the Prince
at Paradise Gate, there appeared to me Michael the
Archangel and said, "I am set over all men bodily.
I tell you Seth that nothing to do orders me; your shed-
ding of tears need not be a requirement for the mild-
hearted oil of the faith for your father Adam's anoint-
ment. Your brethren should grieve for five thousand
and five hundred years before they should be healed
worthy. But then comes the mildhearted Christ, God's
Son, who will let your father, Adam, into Paradise.""

This was heard by the patriarchs, the high men,
and all the saints who were in hell's torment, filling
their hearts with bliss and God's glorification.

These words were so horrible to Satan, there hell's
elder and leader of the dead army, that he said to those
hell residents, "Prepare yourselves to receive your
son, Christ. He himself has glory and is God's Son,
over each man. Each man who is dead fears him; my
soul is so distraught that I think I am not to exist any
more. For you he is much more crowning joy than
the evil done by me, going out over you. I told you
that he will have subdued, drawn blind and lamed,
bent and roughed, and all drawn apart."

Those hellmen, the severely grim and severely

horrible, answered him, Satan, the elder devil, and said, "Who is he that is so strong and so mighty that if he is a man that he does not sink here, death fearing, being formerly imprisoned? And who is this man Christ that sinks not dead, fearing our dreaded might?"

Satan said, "But soon I believe that he has the power of reincarnation, so powerful that he does not now fear death. He is so mighty in goodness that nothing may withstand him. And I believe that if the dead fear him, he wins over them and they become free to go to the everlasting world."

To Satan answered those hell-tormenting elders saying, "What think you or fear you that Christ be received to our fighters and you? For then we tempted him and killed him along with the Jewish people that went to him with malice and all-around anger. We struck him with a spear and killed him; we killed him with a drinking mixture of oil and vinegar; and we killed him on his prepared tree-rood. We hanged him there and fastened him with nails. And now in the next world we will lead him to his death and he will be subject to either you or us."

That so-grizzly devil then said, "Would that you do so, that He, the dead one, not draw from you the people here who are eager to leave, but that he dwell with me, although not willing. But I would that he would not recover from me, not drawing from my collection as he did with Lazarus. His did I quickly return when Almighty God requested through his coming."

"He is the same person that took Lazarus from us!" said those devils.

Thus those hellpeople said to him, "All I entreat, this through thy magnitude and each through mine, that thou never allow that he come in on me, for when I heard his word, his command, I was with great terror afrighted and all mine wicked were then together with me so afrighted and disturbed so that we might not dismember Lazarus, but he was ascended so like an eagle that he with quick flight flew forth and so he was from us risen, and from the earth of dead men like Lazarus was he given life."

But while he spoke these things among the devils, there was a voice and ghastly lamentation so loud that thunder struck and there was heard: "Tollite portas principes uestras & eleuamini porte eternales & introibit rex glorie," which is in English, "You elders lift up the gate and heaven, the everlasting gate, so that your king, the kinsman who has everlasting glory, may go in."

But those hell's devils heard and repeated it to the elder Satan, who said, "Depart quickly from me and go far out into my habitation and make such mighty earthquakes that they are always to be remembered.

Make them befitting of the glorious kind which become
you and me. "

Then that hellish Satan's voice drifted out of his
enchantment saying, "Look out for the murderous and
brazen gate and shoot forth iron missles. The strong-
est withstand and bind the held ones lest they might go
free. "

Then that group who were inside said in a single
loud voice to all the devils, "Open your gate so that the
King who has everlasting glory might come in. "

David then said to them, "I forewarned those with
whom on earth I was living. Acknowledge the Prince
who has mildheartedness and wonder so that you may
bear it manifest and break that brazen gate and iron
missles, along with the men of injustice. "

After him the wiseman Isaiah spoke to all those
holy people there saying, "Did I not foretell you while
I was living on earth that dead men should arise and
many graves should be opened and they in the earth
should receive blessed salvation from the Prince?"

All the wisemen heard him say, "Open your gate,
now shalt you be infirm, weak, and without strength. "

While he spoke this to them, there happened such
a mighty sound like thunder, saying, "You elders, lift
up your gate and heaven, the everlasting gate, so that
King, your kinsman who has everlasting glory, may
come in. "

Yet, those hell-devils who had heard the command
twice, so exclaimed, asking, "Who is this king, this
glorious king?"

David here answered them, saying, "That word I
acknowledge and for him that word I do. When I was
on earth I told of this Prince of heaven and earth's
coming. Hear the lamentations of his earth's ser-
vant. But now, thou foul and full-stinking hell-prince,
open your gate that the everlastingly wonderful King may
go in. "

David thus spoke to them, when there came to them
the glorified King in man's likeness, the Prince of the
inhabitants. Then the eternal darkness gained all light
and he broke the fetters of hell, approaching the elder
fathers who had remained long in the darkness.

But that Satan, the dead and wicked tribe saw all
this and were frightened along with their murderous
servants, for he was so bright in his heavenly kingdom;
they suddenly saw Christ sitting on his throne, he him-
self taking possession. The devils said, "We are sent
from the overcome, but we ask what you are, you that
are of great strife and battles that might with great
strength cast us down? Or what are you who is so great
and so little, so lowly and so high, so wonderful in
man's form that overcomes us? Eh! Are you not him
who lay dead and buried and are now quickened hither

to us and all the dead since earth's creation, sending
the friend who has come to pass between all the dead
and those of earth thusly disturbing? And who are you
who has such a light sent here with goodness and
brightness to aid this sinful darkness?"

Besides this, the devil exclaimed in another voice,
"What are you Christ, so strong a man, bright in great
strength, bearing each sin and yet so clean from each
crime? All the world was subject to us till now. And
indeed we ask this, what are you? You who are so
feared in your coming to eternalize all those who are
drawn from our possession?"

The devils asked, "Does it then suppose victory
because you are Christ, the victor about whom Satan
said would have all the peoples of the world?"

But that immutably glorious King and heavenly
Prince, not wishing the devil to harrangue because he
feared not devilish deed nor devilish dread, grappeled
with Satan and bound him fast and there sealed hell on
his authority. He took all of the devils from their
undertaking.

The devils said to Satan, "Behold, thou elder of
all destruction, behold thy point of all evil, behold
father of all fugitives, behold the leader of the dead,
behold the chief of all haughtiness: presume that of
your purpose that the Jewish people hanged this Prince
and yet no guilt hangs on him. And you, through that
three upon which this King hanged in a hostile manner,
and through the everlasting temptation and the endless
torment that he suffered acknowledge that we now suf-
fer in everlasting captivity."

But this the glorious king heard and he spoke with
the hell-devils and Satan, saying, "I, Satan, and thy
power and will be through all eternity, and shall store
in his the eternal world Adam and this fellow's children
for protection."

And that wonderful Prince then extended his sword-
hand and said: "All and my holy and thee my blessings
have. Come to me with those who were wicked in tree-
blood, and see now that on that tree I was crucified and
hanged, having now overcome death and the devil."

Then there was great wrath among the hell-devils
when the people were coming to see Christ's hands.
Christ named his right hand, saying, "Come to me
Adam with all thy people."

Adam was there so raised, acknowledging his prince
with kisses, imploring him tenderly with tears, saying,
"I hear you heavenly Prince, that you would have me
come out from this hell-torment."

And that Prince extended his hand over Adam,
blessing him and all his saints. Thence the hands of
the tormentors were drawn and Adam flew to his place
among the chosen.

At this action Saint David then said in a strong
voice, "Sing now a song of praise to the Prince and
to all the wonders he has made manifest, and to his
richness brought forth."

The saints answered him, all singing, "Then to the
Prince glory and to all his saints, honor. Amen, Al-
leluia."

The princely King was holding Adam's hand, seated
on the throne with Michael the Archangel. All the el-
ders were flying with Michael the Archangel to the next
world of goodness and wonderful bliss. Between all
the elders and the angels Christ flew. Quoth the el-
ders to the two men going forth with them: "What sent
you who were never in Hell with us, and are not be-
come dead, and are sent together in paradise like us?"

"I am Enoch who was led here through the Prince's
word, and this is Elias Thesbyten with me. He was
ferried here on Christ's fire chariot without bringing
death. He is representative of divinity: remaining with
the Antichrist but won from them in Jerusalem where
he was struck. But within three and one-half days time
he was received through the mist into heaven."

But among them when Enoch and Elias spoke, came
another one, wretched all the while, bearing a rood
taken up on his shoulders. Those people soon saw him
and said to him, "Who art thou whose face is alone
criminal, and what is that token thou bearest upon thy
shoulders?"

He answered the crowd and said, "Truly I say that
I was a shield for all the evil on the earth and I hanged
Christ with Judas. I soon died being a judge of Christ,
but I implored the creator of all creation, the almighty
King: "Alas Prince, be mindful of me when thy kingdom
come." And he soon received my prayer, saying, "It
is truth that I say today thou will be with me in heaven,"
and he sealed this rood upon me and said, "Go you into
heaven with this sign and give the angel this shepherd's
staff where the ingoing perish at Paradise Gate. Show
him this rood-sign and say this to him, that the heaven-
ly Christ, God's Son now crucified, sent you there."
That angel heard all that I was told to say and told me
in gladness to enter that half of Paradise Gate by say-
ing, "Enter here so that all mankind may enter, Father
Adam with all his people and with all the elders that are
now with him in Hell.""

All those high fathers and wisemen heard what he
had said in those great words and they said in another
voice, "The blessed and almighty Prince, the eternal
Father he has sealed your sins with forgiveness and
with such you goeth to heaven."

He answered and said, "Amen."

Carinus gave Annas and Caiphas and Gamaliel his

scroll, and in a like manner Leuticus gave his scroll
to Nicodemus and Joseph, saying, "Peace be with you
all from that King, the wonderful Christ, and from
your earl-ruler."

They were then suddenly so rejoiced in the glori-
ously shining Son, that in that brightness they departed
of those folk.

The elders and the mass-priests read what Carinus
and Leuticus wrote. Therein was all bliss written, not
more nor less than one letter or one period.

And when all the Jewish folk had read what was
written, they asked, "In truth send us this thing, this
word, and afterwards the Prince be blessed in a won-
derful world, Amen." After, each Jew was to return
to home by their own road through humility and dignity,
with much terror and fright, being beaten to make
amends for the offence that they have with God.

And Joseph and Nicodemus went to Pilate who de-
manded their presence. They told him all that was
twice-written by Carinus and Leuticus, all that was a
secret to him before.

Then Pilate in his judgment hall wrote of all those
things which the elders did. He sat and dictated a let-
ter to King Claudius in Rome, which read: "I Pontius
Pilate greet his elder kingship, Claudius, telling of
what has recently happened among the Jews through
their malice and through their repeated wickedness;
that the already named Prince, against whom they
strove, and against whom they accused, going against
him, saying that he was a wizard and an enticer of the
rest day. For they said that he gave light to the blind
on the rest day, along with cleansing lepers, causing
men to flee from idols, awakening the dead, and work-
ing many other wonders. I infirmed him as I never
should have. And since I struck him down he has in
glory returned from the tree-rood which he was hanged,
arose from the grave tomb where he was set, and from
the tomb where forty warriors were bodily set to hold.
But he rose from the dead after three days, making
such news that should not be neglected. The Jews that
he told were said to have been given riches. However,
those who seek his disciples say that they have stolen
away and the word of truth was kept silent so that they
may not find it out. Now beloved king, I advise you not
to believe this Jewish falsehood. Praise to the king,
sorrow to the devils, world without end, AMEN."

b. Commentary

It is my belief that this Old English version of the "Harrowing" could

have been used as one of the earliest dramas of the mediaeval Church. Obviously, the translation does not even approach being a scholarly rendition of its Latin parent, nor does it seem improbable that it is too distant in form from either the poetical works or from real drama. The argument of whether or not it was actually played as is[58] will probably never be settled, but the evidence does lean in the direction of dramatic presentation before the appearance of a single Cycle manuscript makes it an important element in the liturgical plays. Taken point by point, the Old English "Harrowing of Hell" appears to be urdrama.

The Gospel was prepared for dramatic adaptation in six ways: first, the Old English version begins in medias res, with approximately the first sixty lines of the frame story of the Latin missing; second, it is shorter by at least one-third (or some 240 lines of typescript), bringing the dialogues closer together in an overall trend to drop whatever belabors a point or halts the action; third, certain terminology is changed to fit the Anglo-Saxon usage: Zabulon becomes Zion, Nepthalim is transformed into Neptune, and we find that the iron bands of Hell become iron missles in the Old English, as well as Christ's hand becoming his "sword-hand"; fourth, unfamiliar characters are eliminated and long monologues are shortened;[59] fifth, there is a trend toward explaining the movement of characters when "coming to see Christ's hands" was substituted for "under the hand of the Lord"; and sixth, some speeches are rearranged or reassigned.[60]

The dramatic intensity of the Old English version is not destroyed because it begins in medias res; this only suggests that the manuscripts which we have form the last part of a complete redaction of the whole

Gospel.[61] Organic unity (if not harmony) is achieved here as well as

throughout the "Harrowing" by the omission of as much unnecessary ex-

pository material as is possible. If this were not so, and the Old English

version complete as it stands, then the identification of Carinus and

Leuticus would appear as an afterthought, as well as the tenuously at-

tached letter of Pilate at the conclusion of the piece. With the other half

supplying the needed order, these unsolved problems would disappear;

the characters and their situations are part of the beginning of the Gos-

pel, and the judgment before Pilate co-ordinates with the reasons for

his composing an epistle to Tiberius at the end.

The omission of the non-dialogue passages tends to bring the dia-

logues closer together without seriously damaging the continuity of the

piece. If the expository part of the "Harrowing" depended upon the

short paragraphs explaining the speakers and the direction of the action,

then their absence would confound the hearer; however, the speakers

most often identify themselves by name, therefore eliminating the neces-

sity of further discourse. Also, the speeches or dialogues have been

pruned of any excess which is not necessary to the completed meaning

of the character, which, in this case, is in direct contrast with the

apostrophe of David in the Christ of Cynewulf.

The trend to Anglisize the Gospel had been established with the

earlier poems taken from it. The idea of "Zion" and "Neptune" approach

as much modernity for us as they probably did for the English people a

thousand years ago. Even the fight of the devils against Christ could be

made more real--and a great deal livelier by substituting iron missles

for bonds of iron on the hell-gate.[62] The first time the cry to open the

gates is heard, the Old English gives it in Latin, following it by a

translation which is given in place of the Latin thereafter. Had not Jesus seized Hell by some sort of "on-stage" fight, the charge from him would sound a little hollow repeated twice; the use of missles would also fall flat. Each change is in keeping with the other. Christ as the warrior with the "sword-hand" is the Christ of a seen and heard battle, not the Cynewulfian Christ who rose into hell triumphant after the gates had fallen of their own accord.

While the Old English version shows a reworking of the dialogues and language, it also edits the Latin so far as to omit the two characters of Habacuc and Micah. There is no indication that a variant source was used for this portion because there are no other parallel omissions in the Greek and Latin II versions. The loss of these two Old Testament personalities may be attributed to either their unimportance in speeches or to the translator's unfamiliarity with their position. What they do say in the Latin has little bearing on the movement of the story.

When Christ signals the saved to come to him in the Latin version, they move toward him as their natural benefactor and protector; the Old English adds the definition of their moving toward Christ as one more of curiosity than of faith. Without specifically referring to them as "Doubting Thomases", the translator has created an awe-struck crowd, curious enough to pause at this time to look at his wounded hands. Satan's followers also receive further definition. The Latin assigns most of the dialogue parts between the characters of Satan and Hell (devil and assistant demon), not as the Old English with Satan and a chorus of little tormentors. Satan even makes a preliminary appearance in the Old English version some one hundred lines before he is called for in the Latin. The frightful popping on stage makes more sense dramatically

than it does organizationally, even though we are repeatedly reminded
that the scene takes place in Hell.

B. Irish Thematic Variants

The "Harrowing of Hell" theme seems to be of particular interest to the writers who left traces of it in their manuscripts: it was popular enough to undergo one of the most interesting folkloric transformations since the inventive work of the English Beowulf poet. One reason for the transformation (and "humanization") of this theme seems to depend on the fact that Ireland is an island--with no part of it very far from water. Up to the point where we have English transformations of the story, there is no change of the theme to include the idea of an underworld voyage including a journey over water (with the exception of Beowulf's descent through water).[1] The Irish combined the theme with their older Keltic stories of otherworld journeys over the mysterious Ocean that was their natural border.[2]

The only extant prose version of the Irish "Harrowing of Hell" comes to us from the Leabhar Breac, section #170. The book itself is a late collection of passions and homilies.[3] The Irish version begins, as do several of the English, in medies rebus; that is, it does not include the beginning sections concerned with the background story of Annas and Caiphas. It does, however, relate the story with David's lengthy speech to the patriarchs and prophets and continues into the major details of the story without dividing it into the conversation sections of the Latin group A. After the story has been told to the point where Adam receives the saving grace, word is heard from Eve. Eve makes a long plea to Christ stating that she was the direct relative of St. Mary, Christ's mother, and that she should be placed in heaven with a pardon because "her bone is of my bone and her flesh is of my flesh". (This would again appear to the reader as showing the influence of the older

martyrology or as a copy from the English version.) There is no mention of the scene with Enoch in heaven, the following assumption of Annas and Caiphas, and the business of the letter from Pilate to Claudius.

However, in place of the details omitted, there are several poetic apostrophes to Mary and the River Jordan.[4] These sections indicate a closer relationship of the prose Irish version with the Old English poems on the same theme, or at least with a common lost original which may have been used by both authors.

The transmission of the Gospel to the British Isles has already been discussed, but the transmission of the theme to Ireland is another thing. Hitherto it had been assumed that prior to the time of Julius Caesar there was little commerce with Hibernia. Of the three early documents mentioning Ireland by name, one--by a Greek historian, mentions the fact that tin was obtained from Ireland by the ancient Phoenecians--at about the same time in history as the rebirth of the Isis Cult (and its resulting history) in Rome. It may be highly possible that during the commercial intercourse between these two countries a certain exchange took place beyond the business level and that there was a transference of religious belief. We are fairly certain that the Phoenecians came to Ireland because their word for "tin" was Keltic in origin.[5]

On the other hand Roman rule never controlled Ireland even during the more widespread or "golden" centuries (2nd and 3rd) of the Empire; and there is no evidence remaining whatsoever which indicates that any foreign influence interferred with or interrupted Hibernia before the Norse invasions after the time of Bede. The only evidence to indicate possible migrations is found in a few ancient artifacts that reveal traces of an Oriental influence in design (again possible Phoenecian). Place-

markers with an overall leaf pattern suggest some Near Eastern aid;[6] the Lindesfarne Gospels and the Book of Kells are both highly ornate in a manner completely foreign to what has been termed the "contemporary indigenous art". Their dates suggest, however, that the influence upon art was before the decline of the Empire, and a great deal later into the early Christian missionary centuries.[7]

Had a descent story existed in the Bardic tradition it must have been totally absorbed into the Christian writings and teachings of the early missionaries. From the start Rome had approved the use of folk belief to change pagans into Christians. Frazier mentions the story of Wulfa teaching his native Bulgarians about Christ by displacing the native Bulgarian tales with Christian coverings. Whatever must have been the native story, it passed out of pagan hands into the teachings of the Church because there are no remnants or suggestions of a native version ever having existed.

The man who has now the name of "St. Patrick" was supposed to have begun the Christianization of Ireland at approximately the same time as the date of our first written copy of the Gospel (ca. 450). Bede and others attest to the fact that he brought with him the Gospels and the mythology of the Romans. Patrick also served a captive apprenticeship as a bard before he began his great work in Ireland. These things considered, his background would then better enable him to teach out of a folk tradition with his own Christian "bias". It has also been noted that, in the not-too-reliable Church records, Patrick brought with him from Rome an assistant who was schooled in mythology, under whose direction much of the Greek and Roman pagan literature became known in Ireland. Most interesting is the fact that there exist stories of an

Irish bird which corresponds directly to the Phoenecian and Greek Phoenix, but whose generation and regeneration is accomplished not through fire, as in the "original" and English/Norse versions, but through water. The idea of a water motif beginning to attach itself to the "harrowing" theme is evident from the very first. It is difficult to determine whether this single story is really indicative of an earlier trend at assimilation, or whether one instance of the transmission of a motif was accomplished at a date sometime after Patrick and before Bede; whatever the case may be, it is an Oriental motif and helps to support the idea of an intellectual commerce between the "Tin Island" and the Near East. Because of the lack of documents covering the early period in Ireland, it is necessary to look for historical and other evidence in references to Ireland in the works of foreign authors, the acta sanctorum and other records of Irishmen abroad, the writings of expatriated Gauls writing in monasteries abroad, or in England.

The fact worthy of note here, however, is that there is a much better preservation of Irish documents on the Continent than in Ireland. We have far more material relating to individual careers of Irishmen and exiles from these sources than we do from the remaining native records. The fact remains that there are only ten extant MSS. of older date than the year 1000 which have survived in Ireland. On the other hand the books which Irish imigrants carried with them to foreign lands total well over fifty, complete or fragmentary. These works are:

1. The Psalter of Colum-cille
2. Codex Ussrianus I
3. Book of Durrow
4. Book of Mulling
5. Book of Dimma
6. Domnoch Airgid
7. Book of Kells

8. Book of Armagh
9. Garland of Howth
10. Codex Usserianus II

These outside sources give us some indication as to what the mission-
aries did bring along with them. Prior to Bede Ireland or Irish monks
were familiar with the Bible (canonical and un-canonical), Eusebius,
Orosius, and Isidore.[8] At least three of the four--excluding Isidore--
have direct reference to the "Harrowing of Hell", and Eusebius Pam-
phillis cites the history behind the transmission of the apocryphal Gos-
pel to Greece when under the Roman rule.

The actual transmission of the descent into hell theme into Ireland
could have been accomplished in three ways: (1) through the classical
and early mythology brought by the Phoenecians and/or Romans; (2)
through the Christian Gospel of Nicodemus brought by the early Church
missionaries; (3) and through the folklore of the invasions of the Norse-
men. There is also the possibility of an "original" Keltic tale already
existing in the native literature (oral) of Ireland, which, as I have men-
tioned, became submerged after the invasions.

What we know of Icelandic (Norse) folklore and its tradition was
first set down in written form by Snorri Sturluson around 1200-1240.
The collection of legends, which he left as a handbook for poetic train-
ing, was a combination of the pagan overlaid with the Christian teaching:
a pastiche of the entire religious experience of the Scandinavian peoples
already transformed. The storehouse, the Prose and the Poetic Edda,
seldom mention the underworld, but they do contribute one form of the
descent story which may have come to Ireland.

In one of the earliest poems in the Poetic Edda, "Baldrs Draumar"
(Baldar's Dreams), we find a fragment of fourteen lines. A wise-woman

named Volva foretells of the fall of the gods, and, in this case, the
death of Baldr.   Here she is called up from the dead by Othin, who is
anxious to know of Baldr's evil dreams.   Othin travels to hell to seek
Volva.

> Then Othin rode   to the eastern door,
> There, he knew well,   was the wise-woman's grave
> Magic he spoke   and mighty charms,
> Till spell-bound she rose   and in death she spoke. [9]

It is interesting to note the parallels and various permutations of
the Inanna-Tammuz story as it exists in the Norse version.   The
"eastern door" corresponds to the "eastern gate" through which Inanna
passes to enter the lower world of her sister.   The search she con-
ducted for her husband is, in the Scandinavian version, a search for a
woman by a warrior; the Sumerian story relates the assistance of a
wise-man or the "sophia" or wisdom-figure in the resurrection of a
dead character.   Inanna was guided and assisted by her ceremonial
clothes and charms; Othin also raises the dead by his powerful charms.

The continuation, or second "descent/harrowing" theme in the
voyage to Hell is found in the shorter Prose Edda.   The story of the
"Beguiling of Gylfi" (Gylfagnning) takes up after Baldr has died.   Be-
cause the country felt the loss of so great a warrior, Hermodr the Bold,
Othin's son, was sent on an embassy to Hell to seek the release of the
captive whom Loki had killed.   Baldr's body (after a number of strange
happenings) had been borne to the underworld by boat--midst the great
grief of his wife, Nanna (an interestingly parallel name to the Sumerian
Inanna).

Hermodr rode nine nights through mysterious places to reach
Hell's entrance.   He came to the river Gjöll and the Gjöll-Bridge
where he met the guardian, the maiden Modgudr.   After questioning the

warrior as to his purpose for entering Hell and receiving the true answer, Modgudr directed Hermodr to the right road; shortly afterwards, Hermodr found Baldr in Hell's home. The next morning Hermodr presented his case to Hell (personified?). If all the people of the country weep for Baldr said Hell, then <u>she</u> would release him. This was her manner of testing the truth of Hermodr's case.

> "Then Hermodr rode his way back, and came into
> Asgard, and told all those tidings which he had seen
> and heard. Thereupon the Aesir sent over all the world
> messengers to pray that Baldr be wept out of Hell; and
> all men did this, and quick things, and the earth, and
> stones, and trees, and all metals, --even as thou must
> have seen that these things weep when they come out of
> frost and into the heat. Then, when the messengers
> went home, having well wrought their errand, they
> found, in a certain cave, where a giantess sat: she
> called herself Thökk. They prayed her to weep Baldr
> out of Hell; she answered:
>> Thökk will weep waterless tears
>> For Baldr's bale-fare;
>> Living or dead   I loved not the churl's son;
>> Let Hell hold to that she hath!
> And men deem that she who was there was Loki
> Laufeyarson, who hath wrought most ill among the
> Aesir."[10]

The continuation also follows the Inanna story. Although the names are difficult to trace, Baldr's wife is Nanna, and it is by the assembly of her peers that Hermodr is sent to Hell. The questioning gatekeeper is placed at a bridge (an Oriental motif brought into the Christian versions by the folklore in the _Dialogi_ of Gregory the Great), not at the very entrance to the underworld. The charge to the gatekeeper to weep and lament throughout the world has an interesting parallel to the customs of the lamentation performed by the Inanna cult--which are reported in the Old Testament and which were continued into the Ishtar-Osiris phase of this religion in Egypt. The luckless resurrection attempts resemble the earliest cuneiform inscriptions and their version

of the story (<u>ca.</u> 3500 B.C.).

The movement of certain portions of the early Norse folklore has been fairly well traced out through the side issue of the <u>Beowulf</u> epic. With the coming of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes (with the Frisians) to England after the Romans left, the Keltic peoples moved westward into Wales, Upper Scotland (the Highlands), and into Ireland. The wars brought captives and the captives brought their stories into the recently conquered English areas; the gradual intermarriage of these peoples brought the intermingling of blood, family traditions, and family histories--as, naturally enough, family religion. To what extent and to what depth the descent motif was assimilated, it is difficult to tell. It did exist in a highly developed form in Norse, and was available to the Irish after the Norse invasions.

J. F. Kenney has delineated the remainder of what there is to know about the survival of the pagan, pre-classical, and classical gods in Ireland--our second source of the transmission of the descent motif. It has already been mentioned that one phase in the development of the Osiris religion was the effect that the Phoenecians had in bringing Inanna to the Greeks and Isis back to the Egyptians. The Phoenecians were, at the time of this religious revival, trading with the "Tin Islands", England, and Ireland. [11] According to the <u>Periplus of Himilco</u> (6th century, B.C.) Ireland was already known as the "Sacred Island". The tin-trading colonies which had been established from Spain northward interchanged products both with themselves and with the various European parts served by the Phoenecians and their ships. [12] This was later verified by both Hecataeus and the early writings of Herodotus. [13]

Pytheas, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, travelled

throughout the Mediterranean world to observe men for himself. Even

though it is not really known if he sailed the Northern Route to the Bri-

tish Isles, he does report that the Kelts whom he has met are great re-

laters of fables. [14] Diodorus Siculus (60-20 B.C.) is more helpful be-

cause he definitely mentions the tin trade as having reached Ireland in

the time of Caesar's conquest of Gaul. [15] Eleanor Hull has pointed out

that the customs which Diodorus purports to be those of the people of

Ireland have parallels in the Irish heroic sagas. And from other sources

(The Leyden Glossary, especially) we know that the so-called Vandals

and "Huns" moved into Ireland at approximately the same time as they

were sacking Rome (425-475 A.D.). [16] From these historians and his-

torical facts it may be assumed that Ireland felt the influence of at least

three pagan literatures (Anglo-Saxon, Classical, Norse) before the ar-

rival of Christianity to its shores. It is not possible to tell to what ex-

tent any one or the combination of all penetrated the folklore of Ireland,

but it is definite that the Irish had been exposed to foreign influences of

some kind.

Turning now to the literature of the Irish themselves, a brief re-

view of the literary scene is of great importance. It is known that the

Irish had long perpetrated the tradition of recording history by the meth-

od of the oral tale; even their legal system was kept in the same manner.

> In addition to the sagas, the law tracts are an im-
> portant source of evidence. The earlier of them
> are much older than the sagas and may have been
> written in their extant form in the sixth or seventh
> century; and they, too, are clearly based on ancient
> oral tradition and reflect, in some respects, a pre-
> Christian society. [17]

They were first kept by the Bards and later preserved by the Christian

monks, who took over the religious system of the pagans. And, as

might be expected, these tales came down to us in various guises as
Christian stories. They are, however, pagan with only a slight admixture or coating of Christianity.

> The manuscripts of the Old Irish period from the
> sixth to the tenth century were, so far as existing
> examples and the evidence of tradition allow us to
> judge, without exception written in monasteries or in
> schools associated with monasteries. It may be indeed questioned whether the writing art and its materials
> were at that time to be found outside the monasteries.[18]

The Church has never been able, from the very beginning, to keep
the pagan elements completely subdued in Christianity. During the first
Christian period there were many difficulties:

> It would appear, from scattered entries, that part of
> Ireland was invaded at this period by a wave of heresy, which manifested itself under a twofold form:
> (1) a denial of the doctrines and discipline of the
> Church; (2) the practice of sorcery, or as Miss M.
> A. Murray would have us believe, in her Witch-Cult
> in Western Europe, of a definite religion which she
> names the Diana cult with its "God" or "devil", its
> ritual, and its organization.[19]

According to Vincenzo Bernardi, the one thing that the Church did
not have to do in Ireland was to make the Irish believe that there was an
after-life, because there were "few peoples more convinced than the
Irish of the reality of a future life".[20] The Voyage of Bran, the oldest
of the extant legends, was filled with descriptions of the enchanted land
of eternal youth. After the mission of St. Patrick the old pagan conception of future life was transformed, in accord with the new Christian
teaching. The Voyage of Bran ("The Adventure of Bran, Son of Febal",
Echtrae Brain Maic Febail) combines some of the water elements of the
Norse tales and some of the prophetic ideas of the Gospel of Nicodemus.
It is, obviously, an interpretation of many sources.

Bran fell asleep one day when he had gone out

working. He dreamed that he had awakened to find himself in a strange woman's house. The woman sang him a long song about the Other World. She also sang a prophesy of the coming of Christ. Bran saw the woman disappear and suddenly found himself rowing on a sea--toward the Other World. His voyage is suddenly transformed into a religious tale where the coming of Christ is again told (along with a retelling of the sins of Adam). After reaching the Other World--this time the pagan land of merriment, Bran spoke to those assembled there. He asked to return home, and was granted to do so as long as he did not take anything with him. Upon his return, he told his people the entire adventure.[21]

The Yellow Book of Lecan preserves another interesting descent tale (6th century), probably even older in the original than the story of Bran. It tells of a curious incident during the time of a great plague which ravaged the country. Three wise men were asked to muse over what they wanted most. Their wishes were related to Cummain the Tall, the great Connacht king, who, by magic, granted their wishes. All wisdom was given to one; all the earth to another. The third went to Hell and there received all diseases and tribulations--so that none of his body remained together. It is not known why the third was punished.[22] Whatever the reason, it is interesting to know that the sophisticated, Christian concept of a Hell with punishments had made inroads into the Irish legend.

Not long after these pagan tales and voyages (or visits) to Hell, come the first stories of St. Patrick's great deeds. The literature surrounding this figure is so large that it seems to be almost impossible to untangle the themes, motifs, and threads which connect his life with the pagan traditions of this little island. However, one of the first biographies contains an early and "unadulterated" account of Patrick's voyage and vision of hell. That Patrick was intimately understanding of Irish literature of the folk can hardly be denied. As a native who left the

Keltic Gaul to be trained in Rome, it can be supposed that he carried

with him certain memories of his early childhood listening experiences.

What he gained in his ecclesiastical training could hardly have been

called anti-folkloristic: the great Arian controversy was sweeping

through the Church in Africa, and the Eastern Church, according to

Werner Jaeger, was purging itself of the paganism which had crept in

after Julian the Apostate:

> Indeed, not only Lerins, but Marseilles, Lejons,
> and other parts of Southern Gaul maintained inter-
> course with both Egypt and Syria, with the natural
> result that many institutions of the Gallic Church,
> despite an increasing subjection to Rome, dating
> from the year 244, bore the impress of Oriental in-
> fluences. Hence the close relations with Gaul main-
> tained by the Irish churchmen and scholars neces-
> sarily brought them into contact with their Egyptian
> and Syrian brethren and with the ideas and practices
> which prevailed in their respective churches.[23]

Whatever was left of the non-Christian religion was made to agree with

the revised theology of the Christians--and that meant adjusting folklore

to the moral teaching of the Christian religion. This trend may have

also established the fabliaux as a didactic literary form at the same

time.

When Patrick returned to Ireland he was captured and made a slave

to the pagan chieftains of the southernmost part of Ireland. There he

was placed in apprenticeship to the Bards, the great keepers of the folk

tradition of the Keltic peoples. Part of their tradition and part of the

Gospel training he brought with him were mingled in the folklore which

grew up about his own life. The Vita Triparta, or Tripartite Life of

St. Patrick, relates three visions which St. Patrick has of Hell; and at

least one of them in this earliest of versions tells of his voyage there.

In the first, St. Patrick preaches on the evils of accumulating wealth

to Miliuc, a miser. After Miliuc's tragic death Patrick is allowed to
see him in Hell. In the second, a raised woman tells him of her pains
experienced in Hell. The third, the combination of the "harrowing"
theme and a vision of the underworld, tells the story of Patrick's actual
descent into Hell or Purgatory (a later interpolation). His guide, an
angel, has promised the saint any wish he makes. After he has seen
the anguish of the souls, Patrick requests that each year, on a given
date, he be allowed the privilege of having a number of souls taken from
Hell and sent to heaven. The angel grants his wish and we are to pre-
sume that as long as he lived, this special dispensation was carried
on. [24]

"The mediæval hagiographer", says J. B. Bury, "may be com-
pared to the modern novelist; he provided literary recreation for the
public, and he had to consider the public taste". [25] And so it was with
Jocelin, Patrick's well-known and saintly biographer. Jocelin added
two things to the written Patrick legend: another vision of Hell and a
voyage to Purgatory (or Hell). Of these two additions the voyage to
Purgatory has become the most famous.

We cannot be completely certain of Jocelin's sources, but it does
appear that he has employed at least one late classical voyage account
and one local incident which was later accounted for by Bede as having
happened around 633--the period of Jocelin's boyhood. The first source
in the Dream of Scipio Africanus, or Macrobius' Commentary on the
Dream of Scipio--an early work which was recognized by the Church as
a holy vision given to a pagan; the other, the vision of Fursey, is
another standard account of a voyage to Hell to see the punishments of
the wicked. However, the unusual element, that of Christ already

having saved sinners by his descent, comes in directly from the Gospel of Nicodemus, and informs us that the writer of the account may have been writing another saintly parallel on the original theme.

As Jocelin recounts it, Patrick had wandered into a cave to take a short rest. Once he had reclined and drifted into slumber, a voice awakened him. This voice came from his angel-guide, who bade Patrick to follow him into the depths of the cave where the secret of the other world would be revealed to him. Patrick followed orders and was shown the sinners suffering in Hell. The angel related the fact that once Christ had come and had taken away the sinners who had waited there for him. Now it would take the second coming to save the constantly growing remainder. Patrick returned to his sleep and awoke. Since that event the cave has been known as St. Patrick's Purgatory and has fostered highly interesting local legends.[26] (See: Thomas Wright, St. Patrick's Purgatory) Even today a modern church and monastery exist on the island site of the cave. It may well be noted here that the later developments of this part of the Patrick legend depend upon the transmission of other Apocryphal books to Ireland after 1200: the Book of Enoch (from the Jewish Apocrypha), the Visions of Esdras and Isaiah, the Sybilline Books, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Apocalypse of S. Peter, and the Revelation of S. Paul. Other influences have been traced by Stith Thompson in The Folktale (Book 10).

The last of the truly oral "descent" tales derived from local tradition and theological sources concerns an Englishman who rose from the dead to tell of his voyage to the underworld. Later scholars believe this to be an original Irish story repeated by Bede. In the Ecclesiastical History of England we find that this man related the following story.

An angel led the man to the pit of Hell where he saw the torment of the damned. He was led by degrees into the deepest portions of Hell. Great lamentations sounded all around him and the foulest and ugliest creatures surrounded him. Suddenly a star appeared and drew close. With the appearance of this star, the creatures fled. His host had returned to take him away. From here he was brought into Purgatory and from there into Heaven. The host gave the man non-theological descriptions and/or explanations of each of the three worlds. Bede adds to the story by saying that the man spent the rest of his days in prayer at the great Irish monastery of Lindesfarne. [27]

By the tenth century the influence of the Gospel of Nicodemus was profound. The simple tales, both oral reports and Christian reworkings, had taken an extremely refined literary cast. The most recent, that of the Voyage of St. Brendan (Navigatio Brendani), relates the visit of St. Brendan to the pit of Hell. However, this time his host is the Devil himself--who converses with the saint.

> "On a certain day," says the Irish life, "that they were
> on the sea, the devil came in a form old, awful, foul,
> hellish, and sat on the rail of the vessel before Brendan,
> and none of them saw him save Brendan alone. Brendan
> asked him why he had come before his proper time, that
> is before the time of the great resurrection. "For I
> have come," said the devil, "to seek my punishment in
> the deep closes of this black, dark sea." Brendan in-
> quired of him, "What is this, there is that infernal
> place?" "Sad is that," said the devil, "no one can see
> it and remain alive afterwards." Howbeit the devil
> there revealed the gate of hell to Brendan, and Brendan
> beheld that rough, hot prison full of stenchy poison,
> full of flame, full of the camps of the poisonous demons,
> full of wailing and screaming and hurt and sad cries and
> great lamentations and moaning and handsmiting of the
> sinful folks, and a gloomy mournful life in hearts of
> pain, in igneous fires, in streams of the rows of eternal
> fire, in the cup of eternal sorrow and death, without
> limit, without end; in black dark swamps, in fonts of
> heavy flame, in abundance of woe, and death and tor-
> ments, and fetters, and feeble wearying combats,

> with the awful shouting of the poisonous demons, in a
> night ever long, ever-stifling, ever-foul, ever-misty,
> ever-harsh, deadly destructive, gloomy, fiery-haired,
> of the loathsome bottom of hell. On sides of mountains
> of eternal flame, without rest, without stay, were hosts
> of demons dragging the prisoners into prisons . . .
> black demons, stinking fires; streams of poison; cats
> scratching; hounds rending; dogs baying; demons yel-
> ling; stinking lakes; great swamps; dark pits; deep
> glens; high mountains; hard crags; . . . winds bitter,
> wintery; snow frozen, ever-dropping; flakes red,
> fiery; foes base, darkened; demons, swift, greedy;
> tortures vast, various."[28]

Hyde calls this one of the earliest attempts in all of literature to portray the Inferno.[29]

Only a century later comes our last sample of the descent and "harrowing" theme in Early Irish literature. The poems "Sweet Jesus" and "Fall and Passion" mark what may be considered the turning point of the theme. Now, no longer combined with the pagan folklore and pious pseudo-hagiography of a former period, the story stands una- dorned as a simple expression of the Gospel.

> Christ telleth in holy writ
> That a man of withier wit
> Iburied was in helle pit,
> That in this life was rich;
> Shall he never then flit
> From that sorrowful ditch
> He shall sit in helle flitte
> Without wine and miche
> The fiend shall sit, his knot to knit
> Sore may he screech.
>
> The poor man goeth up before thee
> All idried up as a tree,
> And crieth "Lord help me,
> Hunger hath me ibound.
> Let me die pour charite
> Ibrought I am to ground."
> So might I thee and Christ isee,
> If he die that stund
> His life shall be iaround of thee
> Though thou give him no wound."
>
> I thee reder--rise and woke
> From the filthy sin's lake

If thou be therein I itake
Iwis thou shalt to hell
To dwell with fiendës black
In that sorrowful well.
The way thou make, thou dri the stake,
To priest thy sinnës tell;
So wal and wroke shall from the rake
With fiendes grim and fell. [30]

* * *

When Pilate had igrant his boon
Glad enough he was;
He took that sweet body adown
And buried it in a fair place.

After that He light into hell,
There all the soulis were iwis
All his friendës He brought out all
Into joy and heaven's bliss.

When in hellë was Saint John,
Patricks and ither mo,
It was iseen there escapëd none,
Prophets that God loved aloo.

All in hellë were ifast
Till Jesus Christ by His might
Of the pit out He them cast,
And brought them to heaven's light.

Jesus was sure enough
That said early, "I will right me,"
And answered wethow way
"After that death overcame be."

Thereafter He rose to heaven above,
There joy is that ever lest,
And there He shall all us love
In His sweet blissful feast. Amen. [31]

It appears that from the earliest times the Irish had been exposed

to the descent and "Harrowing" theme in its various forms. The pagan

and Christian traditions merging only increased the strong belief in an

Other World or a life to come. On the other hand its literary cross-

breeding has formed some interesting results. In the period from Pat-

rick to 1200 the motif was most often found in voyage literature con-

cerned with actual trips over water. No doubt this was due both to

Ireland's island home and to the Norse invaders' influence. The ques-
tor to hell later became a guide with the coming of the Christian story,
and in the end, the questor was guided by the devil himself. The visions
became more detailed and the theology and conversations more length-
ened. Hence, the dramatic qualities were strengthened.

Unfortunately, the lack of source materials prevents any real cer-
tainty in judging at what particular time the Christian descent and "har-
rowing" theme took precedence over the resident pagan one. /But it is
not a matter of conjecture to say that the Irishmen of literature have
been highly interested in going to hell ever since they first had the
opportunity to get off their island._7

FOOTNOTES

PART I

[1]James Moffatt, The first Five Centuries of the Church (Nashville, Tennessee: Cokesbury Press), 1938, p. 174.

[2]Margaret Deansley, A History of the Medieval Church (London, Methuen and Co., Ltd.), 1950, p. 43.

[3]Ibid.; see also "Whitby" in the ODCC.

[4]Cf. Chapter V for a discussion of the methods of interpretation of Gregory the Great.

[5]William H. Hulme, "The Old English Version of the Gospel of Nicodemus", Publication of the Modern Language Association (Fall 1898), Vol. 13, p. 462.

[6]J. E. King, tr., Baedae Opera Historica (Cambridge, Harvard University Press), 1954, Vol. II, pp. 253-269.

[7]Dorothy Whitelock, The Beginnings of English Society, Vol. II of the Pelican History of England (Baltimore, Penguin Books, Inc.), 1952. Citations from Tacitus are from the Penguin Germania.

[8]Ibid., pp. 19f, 21.

[9]Beowulf, vv. 1452; cf. vv. 1030-1034. All citations to line numbers are taken from the edition of Fr. Klaeber, 3rd ed., 1952.

[10]Whitelock, p. 20.

[11]Ibid., pp. 21f.

[12]Ibid., p. 23.

[13]Ibid., p. 25.

[14]Cf. The Search of Arthur (New York, American Heritage Publishing Co. for Caravel Books), 1969.

[15]Whitelock, p. 24.

[16]Cf. the citations of "Administrative History" in the General Bibliography.

[17]Whitelock, pp. 78-80.

[18]Beowulf, vv. 470-472.

[19]Whitelock, p. 9.

[20]Cf. Chapter VI, "A Note on the Song of Roland".

[21]Beowulf, v. 58.

[22]Whitelock, p. 49.

[23]Cf. Beowulf, vv. 78-79.

[24]Cf. Sir Bannister Fletcher, A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method (New York, Scribners), 1959, for illustrations.

[25]Beowulf, vv. 480-483.

[26]Whitelock, pp. 90f.

[27]Beowulf, vv. 1013-1014.

[28]Beowulf, vv. 867-871; vv. 1063-1065.

[29]Franz Kuttner, "Musical Archaeology", Scientific American (February 1963), p. 210.

[30]Beowulf, vv. 939-942.

[31]Ibid., vv. 620-628.

[32]Ibid., v. 204.

[33]Ibid., the "Opening" prior to Fit I, vv. 1-52.

[34]Morton W. Bloomfield, The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, With Special Reference to Medieval Literature (Detroit, Michigan State College Press), 1952, p. 115.

[35]Rhea Thomas Workman, The Concept of Hell in Anglo-Saxon Poetry Before A.D. 850 (unpublished dissertation, University of North

Carolina), 1959, p. 428.

[36]Raymond Carter Sutherland, Medieval English Conceptions of Hell as Developed from Biblical, Patristic, and Native Germanic Influences (unpublished dissertation, University of Kentucky), 1953, pp. 42-43.

[37]Cf. Part II of this chapter.

[38]W. T. H. Jackson, Medieval Literature (New York, Collier Books), 1966, p. 40, dates the earliest of the Eddas as late 13th century.

[39]University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature (Urbana, University of Illinois Press), Vol. V., No. 2 (May 1919), p. 94.

[40]Cf. Chapter VI.

[41]Jackson, pp. 29ff.

[42]Beowulf, Fit I: "with the exception of public lands and human life".

[43]A detailed description of the whole codex may be found in the section "Cotton Vitellius" in Neil Ripley Ker, Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon (Oxford University Press), 1965. In spite of the later joining together of these manuscripts, their dates are approximately from the same period.

[44]The poet seems to be on the verge of restating the Augustinian and Gregorian beliefs that martyred heroes go directly to heaven. Cf. Chapter III and Chapter VI for applications of this belief.

[45]John Earle, Anglo-Saxon Literature, pp. 213-214; cf. Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. I, pp. 126ff.

[46]Joseph Albert Mosher, The Exemplum in the Early Religions and Didactic Literature of England (New York, Columbia University Press),

1911, p. 27.

[47]Text in Rev. Richard Morris, The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century (London, Trübner for the Early English Text Society), 1880, pp. 82-88.

[48]Cf. Charts and Tables in Chapter II.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

[51]His hopefulness here is in direct contrast to the attitude of the Muspilli-poet. See Chapter V.

[52]Credo (Homily on the Creed) in Rev. Richard Morris, Old English Homilies and Homiletic Treatises of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, and Trübner & Co., Ltd. for the Early English Text Society), Part I, 1867, pp. 74-75.

[53]Text in Israel Gollancz, The Exeter Book, Part I: Poems I-VIII (Oxford, Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society), 1958, pp. 37-38.

[54]Text in W. S. Mackie, The Exeter Book, Part II, Poems IX-XXXII (London, Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society), 1934, pp. 172-181.

[55]Cf. Chapter II.

[56]At least this was the assumption of the "ur-author" of the parent Middle English version of the Gospel: William Henry Hulme, The Middle English Harrowing of Hell and Gospel of Nicodemus (London, Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society), 1961, pp. 22-23.

[57]Karl Young, The Drama of the Mediaeval Church (Oxford, The Clarendon Press), 1933, Vol. I, p. 494.

[58]Sir E. K. Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage (Oxford, Oxford University Press), 1903, Vol. I, pp. 80-81; Vol. II, p. 74.

[59]In vv. 495-517 the Old English omits Habacuc and Micah's speech along with any mention of their characters; vv. 83-87 Isaiah's speech to the patriarchs is shortened; vv. 299-300 omits "O Death, where . . . ."; vv. 110-123 shortens John's story; vv. 320-323 omits the description of God looking down on Hell; vv. 353-356, 372-375 drops the elaborate questioning of the elders on who Christ is; vv. 395-415, 421-431 omits the lengthened speech between the devils and Satan on Satan's eventual punishment; vv. 456-478 shortens Adam's plea to Christ; vv. 582-625 drops the end of Karinus and Leuticus' stories; vv. 659-662, 673-676, 681-689 omits the beginning of Pilate's letter and the additional charges against Christ.

[60]v. 67 introduces Satan before his appearance in the Latin version on line 166; Satan's speech in the Latin, lines 181-186, 189-195, is shortened and placed at the end of the Old English vv. 196-202; lines 232-235 are assigned to the hellpeople rather than to Satan as it is in the Latin; the identification of Christ, Latin lines 247-255, is omitted from the Old English; the robber, lines 545-551, is given as a murderer of Christ with Judas in Old English; v. 270 changes the "fight" of the devils to the making of earthquakes at the event of Christ's death.

[61]Hulme, Middle-English, pp. 22ff.

[62]Some interesting discussion and confusion has arisen from this modernization of the "Harrowing". When the authors of the cycles finally staged their works in France and England, there was some argument over whether Hell had a "mouth" or a "gate" as the way of

entrance. The Old English poet of <u>Christ</u> moved the gate to heaven to confuse matters even more. For a discussion of which plays had "gates" and which had "mouths", see: Gustav Cohen, <u>Histoire de la Mise en Scène dans le Theatre Religieux Français du Moyen Age</u> (Paris, Librarie Honré Champion), 1951, pp. 92-99; Alfred Jeanroy, <u>Le théatre religieux en France du XIe au XIIIe siècles</u> (Paris, E. De Boccard), 1924; Donald Clive Stuart, <u>Stage Decoration in the Middle Ages</u> (New York, Columbia University Press), 1910, pp. 35, 111, 131-132. A most curious sidelight on this problem is discussed in Robert F. Fleissner, "Aroint and Doctor Samuel Johnson", <u>Word Watching</u> (Springfield, Mass., G. & C. Merriam Co.), Vol. XLV, No. 3 (February 1970), pp. 1-3.

<center>PART II</center>

[1] Compare the notes to Chapter IV, "Beowulf", above.

[2] Elizabeth Willson, <u>The Middle English Legend of Visits to the Other World and Their Relation to the Metrical Romances</u> (Chicago, University of Chicago Press), 1917.

[3] Robert Atkinson, <u>The Passions and Homilies Drawn from Leabhar Breac: Text, Translation, and Glossary</u> (Dublin, The Royal Irish Academy), 1887, pp. 392-400.

[4] Ibid.

[5] James F. Kennedy, <u>Sources for the Early History of Ireland</u> (New York, Columbia University Press), 1929, p. 82.

[6] Charles Raymond Morey, <u>Medieval Art</u> (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press), 1948, p. 342.

[7] Morey's chapter VI discusses the transference of the art motif

to the British Isles.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Henry Adams Bellows, tr., The Poetic Edda (New York, The American-Scandanavian Foundation), 1957, p. 196.

[10]Snorri Sturulson, The Prose Edda, tr. by Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur (New York, The American-Scandanavian Foundation), 1960, pp. 70-75.

[11]Kennedy, loc. cit.

[12]Ibid.

[13]W. G. Wood-Martin, Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland: A Folklore Sketch (London, Longman's Green & Co.), 1902, Vol. I, p. 244.

[14]The Greek historians were great repeaters of tales told to them by sailors and are not always to be taken at face value just because they are considered "classical". Cf. notes to Chapter I for the folklore references.

[15]Kennedy, p. 38.

[16]There were other evidences to show that this date is the latest possible one for the Invasions—especially in the English historians. Cf. the first part of this chapter.

[17]Miles Dillon, Early Irish Literature (Chicago, University of Chicago Press), 1958, p. xii.

[18]Robin Flower, Ireland and Medieval Europe (London, Humphrey Milford for the British Academy), 1928, p. 8.

[19]St. John D. Seymour, Irish Visions of the Other-World (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), 1930, p. 45.

[20]Bernardi, p. 45.

[21]Dillon, pp. 104-107.

[22]Charles S. Boswell, An Irish Precursor of Dante (London, David Nutt), 1908, pp. 113-114.

[23]Douglas Hyde, A Literary History of Ireland (London, F. Unwin), 1910, p. 168. Later editions of this work are simple reprints of the first edition.

[24]Whitney Stokes, The Tripartite Life of Patrick, with Other Documents Relating to that Saint (London, Eyre and Spottiswoode), 1887, Vol. I, pp. 115-121.

[25]John Bagwell Bury, The Life of St. Patrick and His Place in History (London, Macmillan and Co.), 1905, p. 205.

[26]There is a photograph of this "Irish tourist trap" in Bernardi.

[27]Bede, The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, ed. and tr. by Thomas Miller (London, N. Trübner for the Early English Text Society), 1890, Part I, Book II, Chapter XIX.

[28]Hyde, pp. 199-200.

[29]Ibid.

[30]St. John D. Deymour, Anglo-Irish Literature, 1200-1582 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 1929, pp. 55-56.

[31]Ibid., pp. 66-67.

CHAPTER V

THE RECEPTION AND ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE "HARROWING OF HELL" IN MEDIAEVAL GERMAN LITERATURE

The Muspilli is one of the earliest works in Old High German; although not separated from the English variants by many years within the time-span of Carolingian literature, it is representative of a seemingly completely different spiritual and social background, even though it was drawn from ultimately the same sources. It uses motifs and ideas derived from the Gospel of Nicodemus; however, not only does the poet receive the Gospel in an entirely different way, he also interprets the Gospel by highly divergent modes which fit the needs of the poem and its particular times. It is possible, therefore, to see this poem as further proof of increased Irish missionary influence throughout the eighth and ninth centuries, as well as evidence of the increasing clerical awareness that the Bible had an appropriate message for all ages.

One of the most fascinatingly complex poems remaining from the first half of the ninth century is this 103-line fragment in Old High German called the Muspilli. So curious a work is this that almost every element of its language, vocabulary, form, content, style, authorship, and meaning has been studied since last century; even in its incomplete state, the Muspilli may represent the most poetically inventive and adaptive use of Gospel sources of any of the works considered thus far. In its lines are contained highly creative extrapolations of themes, characters, and philosophies drawn from the Gospel of Nicodemus' "Harrowing of Hell", as well as from an amalgamation

of contemporary political and theological details. The poem is so con-
nected to the ideas of its particular time and place that it cannot be ex-
amined solely as another repository for the Gospel motifs: it must be
understood as forming a union of concepts working together for a pur-
pose not directly intended by the Gospel, but logically extended from it
in an authorized and unique manner. The varieties of thought and inten-
tion joined together in the poem illustrate the considerable artistry of
the poet in creating a unified work from what seem to be so many diver-
gent materials.

In spite of the considerable former interest in the Muspilli, possi-
bly less has been written on this poem in the past ten years than on any
of the other extant works in Old High German literature. Less than a
decade ago, Kunstmann attempted to give some adequate reasons for
this neglect:

> Can we afford to bother about medieval studies? Should
> we spend interest, time, and money on such a thing as
> the Old High German Muspilli of the dead and gone ninth
> century; a fragment of a hundred or so lines, and deal-
> ing with a legend which has no significance for us today,
> and is, at best, a curiosity, an antiquarian's hobby?[1]

Apparently, he felt the scholarly need and call to devote his collective
energies to the critical examination and commentary on more worthy
works of social and literary importance to his own time; yet he does not
indicate that all of the scholarly problems about this poem have been
solved in a manner which satisfies all factions, nor does he indicate
that we know all that there can be known about the Muspilli and its rela-
tionship with the Gospel of Nicodemus because not one study has been
published which deals at length with the poem's apocryphal sources.
There also seems to be no explanation as to why scholarship and

scholarly trends in Muspilli criticism have neglected the whole poem (or the poem-as-a-whole) and have ignored its historic and political setting. In working toward a final understanding of what Krogmann called the Muspilli's "enigma",[2] the same two fashionable critical lines of word etymology and section division appear again and again. Naturally, both lines provide interesting, yet inconclusive, information about the "interior" of the work; but they supply us with little or no basis for interpreting the Muspilli in the light of what it meant when it was written. Most literary historians, including Bostock, divide and segment; they do not want to believe that the poem is a unit (incomplete as it is), nor do they ever assume that it had a raison d'être beyond the fact that it does appear to be a versification of some curious theological materials. Ancillary studies of social, economic, ecclesiastical, and political matters, not normally covered in former literary histories and critical writings, provide invaluable information for a re-interpretation of the Muspilli, and they allow for the postulation of an ethos of this piece of literature so distant from our own time and thought. The poem itself provides direct internal evidence for the incorporation of new extrinsic materials, and this evidence helps to illuminate the meaning and intention of the poem, as well as point out the fact that the poet was not so isolated from either his poem or his world as was thought before.

A. Manuscript Materials

The "inappropriate" title of the poem is derived from the word muspilli (1. 57), and was first employed by Schmeller. Other than the word's unique appearance in this poem, it is not found to be used

similarly anywhere else in Old High German, and it appears only twice in Old Norse literature as a close form. German scholars have given it various meanings for the Muspilli--"apocalyptic beasts", "Day of Doom", and "world fire"--many times relying upon the scholars of Old Norse to provide them with the authority for their educated guessing. In the American-Scandanavian Society's publication of the Edda the word muspilli, as it is referred to here, does not indicate "beasts", "Doom", or "fire" in any particular way; but it does indicate a region of the mythological world from which come Forces at the End of the world. [3] Hilda R. Ellis-Davidson, in her recent work, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe, offers a fuller explanation: "In the beginning there were two regions: Muspell in the south, full of brightness and fire; and a world of snow and ice in the north."[4] Bostock believes that Braune has "convinced most scholars that the word is of pagan origin and had been converted to Christian purposes. It belongs to the stock of words and phrases used in the epic vocabulary of alliterative poetry, and like so many other words perished with the poetry."[5] In keeping with this idea S. N. Hagen added the comment that, "If the word be of heathen origin, its use in the Christian poem . . . Muspilli may be "incorrect".[6] Kunstmann, somehow misreading the word as it is used in the Old Norse manner, stated that it seemed to refer to a "person" connected to the final doom.[7] Not only have Old High German scholars disagreed continually over what it meant in Old Norse, they have not concluded what it meant in the Muspilli. Whatever the muspilli may have meant in the ninth century, it seems reasonable to assume that the Christian poet was using it in some Christian context within what is a truly Christian poem. Curiously enough, the importance of the exact meaning of

the word is considerably reduced when the poem is considered as a totality; beyond the irrelevant use of muspilli as a title, the muspilli will be found to be irrelevant to a more complete explication of the work.

The text of the Muspilli was written inside and over an elaborate manuscript of St. Augustine's Sermo de symbolis contra Jedaeos, supposedly presented to Ludwig the German by Bishop Adalram ca. 824, before Ludwig attained his majority, but while he was Duke of Bavaria and a king in his own right. Because no approximate date can be set for the time at which the Muspilli was written into the manuscript, scholars have postulated every date within the period from 824 to 900. If it can be assumed that the poem was written or copied into the manuscript while Ludwig was still alive (d. 876), it then could have been inscribed at any time during a 52-year period. However, there is nothing directly connecting the text of the poem to the name of Ludwig, so it is therefore possible that it could have been inserted after his death by anyone having access to the manuscript of Augustine's Sermo. The only reasonable factor in determining a terminus ad quem for the insertion of the Muspilli would depend upon the time limitations placed upon the dialects used in the poem: the usage, spelling, and orthography employed point to a terminus of mid-ninth century. It is also highly doubtful that anyone would attempt to imitate or to forge its "outdated" form because there was no real reason for such an imitation and, secondly, a forgery of this type would have no political advantage for the writer in a time when forgeries of other types abounded.[8] Even if the poem were of great literary value, no scholar has yet postulated the existence of an antique "Alliterative Revival" for this period. Therefore, it is appropriate to assume that the fragment dates from 824 to ca. 850, a

time-span within the first two-thirds of Ludwig's life.

Nothing within the poem or about its contents gives any clue to an exact determination of a possibly identifiable author. Studies of the scribal techniques used in the poem do indicate certain similarities between the Muspilli and the work of two other scribes in Ludwig's court. The arguments which were once postulated over Ludwig's own authorship of the poem have now been discarded as inconclusive, and more effort has been expended on the problem of scribal variations within the received text. Because of these scribal variations and dialectic transformations, most scholars agree that a middle section of the poem (11. 37-62) was added as a later interpolation of the "original" poem when the text was finally copied into the manuscript. Those who accept this "interpolation" thesis then divide the poem into sections called *M I (11. 1-36; 11. 63-103) and *M II (11. 37-62), with 11. 37-62 representing this "interpolation".[9] /A chart of these variants and an annotated text of the poem is provided at the end of the first section of this chapter.7

Considerable scholarly effort has been expended on the section of the Muspilli which deals with the battle between Elias and the Antichrist because: (1) Elias appears to be wounded or defeated by the Antichrist; (2) the fight might presuppose that there were differing theological views concerning the end of the world in ninth-century German theology; (3) the appearance of such a story indicates the transmission of Eastern folkloric motifs into the West; and/or (4) the story is a Christian re-interpretation of an early Germanic legend "akin to the stories told of battles between . . . gods and various giants."[10] Added to this impressive list of possibilities is another one which ultimately connects

the Enoch-Elias battle with the Antichrist to the Sumerian-Babylonian dragon myth. [11] If the Muspilli were used by the modern folklorist in his studies of the transmigration of a folk-legend from one part of the world to another, he would not find it difficult to assume that it, too, was another example of an ancient motif having been changed through the process of epanorthosis. Yet we are dealing not so much with the process of folklore as with the product of the story as it is used in this poem; and the product in this case is a wholly Christian story, no matter how unconsciously it has become garbed in a theology completely foreign to the original motif. It is unlikely that the poet was anywhere near to being an adaptor of anything other than canonical Christian materials, and it is almost impossible to state positively that he ever had access to anything in Eastern pagan mythology which could have been used as his source. This is simply not a matter of conjecture. Among the principles established by Aarne, Thompson, and Graves in their various parallel examinations of folkloric materials, they insist that three basic relationships must be evident for a true folkloric transfer to be established: there must be a parallel sequence of events; there must be a tribal association of characters and character's names; and there must be a parallel between the ultimate fates of the characters in both stories. [12] The Enoch-Elias/Antichrist story as it is told in the Muspilli does not fit any of the other similar pagan motifs as listed in the Motif-Index of Folk-Literature[13], but it does duplicate in part similar re-tellings of the same story in Christian and Hebrew apocryphal materials. Although there are parallel referents (listed in the Appendix to this Chapter), the one used by the Muspilli poet was drawn from the "Harrowing of Hell" and amplified through the use of variants from an

assortment of well-known Old and New Testament apocalypses. Among
other things the "Harrowing of Hell" not only identifies the Enoch-Elias
pair (by name) as being inhabitants of heaven before the Day of Wrath,
it also describes them (or Elias) as being the ones (one) to fight with
the Antichrist when the end draws near. [14] Other thematic evidence
from the "Harrowing of Hell" helps to establish the Gospel of Nicodemus
as the poet's main source for the battle scene.

Within Judaeo-Christian tradition Elias is frequently confused with
the Prophet Elijah, a well-known harbinger of the Messiah, and impor-
tantly, a harbinger of the Dies Irae, the Day of Wrath, or Doomsday.
A rabbinical commentary on the Torah (Sukkah, 52a) explains the pas-
sage in Zechariah 4:3, "And the Lord showed me four craftsmen," as
the revelation to Elijah of the Messiah, son of David. [15] The more not-
able Midrash Tanḥuma, Pekude /§ 3/ establishes an ancient eclectic
gathering of Elijah-apocalyptic lore of the kind available in the Early
Middle Ages:

> God said to Elijah: "Go forth and stand on the moun-
> tain of the Lord . . ." and the Lord asked Elijah, "What
> are the four camps which you see?" Elijah answered:
> "Master of the Universe, I do not know." God replied:
> "These are the four worlds through which man passes.
> A great strong wind (Kings i, 19:11) symbolizes this
> world, which is a passing wind. After the wind an
> earthquake (Ibid.) symbolizes the day of death that
> comes after this wind, in the form of an earthquake,
> because it corrupts the entire body. After the earth-
> quake a fire (Ibid.) refers to the suffering of the wicked
> in Gehenna. After a fire a still small voice (Ibid.) re-
> fers to the great day of judgment." As it says: For
> great is the day of the Lord, and very terrible, who
> can abide it! (Joel 2:11) And then God alone will re-
> main in the world as a supreme power, as it is written:
> And the Lord shall alone be exalted in that day. (Isaiah
> 2:11)[16]

Christians, not seemingly satisfied enough simply to remain within the

wide limitations of rabbinical interpretation of Old Testament literature, undertook to amplify the apocalyptic tradition through the addition of further modifications of the theme in the Revelation of St. John the Divine (which is now nearing the level of apocryphal New Testament literature). "The Antichrist legend was enlarged out of the old Dragon myth about the same time as the New Testament writings," says Bousset, [17] providing us with a possible early origin of the tale, far beyond the reach of the Muspilli poet. However, Hebrew source materials, such as Ezra, Baruch, and the Talmudic commentaries, were even more fertile background sources for Christian reworking into the Antichrist story because those writings were more theologically acceptable. Revelation amplifies the poet's use of the Antichrist tale in a way which is not only appropriate but also uses sources readily available to him.

Not so surprisingly, Revelation can be read and has been read as a Christian interpretation of the signs of Doomsday as they appeared to the writer during his life in the Roman times of the Early Church. The name "Antichrist" itself (I John 2:18 and 2 John 7)--not older than the New Testament--was from the beginning identified with Nero; and as Renan states, "until the time of Charlemagne, there was a sort of tradition to this"[18] persistent interpretation of equating the Emperor with the personification of Evil. In addition to this one important apocalyptic work there are nearly twenty other early neo-Christian writings which deal in some manner with the Antichrist legend. On the other side of the Muspilli we have the 10th-century French MS. Vero letter from Abbot Adso to Queen Gerberga called the Libellus de Antichristo--in which Enoch and Elias are killed by the Antichrist but are later resuscitated by Christ. [19] There is also an English play on the Antichrist in Latin

from 1150, and another similar play in the Chester Cycle. Even the oft-quoted Russian source for the Muspilli section in which Elias' blood ignites the world-fire[20] is late as compared with a similar variant in Ezra, the Syrian Apocalypse 14, Malachi 4:1, and Lactantius 7:17.[21] If the poet had chosen to select a Germanic legend in place of the multitude of ecclesiastical sources already given, he would have been overreaching for his material, as well as using "forbidden" works.

Revelation also provides us with some interesting insights into the nature of the beasts which are supposed to appear at the end of the world: they are of note because some scholars have seen them as the prototypes for the muspilli. Renan says that they are arrayed as follows: "The first has the form of a lion, the second of a calf, the third the countenance of a man, the fourth the form of an eagle with wings outspread."[22] Earlier, in Ezekiel 1:18, they are symbols of divinity: "wisdom, power, knowledge, creation"; and mysteriously enough, "They have six wings, and are covered with eyes all over." (Ezekiel 10:12) They came to conquer the earth in the final hours like the four angels of the destroying winds from the four corners of the earth.[23] There is a distinct possibility that our Muspilli poet was trying to describe such a group when he coined the name for something which he could not describe in any single better-known term. Iconographic art from the Carolingian ninth century pictures such beasts with great frequency in Last Judgment scenes.[24] Although the name-controversy may drag on for yet more time, a biblical source for the muspilli may help to confirm further the poet's knowledge of the apocryphal New Testament and apocalyptic Christian materials.

One additional consideration cannot be overlooked: there is also a

possibility that the poet was working from Eastern and Eastern Com-
munion ecclesiastical sources as well as those supplied by the normal
channels of the Western Church. Such historians as Vasiliev, Guerdan,
Bloch, Geanakoplos, Ware, Arnold, Runciman, Guillaume, Brockel-
man, and Ullah agree that not all roads of Christian tradition in the
West lead directly and only from Rome.[25] Moslem contacts in Char-
lemagne's day were not limited to the out-and-out confrontations of war,
as were depicted in the mediaeval epics and romances; in fact, Charle-
magne's wisdom (not unlike that attributed to the Cid) permitted him to
take advantage of the advances in medicine and medical science made by
the "Infidels" who had, incidentally, already influenced medical prac-
tices in Theodoric's Ostrogothic court.[26] Their great religious work,
the Koran, is also filled with pseudo-Christian apocalyptic borrowings
which speak of almost the identical signs of Doomsday as those found in
Revelation and of almost identical angelic harbingers which come from
the four corners of the earth. /Cf. Koran, chaps. 81, 82, 88, 96, 100-
104, etc.7 The Christian East, too, had an impact of great magnitude
in the late eighth and ninth centuries. Vasiliev estimated that during
the continuing Iconoclastic Controversy in Byzantium more than 50,000
refugee priests and laymen fled into the regions of the Carolingian Em-
pire[27]; and no less of a learned churchman than Charlemagne himself
seemed to be semi-Iconoclastic in his views--but not in favor of the
persecution.[28] Charlemagne's contacts with Byzantium, well document-
ed because of their political significance, were not restricted to matters
of government: he attempted to have his versions of the Gospel texts
corrected with the aid of Byzantine clergy[29], and

> In certain cases, they /accretions of Greek phrases in
> Latin service books7 might be ascribed to the influence

> of Charlemagne and his learned circle (who, ac-
> cording to one scholar, might even have received
> Byzantine influences in church music via the Mus-
> lims of Southern Spain, with whom Charlemagne's
> court had frequent contacts), Charlemagne, we
> are told, after hearing members of a Greek em-
> bassy to his court chanting their religious hymns,
> became so attracted that he ordered the Byzantine
> hymns to be translated into Latin.[30]

Eastern influence also extended from Charlemagne's use of Byzan-

tine architects for his chapel at Aachen,[31] through the Greek-oriented

scholars he imported—beginning with Alcuin—to the imported brocade

of his burial garments.[32] Whether it be from Western or Eastern

Christianity, or from the Moslems themselves, the theological scene

was filled with apocalyptic sources and references from which the

Muspilli-poet could amplify his selection from the "Harrowing of Hell".

Unless some missing Latin source can be found for the motif of

Christ setting up the crucifixion cross and displaying the stigmata, it

is apparent that the poet could only have known of this from the Greek

version of the "Harrowing of Hell", there being no mention of the

motif in the Latin variants.

It is therefore possible to determine with some exactitude what

canonical, non-canonical, apocryphal, and apocalyptic sources were

used in conjunction with the Gospel of Nicodemus; and it allows for a

possible determination of some of the rationale behind the poet's am-

algamation of ideas in order to make some important point in his

writing. Beyond the religious materials already outlined here, the

poet speaks from his ethos in such a manner as to combine with his

biblical texts the current attitudes and desires of the Church and, most

importantly, to bespeak of the impending Doom which might be brought

about by the politics of the day. In order to clarify the architectonics

of the Muspilli, which I believe to be built on a system which is an extension of the "Harrowing", the following sections will be devoted to an analysis of the received text and a possible reconstruction of it.

B. Muspilli Outline

Without extracting *M II from the narrative, the poem reads as follows:

A. The soul of the departed leaves the body and becomes the object of a fight between the devils and the angels; each party claims it for their own kingdoms. However, the soul contains sins which may cause it to fall the Hell.

B. The soul which goes to Hell will have to wait for the Last Judgment before it has any hope of salvation; at the Judgment, everyone will appear to account for his deeds.

C. At the time of the Judgment, Elias will fight with Antichrist; in "defeat" Elias' blood will ignite the fires which herald the end of the world. In the destruction of everything, land will be worth nothing.

D. Man, now ready to be judged, cannot inflict the law through bribery because the forces against him are too powerful; men will realize what poor judges they themselves are.

E. The angels of the Lord call forth all of the souls to confess their sins; the Lord will divide the good and evil ones; every member of the body will confess each murder and sin it has done.

F. Only the repentant will escape damnation; when the Judgment is complete, the cross will be displayed and Christ will show his stigmata.

Certain elements of this summary are worth specific note: in "A" the soul of the departed is in such a condition that it could have been delivered directly to the heavenly host—provided that its condition of sinfulness does not hold it back. The poet states that it could go, but he juxtaposes remarks on punishment following the initial remark so that it would seem the soul is condemned ("B"). Once the soul is in

Hell ("B"), it will have to wait for the Last Judgment before it achieves hope of Salvation. In "C" there is no indication of the time-lapse between the departure of the soul and the beginning of the battle between Elias and the Antichrist; seemingly, the departure of this one soul triggers the action of the fight, and in this departure we find some magnitude. Elias' wounds ("C") set off a chain of events in which the physical world is completely destroyed--especially the land, over which kin fought with kin. Once this is complete, men who await the judgment will realize how foolish their own judgments were ("D"), and they will not be in a position now to change the law through bribes. The body will cry out its sins—particularly murder—("E"), and all faults will be revealed. Only those who repent ("F") by alms, fasting, and penance may escape the terrible fires of eternal damnation.

The eschatology of the poem is interesting in that the poet postulates the immediate deliverance of the "sinless" soul into the heavenly kingdom—without time for torment or purgation. Whereas the Gospel "Harrowing" states that all were delivered from Hell after Christ's appearance there, the Augustinian and Gregorian commentaries assumed that only martyrs were allowed to enter in this manner. Therefore, it can be assumed that the poet considered this soul in question to be fit for a martyr's death, if it had not been hampered in some way by those sins which dragged it down to Hell. Unfortunately, the particular sins in this unrepentant soul were great enough to offset its blessedness, and it will have to wait for the Last Judgment before there is any hope. The poet knows that Christ has already been to Hell once and that everyone who has died since will have to wait there until the End before there is any chance of getting out. What is even

more interesting is the fact that the poet does not allow for any type of purgation to take place before the Last Judgment. The poet's eschatological considerations also include the mentioning of several particular and important sins: (a) fighting among kinsmen; (b) fighting over land; (c) corrupt judgment; (d) bribery of legal officials; and (f) murder. These sins are placed strategically at points where, it would seem, they are the sins which have to be answered for by the departed soul from ("A") when it comes to the Judgment. However, bribery and murder are also the sins of other men who "follow in the footsteps" of the first departed soul. The only way to escape an eternity in Hell is to repent: that is, to repent while still living.

This brings into focus the question of whether or not the Muspilli is, at base, an apocalyptic poem or a poem on some other subject, with the apocalyptic materials inserted in order to illuminate its real theme. It is not possible to reconstruct too much of it from the remaining 103 lines, but the amount left indicates that the poet really did have something else in mind other than giving another rendition of the End. Both the opening and closing of the fragment deal with the sins of a soul: how sins cause a soul to fall into Hell, and how these sins may be removed through repentance. The internal matter of the poem concerns itself again and again with the specific sins as they will reveal themselves, and with the worthlessness of sinful gains (as in the case of land). The apocalyptic happenings destroy the worldly gains, and the Judgment reveals each man's failings. Although the center of the poem brings together many ideas of the canonical and non-canonical writings which speculate the method and signs of Doomsday, the central portion is not the reason for the poem's existence. It is more

reasonable to assume that the poet was issuing a reminder, a warning, or a threat to someone who was in danger of losing his soul—if that someone did not repent in time, and see to it that his followers also repented before it was too late. The poet could justify doing this with ecclesiastical approval and he could have found subject matter close enough at hand to make it relevant, as can be demonstrated by an examination of the poet's religious and political ethos.

C. Religious Ethos

The early efforts to Christianize Germany came from two different directions and from what might have amounted to two different religious communions of the Church: the missions of Rome, substantially augmented during the time of Gregory the Great[33] and by "the missions of the Scots /which/ were directed to the more southern parts of Germany . . . as represented by the churches of . . . Salzburg".[34] Although the Irish Church ("Scots") merged officially with the Roman communion at the Synod of Whitby (A.D. 664), there seemed to be a long-standing difference in theology which left its mark on German religious thought as long as their missionary work was continued. Both sides not only had to fight against centuries of pagan belief (Gregory "urged that the Church should take over old temples and pagan festivals and give them Christian meaning"[35]), but they fought against each other wherever their territories and ideologies overlapped. It is only when, as Dorothy Whitelock says, that "in the ninth century the Viking raids depleated the Church of England, and after the Danish settlement, Englishmen must have found enough to absorb their missionary zeal at home, that Germany finally became

Roman fully".[36] Irish missionary aid to Germany was cut off from Lindesfarne in 793 and Jarrow in 794 when they were sacked by invaders.

It can be said that before, during, and after Charlemagne's "Holy Roman Empire" Germany was possibly one of the most un-Christian regions of the civilized world. Duckett states that the Utrecht Christians had returned to paganism as early as 716[37] and that pagan practices were well-developed over most of the area by 735.[38] To combat this relapse, St. Boniface, the Englishman, was sent by Rome to reconvert the flock—which he attempted to do until his martyrdom at the hands of the Northmen in 755. Boniface's mission was completely opposed, too, to the heretical activities of three of his fellow priests: even in the early days of his career he fought against Adelbert, who, his accusers swore, "had won consecration as bishop by bribery".[39] In the second place, Boniface wrote to the pope that Clement preached heresy to the Germans:

> "Against the faith of the Fathers he taught that
> Christ, Son of God, when He went down to the
> world of those departed souls, freed all those
> who were held in prison there, believers and
> unbelievers, worshippers of God and idols alike."[40]

Curiously, Clement was preaching and teaching directly from the Gospel of Nicodemus; Boniface was taking the interpretation of the commentaries as being the true viewpoint. And, shortly before he was martyred, Boniface condemned Virgil the Irishman for claiming that another world, completely like this one, existed underground. However, Virgil had ingratiated himself with the Duke of Bavaria in 747 and became an official bishop many years before he died in 784. Like Boniface, Virgil was also canonized—in 1233.[41]

It is most suprising that Boniface's problems should have been
bribery, fighting among kinsmen, paganism, and the sin of poor judg-
ment—heresy. In spite of the fact that his training was under the
Roman system established by Gregory the Great, Boniface appears to
have been a literalist when it came to scriptural interpretation. Where-
as the Irish were using and taught Gregory's four-level system of
interpretation (literal, allegorical, moral, and "anagogical") in their
pronouncements, Boniface fought continually to establish only the first
level, condemning the others as heretical.[42] It may have been that the
Irish were better equipped to understand theological works because,
as Bede tells us, the English Church had composed scholarly Latin
works on the Church Fathers, hagiographies, apocryphal works (Nic-
odemus, The Vision of Paul), and on Greek writers.[43] Those Romans
who followed Boniface's aborted mission resumed the Gregorian me-
thodology because Gregory's Pastoral Care "became the manual for
bishops; his Moralia directed the whole allegorizing tendancy of West-
ern literature; and his letters, numbering more than 800, settled many
problems of ecclesiastical doctrine and rule".[44] Boniface's conserva-
tism faded away in the light of missionary acceptance of Gregory's
dictum in the Moralia:

> "For just as the divine word exercises the learned
> with its mysteries, so it frequently cheers the
> simple with its clarity. In its obvious sense, it
> has food to nourish little ones. In its secret
> meaning, it can command the admiration of the
> most learned minds. It is, if I may say so, almost
> like a river, both shallow and deep, in which a
> lamb may walk and an elephant swim. According as
> the context of each passage requires, I carefully
> change the order of interpretation. So much the
> better does one find the sense of the divine word,
> the more he varies the kind of interpretation, ac-
> cording to need."[45]

Such was the spiritual situation into which Alcuin the Englishman stepped at Charlemagne's request in 782.[46] During the twenty-two years before his death in 804, Alcuin achieved as much in the court circles as his compatriots Ss. Lull and Leoba did in the monastic German centers and in the nunneries:[47] he heightened Charlemagne's sense of religion, established a system of schools, and he helped to augment the development of the Carolingian parochial system along the lines of the one established in England.[48] Although most of Alcuin's biographers tend to dwell on his contributions to the building of a school system, it is also worth noting that he wrote against the Roman and Eastern Adoptionist heresy while in Charlemagne's court[49] and was probably responsible for Charlemagne's attitude toward the Iconoclasts when so many refugees from the Byzantine persecution fled into the Empire. There were no artificial religious boundaries coinciding with the political limits of the Greek and Latin worlds.

However, the most profound and subtle religious contribution made by the English and Irish missionaries does not come in the form of theology alone during the formative periods of Charlemagne's rule; rather, it comes in the political developments of and English-inspired German eigenkirche. By examining this system as it develops in the Empire, we can see the English influences at work[50] and understand better the connection between the Muspilli-poet's ultimate purpose and his chosen subject. So long as Charlemagne ruled the Empire and controlled the fisc, abbey lands and other Church properties were considered (in the English sense) to belong to him as his proper crown lands and personal holdings.[51] In spite of the fact that the seeds of the later and greater Investiture Contest were sown by such an

arrangement, no major difficulties arose in the augmented eigenkirche under Charlemagne and Alcuin before the partition of the Empire in 806. Apparently the Church and the state felt that it was mutually good business to continue building on such an arrangement:

> The foundation of a monastery became not only an act of piety but also a good investment. The practice of patronage reserved to the patron the right of avowson and thus the founder not only controlled the management of the monastery founded by him, but touched its revenues also. It is not remarkable that Frankish kings founded a large number of monasteries and abbeys. [52]

Addleshaw tells us that the destiny of the Church and its funds was normally controlled by the seigneur by the right of his dominium—which could be transferred, given, or sold in whole or in part to any other seigneur. In this manner, many men could own a fractional interest in a church, as the modern stockholder owns shares in a large corporation. Furthermore, the seigneur did not have to find a priest for the church; he could give the church out on a feudal tenure relationship to a layman who, in turn, would be assigned the responsibility of procuring the clergy. This method of reducing the church to a feudal relationship caused the income from the church to go to the layman and not to the priest. Naturally, it would follow that the clergy of the church would be part of the feudal contract—not giving his bishop the natural allegiance--by being the seigneur's man. This further evil resulted in the commercialization of church offices; but, it was not settled until the Investiture Contest brought about by Hildebrandine reform under Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085). In the two-hundred year span between the termination of the Carolingian Empire and Gregory's papacy, the old dominium/eigenkirche system was continued without major interruption in Germany. [53]

Until the end of Charlemagne's reign, the appointment of clergy
rested not with the bishop, but with the owner of the estate who took
the initiative in his appointment. The Capitularia regum Francorum
(legum Sectio II §6) stated that: "Other clerics should not hold these
churches, but only our own or those from our chapel".[54] Apparently,
only in England, under the rule of Archbishop of York Engelbert (734-
766), was there any suggestion of a rule that "no priest can serve a
church, particularly one belonging to a layman, without the Bishop's
permission".[55] Engelbert's words fell on dead ears abroad, as well
as at home.

In summary, it can be said that Charlemagne and his heirs actual-
ly owned and ruled a basically English-oriented eigenkirche, which was
staffed in its upper-level clerical positions by Irish-trained monks and
nuns, and which continued to teach a variety of scriptural interpreta-
tions based on Gregory's methodology. These Carolingian Churchmen
were not isolated from the major ecclesiastical problems of their age:
they were in contact with Eastern clergy; they brought with them to
their German assignments a wider knowledge of Greek scholarship
than did their Roman missionary contemporaries. Even after the
English mission ended upon the destruction of their monastic home
foundations by Viking raids, their imported systems were maintained
by those who remained in Germany. It was the danger of this propri-
etary church system's impending disintegration which formed such an
important part of the Muspilli-poet's message to his chosen subject.

D. The Later Carolingian Empire Under Ludwig

To put this thesis more succinctly, the real struggle
of the sons of Louis the Pious was for the possession

of as great a number of crown lands as possible; and
the partition of the ninth century were primarily
and fundamentally partitions of the Carolingian fisc.
Everything in the history of the period was condi-
tioned by this fundamental issue.[56]

When Charlemagne partitioned the Empire in 806, he reserved a
central portion of the crown lands for himself.[57] These lands included
not only those pertaining directly to the fisc, but those "which were
more or less assimilated to it. These were the "royal" abbeys, bis-
hoprics, and comital fiscal land".[58] As head of a proprietary church
system, Charlemagne retained considerable income from these hold-
ings, maintaining his imperial style of living for the last ten years of
his life. In a similar fashion, Louis the Pious retained a major por-
tion of the fisc upon his partition in 817.[59]

Pirenne tells us that, between the time of Charlemagne's partition
and that of Louis the Pious, "the royal power declined /because/ of the
civil wars . . . /and/ the counts became more and more indepen-
dent".[60] In all cases, the younger sons who were suppoed to "live upon
gifts, tributes, rents, office fees, and "such precious metals as may
be obtained within their confines" . . . clamored for a portion of the
fisc "as their just heritage"".[61] The strife and change hinged upon the
mutual dissatisfaction of the younger sons, "the ambitious partisans of
each brother, greedy nobles and land-hungry bishops and abbots"[62]
who desired the fisc to be distributed in order that they themselves
might have a part of it. Unfortunately, it was Louis the Pious who
started the process by bribing semi-independent nobles into pledging
their faith and support to him.[63]

> Even when merely a king of Aquitaine, Louis the
> Pious had manifested a generosity which was al-
> ready ruinous to his domain there, and when he
> became emperor he continued this flabby policy,

> not only alienating the lands of the fisc in the forms
> of benefices, but even giving them away as heredi-
> tary benefices, or in full and free proprietorship. [64]

Such a policy could only make the ninth century one of revolution and

one in which, Thompson tells us, the "old order was passing away and

a new form of government, a new social structure, a new political

philosophy, was coming into being". [65] Furthermore:

> In their magnificent patrimony the Carolingians
> had the very essence of feudal power. But it was
> scattered and dissipated and fell into the hands of
> the feudality, hungry for land and utterly unscru-
> pulous in their aquisition of it. It was feudalism,
> particularism, and proprietorship on a vast and
> formidable scale, that destroyed the empire and
> erected on its ruins a new Europe. [66]

The dissolution of the fisc through alienation of the crown lands

was continued through the reign of Ludwig the German. During his

rule, he alienated 44 crown properties, [67] much to the continual alarm

of the clergy. The high point of these alienations was reached during

the years 840-841, when Ludwig and Charles the Bald, "hastened to

attach fideles to /themselves/ either by force, or by gift or benefices,

or by any other private arrangement". [68] Although the Oaths of Strass-

burg , signed in 842, were supposed to terminate the territorial dis-

putes, an even greater war broke out. The clergy, "deeply alarmed at

the condition of things—war, anarchy, brigandage—"[69] perhaps felt

that above all they were seeing the destruction of the unity of the ec-

clesiastical system. In place of the strong Carolingian eigenkirche,

there began the development of a basically non-ecclesiastically cen-

tered feudal system:

> Now the magnates, for their part, had long
> been accustomed to see in the good companions of
> their household following men whom they could
> rely upon, ready to carry out the most varied
> missions. What happened if a distant appointment,

the gift of an estate or a heritage led one of their
loyal followers to withdraw from personal ser-
vice? The chief none the less continued to regard
him as his sworn follower. Here again, in short,
vassalage by a spontaneous development tended to
break out from the narrow circle of the lord's
household. The example of kings and the influence
of the legal enactments they had promulgated gave
stability to these changing customs. Lords as well
as dependants could not fail to favour a form of
contract which henceforth would be provided with
legal sanctions. The counts bound themselves by
ties of vassalage to the official of lower rank; the
bishop or abbot similarly bound the layman on
whom they depended to assist them in administer-
ing justice or to lead their subjects when the latter
were called up for war. [70]

Three years later, in 845, the Synod of Beauvais vociferously de-
manded that Charles restore alienated Church property to the form it
held "as in the days of your father and grandfather". [71] Charles seems
to have been dilatory in acquiescing to this demand. However, Ludwig,
the strongest of the brother-kings, "seems to have endeavoured to "re-
vindicate" part of his fisc" in 852. [72] Somehow Ludwig never quite
understood the magnitude and ultimate meaning of his alienations: in
865 he became the last Carolingian monarch to partition his kingdom
among his sons, "so that each might have his due share of bishoprics,
monasteries, and manors of the fisc". [73] Feudal obligations which
were created to insure the maintenance of the fisc under Louis the
Pious caused a nearly fatal dissolution of the Empire under Ludwig.

The end of Carolingian rule was predicted by the Churchmen them-
selves during the Council of Paris in 838:

"Among the causes which /we read7 have diverted
priests and princes from the right path there is
one which has been a long-standing evil. It is this:
the royal power interferes in things ecclesiastical,
and priests through negligence, ignorance, and
cupidity busy themselves with secular and worldly
matters. These abuses have not been corrected by

the bishops or the ruler for reasons which may be
expressed in due time. But a reform like this is
beyond our feeble powers to perform because we
have neither the necessary time nor is the general
body of the clergy willing to have them made".
(Decreta council. Paris, c. xxvi.)[74]

Ludwig, who heeded these words too late for his actions to do any good,

attempted to insure the Christianization of Moravia (be it through the

Eastern Church or not) by granting it independence in 874 through one

of the final alienations of the fisc to the Russians.[75] No matter how

effective their conversion was under Ss. Cyril and Methodius, the now

completely feudal lords of mediaeval Germany expelled the final fol-

lowers of Methodius after his death in 885.[76] Even when Ludwig

repented by giving his Church properties away to the Church, he ended

by making additional mistakes.

E. The Muspilli and Ludwig

1. Chronology

A.D. 804	Ludwig the German born (son of Louis the Pious; grandson of Charlemagne)
806	Charlemagne partitions the Empire
817	Louis the Pious partitions the Empire (Louis associated Lothair as co-regent, Pippin as King of Aquitaine, and Ludwig the German as Duke of Bavaria at the age of 13)
821	Louis the Pious confirms his partition of the Empire at the Diet of Nimwegen (which no one trusted); Ludwig is 17.
825	Ludwig comes to Bavaria before his 21st birthday; he is presented with a manuscript gift from Bp. Adalram (ruled 821-836); manuscript later contains the fragment of the Muspilli
828	Council of Paris chafes against problems between the crown and clergy (Louis-Lothair); Ludwig is 24.
840	Louis the Pious signs the Partition of Worms, giving a new division of his empire to Charles the Bald; Ludwig receives fiscal lands; Ludwig is 36

842	Oaths of Strassburg signed by Ludwig and Charles the Bald in order to establish national territories; war breaks out again; Ludwig is 38
845	Synod of Beauvais demands Charles the Bald return Church lands which he distributed to feudal lords; Viking raids on German territories; Ludwig is 44
850	Ludwig the German distributes lands to the Danish royal house; Ludwig is 46
852	Ludwig the German attempts to return previously alienated Church property to the Church; he is 48
865	Ludwig the German partitions the Empire among his three sons; he is 61
876	Ludwig the German died at 72 years of age.

There is a very distinct possibility that the original form (or version) of the Muspilli was written for Ludwig the German and was delivered to him during a particularly difficult time of his political life. Not only is the poem relevant to his personal conduct, it appears to fit exactly into the complicated picture of the disintegrating Church-state relationship brought about by his rule. According to the chronology of his life, and the weight of evidence on the dating of the fragment[77] as not so much over mid-ninth century, it seems reasonable to place the "original" (or even the present MS.) version of the poem between the years 842 and 852. It might also be assumed (although not absolutely) that, because the insertion of the poem itself is a "smear" in Bishop Adalram's beautiful gift, it might not have been copied in as a defacement before Adalram's death in 836. The momento mori form of the poem would be incomprehensible for a youth, irrelevant for a young man who has not physically faced death in a battle, and quite inappropriate for a king who sought in later life to repent for his sins by several "religious" means. The "definitely clerical . . . substance and matter"[78] of the poem helps to attach it to Ludwig and to an exact time-span within his reign.

A period of great turmoil in ninth-century Germany occurred after the signing of the Oaths of Strassburg in 842. Previous to that time, the indecisive skirmishes between Ludwig and Charles precipitated their necessary actions of buying up the allegiance of nobles through the various fiscal alienations of 840-841. Temporary settlement of the hostilities through the 842 Oaths (written in a Latinate Old French version for Charles and in Old High German for Ludwig) lasted only so long as each king could regroup his "national" forces for a final, decisive war. Ludwig got and attempted to hold within his kingdom all "people of pure German speech",[79] while Charles headed the Frankish (French) factions by whatever means he found appropriate. Territorial agreement came about only after terrible battles and the death of Louis the Pious in 843, the following year. 843 also marked the signing of the Treaty of Verdun and for "the first time the French and German nations appear as separate entities".[80]

Ludwig kept the peace only as long as it benefitted him; Charles was plagued in his kingdom by the increasing difficulties of keeping his holdings and the nobles allied to him intact. The Church officially condemned Charles in 845, suing him for the return of those fiscal lands which he had distributed in his earlier attempts to grab power in 840-841. Ludwig also appeared to have mended his ways temporarily by ceasing his alienations of the fisc and by fostering active missionary movements to convert the Danes and Swedes. According to Bloch, he followed Gregory the Great's system of buying up Norse slaves, converting them, educating them, and finally returning them to their own native lands as Christian missionaries.[81] Whether or not Ludwig was pacifying the Church by this move, it is impossible to say; however, it

was beneficial for the Church and the state to make such a move. Hamburg had been pillaged by the Vikings in an 844-845 raid, and it became necessary to take whatever measures were available to pacify the invaders. In the following five years Ludwig also promoted additional religious friendship with the Danes by granting the royal household a "benefice" on the Rhine.[82] By 852, Ludwig was engaged in a program of revindicating fiscal lands which he had alienated sometime earlier.[83] Although these years of relative peace were interrupted by Ludwig's unsuccessful attempt to take Aquitaine from Charles, Ludwig continued to aid the Church: with the property retained by him before his partition in 865, he gave Moravia to the Church in order to have it Christianized.[84]

2. The Reason for the Muspilli

The Muspilli has a first level of interpretation which coordinates with certain events in the life of Ludwig, and which the poet could have seen as reflecting predictions from apocryphal and apocalyptic sources. The poem is an obvious warning to the reader or hearer that at the Final Judgment man's soul will be given its just rewards according to the way in which man obeyed the Will of God. By avoiding sin—or repenting his sins in time—the soul should be a candidate for Heaven; the sinful or unrepentant soul will be delivered to Hell. The three major sins stressed by the poet are fighting among kinsmen, corrupt judgment, and bribery. He also stresses what might be termed the sub-categories of fighting over land and murder (not of kin). If these warnings are compared to many of the events in Ludwig's political career, it appears that they pertain directly to those actions of his

which had a negative effect on the Church. Bribery and corrupt judgment may be taken as a direct reference to Ludwig's policy of buying feudal allegiance by giving out crown lands; corrupt judgment can refer to both Ludwig's poor choice of those to bribe, or to the ultimate conduct of those men who, as seigneurs, gained parts of the fisc bearing income from eigenkirche properties, and who misused their new responsibility.

Although a king since the first days in Bavaria, Ludwig did not achieve his portion of the fisc until the final Partition of Worms in 840; from 840-841 he distributed portions of it as bribes. From 840-843 he was engaged in a war with his brothers, his kinsmen. And, in 845, he began returning to the Church some of their lost property and rights, and in aiding generally the Christianization of the North--as possibly some form of "repenting". Between his 36th and 41st years he also came the closest to death than he had ever been before. His wars were seen by the Church as Apocalyptic. All things considered, Ludwig is the prime political candidate for the Muspilli message during this period.

Going one step further, an appropriate parallel can be drawn between the Elias-Antichrist episode in the Muspilli and the political situation between Ludwig and Charles. As has been mentioned earlier, Churchmen even in Charlemagne's time still associated the Antichrist with the Emperor Nero. In the early days of the war, Charles the Bald, as Louis the Pious' favorite, stood as chief candidate for Emperor--in spite of the fact that he was not supported by his own clergy. In the allegorical fight between Elias and the Antichrist, it is possible for the poet to have seen a "purified" Ludwig in the role of Elias with Charles

as his opponent: Antichrist is destined to fall, as did Charles in 841; and the wounded Elias will be successful. Furthermore, the continuing war of 842-843 would have appeared to the Church as heralding the End. In the interval between the most serious fighting (842), the full effects of the bribes and corrupt judgments of both sides would have become apparent to the Church because of the feudal obligations changing with each alienation. As Charles appeared more and more as a reincarnated Nero, Ludwig looked less objectionable; Ludwig also shared something of that "divine relationship" between Carolingian monarchs and God.

Only the strongest reminders to Ludwig could change his plan of action and cause him to repent. Among the many ecclesiastical pro-tests and harrangues, and outright threats hurled at Ludwig before his 845 "reformation", the Muspilli reads like a poetic attempt to bring the monarch back into line with a policy established and maintained in peace by his grandfather Charlemagne. Whereas this type of evidence is to some extent circumstantially arrayed from an extrinsic point-of-view, the internal evidence of the poem points to the fact that the Muspilli is a meaningful commentary on the way in which the Church received political events and gave them a religious interpretation during Ludwig's reign.

F. A Possible Thematic Form of the Muspilli

A. Momento Mori form of "Introduction" (missing from the text as it is received presently)

B. "Archetypal" Christian situation of the soul's departure from the body with the soul personified as "she": its ultimate fate is to be decided immediately after death; previous earthly actions will determine which of the forces (from Heaven or Hell) will win ("capture") the soul. Freedom from the human condition is the reward

of Heaven; unrelenting torment awaits the soul which
has done evil. (Lines 1-18)

> Interpolation #1: Knowing these fates, men must
> hasten to do God's will in order
> to avoid Hell. (19-23)
>
> Interpolation #2: Woe to the sinful man because,
> in not striving for salvation on
> earth, the soul will not be heard
> in Hell by God.

C. When the Final Judgment is announced by God, all will
come to the appointed spot to relate their mortal deeds.
(34-37)

D. It has been foretold that Elias will fight the Antichrist;
in this fight, Elias will seek eternal life in Heaven for
the lover of justice; God's aid to Elias will win him
victory. It has also been foretold that Elias will fall
and that his blood will ignite the apocalyptic fires. (38-62)

> Interpolation #1: The world and the skies will be
> consumed with punishing fire for
> the living. (51-56)
>
> Interpolation #2: No one may help another face the
> muspilli; disputed lands will be
> worth nothing; the sinful soul does
> not know how to repent and it will
> descend to Hell. (57-62)

E. Therefore, each man who comes to judgment should con-
sider things beforehand; God records every sin and every
bribe given by the wealthy. (63-72)

> Interpolation #1: When the summons comes, each
> must answer for his deeds--in-
> cluding the dead. (73-90)
>
> Interpolation #2: Each member of the body will con-
> fess its hidden sins; murder shall
> be revealed. (91-93)

F. Only those who repent for their deeds (alms, fasting) can
come to the place of justice. (94-100)

G. The Crucifixion Cross will be displayed and Chirst will
show his Stigmata. (101-103) This may have been fol-
lowed by a concluding prayer for the righteous actions
of man, men, or mankind, after the exhortation.

The form which I have postulated in this partial reconstruction of

the poem is based on the poet's own interpolations of the biblical,

apocryphal, and apocalyptic paraphrases versified for the work, with

the addition of a suppositional opening and closing to give it a more
complete form. However, the poem's message is quite complete as it
has been received, and can stand as a "unity" with or without theorizing
on its missing beginning and ending: what remains follows rather close-
ly the classical rhetorical form of argumentation, and the sections make
their various points with the minimum amount of awkward positioning.
The movement is mostly chronologically linear, with the necessary
shifts from possible future to present made when the poet reminds his
listener that certain difficulties may be avoided by immediate mortal
actions. His message is generalized by the governing principle of a
cause/effect relationship and made specific through the technique of
statement/exposition; to this he has attempted to add the Gregorian
system of the four levels of interpretation of his sources.

It is basic to this poem that the listener remember two things
from the "Harrowing of Hell" and the commentaries: first, that all
souls would have to await the Final Judgment in some form of Hell be-
fore their fates were decided; and, secondly, that only martyrs were
released from hellish obligations to go directly to Heaven. Without
this knowledge, the fate of the first soul ("she") would be of no interest
to the poem and of no theological debate: if the soul in question could
not be considered to have the potential characteristics of a martyr,
then there would be no debate or discussion about its fate. However,
the major point is made that something in the soul's past record might
cause it to spend retributive time in Hell. In that instance, the soul
would have to wait for the Final Judgment to answer for itself. The
poet does not enter the debate over whether or not all souls were
delivered from Hell by the "Harrowing"; he accepts only the idea that

the single true release from fiery damnation is by spotless martyrdom, and that this sets the tone of the entire work. Should anything (the sins) hold back the soul, then its fate will be determined only after residing in Hell for an unspecified time.

In the following sections of the Muspilli, the poet concentrates on the Last Judgment and the events leading up to it; since the time of the "Harrowing of Hell" there will be no more special dispensations for the damned: they must bring their "conditions" before the Judge as they were when they died. Apparently nothing can be done after death to repent for mortal sins; the entire Gregorian conception of Purgatory is missing from the poem, either by design or because of the poet's ignorance of the doctrine. Considering the combinations of theological viewpoints presented, the poem is not veiled in its purpose, but rather precise in its intent to correct an unpleasant situation which existed between the soul and its temporal behavior. The poet does not speculate about the future of the soul or of all mankind because he has verification of this future from his religious sources; therefore, he states the only possible alternatives to the situation. However, if the soul can be shriven before it departs by death from the body, it can present itself at the Final Judgment without worry or fear of eternal damnation; likewise, the first soul ("she")—once shriven, too—will achieve Heaven through martyrdom.

Gregory's four levels of interpretation are relevant to an analysis of the reconstructed form of the poem. The formalistic structure is based on the semi-classical patristic system of statement and explication, with each explication containing something which could be taken as either literal, moral, allegorical, or anagogical. Should the

reader accept the Christianized stories used by the poet, then the literal level of the poem is nothing more than a versification of more or less doctrinal ideas reinforced by many sources. The moral level is not concealed, because the "Interpolations" of the reconstruction are very direct in their various messages: sin causes damnation; mortal effort cannot deter or alter the Final Judgment; temporal actions determine man's eternal fate; repentance cleanses the soul. Reinforcing the messages of the moral level are the particular sins singled out by the poet in his narrative on the literal level: the object lesson to be made moral is made personally profound by being based on events which are considered to be true in Christian belief.

Some of the allegorical level can be found in the parallels between Elias/Antichrist and Ludwig/Charles, if there were a continuation of the notion that the Emperor is the Antichrist. Seen from a "German" point-of-view, Charles was a natural opponent and Ludwig a possible "savious" in the battle which the poet calls a fight for eternal life for the lover of justice (lines 41-43). Curiously enough, even the outcome of the apocalyptic battle seems to be in as much doubt as the fate of the soul in the first section of the poem. This paradox can be explained if the allegory is extended: the first soul (as martyr) will succeed as Elias, whereas the first soul (as sinful) will fall against the Antichrist in the second telling of the conflict. In each instance, the outcome of the situation about the dreadful punishments of Hell brings about the destruction of the world. Elias' defeat in the real or allegorical battle brings about the loss of land over which kin fought against kin; the soul does not know how to pay for causing this loss, and it descends into Hell. It is somewhat difficult to understand how the poet can

justify allegorizing Ludwig into Elias if the only story known was the first one; Elias' fate in the contrasting version is more appropriate to the concept that the poet was issuing a warning to someone through the poem, and that that warning could be made more powerful if it were attached to a variant which stressed Elias' supposed downfall. The literal kinship relationship between the brother-kings becomes, on the allegorical level, a relationship of opposites: good and evil. In the final remarks made on the oattle, the poet comes to about the same conclusion as he made in the first section of the work: the final resolution of each conflict of good and evil is made by God at the Last Judgment, and good will triumph.

Throughout the first sections of the Muspilli, including *M II, the poet has reserved his commentary to a limited discussion of one soul's fate and this soul's ultimate responsibility for the results of the Dies Irae. The last portion of the poem extends this lesson to include the followers of the man whose soul occupied the poet's interests at the beginning. It is also possible to include the first soul in the general group of men because the Judgment will be the same for him as well. Their admission of sin, on the literal level, will be similar; their allegorical relationship to a greater overlord is the same; and their moral responsibility (or lack of it) will determine their fates. The single soul and the souls of the group will then realize their ultimate responsibility for corrupt judgment, bribery, and—as the body reveals— murder. In true feudal order, the prime guilt for collective misbehavior falls on the leader; when the leader fails to justify his actions as being morally right, then his men will discover their poor judgment in supporting him and will have to answer for their sins.

Gregory's fourth level of interpretation, the "anagogical", reveals the mystical relationship between the poem, its subject/lesson, and the poet's source of the "Harrowing of Hell". Because of the special spiritual union of Carolingian kings (as head of the eigenkirche) with God, they were considered protectors of the Church. The "Harrowing" stressed Christ's deliverance of souls from the torment of Hell and his bringing blessings to men. The Muspilli stresses what might be termed the "Harrowing of Evil" in a temporal relationship: Ludwig could be to the war with Charles as Christ was to the war with Satan. When the poet postulates this mystical analogy, he believes that there is a possibility that Ludwig might be able to succeed in the same manner as Christ. However, Ludwig is not without sin as the war reaches its crucial stages, and there is danger that the worldly results will be the opposite from the biblical ones. What could be interpreted as an exact ninth-century repetition of the Gospel story is turned into an ironic disappointment: in place of salvation, the Germans might face damnation; assuredness and bliss are replaced with doubt and fear; spotlessness is transformed into black weight of sins. Nevertheless, the anagogical relationship permits the poet to state that man can regain his communion with God through an act of contrition and repentance. As Christ saved the soul of the Robber from the pains of Hell, so he will repeat this act of Grace in forgiving man's sins before death.

G. Conclusion

The eliptical and intricate structure of the Muspilli is unified in its integration of ideas and themes in that all of its parts reinforce the total four-level meaning of the poem, in spite of the fact that the

received text is incomplete and somewhat awkwardly stated in its present form. It is at one time a literal account of accepted canonical materials, while it presents a warning and challenge to the listener and reader on the other three levels. In speaking out of the _ethos_ of his times, the poet has been able to capture and present the spirit of the "Harrowing of Hell" in such a way as to point out not only the essential truth of the "Harrowing", but to make this truth a relevant basis for action in his own time. And, although it is not possible to determine the efficacy of the work, its warnings were never repeated and the temporal apocalypse never came to be.

Appendix #1: The <u>Muspilli</u>

. . . . . _/that_/ his hour comes, that he is to die.
Even as the spirit rises for the journey
and leaves its corpse lying,
one troup approaches from the heavenly bodies,
5   another from the fire pit; then they fight over it.
/Well/ may the soul worry, as long as the victory still wavers,
about to which of the troups she may be taken.
For if she becomes Satan's companion,
she will promptly be led to where harm will come to her,
10   in fire and in darkness: that is a terrible dreadful fate.
But if they, who come from the heavenly kingdom, fetch her,
and she becomes the property of the angels:
then she may immediately enter Paradise,
where life is without death. Light without darkness,
15   a hall without sorrow, and no one ailing.
Whoever then wins shelter in Paradise,
a house in heaven, he has sublime satisfaction.
Therefore it is of dire necessity for all men, each and everyone,
that his mind drive him on (and that he hurry mightily),
20   to gladly do God's will
and hastily flee the hell fire,
the agonies of the sulphur pit, where ancient Satan kindles
a hot blaze. From that, may he who knows himself to be sinful,
guard himself, be quick to worry.
25   Woe unto him, who is to repent his misdeeds in darkness,
tortured in the pitch pit; that is a right painful lot,
that man _/should_/ howl to God and no help _/should_/ come to him.
The suffering soul hopes for salvation,
/but/ she is not within the memory of the eternal God;
30   for here in the world did she not strive for that.
        So when the opulent King summons to judgment,
there shall appear each and every creature:
no mortal may disregard the summons
35   that not one and all come to the appointed spot.
There he shall give to the Judge account of
what he has ever done in this world.
        I heard the wise men of this earth foretell,
that the Antichrist will contend with Elias (Elijah).
50   The wolf is armed: there will begin a contest between them.
The warriors are so mighty, the prize (of victory) is so sublime.
Elias fights for eternal life,
wants to secure the Kingdom for the lover of justice:
therefore the Master of Heaven will help him.
55   The Antichrist stands by the Arch-enemy,
stands by Satan, who will drag him down:
therefore he shall fall wounded on the battlefield,
and shall fall in the struggle without victory.
Yet many of the men of God believe that Elias shall fall.
50   When Elias' blood drops to the earth,
the mountains will take fire, no tree remains standing

in the wide world; the waters dry up,
the ocean chokes, the sky melts in flames.
The moon falls, the region of earth burns,
55   no rock remains standing; the day of judgment approaches,
driving with fire, to punish the people.
Then no spouse may help the other to face the firebrands of the gods
when the broad rain of embers burns up everything,
and the blaze and the heavy gale purges everything:
60   where is then the piece of land over which one once fought with one's
      relatives?
The land, it is scorched, the soul stands in distress,
it does not know how to pay for the sin and descends to the agonies
      of hell.
Therefore it benefits man when he comes to the marked place,
that he justly judges each matter.
65   Then he need not regret when he comes to the court of justice.
The wretched man does not know what an overseer he has
when he for wealth inflects the law:
that the evil at the same time remains hidden.
He records all and everything
70   what evil man ever had carried out,
so that he can reveal it all when he comes to the court of justice:
therefore no mortal man should accept a bribe.
When the heavenly horn resounds through the air,
and when the judge of the world rises up on his way:
75   then rises with him the greatest of armies;
all is so bold that nobody wants to fight him.
Then he goes to the place which is marked:
there the judgment will be issued about which one had always talked.
Then the angels will travel across the lands,
80   stir up the nations indicating the matter,
Then every man shall rise from the rotten earth, life shall be
      given to him again,
freeing him from the chains of the grave,
so that he may openly confess his sins,
and that according to his deeds shall be his sentence,
85   when he then reigns who shall divide,
to whom is due the right to judge the living and the dead,
then there will be around him the host of angels;
such a great circle of good people is there.
So many who arose from their rest come there for the judgment
90   that of all people nobody can fail to appear.
There then the hand shall speak, the head shall say,
everyone of all limbs down to the smallest finger,
what murder it had carried out under this mankind.
There no man will be so deceitful that he may want to tell a false-
      hood,
95   that he may want to conceal some deed,
that he will not announce everything to the King,
unless he had made good everything with alms
and with fasting done penance for his wickedness.
For when he is cheerful he has done penance for his deeds
100 when he comes to the place of justice.

There they will bring the hold cross
on which Jesus /Christ/, the Lord, was fastened and tortured.
Then he will show the stigmata which he received from mankind,
which he endured for the sake of this world.

Appendix #2: Possible Muspilli Sources

1. Babylonian dragon myth
2. Pseudo-Ephrem: a late Latin homily on the end of the world
3. St. Ephrem: a Greek homily on the Antichrist, and other of his prophetic writings
4. Pseudo-Hippolytus: On the End of the World
5. Pseudo-Johannine Apocalypse
6. St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Fifteen Catechesis
7. Philip the Solitary: Dioptra
8. Pseudo-Chrysostom
9. Mediaeval Sibylline Documents (Bede)
10. Adso on the Antichrist (letter to Queen Gerberga)
11. Pseudo-Methodius
12. St. Jerome's apocalyptic materials
13. Greek and Armenian Apocalypses of Daniel
14. Arabic, Syriac and Ethiopic Apocalypses of Peter

(See: Bosset, pp. v-viii)

15. II Peter 3:10, 11
16. Apoc. XX, VIII, IX
17. Matthew 25:31f.
18. John 5:26f.
19. Voluspa 45-47, 50-52, 57, 64, 66
20. II Lokasenna 42
21. Heliand: vv. 2581ff; vv. 4338ff.

(See: Krogmann, Mudspelli auf Island,
pp. 7-8, 34, 39, 49, 50.)

FOOTNOTES

[1]John G. Kunstmann, "Some Unprofessional Remarks on the Elijah-Episode of the Old High German Muspilli", Annuale Mediaevale, Vol. I (1960), p. 5.

[2]Willy Krogman, "Eine neue Vermutung über as. mudspelli", Neiderdeutsches Jahrbuch, Vol. 84 (1962), pp. 9f.

[3]Jean S. Young, The Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson (Berkeley, University of California Press), 1966, p. 427.

[4]H. R. Ellis Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe (Baltimore, Penguin Books, Inc.), 1964, p. 37.

[5]J. Knight Bostock, A Handbook on Old High German Literature (Oxford, Oxford University Press), 1955, p. 123.

[6]S. N. Hagen,

[7]Marc Bloch, Feudal Society, Vol. I, various references to mediaeval "forgeries".

[8]Kunstmann, p. 23.

[9]Bostock, pp. 120ff.

[10]Cf. Renan, Antichrist, "Preface".

[11]Ibid.

[12]Cf. Graves, GM, Vol. I, "Introduction".

[13]Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, all eds.

[14]Cf. Chapter II, the Greek and Latin versions of the "Harrowing".

[15]Segal, p. 158.

[16]W. Bousset, The Antichrist Legend: A Chapter in Christian and Jewish Folklore, tr. by A. H. Keane (London, Hutchinson & Co.),

1896, p. 184.

[17]Segal, p. 53.

[18]Renan, p. 356.

[19]Young, p. 370, n. 2; pp. 499f.

[20]W. R. S. Ralston, Russian Folk Tales (London, Smith-Elder and Co.), 1873, pp. 337-340.

[21]Bousset, p. 206.

[22]Renan, p. 299.

[23]Ibid., p. 305.

[24]Cf. Cocognac, pp. 15-19; also the Victoria and Albert Museum publications on mediæval artifacts.

[25]Full citations of their works appear in the General Bibliography.

[26]Geanakoplos, p. 30, note.

[27]Vasiliev, p. 262.

[28]Ware, p. 52.

[29]Geanakoplos, p. 43, n. 65.

[30]Ibid., pp. 42-43.

[31]Ibid., p. 19.

[32]Ibid., p. 32.

[33]Cf. Chadwick, pp. 64, 164, 248-249, 253ff.

[34]Stubbs, p. 22.

[35]Chadwick, p. 254.

[36]Whitelock, p. 180.

[37]Duckett, Wandering Saints, p. 194.

[38]Ibid., pp. 198-199.

[39]Ibid., p. 207.

[40]Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Herlihy, pp. 64-65.

[43] Whitelock, p. 191.

[44] C. W. Jones, pp. 58-59.

[45] Ibid., pp. 59ff.

[46] Herlihy, p. 67.

[47] Duckett, pp. 193ff.

[48] Cf. Whitelock, pp. 164-173.

[49] Whitelock, p. 196.

[50] Addelshaw, Beginnings, p. 5.

[51] Thompson, p. 16.

[52] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[53] Addelshaw, Development, p. 10.

[54] Herlihy, p. 43.

[55] Addleshaw, Development, p. 14.

[56] Thompson, p. 20.

[57] Ibid., p. 18.

[58] Ibid., 1. 15.

[59] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

[60] Pirenne, Mohammed, p. 273.

[61] Thompson, p. 22.

[62] Ibid., p. 21.

[63] Ibid., pp. 20f.

[64] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

[65] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[66] Ibid., p. 47.

[67] Ibid., p. 173.

[68]Ibid., p. 34.

[69]Ibid., p. 41.

[70]Bloch, p. 159.

[71]Thompson, p. 49.

[72]Ibid., p. 50.

[73]Ibid., p. 51.

[74]Ibid., p. 22; italics his.

[75]Pares, p. 18.

[76]Ware, p. 84.

[77]Bostock, cf. discussion of the dates in "Muspilli".

[78]Ibid., p. 133.

[79]Thompson, p. 34.

[80]Bostock, p. 168.

[81]Bloch, p. 33.

[82]Ibid., p. 26.

[83]Thompson, p. 50.

[84]Pares, p. 18; Ware, p. 13.

CHAPTER VI

SOME NOTES ON THE SONG OF ROLAND

George Fenwick Jones notes that, "There was no place in Turpin's company for the meek or the poor in spirit, no place for the merciful or the peacemakers."[1] In such a society as this, one would hardly expect the Roland-poet to reflect an ethical and cultural situation much different from that presented four centuries earlier by the author of Beowulf,[2] yet there are some notable differences in the manner in which the Christian religion was accepted by the Franks: first, they were not new converts to their particular brand of Christianity because they were engaged and would become engaged later again in "holy wars" for the propagation of the faith. From the very beginning of the poem we are told that the antagonist Marsilion

> . . .ki Deu nen aimet.
> Mahumet sert e Apollon recleimet:
> Nes poet guarder que mals ne l'i ateignet. (7-9)[3]

And that, after the major victory of converting Bramimonda to the fold of Christ, Gabriel announces to Charlemagne that he will have to continue fighting the pagan tribes because, "Li chrestien te recleiment e crient" (3998). Secondly, part of their forces are headed by a group of peers which includes at least one archbishop and his company of bishops (properly ordained through the principles of apostolic succession)[5] fighting in the same manner as Odo of Bayeux did in 1066.[6] Thirdly, the concept of divine kingship is evident in the almost mythological treatment of Charlemagne as one of God's vicars-on-earth:[7] his right to govern is verified by the direct supervision of God through his archangelic messengers and divinely-directed dreams.[8] Furthermore, the

sacraments of the Western Church--both the inward and outward symbols of Grace[9]-become frequent elements in the motivating action of the poem: baptism, confession, absolution, mass, matins, deliverance, and salvation are all necessary for the meaning and movement of the story.[10] Because the culture of the Carolingian society is conceived of as so heavily Christian, removing any trace of the religion from the narrative destroys the work by rendering it meaningless; whereas in Beowulf the superficial coating of Christianity does not interfere with the inner workings of the poem. However, it must be noted that for all of the poet's concern with things Christian in the Roland, it is Christianity which undergoes a cultural change to meet the needs of the French society.[11]

One cannot be too suprised to find that such documents as the "Harrowing of Hell", which espouse a militant religion,[12] should play an effective part in the ethical background of the poem: just as the Muspilli-poet abstracted the descent and apocalyptic themes for use in his political adaptation,[13] and the Old English Gospel-writer transformed Christ into Prince Jesus, Thegn of the Faithful,[14] Turoldus felt at ease to use elements from the "Harrowing" to support his own beliefs, without fear of having such references lost on his audience. Although Charlemagne's society was no less fierce than that of Beowulf,[15] the Franks were pictured as being more mature in living their religion through outward forms, and as having been exposed—at least on the upper levels—to more frequent theological discussions and indoctrinations;[16] therefore, the poet's pronouncements on death, damnation, and salvation are more open and forthright in a seemingly scholastic[17] way. Not needing to instruct his audience in the articles of the faith, the poet

can use these religious principles to further his action by showing how
they operate in time of national need. Because Christianity is the
raison d'être for the poem's action, we find that throughout the Song of
Roland death takes on a new and glamorous warlike aspect which echoes
the Germanic[18] setting for the battles between Christ and Satan. Char-
lemagne must be in Spain to rid the country of the pagan disease by kil-
ling pagans as the first remedy or--in the unique exception of the weak
Bramimonda--by converting a noblewoman to the faith.[19] Before
Christ could expose the pagans in Hell to the Gospel, it was necessary
for him to defeat the demons keeping the enlightened ones captive.[20]
It is not possible to make a verifiable parallel between the salvation of
Eve and that of Bramimonda, but as Juliana,[21] she partakes of being a
descendant of Eve; as much "bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh"[22] as
all Christian women. The "Harrowing" of baptism has granted her the
right to salvation: "Chrestienne est par veire conoisance" (3987). Be-
cause the pagans are monsterous adversaries of God, they appear to
have inconvertibly black souls which were worth nothing by the fact that
they were condemned from the beginning.[23] Killing them amounts to
ridding the world of pests, not humans: they worship the Devil (in the
form of Mohammed or Apollo) and have no other will than to oppose the
Church.[24] No matter what they do, the poet tells us, they cannot be
trusted because they have no qualities which would make them worth
saving.[25] In the Armenian "Harrowing" Satan inspired the Sanhedran
to crucify Jesus and Judas to betray him;[26] likewise, in the Roland,
pagans are inspired to do their anti-Christian acts by the devils.[27]
Even though we might assume that Charlemagne actually believes that
there is hope for the eventual conversion of Marsilion, the omniscient

poet constantly reminds us that, "Paien unt tort e chestiens unt dreit" (1015) and "Nos avum dreit, mais cist glutun unt tort" (1212).

Christians who accomplish the ritual murder of pagans receive heavenly merit because they not only make the world safe for Christianity, but they do so (unconsciously?) by raising the relative number of Christians in it. Christians who die for this religious cause receive assurance of immediate salvation from God's earthly representative, Archbishop Turpin:

> Se vos murez, esterez seinz martirs,
> Sieges avrez el greignor pareis. (1134-1135)

The ordinarily difficult and always painful death in battle becomes a pleasurable gateway into Paradise when death is suffered for the faith. The Gospel stated that Christ was the doorway to heaven, [28] and as early as The Vision of S. Perpetua, [29] it was recognized that martyrdom permitted immediate salvation. In earlier chapters we found that both S. Clement and S. Augustine were filled with the notion that martyrs for the Church are released by their actions and freed from Hell (or Purgatory) to live with Christ: [30] this assertion is drawn directly from the "Harrowing" and the commentaries on it. However careful the poet is to detail his theological reasons and theological actions on the part of the Archbishop, he has substantial religious history and dogma to back his statements. [31] Turpin's unusual battlefield sermon promise is not an empty one for Roland; his death-speech begins with a recall of Christ's raising Lazarus and ends with two Archangels receiving his soul: "L'anme del cunte portent en pareis" (2396). To add additional proof of this, the very next laissez begins with the line: "Morz est Rollant, Deus en ad l'anme es cels" (2397).

On the other hand the poet has much to say about heresy and the
fact that heresy contains no shades of grey. In the manner of a legal
philosopher or judge of canon law Turoldus shows us the logical reasons
why Ganelon and Ganelon's compurgators should suffer hopeless death
although they are supposed to be Christians.[32] Thierry explains by in-
ference that Ga .elon's actions are, in essence, theological treason:
Ganelon has tai. a line of action which has resulted in the slaughter of
God's chosen pe   s while they were engaged in holy action. Because
these peers re sworn in Christian faith to Christ's vicar, Charlemagne,
any action against them is an action against the Godhead. Therefore,
Ganelon has fallen into heresy by holding back the actions of the Church
and preventing it from accomplishing its purposes. Knowing obstruc-
tion of justice is, in actuality, supporting the opposing cause: Ganelon,
although he supposes that he has justifiable externally personal reasons
for his actions, has sworn his faith away ("La traisun jurat e si s'en
est forsfait" (608).) and enters a theological limbo where he becomes
as vile a heretic as the pagans. His death then becomes as necessary
as it is right. Thierry knows that Hell has been harrowed in the past,
and that all who die without martyrdom will have to remain in Hell un-
til the Second Coming, suffering purgation until God decides their ulti-
mate fate:

> De Guenelun justise ert faite tel
> Jamais n'ert jur que il n'en seit parlet (3904-3905)

Not even money (for prayers?) can bring back the dead from their eter-
nal punishment: "Ne por aveir ja nel recuverum" (3813).

The ordinary reader or listener would have found that the poet used
the chivalric as well as the theological reasons for condemning

Ganelon. Even if it is obvious that there is much information provided in the poem about Ganelon's treason, the poet allows for his treachery to take on implications beyond the courtly code of conduct which are in perfect keeping with the religious ethos of the entire work. In fact, Turoldus does not deviate from his main purpose of telling a basically Christian-motivated story by interjecting any sections not predicated on Christian codes of ethics. We cannot interpret the judgment of Ganelon for heresy as being a new formulation of principles yet-to-be accepted, but simply as a normal reflection of the poet's own ethical background. He does not see his combination of the chivalric and the theological as a double standard of conduct; rather, he uses only one acceptable standard of action derived logically from the precepts of the Church, precepts which reflect the comitatus[33] and the eigenkirche[34] of Germanic tradition. Nor is there any indication that Thierry's interpolation of this code of ethics is inserted at the end without adequate preparation: we are told from the beginning what Ganelon has done, so his just judgment closes the action of that portion of the tryptich in a sensible manner. The hell of the pagan hordes has been harrowed by Charlemagne, and the destruction of Ganelon, with his deliverance to Satan, would naturally follow the ascension of the Christ-like saints who have died as martyrs for the Church. Turoldus operates under the belief that his society is a development of a Christianity proved by works like the Gospel of Nicodemus, whereas we find that it is his society which re-creates Christianity to reflect the older mores of a social system which was in existence long before Christianity was to attempt a transformation of the West.[35]

The poet's legalistic turn-of-mind explains further the reasoning

behind his statement that the pagans are wrong and the Christians are right. Death for the non-Christians is deserved by them for more reasons than the fact that they do not embrace the faith: the anti-Christian actions of serious nature condemn them to this fate of eternal damnation. They prove continually that they are incapable of being converted and merit being killed; in fact, nowhere is all of the patristic writings, commentaries on the Gospel, and the Gospel itself, do we have any indication whatsoever that Christ's descent to Hell and his preaching there had any effect on the demons.[36] At the termination of the "Harrowing", they are still there; they will remain there; they will continue to tempt men until the end of time. Because it seems that the pagans' souls harbor demons, Turoldus can find additional reasons for having the Christians kill them. His impressive catalogue is a magnificient mediaeval inditement of heresies:

1. Violation of the code of hospitality, especially
   in the case of the persons of Balan and Basile
   who acted as Christian "missionaries" to the
   court of the heathen potentate.[38]

2. Incitement to heresy by causing the noble Christian peer Ganelon to forsake his faith.[39]

3. Practices of the heretical acts of black magic,
   idol worship,[40] and the formation of unholy
   orders in parody of the Christian ones.[41]

4. Killing Christians; killing Christians while they
   are engaged in holy actions for the Church.

5. Desecrating relics.[42]

6. Bearing evil looks (evil eye?) which indicate

that they are cursed by God.[43]

7. Being indirectly cursed by God through such
indications as omens,[44] signs,[45] dreams,[46]
and other portents.[47]

The Beowulf-poet would have Grendel descended from Cain,[48] as would the Roland-poet have the pagans descendants of Judas and the devil-inspired Sanhedran.[49]

In order to keep his audience constantly reminded of the service which was being performed by the Christians in their killing of pagans, Turoldus inserts the various Christian causes between heavenly assurances to Charlemagne that his forces were engaged in an approved action. The reason for this stylistic device seems to be beyond the call of artistry and/or the aesthetics of preventing the battle from becoming a dull repetition of taking a life for a life:[50] Archbishop Turpin's dictum that fallen Christians will become martyrs is closely followed by the assurance that Satan is hauling away the souls of the pagans.[51] A sign of Doomsday[52] heralds the next reason for killing: the Saracens look like heretics because they are black[53] and deal in devilish things.[54] Satan's appearance again proves this rationale to be correct by carrying off more souls to Hell.[55] Valdabron is self-condemned in a most anachronistic way because he captured Jerusalem and sacked the Temple after killing Solomon.[56] Of course, the souls of Oliver, Turpin, and Roland are delivered to Paradise by the Archangels.[57] In a last-minute attempt to preserve his sword's relics from desecration,[58] Roland is allowed to kill one last pagan before he expires and is received into the kingdom of heaven. Charlemagne's completion of the revenge is accompanied by the physical sign of the sun standing still[59] (as in the

Gospel[60]), a dream of great portents,[61] and the personal appearance of Gabriel[62] to chide him back into action once he has been wounded. Signs of Christ's descent to deliver the saints also came beforehand.[63] Curiously enough, Charlemagne destroys Baligant and casts him down (L. 262) in a manner which recalls Christ's destruction of Satan; Marsilion trembles in fear as did Hell.[64]

Although it is sometimes somewhat difficult for the modern reader to accept the religious sophistication of the poet and his mediaeval audience, we must admit that the Song of Roland does present a picture of society considerably more involved in the intricacies of Christianity than would appear on the surface of the poem. Turoldus was such an encyclopedia of extra-biblical literature that his learning overflowed frequently into his reasoning: he was familiar with hagiographies, martyrologies, patrologies, the Old and New Testament apocrypha, witchcraft, some classical literature, and canon law.[65] His knowledge of these things served him well in finding additional reasons for killing pagans; there is no indication whatsoever that his schooling served to widen his knowledge and understanding of the world: he almost seems to be reassuring himself that what he explains is right in the eyes of God and he has lost that Germanic comprehension of man's nature and the patience with the world which is a trademark of the Beowulf-poet. Because of his background, he sees the actions of mankind in terms of absolutes: one of the major differences in Turoldus' treatment of death, damnation, and salvation is that he does depend more on the canonically legal aspects of killing than does the Anglo-Saxon poet.[66] He reflects a civilization in which the freedom to act has been increasingly limited through the influence of the Church and its popular absolute gospels

such as the <u>Nicodemus</u>. Although Turoldus does mention the family

feud between Roland and Ganelon,[67] the consequences of this one take

on terrifying religious overtones. The varieties of secular life con-

demned in <u>Beowulf</u>[68] and the <u>Muspilli</u>[69] appear nowhere in the Roland:

even at the conclusion, Charlemagne is warned that he should rearm

again for battle against the omnipresent pagan foe who challenges the

outposts of his Christian empire. Whether or not we can ever make a

decision about Turoldus' judgment of secular actions, we do have his

approval of holy war. His interest is clerical and his world-view lim-

ited more by what he reads out of his ecclesiastical texts than by what

he experiences of man.[70]

There are a number of additional details which indicate the very

subtle influence of the "Harrowing" on the <u>Roland</u>. The final capture

of the pagan forces—leading to their destruction—is accomplished by

Charlemagne after he lays level the gates of Saragossa. Although not

accompanied by a voice giving a charge to the hellish inhabitants, his

forces do shout the war-cry "Mountjoy!" as they triumph. (L. 265)

The forces of Baligant march under the Emir's dragon-standard, a

flag of fierce and foul images (L. 235), whereas the Devil is described

in many of the "Harrowing" manuscripts as the serpent of Hell. On the

other hand, Charlemagne's forces mass themselves under the oriflam-

me of S. Peter ("Romayne"/"Mountjoy") as they harrow their adver-

saries and enter into Saragossa carrying the symbol which indicates

the keys to heaven. (L. 225) And, as the battle is about to begin,

Charlemagne prays that his forces will be spared in the same manner

as God spared Jonah, Daniel, and the three children in the fire:[71] the

same Old Testament characters mentioned by the patristic writers who

employed them in their discussions of the descent-theme.[72] The Palm Sunday entry of Christ into Jerusalem on the back of an ass is almost imitated by Thierry's being placed on the back of an Araby mule by the barons; this time, however, it is the furs of Charlemagne which wipe the face of Thierry and not the hair of a woman which is used to wipe Christ's feet. (L. 287)

In many respects, the Song of Roland is a modern adaptation of the mediaevalized versions of the descent tale, although the counter-plots of the poem would prevent a direct identification of this work with the Christian Gospel. By casting the historical disaster of the battle at Roncevalles into the "Harrowing" framework, Turoldus has been able to transform a political defeat into a Christian success: Roland may have been lost to the men on earth, but he has gained direct entry into Paradise as his reward; the Church, through Charlemagne, has extinguished paganism in Spain and gained some new converts; Bramimonda, a queen, has been assured of her salvation; and the Church is able to march on to new conquests in the West; the Truth of Christianity is again made manifest to men who could not be witness to the descent of Christ. In this manner, Turoldus' epic achieves the twofold end of correcting history by transforming it into evidence of God's plan for mankind, and of feudalizing twelfth-century Christianity into a form which could be better understood by a society whose precepts were quite alien to the original missionaries. The tremendous impact of this militant variety of Christianity was seen in literature long before the Investiture Contest[73] made it a monumental force in the reshaping of Western Europe.

TABLE OF THE FALLEN CHARACTERS

Laisse	Character	Killer	Reason or Implication for killing
Opening	Basan/ Basile	Marsile	Christian; violation of hospitality
82	Pagans	French	
83	Pagans	Roland	
84	Pagans	Roland	Christian faith
85	Pagans	Roland	theological pledge
88	Pagans	Roland	sword; honor in death; relics (?)
89	Turpin	Pagans	sermon; salvation assured
93	Adelroth	Roland	Saracen; Marsile's nephew
94	Falsaron	Oliver	pagan; Marsile's brother
95	Corsablis	Turpin	pagan; Barbary lord
96	Malpri-mus	Gerin	pagan; Satan takes soul
97	Emir	Gerier	pagan; honor
98	Alaman-cer	Samson	pagan; honor
99	Turgis of T.	Anseis	pagan; honor
100	Excrimiz	Engelier	pagan; Devil involved
101	Estor-gant	Othon	pagan
102	Estra-marin	Berenger	pagan
104	Chernu-bles	Roland	pagan; hit Oliver in L. 103
106	Malun	Oliver	pagan
107	Hustin of V. F.	Roland	pagan
108	Timozel	Gerin/ Gerier	pagan
	Esprevere	Englier	pagan; son of Burel
	Siglorel	Turpin	pagan; sorcerer
114	Abisme	Turpin	pagan; "looks heretic"
116	Englier	Climborin	Christian
117	Climbor-in	Roland	pagan; revenge/hell
118	Samson	Valdabron	Christian; Marsile's "godfather"
119	Valda-bron	Roland	pagan; revenge
120	Anseis	Malquiant	Christian
121	Malqui-ant	Turpin	pagan; revenge
122	Gerin	Grandoyne	Christian
124	Gran-doyne	Roland	pagan; revenge
141	Falda-ronde	Roland	pagan

142	Bevan	Marsile	Christian
	Ivan	Marsile	Christian
	Ivor	Marsile	Christian
	Gerard	Marsile	Christian
	(Marsile)	(Roland)	pagan; cuts off right hand
	Jufaret		
	Fair	Roland	pagan; Marsile's son
145	Oliver	Marganice	Christian; attacked from behind and dies later in L. 150
146	Marganice	Oliver	pagan
154	Walter	pagan	
		hoard	Christian
155	Turpin	pagans	Christian; dies later in L. 166
162	Gerier	pagans	Christian; found dead
162	Oton	pagans	Christian; found dead
170	Pagan	Roland	pagan; desecrate relics
176	Roland	pagans	Christian; taken to Heaven directly

BALAGANT EPISODE

180	Pagans	Hand of God	drown
241	Torleu	Rabel	pagan; revenge
242	Lycian King	Guinemanz	pagan; God's judgment
247	Malprimis	Naimon	pagan; God's judgment
249	King Canabeus	Charlemagne	pagan; went against Naimon
251	Guinemanz	Baligant	Christian
	Richard Old	Baligant	Christian
	Lorant	Baligant	Christian
	Geboin	Balagant	Christian
257	Ambure	Ogier	pagan
262	Baligant	Charlemagne	pagan; God's design

JUDGMENT SCENES

264	Marsilon	Roland	grief (?); fear
286	Pinabel	Thierry	combat; God's will
289	Ganelon	execution	Christians judge him guilty in combat for treason and heresy

Christian Forces Destroyed (by name):

Named Christians	18
Balan and Basile	2
Total Christians	20

Pagan Forces Destroyed (by name):

Pagans mentioned	32
Defender (Pinabel)	1
Faithless Ganelon	1
Sureties for Ganelon	30
Un-named sword stealer	1
Bramimonda (converted)	1
Total Pagans and "helpers"	66

FOOTNOTES

[1]George Fenwick Jones, The Ethos of the Song of Roland (Baltimore, Maryland, The Johns Hopkins University Press), p. 102.

[2]Cf. "Beowulf" in Chapter IV.

[3]All Old French citations are from the Bédier edition. In the edition prepared by Dorothy Sayers (Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1957), she translates Ganelon as saying in L. 58: "I name my nephew Roland" (italics mine). If this is so, then there are additional complications in the poem which involve the Nephew-Uncle relationship; however, the line should be translated "my poor example of a son". Roland is Ganelon's step-son and the nephew of Charlemagne.

[4]L. 291, l. 3990.

[5]L. 264: Turoldus insists that each religion must have priests, but he denies them the honor of having been ordained properly.

[6]Dr. C. R. Dodwell, Fellow and Librarian of Trinity College, Oxford University, lectured on this fact in the "Bayeux Tapestry and the French Epic", California State College at Long Beach, January 21, 1964, while he was a Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University.

[7]Charlemagne's personal appearance is that of the Old Testament God; he is also surrounded by twelve peers of the realm in Christ-like fashion.

[8]Because Charlemagne is defending the Church, God sends him information directly through the intercession of the angels. Were he not on the side of the truth and the right, there would be no sense in receiving this aid.

[9]The Catholic Encyclopedia lists thirty-seven kinds of Grace; Turoldus hardly over-extends himself by mentioning a few varieties as they are connected to the more or less standard sacraments of the mediaeval Catholic Church.

[10]In keeping with the idea of holiness and holy war in the story, it is necessary that the warriors be purified before they enter into any battles against the pagans. No action is taken without this precaution.

[11]Jones, pp. 100ff.

[12]Cf. Chapter II and Chapter IV. The idea of a militant Christianity comes out in the Old English adaptations of the "Harrowing: story where there is a considerable interest shown in the war of Christ against the forces of Hell. Christ was transformed into a battle-lord, complete with an army of angels to aid him.

[13]Cf. Chapter V.

[14]Cf. Chapter IV, "Old English "Harrowing of Hell"".

[15]In fact, the actual descriptions of the bloody battles are much more detailed in the Roland, although they were probably no more horrible in actuality than they were in previous times.

[16]Turoldus takes it for granted that everyone knows what he is talking about when he discusses religion. Turpin's sermon-making (a rare thing at the time of Charlemagne) seems to take place as if it were a common thing on the battlefield. Bloch, vol. I, p. 82, has some interesting remarks on the lack of preaching in France during the period when this epic was composed.

[17]The entire matter of Turoldus' concern with heresy prefigures the 12th-and 13th-century arguments of the universities. His argument of Ganelon's guilt (as stated through Thierry) is discussed later on in

this chapter.

[18]Cf. Jones, p. 103; see Chapter IV, Part II.

[19]L. 291, l. 3990.

[20]Cf. Chapter II, Charts and Tables.

[21]L. 290, l. 3986. Juliana is an appropriate name for her because the original (legendary) S. Juliana went through a military harrowing before her martyrdom. See "February 16th" in Omer Engelbert, The Lives of the Saints (New York, Collier Books), 1964. A most curious parallel in the OE version of Juliana is based on Aldhelm's de laudibus Virginitatis: there is a "Harrowing of Hell" in Aldhelm's work. See Juliana, ed. Rosemary Woolf (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts), 1966, "Introduction".

[22]EETS ed., O.S.

[23]See references to S. Jerome in Charles Williams' Witchcraft.

[24]Ibid., for references on "Gregory the Great"; cf. "demonology" in Dudden, Gregory the Great: His Place in History. Gregory's Dialigi are filled with references to Satan and his demon-helpers.

[25]In spite of what might be called bravery, Turoldus constantly reminds his listeners that it is unfortunate that the pagans are not Christians.

[26]See Chapter II, Part II.

[27]Infra., n. 24; see "temptation" in ODCC.

[28]Cf. Chapter II, Charts and Tables.

[29]Cf. Chapter II, Chart of Contributors, "Tertullian".

[30]Cf. Chapter III for a discussion of this idea; Eric Francis Osborn, The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria (Cambridge at the University Press), 1957, p. 79. Cf. Prot. 144: I, 80, 26 and Strom.

IV, 80, ii, 283, 24. Also, William Hone, <u>Ancient Mysteries</u> . . ., p. 129.

[31]<u>Ibid.</u>, "Augustine"; note also that in L. 114, l. 1498 that Archbishop Turpin's horse is appropriately named "Abisme".

[32]L. 277.

[33]Jones, p. 104, p. 106; cf. Chapter IV.

[34]Cf. Chapter V.

[35]Jones, Chapter III, "Ethical Origins and Ideological Environment", pp. 96ff.

[36]Cf. Chapters II and III.

[37]See "Heresy" in <u>ODCC</u>.

[38]L. 24, l. 330.

[39]L. 46, l. 608.

[40]L. 108, ll. 1391-1392: Siglorel has visited Hell, according to the poets.

[41]L. 264, l. 3639; see L. 173 for the list of relics contained in Durendal.

[42]L. 119, l. 1583; L. 171, l. 2304.

[43]L. 113, ll. 1475 and 1484.

[44]L. 25; naturally, the glove figures as first in a series of omens, but the bleak scenery assists by adding a fitting reminder to what will happen.

[45]L. 280, l. 2459.

[46]L. 56; L. 185, l. 2525.

[47]L. 189, such as the description of Baligant.

[48]Cf. Chapter IV.

[49]The forces of Charlemagne destroy synagogues in L. 266, l.

2662.

[50]The list of names given in the chart following the chapter gives an accounting of the pagans and the Christians who fall during the narrative. The total appended to the list does not make an exceptional point; however, those interested in mediæval numerology might find the fact that 66 important pagans and their 'helpers" meet death is of some special significance.

[51]L. 96, l. 1268.

[52]L. 110, ll. 1430-1437.

[53]L. 113, l. 1474.

[54]L. 113, l. 1484.

[55]L. 117, l. 1553.

[56]Turoldus throws in—for good measure—a reference to the Holy Innocents. Later on, legend repeats itself and the Jews were accused and condemned guilty of additional ritual murders of Christian children by the Inquisition.

[57]L. 176, ll. 2394-2395.

[58]After saving it, the poet forgets it. It is a more worthy item than the mangon-filled Olifant, however.

[59]L. 180, l. 2459.

[60]See Chapter II, Section D on the Armenian version for Satan's observation of the signs of the crucifixion.

[61]L. 185, l. 2525.

[62]L. 261, l. 3611.

[63]Cf. Chapter II Charts and Tables.

[64]L. 264, ll. 3644-3647.

[65]One of the most interesting asides to be found in the Roland is

Turoldus' condemnation of the black arts of witchcraft, before the official condemnation by the Church in the Canon Episcopi of 1234. Between the years 1234 and 1490, when the Malleus Malificarum set guidelines for how witches should be judged, countless numbers of innocent people fell prey to casual observers like Turoldus, but observers who had the power to take life. Turoldus makes an interesting admixture of his classical reference to people who travel in the underworld with the help of demons, of those who deal with demons, and of those who practice black magic. This same kind of confusion with his history at least permits him to blame the pagans for all of the religious sins of history: although there is no direct reference to the Jews crucifying Christ, he sees them as helpers of the other pagans when he pictures synagogues in Saragossa. His condemnation was reflected later by the Inquisition.

[66]See Chapter IV, "Beowulf".

[67]Roland, however, does not want to discuss Ganelon's part in the deed; see: L. 80, 11. 1026-1027.
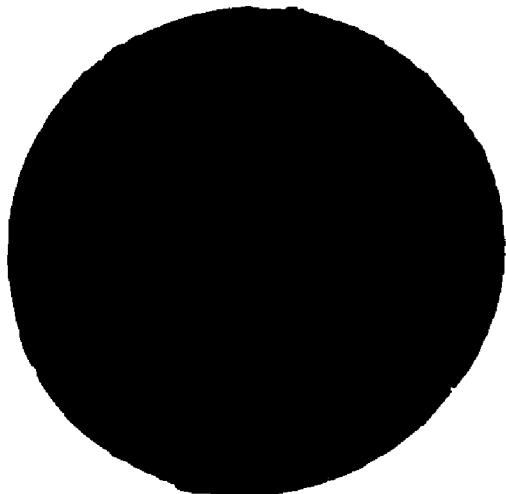
[68]Cf. Chapter IV.

[69]Cf. Chapter V.

[70]Turoldus' picture of the men fighting and killing is not what one might call "realistic" in the modern sense. However, it might be noted that in picturing them as doing deeds greater than life, he is using in literature a form which was common in manuscript illustration and stone carving: the most important figures are giants among men. The concept of mediaeval perspective was not three-dimensional.

[71]Cf. Chapter II wherein Jonah is mentioned as a type of "harrowing."

[72]Cf. Chapter II Charts and Tables.

[73]Zachary Nugent Brooke, Lay Investiture and its Relation to the Conflict of Empire and Papacy (London, Humphrey Milford), 1939. British Academy Raleigh Lecture on History.

CONCLUSION

Even though the overriding concern of this dissertation was to make a specific study of the transmission and artistic interpretation of the "Harrowing of Hell" from the Gospel of Nicodemus through a themato-logical and ethico-historical approach, many of the sectional conclu-sions have indicated that previous evaluations of early mediaeval litera-ture required careful reevaluation in the light of now-relevant associ-ated disciplines not normally considered in the study of literature: for instance, the "fact" that a given work was derived from the Gospel of Nicodemus is no longer a correct enough explanation when one finds that the Gospel is in reality only an unspecific term for several related versions of the Christian descent motif; and, whereas it was believed previously that the Gospel was derived solely from canonical materials and the theological formulations of the Primitive Church, one discovers that it was originally one of the oldest folkloric stories, descended from the very beginnings of written literature two millennia before the Incar-nation and that it was subtly--sometimes unconsciously--converted to purposes unintended by its originators. Because the "Harrowing" is only a Christian rendition of a pagan motif, the Christian dependence upon the legend posed certain questions about its contributions to early theology and its transmission to the West in forms not usually consid-ered the most direct: in the beginning the motif served the purpose of heathen religions; later it became an integral part of the Passion nar-rative because it filled in gaps in the Canonic Gospels. Its movement to the West depended as much upon patristic and papal commentaries as it did to the actual manuscripts of the versions of the Gospel being included in the missionary materials sent out from Rome.

[72]Cf. Chapter II Charts and Tables.

[73]Zachary Nugent Brooke, Lay Investiture and its Relation to the Conflict of Empire and Papacy (London, Humphrey Milford), 1939. British Academy Raleigh Lecture on History.

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305

Probably nothing accounts so much for the varied reception of the theme in the West than this multitude of possible sources. Longer vernacular versions, such as the Old English rendition, depend on the highly involved Latin text; shorter poetic works can be attributed to either the Latin version or to a number of the homilies of the Armenian type--homilies which changed the emphasis of the story to fit the adaptor's concern with such other characters as John the Baptist, Seth, or Eve. When the Early Mediaeval writers chose to adapt the descent theme, they borrowed more from the commentaries than from the narrative texts: both the poet of the Muspilli and the poet of the Roland share a common interest by their use of the papal doctrinal directives which granted sainthood for martyrdom; however, the Muspilli developed these into a threat against the crown, and the Roland used them to show the just cause of killing foes of the Church. The Irish shared visions of the otherworld with those of local saints lives and culture heroes; the English dramatized it. At no time was the story left unchanged. Throughout all of the mediaeval versions there is the constant idea of making the "Harrowing" relevant to each time, place, and occasion.

I can only remark that the ingenious inventiveness of the mediaeval writers becomes apparent when it can be demonstrated what they did with even the most standard, "commonplace" New Testament sources.

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Standard Abbreviations:

ANET	Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*
A-NF	*Ante-Nicene Fathers*
ANT	James, *Apocryphal New Testament*
APOT	Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*
CC	*Chambers' Cyclopedia*
CE	*Catholic Encyclopedia*
EETS	*Early English Text Society*
ERE	Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*
GM	Graves, *The Greek Myths*
MAW	Kramer, *Mythologies of the Ancient World*
N&P-NF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
ODCC	*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*
PG	Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*
PL	Migne, *Patrologia Latina*
PMLA	*Publication of the Modern Language Association*
SM	Kramer, *Sacred Marriage*

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VITA

Name: A. Robert Bell.

Permanent address: 1607 Electric Avenue, Seal Beach, California 90740.

Degree and date to be conferred: Ph.D., 1971.

Date of birth: August 9, 1936.

Place of birth: Rock Island, Illinois.

Secondary Education: East Senior High School, 1954.

Collegiate institutions attended	Dates	Degree	Date of Degree
University of Miami	1954-1960	B.A.	1960
University of Miami	1960-1962	M.A.	1962
University of Maryland	1962-1969	Ph.D.	1971

Major: Mediaeval Comparative Literature.

Publications:

A Partially Annotated Bibliography of English Mediaeval History (to 1963) (Long Beach, Department of English, California State College), 1965.

"The Internal Combustion Engine" and "The Four-Cycle Internal Combustion Engine" (Los Angeles, Galusha-Mendez Design Associates for the American Honda Motorcycle Company), 1965.

Materials for a Teaching Unit in Comparative Literature: Mediaevalism (Long Beach, Department of Comparative Literature, California State College), 1966.

English Literature from 1789 (Long Beach, Department of English, California State College), 1966.

Folklore and Mythology: An Introductory Course (Long Beach, Department of Comparative Literature, California State College), 1966, rev. ed., 1967.

"Folklore and Mythology in La Celestina" in Medieval Epic to the Epic Theatre of Brecht, ed. Rosario P. Armato and Joseph M. Spalek (Los Angeles, University

of Southern California Publications in Comparative Literature), 1968, Vol. I.

World Literature: a Course Guide (College Park, University of Maryland Department of English), 1968.

Positions held:

Assistant Professor of English
California State College at Long Beach   1969-

Instructor of English and Comparative Literature
Administrative Assistant to the Head,
Department of English
University of Maryland at College Park   1967-1969

Instructor of English and Comparative Literature
California State College at Long Beach   1964-1967

Teaching and Administrative Assistant
Department of English and Comparative Literature
University of Maryland at College Park   1962-1963

Teaching and Bibliographic Research Assistant
Department of English and Humanities
University of Miami at Coral Gables   1960-1962